

PERCEPTIONS

JOURNAL OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

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Cooperation in the Mediterranean and the
Middle East

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and Europe

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Partnership'

Emiliano ALESSANDRI



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Guest Editor: Özgehan ŞENYUVA

- 1 Editorial
- 3 Turkey and Italy: Interests and Cooperation
in the Mediterranean and the Middle East
Roberto ALIBONI
- 21 Turkey in Italian Media: Between Islam and
Europe
Margherita MARCELLINI
Özgehan ŞENYUVA
- 47 Italian Public Opinion on Turkey's EU
Accession: Utilitarian Calculations,
Identitarian Evaluations or Perceived
Threats?
Ebru Ş. CANAN-SOKULLU
- 71 Energy Cooperation between Import
Dependent Countries: Cases of Italy and
Turkey
Çiğdem ÜSTÜN
- 91 Italian-Turkish Relations:
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PERCEPTIONS - Spring 2011

Editorial

Perceptions is publishing its second issue with its new design. The editorial team and board have worked hard on improving the style and quality of the journal. *Perceptions* has a new deputy editor, Dr. Mesut Özcan, who recently joined the Center for Strategic Research (SAM). The SAM staff continues their hard work in restructuring the center so that it can establish itself as an influential and leading research institution. This particular special issue, featuring five articles, examines both Turco-Italian perspectives on regional and global issues as well as bilateral relations between the two countries. This issue looks at the current state of Turkish-Italian relations, the changes in the nature of this relationship, and the potential areas of cooperation on regional and global issues, particularly security in the Middle East and North Africa. Distinguished researchers and academics from Turkey and Italy have worked extensively for over a year to bring together this collection of essays which, among its many other strengths, offers new data as well as genuine analyses of the various issues. This issue owes much to guest editor Özgehan Şenyuva of the Middle East Technical University, as his invaluable help was crucial in bringing this issue together.

We believe that this special issue will contribute to increased dialogue and cooperation between the two countries, whose political, socio-cultural, and economic relations have a long and rich history. In 2006, we celebrated the 150th anniversary of the establishment of Turkish-Italian diplomatic relations. The volume of bilateral trade, cooperation in political and economic spheres, and cultural exchanges are also increasing and getting stronger every year. Italy remains a strong supporter of Turkey's bid for European Union membership. Each year, millions of Italians and Turks are travelling for touristic and cultural purposes to each other's countries, and especially the number of young people travelling for study and language learning has been steadily increasing. The universities from the two countries have been actively building stronger cooperation in the fields of education and research through joint research projects and student and faculty exchanges.

Reflecting the ever-closer political dialogue between the countries, there is now an annual Turkish-Italian Forum. The forum offers a unique opportunity for sustained dialogue between the two countries by bringing together academics, journalists, researchers, representatives from business circles and

NGOs, and opinion leaders as well as political figures. The first Turkish-Italian forum was organized in 2004 and since then has been continuing to offer a space for further cooperation. In 2011, we will be hosting the Eighth Turkish-Italian Forum in Istanbul, with the participation of high-level delegations from both sides.

Despite all these strong and positive indicators, Turkish-Italian relations are not free from challenges. As some of the studies in this volume indicate, the level of support for Turkish membership in the EU and the overall positive feelings towards Turkey is in slight decline among the Italian public. Studies also show that the level of knowledge of each other is rather low among the respective publics. Although political and economic dialogue and cooperation are strong and dynamic, the socio-cultural dimension of the relationship requires more attention and mutual effort. Hence, in the future the sides might be well advised to develop projects to further socio-cultural exchanges so that a more sustainable relationship could be established.

Another challenge pertains to the lack of systematic studies that focus on bilateral relations between Turkey and Italy. Although there are numerous experts from both countries working on Turkish-Italian relations, the publications that examine the multi-dimensional issues affecting bilateral relations are very limited in number and quality. We sincerely hope that this special issue will form an important contribution

to this field and will have a multiplier effect, encouraging similar studies with empirical and analytical depth.

In this issue, Roberto Aliboni presents an overview of the current state of economic and political cooperation between Turkey and Italy, with a special emphasis on the Mediterranean and Middle East regions. Emiliano Alessandri takes the analysis of Turkish-Italian partnership one level further and makes a critical evaluation of the limits and challenges that these countries face in their strategic thinking on regional and global issues. The joint article by Margherita Marcellini and Özgehan Şenyuva deals with Italian public opinion and the representation of Turkey by the Italian media and offers insights into the link between public opinion and media agenda setting. Ebru Şule Canan - Sokullu provides an extensive analysis on Italian public attitude towards Turkey and its membership to the EU, based on her detailed analysis of Eurobarometer data. And Çiğdem Üstün focuses on a crucial element within Turkish-Italian relations as she analyzes the role and importance of the energy sector in the equation.

Soon we will publish new special issues, looking at, among other issues, security in the Middle East, new developments in Turkish foreign policy, and Turkish migration to Germany. Stay tuned for more!

Bülent ARAS
Editor-in- Chief

Turkey and Italy: Interests and Cooperation in the Mediterranean and the Middle East

Roberto ALIBONI*

Abstract

Both Turkey's and Italy's strategic centers lie outside the Mediterranean, in particular the North Atlantic and Europe, where their major alliances, namely NATO and EU, are located. Their gravitation towards these centers has involved the two countries in policy frameworks in the Mediterranean initiated by those alliances, such as the NATO Mediterranean Dialogue, the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and the Union for the Mediterranean. This situation has been altered by the end of the Cold War and the weakening of the alliances' rationales and, even more so, by the post-September 11 American decision to intervene militarily in the Middle East. This intervention has shifted Turkey's and Italy's focus in their southern approaches from the Mediterranean to the Middle East. While Italy's shift is peripheral with respect to its foreign policy strategy and is mostly an opportunistic move, Turkey's shift may have a more structural significance and bring about changes in its strategic posture. Cooperation between Turkey and Italy in the Mediterranean and the Middle East involves less strategic-intense areas, such as developing structured economic cooperation in the area, support for small and medium sized firms, transport and energy security. In

this sense, the Union for the Mediterranean, if duly reformed, could offer opportunities for expanding cooperation.

Key Words

Turkey- Italy bilateral relations, EU, Middle East, Union for the Mediterranean.

Introduction

Turkey and Italy enjoy very good and cooperative relations, both bilaterally and in the framework of numerous international organizations and alliances to which they both belong. Both countries happen to have important historical and, currently, relevant geopolitical interests with respect to their southern neighbors in the Mediterranean and the Middle East. This article considers Turkey's and Italy's relations with the Mediterranean and the Middle East with a view to understand the similarities and differences in their strategic and policy approaches to southern areas and the two countries' ensuing prospects for cooperation as well as disagreement.

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The relative importance of the Mediterranean and the Middle East in Turkish and Italian grand strategies and foreign policies has traditionally depended on the significance of the two areas for the major alliances to which they both belong, namely NATO and the European Union (EU). In this sense, neither the Mediterranean nor the Middle East can have a central strategic significance for Turkey or Italy. The center is in the West and Europe, and the Mediterranean and the Middle East are bound to be, to a varying extent, peripheral to the former.

While Italy's shift is peripheral with respect to its foreign policy strategy and is mostly an opportunistic move, Turkey's shift may have a more structural significance and bring about changes in its strategic posture.

Until the end of the Cold War, the Mediterranean was undoubtedly more important for Turkey and Italy than the Middle East, consistent with the policies of their major alliances, which largely included the Mediterranean and stayed aloof of the Middle East. Beside their important political and economic bilateral relations in the Mediterranean, Turkey and Italy engaged in successive Euro-Mediterranean policies: the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) from 1995-2008, and, since 2008, the emerging Union for the Mediterranean

(UFM). Furthermore, they are also engaged in the NATO Mediterranean Dialogue.

In the 2000s, developments in the international and domestic arenas contributed to promoting shifts in the balance between the Mediterranean and the Middle East for both the alliances and the two countries. These shifts were not promoted by the alliances, which merely tried to adjust to them. However, neither the NATO-initiated Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI) towards the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), nor the long-standing EU-GCC relationship managed to expand the Euro-Atlantic alliances' outreach to the Middle East. As a matter of fact, the alliances did not really move from the Mediterranean. The later shifts were promoted by the United States alone and with the initiatives it took in response to the September 11 attacks. In agreement or disagreement with the United States, Turkey and Italy began to look towards the Middle East. They are now doing so to an extent that seems unprecedented in the post-World War II era, an extent that is rather reminiscent of historical times.

The question is whether Turkey's and Italy's shift towards the Middle East remains in tune with or contradicts their central strategic tenets. The present situation confronts us with the question of how the changing balance between the Mediterranean and the Middle East is reflected in Turkey's and Italy's foreign policies and grand strategies. Are the two countries' policies a harbinger of

alterations in the grand strategies of the alliances or are they going to collide with those of their long-standing allies? Are the ongoing changes bringing Turkey and Italy nearer or further away from one another?

Are the two countries' policies a harbinger of alterations in the grand strategies of the alliances or are they going to collide with those of their long-standing allies?

Against this backdrop, this article highlights the role of the Mediterranean in Turkish and Italian respective interests. Then, it illustrates the shifts that are taking place as a consequence of new developments in the 2000s and the impact of such shifts on the two countries' strategies and policies. Finally, it looks into the consequences on the two countries' relations that could stem from current shifts in the balance between Mediterranean, Middle Eastern and Euro-Mediterranean interests.

The Southern Approaches' Relevance to Turkey and Italy

An illustration of the respective importance for Turkey and Italy of the various Mediterranean and Middle Eastern areas and the relative weight these areas have for them in terms of national political and economic interests

is necessary. To that purpose, among the array of possible benchmarks, let us consider one economic and one political indicator, namely (a) trade relations, and (b) participation in multilateral Mediterranean policy frameworks.

a) Trade

When it comes to trade, the different areas we can take into consideration are (a) the Mediterranean as a whole, i.e. the area comprising the riparian countries plus Jordan and Portugal, which are normally included in the various EU frameworks referred to as the "Mediterranean"; (b) the Western Balkans; (c) the Maghreb; (d) the Near East; (e) the Gulf; (f) Southern Europe; and (g) Turkey, taken alone. Another important area is the Euro-Mediterranean one, i.e. the area comprising all the EU countries and the non-EU Mediterranean countries. The former EMP and today's UFM encompass the Euro-Mediterranean areas.

The Euro-Mediterranean area is of extreme relevance to both Turkey¹ and Italy as it includes their top trading partners. This point is self-evident and we will not delve into it. But what about the pan-Mediterranean area, the area comprising the southern members EU only, plus the Western Balkan countries and those of the Maghreb and the Near East?

The tables attached to this article can help to answer this question as well

as similar questions regarding other Mediterranean sub-areas and the Middle East. Evaluations are made by comparing 2004-2008 Turkish and Italian trade flows with relevant areas, calculated as percentages of their total trade. If we begin by considering the whole pan-Mediterranean area, we see that Italy's exports towards that area amounted to 29.9% of its total export, whereas imports accounted for 24.3%. By the same token, Turkey's exports accounted for 27.6% of its total exports, while imports amounted to 18.1%. These figures tell us that the pan-Mediterranean area is as important as the Euro-Mediterranean for both countries. This is explained by the presence in the grouping of top trading partners in the Southern European group for both Turkey and Italy.

When it comes to sub-Mediterranean areas and the Gulf, the picture is somewhat different. The Gulf looks more important for Turkey (10.1% of exports and 5.7% of imports) than for Italy (3.1% and 3% respectively). Equally, the area comprising the Maghreb and the Near East is more important for Turkey (6.9% of its exports and 3.8% of its imports) than Italy (3.9% of exports and 7.4% of imports- the latter figure largely due to gas imports from Algeria). If we add the Western Balkans countries to the Maghreb and the Near East, we see that Turkey's share of its total exports towards this grouping is more important than Italy's (8.5% versus 5.3%), whereas its imports are considerably weaker (3.9% versus 8.2%). The relatively weak share of Turkish imports can probably

be explained by a different geographic pattern in energy imports (from Russia and the Caspian Sea).

In evaluating these figures, one has to keep in mind that the absolute amounts are quite different and that the Italian economy, in terms of GDP, is about three times that of Turkey. Nevertheless, consideration of relative values suggests that, while the Euro- and pan-Mediterranean areas, in which all or several EU countries are included, do not show significant differences between Turkey and Italy; in contrast, the Mediterranean sub-areas- in which EU countries are not included or the Middle East is included- show differences. It may be interesting to see that, if we consider a grouping comprising the Maghreb, the Near East and the Gulf, more or less akin to what is known as the MENA region, whereas Turkey's exports toward this area amount to 17.2% of its total exports, Italy's only amount to 7%. As for imports, Turkey's imports from this group amount to 9.5% while Italy's amount to 10.5% (which again is probably explained by the pattern of energy imports).

Let's try to draw some conclusion from this overview. First of all, the Mediterranean and the Middle East play a remarkably secondary role in the framework of the two countries' total trade. The United States, other OECD countries, China and Russia are by far their most important trade partners. The Mediterranean takes on a bigger role only when we refer to Euro-Mediterranean

frameworks- including the EU- as the principal Western partner of Turkey and Italy. But if we take the Mediterranean region and exclude the EU or the Middle East, as relatively important as these areas may be in the context of respective trade flows, they prove peripheral to both countries' patterns of trade relations.

Only with the rise of the AKP did things change with the Middle East / Mediterranean becoming strategically more significant than in the past.

It can also be noted that non-EU southern approaches to Turkey and Italy are, in relative terms and considering trade, more important for Turkey than for Italy. This conclusion would be even greater if we were to consider the figures showing the current fast-growing relationship between Turkey and Iran, Syria and Iraq. There is no doubt that Turkey's relations with the Middle East and, to a lesser extent, several Southern and Eastern Mediterranean countries are growing stronger and, at least in the short and medium term, bound to outstrip Italy.

b) Participation in Euro-Mediterranean Policy Frameworks

At the end of World War II, both countries had good, though different,

reasons to see the West and Europe as central to their national security. Both entered NATO but not without difficulties and reservations from several European countries. Italy was a founding member of the then EEC and Turkey soon applied for association and membership. In both countries, there was a debate on the role the Mediterranean and the Middle East was supposed to play in the framework of their emerging grand national strategies and both responded by giving priority and prominence to the Mediterranean, as it was regarded a dimension of their Atlantic and European engagement.

Admittedly, this major strategic assumption was frequently challenged in respective domestic debates. In Turkey, the strategic alliances of the country have been challenged by ultranationalist, leftist and pan-Turkic groups. These groups looked at other strategic alternatives, such as Central Asia, and to a much lesser extent the Islamic and Muslim world. In Italy, the Western/European strategic option was long challenged by the left, in particular the powerful Italian Communist Party, and large sections of Catholics inside and outside the Christian Democratic Party, which looked with interest and empathy at the Third World. These political groups used to see the West and the EEC as expressions of international capitalism and imperialism and thought of solidarity among Mediterranean countries as a preferable alternative to the Western/European alliances. The

Turkish left and the Kurds must have looked at the Mediterranean through an anti-imperialist prism as well. However the “Mediterraneanist” movement in Southern Europe, with its climax in the 1980 with Craxi, Mitterrand, Gonzales, Papandreou and Mintoff, only marginally involved Turkey.

In Italy, the alternative between “climbing the Alps or sailing towards the Mediterranean” was a key debate between those who wanted to keep the West and Europe as the central tenet of the nation’s grand strategy and looked at the Mediterranean as nothing more than an important dimension in that strategy, and those who looked at the Mediterranean as the central national strategy. In Turkey, this debate was marginal and, to the extent that it took place, did not really concern the Mediterranean or the Middle East. Only with the rise of the AKP did things change with the Middle East/Mediterranean becoming strategically more significant than in the past.

Nevertheless, the political majorities that have governed the two countries have unequivocally predicated their national grand strategies on the Western and European alliances and looked at the Mediterranean and the Middle East as functional to those alliances. Hence, their effective contributions to NATO’s Southern Commands, operations in the Western Balkans, the NATO Mediterranean Dialogue, the EMP and, today, the UFM.

The strategic agendas match the commercial and, more broadly speaking, the economic agendas of the two countries, as considered in the previous paragraph. Both agendas are primarily rooted in their national grand strategies predicated on the Euro-Atlantic platform, with prominence given to the alliances.

Shifts in the 2000s

The picture presented in the previous paragraph is now changing because of the many political and strategic shifts that occurred in the first decade of the 2000s. It may be too early to say how important these shifts are strategically. However, in the post-Cold War and post-September 11 world there is no doubt that changes in and challenges to the traditional strategic setting are not lacking. Let us argue about the main ones.

First of all, the direct and massive intervention of the United States in Iraq and Afghanistan has changed perceptions of the Mediterranean and the Middle East and made it difficult for the Mediterranean to survive as a workable and credible geopolitical entity. From a geopolitical point of view, after the war in Iraq, the intervention in Afghanistan, the rise of Iran as a regional power, and the consolidation of trans-national Sunni radicalism, the European vision of the Mediterranean as a geopolitical entity on its own appears unsustainable and is in fact fading away. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is strongly embedded in an Islamic-Middle Eastern framework, in

which the Mediterranean no longer makes any sense. In this emerging framework, both Israel and the Mediterranean Arab countries are being firmly attracted by developments in the Greater Middle East; more than ever, they are focusing on the United States and they feel more and more disillusioned and alienated towards Europe. If the representation of the Mediterranean as a geopolitical entity has weakened, so has the Euro-Mediterranean cooperation framework put forward by the Europeans.

These developments have strongly affected the foreign policies of many allied countries, Turkey and Italy being no exceptions. Italy has responded to the US initiatives towards the Greater Middle East by uncritically following the US.² The Italian government has sent relatively important military forces to Iraq and Afghanistan and become a staunch supporter of Israel, no matter how nationalist or chauvinist its policies. It also sent a force to strengthen UNIFIL after the 2006 war between Israel and Hizbollah. This force was constructed by the then Prodi government as part of a Euro-Mediterranean policy, but objectively it was framed in a pan-Middle East context in which Iran has turned into a Mediterranean actor and Near East conflicts are now firmly and inherently linked to the Gulf and beyond. Ten years after September 11, despite domestic rhetoric, Italy is in fact looking more at the Middle East than the Mediterranean.³

Turkey's response to US initiatives towards the Gulf and the Greater Middle East has been more complex and diversified than Italy's. While it has confirmed its Atlantic engagement by sending troops to Afghanistan, the US intervention in Iraq created serious risks, if not threats, to its economy and security. For this reason, it was compelled to more closely examine these risks, a problem which did not affect Italy at all, and Turkey was forced to develop a new foreign policy towards the Middle East, which basically did not exist before then. Turkish foreign policy has received an entirely new strategic doctrine of "zero problems" with its neighbors, as preached by Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu.⁴ Based on this doctrine, Turkey is working strongly on developing relations with Syria, Iraq, Iran, Saudi Arabia and the Arab world in general. So, ten years after September 11, Turkey's foreign policy has turned towards the Middle East, like Italy's, but more so.

Ten years after September 11, despite domestic rhetoric, Italy is in fact looking more at the Middle East than the Mediterranean.

In conclusion, Turkey and Italy have both moved eastward. Until the end of the 1990s, Turkey and Italy essentially pursued a Mediterranean

policy, predicated on their Atlantic and European strategic priorities and strongly embedded in the policy frameworks initiated by NATO and the EU. Ten years later, they continue to have Mediterranean interests, but their focus more broadly speaking is on the Middle East. Is this a policy shift only or does it have strategic implications as well?

Turkey's response to US initiatives towards the Gulf and the Greater Middle East has been more complex and diversified than Italy's.

Since the Western/European alliances were not established to look after the Middle East and- as we argued above- have proved unable to integrate the latter in their mandate, when it comes to this region the role of the alliances is not very clear. As a consequence, the allies' policy shifts from the Mediterranean to the Middle East cannot easily square with the alliances' strategic platform. Furthermore, we are living in an era in which the great multilateral organizations that structured the Western world until the end of the 1990s are somehow weakening. In Turkey as well as Italy, national interests tend to compete with and prevail over the alliances' interests (or the latter prove unable to reconcile national and collective interests). No doubt, this reflects an ongoing political shift, which has been affecting all the

allied countries and their organizations, Turkey and Italy being no exception. For these reasons, one can wonder how the two countries are balancing their new interests towards the Middle East and their continued strategic focus on the Western/European alliances and the Mediterranean.

The response to this question is quite different according to whether we want to look at Italy or Turkey. For Italy, after the long post-war period came to an end (the so-called First Republic), the new domestic political actors that emerged in this country at the beginning of the 1990s have concentrated their interests mostly on the implementation of their agenda of domestic conservative and constitutional reforms. This domestic focus requires some measure of re-nationalization of the country's foreign policy so as to minimize interference from the alliances, especially the EU. Re-nationalization is a broad and winning trend in intra-EU relations. In this new environment, Italy happens to be a relatively weak "nation" with respect to other major EU "nations". To get around this weakness, it has shifted from its traditional Europeanist policy towards a policy of privileging bilateral relations with the United States. All in all, these approaches have generated a kind of opportunistic soft nationalism, which is eroding and changing the early strategic platform of Italian foreign policy, alienating the country from any Euro-Mediterranean or Mediterranean grand design, and directing its foreign

policy towards the Middle East as a consequence of its American strategic priority. If these changes are taken into consideration, it is clear that Italy's shift is not simply a policy shift, but a change in its strategic setting. The real change regards its traditional relations with its allies to which the Middle East is only instrumental. This shift fully reflects the broad weakening of the post- World War II alliances and their creeping decline.

For Turkey, as already pointed out, its interest in the Middle East is, above all, a response to the national security risks raised by the US intervention in Iraq and the various implications of the Greater Middle East concept. The intervention and the alterations it triggered in the region have caused a new Middle Eastern dimension to emerge in Turkey's national security and this has, in turn, caused an eastward enlargement of Turkish security and foreign policy. This was perceived of as compatible with- even supportive of- the Atlantic alliance platform and its present pattern of Middle East relations as long as Ankara developed good relations with its Arab neighbors without upgrading its low-profile relations with Iran and spoiling its long-standing excellent relations with Israel. As soon as Turkey's patterns began to remarkably improve relations with Iran and worsen with

Israel, that compatibility was thrown into question. Many see a strategic shift in Turkey's Middle East policy, that is a Middle East policy not clearly linked to, if not de-linked from, its persisting Western/European and consequently Mediterranean strategic priorities.

The shift is regarded by some in the West as a result of the AKP's Islamic agenda which, concealed so far, will now be unveiled by the rise in domestic support the AKP has enjoyed in past years. Thus, according to this argument, a strategic shift in Turkey's foreign policy derives from the broad changes in the Western/

For Turkey, its interest in the Middle East is, a response to the national security risks raised by the US intervention in Iraq and the various implications of the Greater Middle East concept.

European strategic predicament, but the actually outcome is magnified by the governing party's Islamic orientation. This author guesses that the Turkish drivers are essentially national and perhaps

nationalist, and that they are the offspring of the re-nationalization era in which we are all living. Ideology is only providing the domestic flavor and consensus for the national Turkish responses to the regional environment. These responses would not be that far from those of the AKP if a Kemalist government were in power. In fact, these responses began to emerge before the AKP took over. As the common rationale is nationalism, they are substantially shared, albeit with caveats, by different streams of opinion going beyond the AKP.

Both Turkey's and Italy's strategic perspectives are definitely undergoing a shift. In both cases the shift is seen most clearly in the weakened fabric of the alliances due to Bush's unilateralism (from which Obama has not clearly distanced himself), the re-nationalization trend in the EU, and the ultimately short-sighted European closure of Turkey EU's membership application. There are important differences, though, for while Italy has chosen to respond with a defensive and inward-looking re-nationalized strategy, in which the Middle East is instrumental to its privileged relationship with the United States, Turkey has chosen to respond by actually expanding its strategic horizon to the Middle East in the framework of reinforced national objectives and aspirations. This course may lead to a collision, unless there is some dialogue with a view to work out strategies to deal with emerging realities in the region on the allied side, and more flexibility and pragmatism on Turkey's side.

The Euro-Mediterranean Setting

The two countries' turn towards the Middle East has not cancelled their interest in and commitment towards Euro-Mediterranean endeavors. Before describing the current situation in the UFM, we must note the similarities and differences in Turkish and Italian perceptions of Mediterranean and Euro-Mediterranean prospects.

Italy perceives the whole Mediterranean (including the Western Balkans) as a region of primary national interest, whereas Turkey has a more specific national interest in the Eastern Mediterranean. Historical memories regarding their southern approaches are different: while empires and states located in the Italian peninsula have constantly dealt with the Mediterranean basin and, more rarely, some adjoining areas, the empires and states in the Anatolian peninsula and Asia Minor (the Ottomans and the Turks as well as the Byzantines before them) always had to do with a multiplicity of strategic directions, the Mediterranean as well as Central Asia, Iran and the Arab countries.

These different national perceptions, while irrelevant in NATO, do matter when it comes to the EU-initiated Euro-Mediterranean frameworks of cooperation. NATO provides the two countries with joint perspectives, perceptions and actions, such as the NATO's Southern Flank in the Cold War, the NATO Mediterranean Dialogue and ICI, the operations in the Balkans after the breakdown of Yugoslavia, and other joint operations, such as today's Active Endeavour. When it comes to Euro-Mediterranean initiatives, Turkey's interest is different from Italy's, first of all, because, as we have just argued, the Mediterranean is culturally and historically less relevant for Turkey than for Italy and, second, because Turkey's primary interest lies in becoming a member of the EU rather than being

a member of a Euro-Mediterranean framework. In this sense, its interest towards the EU's Euro-Mediterranean initiatives are instrumental: they are mostly regarded by Turkey as a dimension of the membership to come. In this, Turkey's position looks similar to that of the new Baltic, Central-eastern European and Eastern Balkans members of the EU.

The developments we considered in the previous paragraph and Europe's recent closure to Turkey's membership have certainly contributed to further diluting Turkish interests in Euro-Mediterranean initiatives. President Sarkozy's proposal to turn the Mediterranean into a platform for an EU-Turkey strategic partnership completely misunderstands Turkish priorities and betrays Turkey's expectations. Proposing a privileged strategic partnership with the EU in the Mediterranean with a view to dealing jointly with the Middle East as an alternative to Turkey's membership in the EU is reminiscent of the British attempt to offer Turkey a partnership in the Middle East as an alternative to or as a condition of its membership in NATO in the 1950s.⁵ For Turkey the strategic stakes are less the Mediterranean than the EU.

Turkey's diplomacy argues that the country is ready to cooperate in the Middle East as well as in the Mediterranean, but as a member of the EU rather than an external power. In summary, we can say that while Turkey's interest towards the Euro-Mediterranean

framework is a proxy of its primary interest in becoming a member of the EU, Italy's interest is predicated more on its important bilateral relations with the countries of the basin and the EU as a facilitator of its bilateral relations in the region. In both cases, interest is not that high and always instrumental to other aims.

President Sarkozy's proposal to turn the Mediterranean into a platform for an EU-Turkey strategic partnership completely misunderstands Turkish priorities and betrays Turkey's expectations.

Having said that, Turkey has vehemently rejected the French interpretation of the UFM but has accepted to be a part of this emerging Euro-Mediterranean framework.⁶ Italy has supported Sarkozy's proposal, on the condition that it is "Europeanized". Turkey's driver is always the need to stay apace of the EU. Italy sees the UFM essentially as an opportunity for commercial and business relations in the area. However, both Turkey and Italy play a leading role in the UFM as deputies of the secretary-general, Turkey for transport and Italy for business development, in particular for small- and medium-sized firms. As is known, the UFM is not precisely a success at the moment. It has deep-seated shortcomings

such as a high political value which is not matched by its actual political cohesion (and this exacerbates the members' impotence in solving the area's conflicts), as well as the inherent weakness of the Euro-Mediterranean format. If the UFM can narrow its misplaced political ambitions and develop into a framework for organizing economic cooperation regionally and implementing big joint projects, it may succeed. Otherwise, it may fail.

Conclusions: Turkish and Italian Cooperation in their Southern Approaches

Both Turkey's and Italy's strategic centers lie outside the Mediterranean, in particular in the North Atlantic and Europe, where their major alliances, that is NATO and EU, are located. Their gravitation towards these centers has involved the two countries in the policy frameworks initiated by those alliances in the Mediterranean, such as the NATO Mediterranean Dialogue, the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and the Union for the Mediterranean. Thus, the Mediterranean policies of Turkey and Italy, undoubtedly predicated on strong proximity interests and bilateral relations, have developed as proxies of their strategic Atlantic and European interests. This situation has been altered by the end of the Cold War and the weakening of their alliances' rationale and, even more so, by the post-September 11 US decision to intervene militarily

in the Middle East. This intervention has shifted Turkey's and Italy's focuses in their southern approaches from the Mediterranean to the Middle East. While Italy's shift is peripheral with respect to its foreign policy strategy and is mainly an opportunistic move, Turkey's shift may have a more structural significance and could bring about changes in its strategic posture.

If Turkey is in flux, there is no doubt that more efforts to embed it in the Western-European alliances would contribute to shaping Turkish foreign policy and keeping it from getting "lost".

Turkey's situation today is in flux and the way in which its strategic posture evolves depends greatly on what its Atlantic and European allies do. The decisions taken by such important European countries as France and Germany could force Turkey to "go it alone" and transform its policy towards the Middle East from one based on legitimate national interests into one predicated on identity. This would be a risky development for Turkey and Western countries. However, the United States and many countries in the EU are keeping the door open. What they should do, while waiting for shifts in the German and French postures, is to prevent a break. In this sense, efforts should be made in the context of the

current negotiations for membership to achieve significant partial results even if affiliation cannot be immediate, in other words keep up the perspective. This requires a strong and concentrated effort by those EU members willing to have Turkey in Europe. If Turkey is in flux, there is no doubt that more efforts to embed it in the Western-European alliances would contribute to shaping Turkish foreign policy and keeping it from getting “lost”.

Definitely, Italy can play a role in this. From the point of view of the Mediterranean and the Middle East and in view of cooperation, more effective Italian diplomatic support for Turkey’s affiliation to the EU should be a central factor of cooperation in the Mediterranean and, now, in the Middle East. Italy is very close to Turkey’s aspirations and views on this point, including on the Cyprus issue. However, Rome has never really translated this position into effective policies in intra-EU relations.

While a more active Italian approach on Turkey’s affiliation to the EU is desirable, both in bilateral and allied relations, cooperation between Turkey and Italy in the Mediterranean and the Middle East also concerns less strategic-intense areas, such as the development of a structured economic cooperation

in the area, support for small- and medium-sized firms, transport and energy security. This requires bilateral cooperation, but also cooperation in the regional and international arenas and in organizations to which Turkey and Italy are committed. In some of these areas, cooperation is already well developed, as in the field of energy, especially in the transport of gas and oil across that crucial hub between different regions that Turkey is becoming.⁷

The UFM is where upgraded cooperation between Turkey and Italy could be developed, if the two countries, in coalition with others, are able and willing to first of all reform this emerging organization. As it is conceived today- a political endeavor with an economic arm- it will never really work. If redirected towards being a regional economic endeavor with a soft political background, it could. Cooperation is thus needed primarily with a view to redirect the UFM towards this aim. Once redirected, the UFM, with its goal of implementing big regional projects and infrastructure, as well projects in social and cultural fields, could allow for strong and fruitful cooperation between the two countries, both interested in multiplying development opportunities in the Mediterranean.

Table 1: Turkey Import (in mn. US \$)

Countries & areas	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2004-2008
France	6.201	5.884	7.236	7.832	9.022	36.175
Greece	593	727	1.044	950	1.151	4.465
Italy	6.864	7.561	8.653	9.967	11.012	44.057
Portugal	237	398	382	408	480	1.905
Spain	3.249	3.550	3.831	4.342	4.548	19.520
Cyprus						
Malta	73	46	21	99	168	407
South Europe	17.217	18.166	21.167	23.598	26.381	106.529
Albania	16	16	13	24	37	106
Bosnia	11	15	9	21	25	81
Croatia	35	86	61	77	106	365
Fyrom	52	52	56	55	30	245
Montenegro*	87	97	52	74	1	311
Serbia	---	---	---	---	62	62
Western Balkans	201	266	191	251	261	1.170
Algeria	1.256	1.693	1.865	2.108	3.262	10.184
Libya	1.514	1.984	2.297	400	336	6.531
Morocco	106	143	174	198	361	982
Tunisia	100	117	150	229	365	961
Maghreb	2.976	3.937	4.486	2.935	4.324	18.658
Egypt	255	267	393	679	943	2.537
Jordan	14	28	9	12	25	88
Israel	714	803	782	1.081	1.448	4.828
Lebanon	146	144	127	116	179	712
Syria	358	272	187	377	639	1.833
Near east	1.487	1.514	1.498	2.265	3.234	9.998
Mediterranean	21.881	23.883	27.342	29.049	34.200	136.355
Iran	1.961	3.470	5.626	6.614	8.200	25.871
Iraq	468	459	376	645	1.321	3.269
GCC	1.477	2.209	2.773	3.173	4.360	13.992
Gulf	3.906	6.138	8.775	10.432	13.881	43.132
World	97.340	116.562	139.480	169.986	201.964	725.332

* Until 2007 Serbia and Montenegro

Source: FMI Direction of trade statistics yearbook 2008 & Quartely March 2010.

Table 2: Turkey Export (in mn. US \$)

Countries & areas	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2004-08
France	3.699	3.806	4.604	5.975	6.621	24.705
Greece	1.167	1.127	1.602	2.262	2.430	8.588
Italy	4.625	5.617	6.752	7.479	7.820	32.293
Portugal	395	396	563	551	541	2.446
Spain	2.617	3.011	3.721	4.580	4.047	17.976
Cyprus		6	12	8	11	37
Malta	98	279	227	621	956	2.181
Southern Europe	12.601	14.242	17.481	21.476	22.426	88.226
Albania	161	191	214	294	306	1.166
Bosnia	100	128	151	445	572	1.396
Croatia	118	168	214	356	329	1.185
Fyrom	149	162	173	272	296	1.052
Montenegro*	211	258	363	615	48	1.495
Serbia	---	---	---	---	458	458
Western Balkans	739	907	1.115	1.982	2.009	6.752
Algeria	806	807	1.021	1.232	1.614	5.480
Libya	337	384	489	644	1.074	2.928
Morocco	330	370	551	722	958	2.931
Tunisia	256	295	325	530	778	2.184
Maghreb	1.729	1.856	2.386	3.128	4.424	13.523
Egypt	473	687	709	903	1.426	4.198
Jordan	229	288	322	389	461	1.689
Israel	1.309	1.467	1.529	1.658	1.935	7.898
Lebanon	234	196	241	393	665	1.729
Syria	393	552	609	797	1.115	3.466
Near East	2.638	3.190	3.410	4.140	5.602	18.980
Mediterranean	17.707	20.195	24.392	30.726	34.461	127.481
Iran	810	913	1.066	1.387	2.030	6.206
Iraq	1.815	2.749	2.589	2.812	3.917	13.882
GCC	2.291	3.011	3.636	5.567	12.268	26.773
Gulf	4.916	6.673	7.291	9.766	18.215	46.861
World (Dots total)	62.989	73.451	85.492	107.113	132.313	461.358

* Until 2007 Serbia and Montenegro

Source: FMI Direction of trade statistics yearbook 2008 & Quartely March 2010.

Table 3: Italy Import (in mn. US \$)

Countries & areas	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2004-08
France	38.923	38.413	41.043	45.511	47.663	211.553
Greece	1.868	1.926	2.497	2.632	2.633	11.556
Portugal	1.658	1.720	1.992	2.029	2.010	9.409
Spain	16.554	16.391	18.864	21.440	21.851	95.100
Cyprus	30	70	65	87	185	437
Malta	184	250	251	229	365	1.279
Southern Europe	59.217	58.770	64.712	71.928	74.707	329.334
Turkey	4.941	5.426	6.788	7.328	8.286	32.769
Albania	422	439	518	631	708	2.718
Bosnia	366	420	466	558	658	2.468
Croatia	1.346	1.525	1.607	1.557	2.029	8.064
Fyrom	232	265	302	401	377	1.577
Montenegro*			224	217	183	624
Serbia					1.070	1.070
Western Balkans	2.366	2.649	3.117	3.364	5.025	16.521
Algeria	6.023	7.645	10.039	8.667	12.545	44.919
Libya	7.920	12.119	15.893	19.278	25.764	80.974
Morocco	581	616	680	856	906	3.639
Tunisia	2.427	2.310	2.646	3.364	3.445	14.192
Maghreb	16.951	22.690	29.258	32.165	42.660	143.724
Egypt	1.590	1.589	2.725	2.486	3.318	11.708
Jordan	25	29	37	36	84	211
Israel	1.121	1.079	1.246	1.325	1.720	6.491
Lebanon	25	29	30	40	52	176
Syria	927	1.139	891	1.279	1.191	5.427
Near East	3.688	3.865	4.929	5.166	6.365	24.013
Mediterranean	87.163	93.400	108.804	119.951	137.043	546.361
Iran	2.713	3.648	4.914	5.737	5.796	22.808
Iraq	1.005	2.017	2.791	4.068	5.836	15.717
GCC	4.131	5.863	5.903	5.773	7.388	29.058
Gulf	7.849	11.528	13.608	15.578	19.020	67.583
World (Dots Total)	355.285	384.682	442.579	504.827	556.328	2.243.701

* Until 2007 Serbia and Montenegro

Source: FMI Direction of trade statistics yearbook 2008 & Quartely March 2010.

Table 4: Italy Export (in mn. US \$)

Countries & areas	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2004-08
France	43.800	45.890	49.082	56.233	60.259	255.264
Greece	8.051	7.511	8.581	10.109	11.232	45.484
Portugal	4.249	4.127	4.679	4.670	5.186	22.911
Spain	25.789	27.977	30.761	36.309	35.431	156.267
Cyprus	805	910	1.058	1.107	1.582	5.462
Malta	889	853	1.112	1.112	1.716	5.682
Southern Europe	83.583	87.268	95.273	109.540	115.406	491.070
Turkey	7.062	7.644	8.509	9.891	11.126	44.232
Albania	726	758	848	1.121	1.367	4.820
Bosnia	503	578	545	708	930	3.264
Croatia	2.743	2.894	3.417	3.853	4.619	17.526
Fyrom	170	192	206	259	329	1.156
Montenegro*			177	208	308	693
Serbia					1.818	1.818
Western Balkans	4.142	4.422	5.193	6.149	9.371	29.277
Algeria	1.544	1.656	1.956	2.556	4.417	12.129
Libya	1.863	1.691	1.759	2.255	3.882	11.450
Morocco	1.176	1.253	1.443	1.994	2.499	8.365
Tunisia	2.602	3.025	3.262	4.001	4.355	17.245
Maghreb	7.185	7.625	8.420	10.806	15.153	49.189
Egypt	1.678	1.726	1.941	2.951	4.272	12.568
Jordan	400	404	468	554	627	2.453
Israel	1.667	1.913	2.055	2.464	2.720	10.819
Lebanon	946	974	973	1.004	1.140	5.037
Syria	687	840	835	1.290	1.525	5.177
Near East	5.378	5.857	6.272	8.263	10.284	36.054
Mediterranean	107.350	112.816	123.667	144.649	161.340	649.822
Iran	2.693	2.799	2.290	2.567	3.187	13.536
Iraq	250	362	163	131	299	1.205
GCC	6.053	6.915	9.687	14.308	16.809	53.772
Gulf	8.996	10.076	12.140	17.006	20.295	68.513
World (Dots total)	353.472	372.847	417.098	492.000	539.933	2.175.350

* Until 2007 Serbia and Montenegro

Source: FMI Direction of trade statistics yearbook 2008 & Quartely March 2010.

Endnotes

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Turkey in Italian Media: Between Islam and Europe

Margherita MARCELLINI* and Özgehan ŞENYUVA**

Abstract

The aim of this article is to examine the representation of Turkey in Italian newspapers. The questions that are investigated are: a) if the representation of Turkey in Italian newspapers is stereotyped and ill-informed; b) if there is a convergence among the political elites and the media on Turkey; and c) whether Islam is being inserted into the construction of the perception about Turkey by the Italian media.

This study argues that religion plays an important role in the Italian newspapers' construction of the Turkish image. Several studies about the effects of mass media on public opinion argue that a linear relationship exists between the quantity of media reports and the opinions of the population. Thus it is argued that Italian public opinion on Turkey is highly related to the media coverage and, most importantly, on how it is addressed. Plus, it is also argued that there are similarities between the media's agenda and the political agenda, with certain media outlets

reflecting and repeating the positions of related political parties. This study concludes that the representation of Turkey in Italian newspapers is limited in its informative content and Islam is a major component of its representation.

Key Words

Turkey, Italian media, public opinion, European Union, Islam.

Introduction

“*Cose turche!*” (“Turkish things!”) is an old Italian saying used to underline the weirdness of some actions or events. This is only one of the many proverbs that exist about Turks in Italy; there are numerous others, often with negative connotations. Some of them are full of peculiar references to Ottoman Turkey and to religious conflicts among Christianity and Islam, such as the reference to episodes of religious carelessness and blasphemous outrage as “*Bestemmiare come un turco*” (“To blaspheme as a Turk”) or “*mamma li Turchi!*” (“Oh mommy the Turks!”).¹

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But if in one hand the Turks were the enemies of Italians and, more importantly, of Christians, on the other hand they were also important economic partners. In fact, there were prosperous commercial exchanges among the republic of Venice and Genoa and the Ottoman Empire.² A lot has changed in the centuries, but the “like-dislike” dichotomy in Italy-Turkey relations is still present. Economically speaking, relations among these two countries are still prosperous; in fact Italy and Turkey cooperate on a range of projects and are partners in diverse subjects.³

The Italian government’s support for Turkey’s membership to the EU does not represent Italian society at large.

However, the opinion on Turkey and its membership to the EU is various and not homogeneous in Italy. The official position of the Italian government towards Turkey’s EU membership bid is a supportive one but there is also some resistance against Turkey.⁴ Furthermore, the reasons for support or opposition are different depending on the political affiliation of the parties: right-wing parties normally base their antagonism on religious, cultural and historical grounds while they support Turkey on strategic and economic fields; on the other side, left-wing parties do not make issues out of different and incompatible cultures and religions, but principally underline

the difficult situation of Turkey’s ethnic minorities and its poor human rights record. The population also seems to be confused about membership and about Turkey itself, more precisely there is a wide-spread lack of knowledge about the country, its bid for membership into the European Union and so on.

The Italian government’s support for Turkey’s membership to the EU does not represent Italian society at large. One may even identify the groups within the political elite, especially on the radical wings of the political spectrum. The *Lega Nord* (Northern League), which strongly opposes Turkey’s membership, especially on religious and cultural grounds, considers Turkey a clear threat, as the claim that:

it [Turkey’s membership to the EU] would make enter into the European Union a country that has about 70 million inhabitants who are Muslims and this would inevitably have a major impact on our cultural and religious identity. Furthermore, the lack of reference in the Treaty [the EU Constitutional Treaty] on European Union to the Christian roots (only as a vague reference in the Preamble) should force us to be vigilant, in order to avoid the risk of the Islamization of Europe.⁵

When different surveys on Italian public opinion are examined, it is observed that support for Turkey’s

membership is on the decline and that the Italian public is growing distant from Turkey generally. The issues of religion and identity appear as major determinants in shaping Italian public opinion, as Canan-Sokullu also argues in this volume.

Turkey's Bid for EU Membership and Italy

Consecutive Italian governments have been among the earliest and strongest supporters of Turkey's EU membership. The governments of both the centre left and the centre right have consistently advocated the EU's enlargement to include Turkey on the grounds that it makes sense commercially and would enhance Europe's standing in the world while giving the EU a more diverse identity.⁶ During his official visit to Turkey in November 2009, Italian President Giorgio Napolitano restated his support toward Turkey joining the European Union and the importance and richness this accession would represent for the EU. He stated that "The negotiations for membership should continue without obstruction or hesitation" because "Turkey is an added value for Europe".⁷ The argument that Turkey is a "bridge" between civilizations and cultures of the West and the East enjoys broad support in Italy, but Italian elites have presented Turkey's bridging role as equally important from an economic and strategic point of view. Italian governments of different political

orientations have all emphasized the role Turkey can play as an "energy hub" connecting mainland Europe to much needed energy sources in Central Asia and the Caspian basin.⁸ The centre-right parties particularly, especially those that are now in power, emphasize economic and strategic factors: they see Turkey's membership as a guarantee of Europe's continued strategic partnership with the US and NATO, and Turkey itself as an attractive market for trade and investment and a key economic partner for Italy.⁹

Italian political elites are not alone in their support. Italian economic stakeholders also support Turkey's EU accession process. In 2008, Italy was the third largest trading partner of Turkey, and, independent from Turkey's bid for EU membership, it always has been considered an important market for Italy.¹⁰ Italy's most powerful business families and groups have exerted pressure on the Italian government for greater openness towards the Turkish economy since the 1960s, being among the first to ask the European Communities to sign a customs union agreement with Turkey.¹¹

Despite the support of the Italian political elite for Turkey's membership, the place of Turkey in Italian minds is all but homogeneous. One has to keep in mind an old Italian proverb, "*Non son sempre rose e fiori*" ("it is not always roses and flowers"). Both at the political and economic level there are those who are skeptical about or directly against Turkey's joining the EU. Despite the fact

that Italian governments have always supported full membership on strategic and economic grounds, the Italian right has usually been against Turkey's entry into the EU, mainly on religious and historical grounds.¹² On the right of the Italian political spectrum, the following parties are extremely resolute against Turkish membership: the *Lega Nord* (Northern League) and *La Destra* (The Right). Both oppose Turkey's EU membership mainly on reasons of religion, identity, and "culture".¹³ *Lega Nord* is a regionalist and xenophobic party that has strongly opposed Turkey as a member of the

European Union and is campaigning strongly against Muslim immigration. Their communications often relate Turkish membership with

religion and Islam: "*L'Europa sia Cristiana. Il vero pericolo è la Turchia, vero cavallo di troia dell' "Islam"*" ("Europe must be Christian. The real danger is Turkey, the real Trojan horse of Islam").¹⁴ The motivation of its negative stance towards Turkey is clearly and self-admittedly a question of religion and identity: Turkey cannot be part of Europe because its state and society, however "secular on paper", are deeply imbued with Islamic culture, while Europe is "Christian".¹⁵ Listening to the party slogans, this becomes

immediately clear: "*Padania: Mitteleuropa con Germania, Austria e Sud Tirolo. Italia magrebina con Egitto e Turchia*" ("Padania: Mitteleuropa together with Austria, Germany and South Tyrol. Maghreb in Italy with Egypt and Turkey").¹⁶

The debates on Turkish membership and the opposing views have their toll on the overall support over the time. There is an erosion of warm feelings toward Turkey in the Italian elite opinion, with a 16 percentage point drop from 2004 to 2006.¹⁷ Furthermore, while Italian MPs were strongly positive (74%) on Turkish membership in 2004, Italian Members of

In 2008, Italy was the third largest trading partner of Turkey, and, independent from Turkey's bid for EU membership, it always has been considered an important market for Italy.

European Parliament approached the issue less optimistically (58%) in recent years (2006-2007).¹⁸ Nevertheless, regarding the reasons why Turkey's membership would be

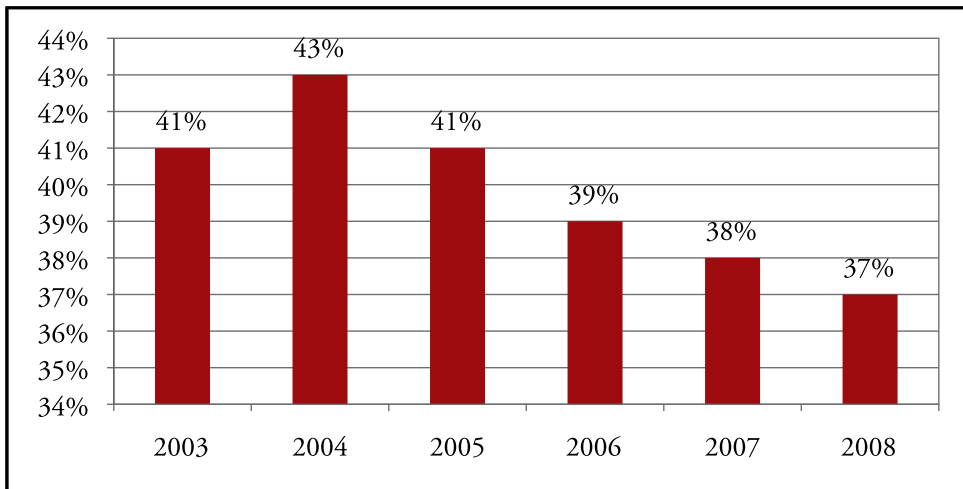
a good thing, the Italian elite considered that Turkish accession to the EU had a good prospect for "strengthening moderate Islam as a model in the Muslim world" (49%).¹⁹

There is an important fact that should be underlined here: not only is there a decrease in positive views towards Turkish membership to the EU inside the Italian elite opinion, but there is also a decrease in the positive opinion on Turkey itself.²⁰

The decrease in positive opinion on Turkey in last years has not been felt only among the Italian elite. The Italian public has also displayed a decrease in positive attitudes towards Turkey. This is clearly visible from the data collected by the Transatlantic Trends Surveys (TTS)

from 2003 to 2008. In this period the positive feelings towards Turkey among the Italian public declined from 43% in 2004 to 37% in 2008 (Figure 1). Furthermore, the “not so cold” category is also on the decline, meaning that there is a general turn from the positive to the negative.

Figure 1: Italy’s warm feelings toward Turkey (%)



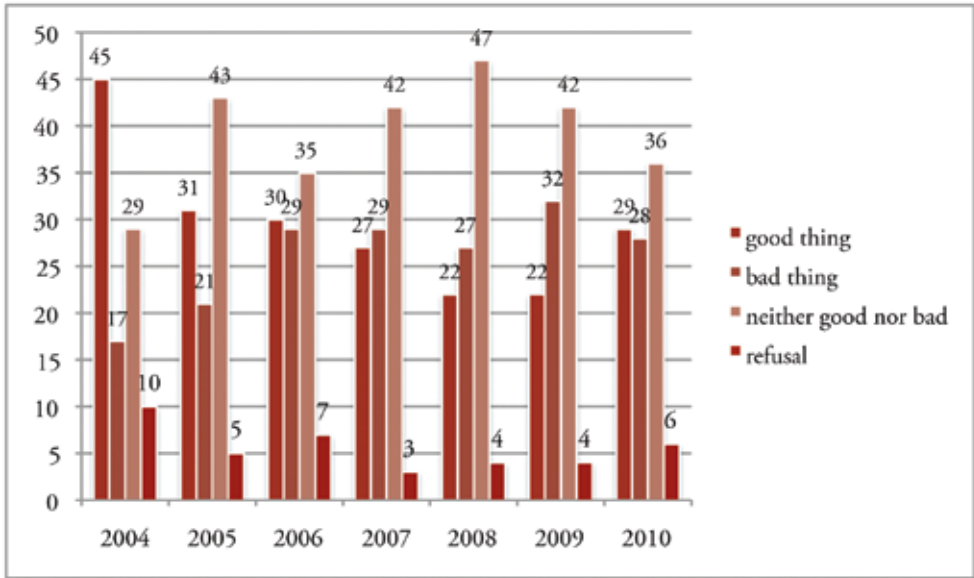
Sources: TTS 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008.

Question wording: Next I'd like you to rate your feelings toward some countries, institutions and people, with 100 meaning a very warm, favourable feeling, 0 meaning a very cold, unfavorable feeling, and 50 meaning not particularly warm or cold. You can use any number from 0 to 100. If you have no opinion or have never heard of that country or institution, please say so.

The Transatlantic Trends Survey also asks the respondents whether Turkey's EU accession would be a “good thing”, a “bad thing” or “neither/nor a good/bad

thing”. Over recent years, the support of the Italian public displayed on this matter too has declined, as can be seen in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Turkey’s membership perceived as... (%)



Sources: TTS 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010.

Question wording: Generally speaking, do you think that Turkey’s membership of the European Union would be a “good thing”, a “bad thing” or “neither/nor a good/bad thing”?

The highest category is “neither/nor a good/bad thing” almost every year, except for 2004 (29% in 2004, 43% in 2005, 35% in 2006, 42% in 2007, 47% in 2008, 42% in 2009, and 36% in 2010). In the same figure we can observe that there was a steady decrease in the “good thing” category starting in 2005 (45% in 2004, 31% in 2005, 30% in 2006, 27% in 2007, 22% in 2008, and 22% in 2009) while there was an increase in the “bad thing” category starting in the same year (17% in 2004, 21% in 2005, 29% in 2006, 29% in 2007, 27% in 2008, and 32% in 2009). This situation goes more or less unvaried until 2010 when

the first category increased a little bit (29%) and the second one decreased in the same way (28%).

When the respondents who stated that “Turkey’s membership would be a bad thing” were asked to give their reasons, we observe the effect of religion. The most popular reasons given were “Turkey’s democracy is still problematic” with 34% of responses, and “as a predominantly Muslim country, Turkey does not belong in the EU” with 32% of responses (Figure 3). It is remarkable to notice that these two principal reasons correspond with the general skeptical pattern towards Turkey in recent years.

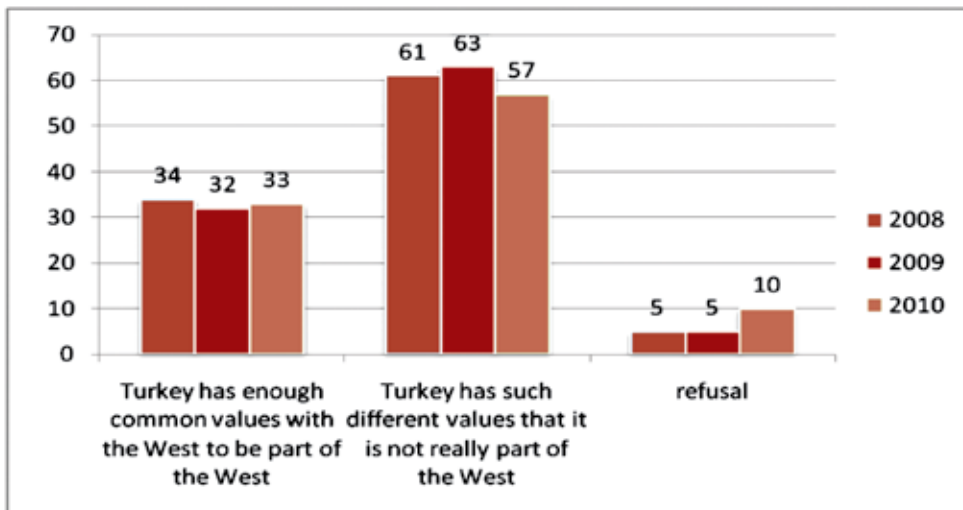
Figure 3: Turkish membership is a “bad thing” because of... (%)

	<i>Breakdown</i>
As a predominantly Muslim country, Turkey does not belong in the EU	32
It would drag the EU into the Middle East conflict	16
Turkey is [too poor or too populous] to be digested in a growing EU	5
It would make the running of the European Institutions more complicated	13
Turkey's democracy is still problematic	34
Total	100

Source: TTS 2004.

Since 2008 respondents were asked the following: “Some people say that Turkey has enough common values with the West to be part of the West. Other people say that Turkey has such different values that it is not really part of the

West. Which view is closer to your own?” The majority of Italians answered that “Turkey has such different values that it is not really part of the West” (61% in 2008, 63% in 2009, and 57% in 2010) (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Is Turkey part of the West or not? (%)

Sources: TTS 2008, 2009, 2010.

Question wording: Some people say that Turkey has enough common values with the west to be part of the West. Other people say that Turkey has such different values that it is not really part of the West. Which view is closer to your own?

The presence of radical right-wing parties in the current coalition government has also strengthened the negative perception of Turkey.

Opponents of Turkey's EU membership have often tended to phrase their arguments against Turkey's accession in terms of cultural identity. Christianity, for many, still appears to be an important component of "European identity", and so it follows that Islam continues to be seen as an important "Other". Turkey appears to be widely constructed at popular and media levels as Europe's "Other" regarding the older "Christendom" aspect of European identity and, by extension, to the "Enlightenment" values underlining the EU integration project, which are frequently seen as exclusive to "Christian civilization".²¹

A survey conducted by A. Pitasi, M. Marchionni and M.F. Massoni reveals that Italians feel threatened by what they see as people who have strong differently oriented cultural identity that is in opposition to the traditional, more familiar Italian one.²² Italians tend to consider their homeland as a safe shelter that they do not want to share with people of different cultures. Thus with the mass immigration of Muslims to the country, especially in the 1990s, many Italians began to fear for their traditions, culture and identity.²³ As McLaren argues, such fears may cause opposition to enlargement and to the EU.²⁴ In the results of the Pitasi *et al*

survey, a sizeable number of Italians appear to be rather optimistic and proud of their new European identity, even if they are uncertain what that identity precisely entails.²⁵ Uncertainty on what European identity is could also be influenced by the enlargement of the EU, accompanied by the practical need to reform its institutions and functioning mechanisms, which has accentuated the need to clarify the EU's objectives and identity. Increasing immigration into the EU and the consequent expansion of Islam in the region, especially in the course of the 1990s, has intensified this need further. This urgency to demarcate the EU's cultural identity along with its borders became even more manifest after the start of the accession negotiations with Turkey in 2005.²⁶

Recent scholarship suggests that a new religion-based cleavage has emerged in Europe in the post 9/11 era in the form of tensions between the Christian majorities and the Muslim minorities.²⁷ Thus, "common Christian roots" is one of the most discussed topics about the definition of a European cultural identity and a question mark on Turkey's EU accession.

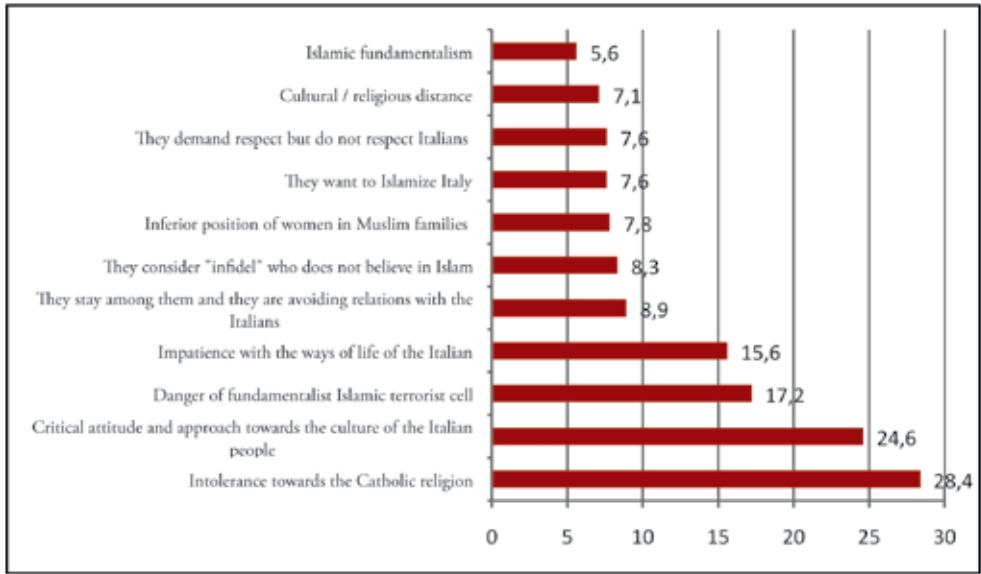
Italy's historically close relations with the Catholic Church and the presence of the Vatican on its soil have definitely marked the way in which Italian society relates to religious communities and has led to particular privileges for the Catholic Church. So, looking at the Italian situation, it is interesting to note how, during public debates on European

identity in the course of 2004, even atheist intellectuals joined with Cardinal Ratzinger (now Pope Benedict XVI) in the claim that Europe should reassert its “Christian roots”.²⁸ In fact, Christian public opinion is fairly strong in Italy and while this has not led to a large-scale “no Turkey in the EU” movement so far, it does include intellectual and political leaders who subscribe to a Christian interpretation of Europe’s political future, asserting that the EU’s borders should not extend to encompass Muslim Turkey.²⁹ Christianity is viewed not as a belief but as a cultural marker. Thus, for these actors, the accession to the EU of a country like Turkey with a Muslim population is seen as highly problematic.³⁰

The presence of radical right-wing parties in the current coalition government has also strengthened the negative perception of Turkey, related with their radical views on immigration. Immigration is perceived by the Italian public as a threat to their “survival” in a certain sense, especially regarding their jobs. Restrictive policies carried out by the current coalition (e.g., the Bossi–

Fini law which brings strict and harsh regulations on irregular immigrants) are justified by politicians and reported by the media as being matters of security for Italian citizens, thus creating a fear of immigrants. A big part of the migrant populations in Italy are coming from North African countries and most of them are Muslim and therefore Islam and immigration are linked in Italian minds and are approached with suspicion, especially after 9/11. Furthermore, research by the social observatory of the Italian Ministry of Interior on immigration conducted by Makno & Consulting shows some interesting results: The majority of Italians consider “Muslim immigration” as posing a greater risk to Italy than the immigration of other groups. In the same survey, at the top of the perceived problems that the Muslim immigration poses to Italians there are: “intolerance towards the Catholic religion” (28.4%), “critical attitude towards Italian culture and Italian people” (24.6%), and the “danger of terrorist attacks from fundamentalist Islamic cells” (17.2%) (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Potential threats posed by Islamic immigrants



Source: Reproduced from Ministero dell’Interno, Osservatorio Sociale sull’Immigrazione 2008.

According to the same survey, one out of three Italians opposes the construction of mosques in Italy not just because of the perceived link between sites of worship and terrorist activities, but simply as a matter of Catholic religion and culture.

It is on the issue of religion and culture that Christian public opinion plays a role, maybe further influenced by the debates over Turkish accession and the question of its cultural and religious belonging to Europe, especially after the start of accession negotiations in 2005. Moreover, we can also argue that the skeptical attitude of the Italian public towards Islam in general and Muslim immigrants in particular strengthens the spread of *Islamophobia*, which subsists in the severe form of “Islamist

fundamentalist threat” in the minds of “ordinary Italians” who link the political issue of Turkey’s membership to a cultural and religious dynamic.

Due to the fact that in the “negativity” of the dichotomy in Italian-Turkish relations religion plays a role, it can be argued that Islam influences the perception of Turkey that Italians have and also the image of Turkey portrayed by the media.

Italian Newspapers’ Role in the Construction of Turkey’s Image

Emiliano Alessandri and Sebastiano Sali criticize the information about

Turkey in the Italian media as being scarce and ill-informed, full of simplifications, deformations and manipulations, and influenced by the stereotypical views of Turkey, in which Turkey is principally and foremost referred to as a Muslim country.³¹ This linkage with Islam has negative consequences, as the image of Islam given by the media is not very positive either. As Bruno argues in the conclusion of his influential publication, *L'Islam immaginato: Rappresentazioni e stereotipi nei media italiani (Imagined Islam: Representations and Stereotypes in the Italian Media)*, the Italian media has an active role in the social construction of a stereotypical representation of Islam that tends to be superficial and alarmist, misleading the public that moderate Muslims are the minority compared with radical, fundamentalist violent factions.³² Thus, it helps to create a perceived threat of “Islam” and “Muslims”. This negative perception of Islam and Muslims and the spread of *Islamophobia* link the political issue of Turkey’s membership to EU to the cultural religious dynamics, and it seems that Turkey is not placed in such a good light in the minds of the Italians.

The skeptical attitude of the Italian public towards Islam in general and Muslim immigrants in particular strengthens the spread of *Islamophobia*.

In theory, newspapers enrich the symbolic legacy of the community by

giving multiple perspectives to readers, helping to undermine the information monopoly. This, in a sense, means giving the individual the opportunity to reflect on a given topic and then form an opinion on the facts. On these personal interpretations of the reader, Zaller argues that the acceptance or not of the messages coming from the media by the public depends on the individual, as individuals are less likely to accept messages that are inconsistent with their prior beliefs.³³ In the famous formulation of Walter Lippman, presented in his classic *Public Opinion*, “citizens in large societies are dependent on unseen and usually unknown others for most of their information about the larger world in which they live”.³⁴

The journalist is an opinion maker, a person who essentially is a character of culture, journalism, politics or show, who directly or indirectly leads the judgments and the choices of the public.³⁵ Therefore it may be argued that the news is never a “pure” representation on the facts. Together with that, the reader is subjected to “agenda-setting”, “which is the role of the media to influence the salience of topics of the public agenda by the selection and display, day-by-day, of the news in order to focus our attention and affect our perceptions of what the most important issues of the day are”.³⁶ Furthermore, it is remarkable to note another approach aimed at expanding the cognitive perspective of the agenda-setting, the “media priming”, which is the process by which the news media call

attention to some issues while ignoring others, thereby influencing the standard by which the public judges political figures and issues.³⁷ Thus, the information that reaches the public is never a full record of important events and developments in the world. It is, rather, a highly selective and stereotyped view of what has taken place.³⁸ Thus, the opinion of the Italian public on Turkey depends on how much this topic is covered by the media and, most important, how it is addressed.

So, in order to understand the image of Turkey given by the Italian media, the presence, interconnection and connotation of the use of religion will be analyzed within newspapers' articles. The question that will be investigated is whether Italian newspapers contribute to the construction of a religion-based perception of Turkey.

Methodology and Sampling

In order to get a more accurate picture of the image of Turkey given by Italian newspapers it is important to focus on three principal issues:

- a. **Quantity:** how many subjects, how many articles and of which subject category, how many words of this or that kind, etc.;
- b. **Quality:** which subjects and which words;
- c. **Politics:** ideological relations between the political elites and

newspapers that are reflected in the articles.

In the analysis of the selected articles on Turkey, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is employed. CDA's central assumption is that speakers make choices regarding vocabulary and grammar, and these choices are consciously or unconsciously principled and systematic, in other words ideologically biased.³⁹ Starting from Critical Linguistics (CL), which aims to show "how ideology and ideological processes are manifested as systems of linguistic characteristics and processes", CDA is "a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance and inequality are enacted, reproduced and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context".⁴⁰

For this research two newspapers that Audipress⁴¹ data shows as the most read newspapers in Italy, *La Repubblica* (with 3,250,000 readers, Audipress 2011/I) and *Il Corriere della Sera* (with 3,056,000 readers, Audipress 2011/I), were chosen. Secondly, political affiliation is still important in Italy because the position on the left-right political spectrum is a direct determinant of the attitudes toward Turkish membership. Therefore one leftist newspaper, *L'Unità*, and one rightist one, *Libero* were also included in the analysis. Lastly, due to the importance of economic relations between Italy and Turkey, the main Italian economic newspaper, *Il Sole 24 Ore*, was included in the analysis.

Furthermore, the research was based on the websites of the above mentioned newspapers because this new medium has special features that have transformed the work of journalists. In fact, beyond the innovations introduced in the style of writing, from a more “structural” point of view, there are elements of online journalism that has had major effects, among which the one that has the most relevance in this work is *interactivity*. Websites allow researchers to observe the audience feedbacks to the text (thus the impact that the text has on audience) when it is presented, for example with the readers’ comments related to the articles to be found in the website pages.

For time span two, periods of six months were chosen: from 1 July to 31 December 2005, and from 1 July to 31 December 2009. The first period covers the start of accession negotiations between the EU and Turkey, and the second period covers the high-level contacts between Italian and Turkish politicians, including the official state

visit to Turkey by the Italian president, as well as important events such as the signing of the Turkey-Armenia Protocols in October 2009, and the signing of economic accords for gas pipelines between Italy, Turkey and Russia.

Analysis

All the articles related to Turkey in the newspapers were collected for analysis for the periods selected. Second, a classification was done to separate the “articles directly related to Turkey” (A), from the “articles in which the word ‘Turkey’ just appears” (B). In the periods of time studied there are 276 articles on Turkey (A).

Later on, the articles were classified according to their subjects, which was determined from their headlines, and the presence of religion-related words were counted in order to define both on which fields more about Turkey has been written, and how much of that was linked to Islam.

Figure 6: Categories of Articles on Turkey

Subjects	Religion-related words
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Bombs and attacks</i> - <i>Turkey-EU</i> - <i>Avian influenza</i> - <i>H1N1 influenza</i> - <i>Turkish foreign relations</i> - <i>Society</i> (in which we grouped all the articles that in somehow show various aspects of Turkish society). - <i>Violence/human rights</i> (in which we grouped all the articles related to violent acts or to matters that in Turkey immediately involve violence or human rights, as for example the Kurdish question or the Orhan Pamuk court case). - <i>Turkey's economy</i> - <i>Gas pipeline</i> - <i>Others</i> (in which we grouped all the articles which subjects were not relevant for my research, such as movies, books, art, etc.). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Islam</i> - <i>Islamic</i> - <i>Muslim</i> - <i>Fundamentalist</i> - <i>Terrorist</i> - <i>Kamikaze</i> - <i>Al-Qaeda</i> - <i>Jihad</i> - <i>Jihadist</i> - <i>Fatwa</i>

La Repubblica

La Repubblica was founded on 14 January 1976 by Eugenio Scalfari. It is the most read newspaper in Italy with 3,250,000 readers and “it is - [as written in its presentation] - an information newspaper composed by people who belong to the vast arc of the Italian left”.⁴² It is owned by the Editorial Group *L'Espresso*. In 2005, when searching for the word “Turkey”, a total of 135 articles

were found, of which 30 were about Turkey, while in the other 105 “Turkey” just appeared as a word. Among the articles about Turkey, the majority were published in October (12), followed by August (8), July (6), September and November (2), and December (0). The newspaper’s section that contained the most number of stories on Turkey was “Foreign affairs” (13), followed by “News item” (7), “Culture” (6), “Sport” (3), “Others” (1), and “Politics”, “Economics” and “Opinion” (0).

In 2009, the total of the articles was 237, of which 34 were about Turkey and 203 just had the word appear. Of the 34 articles on Turkey, eight were written in September, seven in October and December, five in November, four in August and three in July. Again, “Foreign affairs” was the section with the most articles about Turkey (10), followed by “Economics” (9), “Culture” (8), “News item” (5), “Others” (2). The “Politics”, “Sport” and “Opinion” sections had no articles on Turkey at all.

Both in 2005 and 2009, the period in which there were more articles about Turkey was the one in which there had been major internationally important events, such as accession negotiations starting in October 2005 and the Turkey-Armenia Protocols in October 2009. Also, neither in 2005 nor in 2009 were there any editorials or opinion articles on Turkey.

As articles’ subjects and religion-related words are concerned, in 2005 it can be observed that the major number of articles were in the “Others” category (8) in which all the items about which there was just one article were grouped, followed by “Bombs and attacks” and “Society” (6), and “Turkey-EU” and “Avian Influenza” (5). Regarding religion-related words, the majority were found in the “Culture” section, and in decreasing order there were the following words: Islam (14), Muslim (12), Islamic (5), Fundamentalist and *Kamikaze* (4), and Al-Qaeda (1). Also in 2009 the largest number of articles were contained

in the “Others” category (14), followed by “Violence/human rights” (7), “Gas pipeline” and “Turkey’s economy” (4), “Turkey’s foreign relations” (3), and “Society” (2). There were only two religion-related words present, “Islamic” and “Muslim”, that both appeared four times.

Il Corriere della Sera

Il Corriere della Sera is the second most read Italian newspaper with 3,056,000 readers. It was established on March 5, 1876, exactly one century before *La Repubblica*. It was bought in 1974 by the publisher Rizzoli, which is today Rcs Editori Spa.⁴³ In searching the word “Turkey” in the newspaper’s website, in 2005 there were a total of 105 articles, of which only 22 were properly about Turkey (and 83 were just mentioning Turkey in a larger context). Among the ones regarding Turkey, the largest number of articles were posted in October (8), followed by July and September (5), August (2), and November and December (1); the section where Turkey was more present, as it was for *La Repubblica* as well, was the “Foreign affairs” section (15), followed by “News item” (3), “Others” and “Opinion” (2), and the other categories (“Politics”, “Economics” and “Sport”) did not have articles at all. In 2009, in a total of 148 articles, 44 were about Turkey, 10 of which (the ones in the “Others” category) were readers’ stories of trips to Turkey and not of journalists, and they provided

some interesting insights to have a look at the readers' interpretation of Turkey. So, also here, October was the month with the most articles (12), followed by August (10), July (9), September (7), November (4) and December (2). Regarding sections, the first was "News items" with 11 articles, and then "Others" (10), "Foreign affairs" (9), "Economics" (5), "Politics" (4), "Culture" and "Sport" (2), and "Opinion" (1).

As with *La Repubblica*, in *Il Corriere della Sera*, both in 2005 and in 2009, the largest number of articles appeared in the period in which there were major internationally important events, that is the month of October. In 2005, there were principally three subjects that were addressed by *Il Corriere della Sera* regarding Turkey, that first, with nine articles, was "Turkey-EU", followed by, with eight articles, "Bombs and attacks" and third "Avian Influenza" with three articles. In 2009 the largest category for number of articles was "Others" (10), followed by "Society" (7), "Violence/ human rights" and "Turkey's foreign relations" (5), "Gas pipeline" and "Influenza H1N1" (2), and "Turkey-EU" (1). For religion-related words, the most were in the "Foreign affairs" category, together with "Bombs and attacks" and "Turkey-EU" articles. Regarding religion-related words, the time that they were used the most was almost the same as in 2005 (27 in 2005 and 23 in 2009), but there was a minor variation.

Il Sole 24 Ore

Il Sole 24 Ore was established on November 9, 1965 with the union of two newspapers, *Sole* and *24 Ore*. It is produced by the publishing company *Il Sole 24 Ore*, which is controlled by *Confindustria* (the Italian employers' federation) and it is the major Italian economic newspaper.⁴⁴

In 2005, out a total of only 36 articles, just eight were about Turkey of which five were in the "Foreign affairs" section and three in "Economics". In 2009 the number of articles on Turkey increased a little bit from eight to 13 from a total of 37 articles found. The majority of the texts were in the "Foreign affairs" section (10) and surprisingly there were no articles in the "Economics" category. The articles in 2005 were equally distributed among the following subjects: "Turkey-EU", "Turkey's economy", "Gas pipeline" and "Others". Also only two religion-related words ("Islamic" and "Muslim") were present and in a small number (two and four respectively). Also in 2009 the articles were almost equally distributed among three subjects: "Turkey's foreign relations" (4), "Gas pipeline" (4) and "Others" (5). The same religion-related words of 2005 were present: "Islamic" (1) and "Muslim" (2).

L'Unita

L'Unità was founded on February 12, 1924 by Antonio Gramsci.⁴⁵ It was

originally the press branch of the PCI (Italian Communist Party), then of the PDS (Party of Leftist Democrats,) and then of the DS (Leftist Democrats). It is edited by L'Unità Publishing House, controlled by first the PCI and then the PDS.⁴⁶

In 2005 there were 141 articles containing the word “Turkey”, 112 had other subjects, while 29 were properly on Turkey. The number of articles each month was as follows: October (11), July (7), September (5), November (3), December (2), and August (2). The largest section that had articles was “Foreign affairs” (17), while “News item” had no articles and the other sections had between one and three articles (“Culture” and “Opinion” had three, “Politics” and “Sport” had two, and “Economics” and “Other” had one). In 2009, out of a total of 116 articles, there were 30 properly about Turkey of which the majority were contained in the “Foreign affairs” section with 11 articles (“News item” had six, “Culture” and “Economics” had four, “Politics” and “Sport” had two, “Others” had one and “Opinion” none). The most prolific month for articles was again October with 10 (eight in September, six in August, three in November, two in December and one in July). As it has also been seen with other newspapers, the largest number of articles, for both for 2005 and 2009, were published at times that coincided with major internationally important events, with, at least in 2005, a “bigger” production (only three) of editorials on Turkey. “Turkey-EU” (9)

was the subjects with the most articles in 2005, immediately followed by “Bombs and attacks” (7). The difference here is that the “Violence/human rights” (4) category was present in 2005, while in the above analyzed newspapers it appeared only in 2009. There was also a bigger presence of religion-related words (“Islam” (14), “Islamic” (22), “Muslim” (18), “Fundamentalist” (8), “Kamikaze” (11), “Terrorist” (2), “Al-Qaeda” (6), and a new entry, “Jihadist” (7)). In 2009, there were fewer religion-related words and in fewer number (“Islam” (2), “Muslim” (1), and “Fatwa” (3)). The number of subjects was fewer as well with the “Others” category at the top with 11 articles, followed by “Turkey’s foreign relations” (8), “Violence/human rights” (5), “Gas pipeline” (4), and “Society” (2).

Libero

Libero was founded on July 18, 2000 by Vittorio Feltri, former editor of *Il Giornale*, a centre-right Italian newspaper, and put itself politically in the liberal-democratic area; it is published by the Vittorio Feltri Editore & C.⁴⁷ Unfortunately, it has not been possible to analyze the second half of 2005 because the newspaper’s website archive starts from 2008.

In 2009, out a total of 197 articles, 66 were properly about Turkey and 131 were not. October was the most prolific month, with 19 articles being published, followed by December (16), November

(10), July and September (8), and August (5). As regarding the newspaper's sections, in the first place was "Foreign affairs" (36), followed by "Economics" (12), "Culture" (5), "Politics" and "News item" (4), "Others" (3), "Sport" (2), and "Opinion" with no articles at all.

In *Libero* in 2009 there was a large variety of subjects, however the majority of the articles were contained in the "Others" category (25), followed by "Violence/human rights" (12), "Turkey's economy" (7), "Turkey-EU" (6), "Turkey's foreign relations" (5), "Society" (4), and "Bombs and attack" and "Gas pipeline" (2). Also for religion-related words there was a larger variety and number in comparison to the other newspapers analyzed for the year 2009.

Quantitative and Qualitative Analysis

In terms of quantitative analysis, the following partial conclusions may be made. In all newspapers the number of "articles directly related to Turkey" was always smaller than the "articles in which the word 'Turkey' just appears". Both in 2005 and 2009, in all newspapers the majority of the articles were published in the months in which there had been internationally important events, such as the start of EU accession negotiations (3 October 2005) and the signing of the Turkey-Armenia Protocols (10 October 2009). In the majority of newspapers

in 2005 the categories of subjects most often written about were "Bomb attack", "Turkey-EU" and "Avian influenza", while there was an increase in the variety in 2009, which were more or less the same in all newspapers, except for *L'Unità* that presented the "Violence/human rights" category in 2005. The "Turkey-EU" subject was principally discussed in 2005, while in 2009 it has almost been "forgotten", except for in *Libero*. In all newspapers, except for *Libero*, the variety of religion-related words was more prolific in 2005, where also terrorism-related words were used; while in 2009 terrorism-related words almost disappeared, leaving generally to the use of "Islam", "Islamic" and "Muslim". In all newspapers, except for very few examples, there were no editorials or opinion articles. This can really influence the qualitative section of this research because there was not an "open" expression of the journalists' thoughts and so it would be more difficult to understand and analyze them.

Leftist newspapers tended to place more emphasis on the human rights issue.

Following the quantitative analysis, in line with the Critical Discourse Analysis, detailed qualitative analysis were conducted, looking under each subject category to analyze which subjects and which words were used in which context.

Some further conclusions can be drawn from the second reading and qualitative analysis. *Il Sole 24 Ore* did not satisfy the needs of this research because of the lack of articles about Turkey. The newspapers with leftist ideologies tended to report news in more detail. *Libero*, the right-oriented newspaper, had very short articles with very little information. *Il Corriere della Sera*, the most read newspaper without specific political affiliation, had even less detail and its news coverage lacked exhaustive information on Turkey. *La Repubblica*, the most read politically left-oriented newspaper, had a more detailed and exhaustive approach of addressing the various categories than the other two newspapers, at least in 2005. In 2009 its “style” changed and became more superficial and less detailed. *L’Unità*, a politically left-oriented newspaper, provided the most detailed and exhaustive information, especially for the “Turkey-EU” category.

In the “Turkey’s economy” category there was a general positive attitude towards Turkey, especially due to the opportunities that its market gives to Italian enterprises.

Leftist newspapers tended to place more emphasis on the human rights issue, with *Libero* focusing only on violence and *L’Unità* only on human rights. When human rights were concerned, all the newspapers presented a negative image

of Turkey, giving more or less the same message: the scarce improvement on this issue represents an obstacle to Turkey’s membership to the EU. The human rights issue is presented in all newspapers were especially concerned with freedom of expression (represented by the court case against the writer Orhan Pamuk) and the minority issue, particularly the Kurdish question, but also on the so-called Armenian genocide and, in *La Repubblica*, the Christian minority.

The articles under the “Turkey-EU” category in more or less all the newspapers represented the official view of the Italian, and also some European, elite, in that Turkey’s membership was seen as a good thing because it would constitute a bridge between Europe and the Muslim world. Openly or not, in all articles Turkey is referred to as a Muslim country and in their presentation, Islam played an important role in the Turkey’s EU membership process. In the “Bomb attack” and “Turkey-EU” categories, however for different reasons, more or less all the articles discussed the risk and fear of a rising of Islamic fundamentalism in Turkey. The opposite positions of the left-oriented *L’Unità* and the right-oriented *Libero* on Islam are noteworthy. *Libero* referred to Islam in general from a point of view of suspicion, linking it several times to fundamentalism. *L’Unità*, especially in the “Turkey-EU” category, addressed this issue from a different point of view, in line with the Italian political left, in which religious difference is not considered a problem but in some ways a value. However *L’Unità* too principally

referred to Turkey as a Muslim country, but also as a European and secular country as well because, in their opinion, the real obstacle to Turkish membership is not religion, but lack of full respect of human rights. In short, *L'Unità* did not to present Islam and EU membership as mutually exclusive. Other newspapers gave confusing messages, feeding to an alarmist perception of Islam, linking it with terrorism and immigration while often underlining the fact that Turkey is a predominantly Muslim country.

In the “Turkey’s economy” category there was a general positive attitude towards Turkey, especially due to the opportunities that its market gives to Italian enterprises. All the newspapers were more exhaustive and interested in Turkey in 2005 than 2009. At least one time per newspaper, the presence of a stereotyped, Orientalist vision of Turkey was present, even though in different contexts.

Conclusion

Three principal issues were addressed in this article: a) the lack of information that newspapers give about Turkey, b) the image of Turkey portrayed, and c) the weight of Islam in this portrayed image.

Starting with the first point, it is argued that Italian newspapers principally give scarce and sometimes ill-informed and stereotyped information about Turkey. In fact, in all newspapers the number of “articles directly related

to Turkey” is always lower than the “articles in which the word ‘Turkey’ just appears”. Plus, both in 2005 and 2009, the majority of the articles were published in the months in which there were internationally important events, such as the start of EU accession negotiations, the signing of the Turkey-Armenia Protocols, or the signing of the South Stream gas pipeline agreement, while in the other months the number of articles was lower. It may be concluded that for Italian newspapers, Turkey is under the spotlight only when there is something internationally important on the table rather than there being an ongoing debate on Turkey and its membership. To illustrate this case, the “Turkey-EU” issue was discussed only in 2005, in relation to the start of the EU accession negotiation, while in 2009 this issue had been totally “forgotten”. Plus, there were almost no opinion articles on Turkey, just short news pieces that had little information and were without any details, except for in *L'Unità*, as it seemed more dedicated to Turkey, and in *La Repubblica*, but only in 2005, because in 2009 it became more similar to the other newspapers’ “quick” style.

The reasons for support or opposition were different depending on the political affiliation of the parties.

One may also argue that there was a convergence of the political agenda

and the media. On several occasions, the image of Turkey in the articles reflected the vision and position of the different political groups. At the elite level, Italy officially supports Turkey's membership of the EU, arguing that "it would strengthen moderate Islam as a model in the Muslim World, it would increase EU influence in the neighboring regions, it would be a bridge among cultures and civilizations, and it would be a new energy hub for Europe (gas pipeline)". Almost identical messages were to be found in the few articles that dealt directly with Turkey's bid for EU membership.

The reasons for support or opposition were different depending on the political affiliation of the parties: right-wing parties normally base their antagonism on mainly religious, cultural and historical grounds, while support Turkey for strategic and economic reasons. On the other hand, left-wing parties do not make an issue of different and incompatible cultures and religions but principally underline the difficult situation of Turkey's ethnic minorities and its poor human rights record.

The analysis of newspaper coverage displayed a very similar, if not identical, presentation of Turkey. In fact, we see leftist newspapers tending to report in more detail and place more emphasis on the human rights issue. Turkey is referred

to as a Muslim country, openly or not, in all newspapers and in all articles, and it is argued that Islam plays an important role in the Turkey's EU membership process. In fact, in connection with the start of negotiation process, more than one newspaper reported the "fear" on part of the political elite by which a refusal to Turkey's membership would expose it to a possible rise of Islamic fundamentalism. The opposite positions of the left-oriented *L'Unità* and the right-oriented *Libero* on Islam are quite interesting. *Libero* referred to Islam principally suspiciously, linking it several times to fundamentalism. While *L'Unità*, especially in the "Turkey-EU" category, saw Islam in some way as a value and, while it referred to Turkey as a Muslim country, it also referred to it as a European and secular country. Finally, the positive evaluation of

Turkey is referred to as a Muslim country, openly or not, in all newspapers and in all articles, and it is argued that Islam plays an important role in Turkey's EU membership process.

Turkey by the Italian elite on its economic performance and increased geopolitical activism was seen in newspapers too. Especially the opportunities provided by Turkey's positive market conditions and growth rate to Italian enterprises were emphasized repeatedly.

Regarding the impact of newspapers on readers, it is difficult to determine as there are few readers' comments on the various articles, except for in *Il Corriere della Sera*. This newspaper presented some articles written by readers telling of their trips to Turkey. When these few

articles were analyzed, it was clear that Islam played a big role in the perception of Turkey in readers' minds. In fact, in the travelogues, which principally covered Istanbul, Ephesus and Cappadocia, but also included one on eastern Turkey, there was a mystical perception of Turkey oscillating between West and East. It becomes clear from these texts that the travelers were fascinated by Turkey, in which they found the atmosphere of the Orient. In fact, in almost all these readers' articles there was a strong distinguishing element of constructing an "Us versus Them" narrative in the form of religion, with constant references to mosques and muezzins' call for prayer, women hidden behind secretive veils, and palaces and harems.

The link between Islam and Turkey in Italians' mind also becomes clear in the comments left to the websites following an article dated 17 November 2009, covering the official visit of Italian President Giorgio Napolitano to Turkey. In the article, the supportive statement of President Napolitano on Turkish membership indicating that "Turkey is an added value for Europe" was reported. The readers that took the time to leave their comments to this article were rather negative on Turkey. In fact, out of a total of 12 comments, 10 are very negative and against Turkey in the European Union, basically because of religion. Furthermore, they are really

stereotyped and ill-informed, referring to Turkey as a country in which covered women are killed like flies because they are inferior, some parties have theocratic aspirations and the death penalty was still present (although it was abolished in 2004). The remaining two comments, although they are not completely pro-Turkey, show more concrete knowledge of the country, trying to correct the erroneous information given in the negative comments that presented a Turkey that is far away from the reality.

The results of this research are even more important if one considers that in Italy the newspapers constitute the more diverse source of information compared to Italian TV networks, of which three major groups control 92% of the market share.⁴⁸

In conclusion, it may be argued that the initial expectations were met. The analyzed newspapers give a stereotyped, scarce and ill-informed vision of Turkey, and moreover they represent and reproduce the opinions about Turkey shared by the different Italian political elites. As a consequence, the public is influenced by these factors and, together with the erroneous and alarmist information given by the media about Islam, it is easier to understand the rise of an *Islamophobia* that created a negative perception among the Italian public not just about Turkey itself, but also about its membership in the EU.

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Italian Public Opinion on Turkey's EU Accession: Utilitarian Calculations, Identitarian Evaluations or Perceived Threats?

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Abstract

This article provides an in- depth analysis of Italian citizens' attitudes towards Turkey's accession to the European Union (EU). It identifies opinion patterns in Italy concerning Turkey and key determinants of variation in popular support for Turkey's possible membership of the EU. This article first analyzes whether the Italian public adopts a utilitarian approach in calculating the perceived costs and benefits of EU enlargement with Turkey. Second, turning to identity- related determinants, it examines whether Italians consider Turkey's cultural, religious and universal values to be compatible with those of the EU and Italy. Third, in terms of threat- based determinants, it examines whether Turcoscepticism in Italy is based on the fear of an influx of Turks into Europe, both from realistic and symbolic threat perspectives. This article contributes to the burgeoning literature on public opinion by testing how these competing theories help explain attitudes of Italian citizens in the 2000s toward Turkey's possible EU accession. Through binary logistic regression analysis of Eurobarometer survey data (2000-2008), the article concludes that pragmatist sociotropic utilitarian considerations, in concert with mutual comprehension of values based on

'we- feeling' and perceived symbolic threat of loss of identity and culture, have significant effects on Italian public opinion concerning Turkey's protracted EU membership bid.

Key Words

Italy, public opinion, Turkey- EU relations, utilitarian theory, identity theory, threat perception, binary logistic regression.

Introduction

Turkish- Italian relations, which date back to at least the 14th century, have been fairly friendly and cordial at the political and diplomatic levels and have rarely suffered from tensions. Especially during the Cold War, bilateral dialogue was punctuated by commitments of both countries for further economic and political cooperation. As Alessandri and Canan argued, “[i]n the European context, Italy has traditionally been one of the most enthusiastic supporters of Turkey's EU membership...Italy has been one of the earliest and most committed supporters of Turkey's accession.”¹ Although Italian economic stakeholders

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strongly support Turkey's accession, a certain level of resistance exists at the political level among political parties, and supporters from the Communist to regionalist parties have mixed and differing motivations for resistance, including religion, identity, and the Kurdish question. The regionalist and Eurosceptic Northern League's remarkable electoral victory in 2008 showed that Italy's traditionally positive attitude towards Turkey's entry into the European Union (EU) is likely to reverse in the foreseeable future. This observation introduces the need to account for the determinants and trends of Italian public opinion on the debate over Turkey's EU accession.

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Italian public opinion has been studied through the Eurobarometer (EB) surveys since the first inception of the systematic surveys in 1974. The earliest EB surveys provided thematic coverage of European citizens' priorities in the six member states about issues such as the Common Market (EB No: 3, 1975), the then upcoming European Parliament elections in 1979, and the institutional formulation of the European Community (EC). In comparison with

more immediate concerns, like the EC's social policies, regional development differences or the common fight against inflation, Turkey's relations with the EC have appeared neither on the political nor the public agenda. Even after the third enlargement of the EC in 1986, when Turkey applied for full EC membership (1987), Europeans (including the Italians) still did not see the possibility of a new state joining the EC as a crucial issue. Instead, driven mainly by utilitarian motivations, Europeans (as well as Italians) were frustrated more by the relative costs and benefits of membership for their own country.

After Turkey applied for full membership, only 3% of Italians supported Turkey's admission (EB No: 30). However, only one out of four Italians considered the "expansion of the EC Turkey" to be "a very important problem." At the same time, Italians were among the more Turcosceptic Europeans and in 1988 they were more supportive of EC enlargement with countries such as Malta and Cyprus rather than Turkey (EB No: 37).² By 1992, while EU citizens overall were divided against Turkey's accession (41% for versus 42% against), Italians were more Turcosceptic with 44% against Turkey's accession (EB No: 38). That is, Italy was in general not among those European countries favouring EU enlargement.

At the outset of the 21st century, Turkish- EU relations became more politically positive, which was also followed by a positive opinion climate.

The European Council adopted the EU-Turkey Accession Partnership in 2001, which provided a road map for Turkey's EU accession process. Later, at the Copenhagen Summit (2001), the European Council decided to increase EU financial support through the pre-accession instrument. This positive political mood was matched by a four point increase in public support in Italy (to 34%). However, there was also a one point increase in opposition to Turkish accession (to 46%, EB No: 56).

Italy has traditionally been one of the most enthusiastic supporters of Turkey's EU membership.

The 2002 Copenhagen Summit decided that accession negotiations with Turkey would be opened if, by December 2004, the European Council decided that Turkey could meet the Copenhagen political criteria. The lack of a predetermined membership date for Turkey, however, rekindled the debate over its accession. In Italy, this was reflected in a mood of increased Turcoscepticism at the mass public level (with 31% support versus 48% opposition, EB No: 57). Until the EU's historical enlargement in the east in 2004, Italian support for enlargement had remained *stable* with Turkey having the least support of any applicant country. That is, although the European Council decided to open membership talks with Turkey, by 2005, Italian public opinion did not support Turkey's accession (EB No: 63).

Although a significant proportion of Italians accepted that Turkey forms a part of European geography and to lesser extent of European history (54% and 45% respectively), 56% of Italians nevertheless believed there were significant cultural differences between Turkey and the EU. For Italians, the human rights issue was another problem, with 73% believing that Turkey should respect human rights (EB No: 63). Italy has thus become one of the EU member states in which public opinion generally favoured EU enlargement, yet remained rather sceptical regarding Turkish EU membership, with only 39% approving in 2006 (*Special Eurobarometer 255 Report on Attitudes towards European Union Enlargement*).

This brief insight into Italian public opinion on Turkey's EU accession introduces the need for an in-depth analysis of the determinants of public opinion to create a constructive and focused discussion of EU-Turkey relations. This article examines the key determinants of Turcosceptic and Turco-enthusiast attitudes. The rationale that inspired this study is two-fold. Firstly, a number of academic studies have demonstrated the importance and relevance of studying public opinion on EU enlargement, and there is no doubt that understanding the nature and determinants of public opinion are essential to future Turkey-EU relations. As Canan-Sokullu and Kentmen argued, "Turcosceptic citizens might halt Turkey's accession to the EU by voting against it

in referenda or by electing Turcosceptic policy-makers at national and the European levels who would work against Turkey".³ Yet, research into Italian public opinion regarding enlargement and Turkey's accession is rather scarce.⁴ Secondly, as well as its normative imperative, this study is motivated by the need to generate empirical evidence about the dynamics of public attitudes toward candidate countries. As the issue of Turkey's EU membership climbs higher in the public agenda, and as the public's attitude is contingent on a complex set of factors rather than a single one, a multidimensional approach is needed. Therefore, it is timely to investigate whether Italians evaluate Turkey's EU membership bid in terms of the economic utility of enlargement for Italy and Italians, or in terms of identitarian perceptions, or in terms of fears about Turkey prevalent at a public level.

Italy has become one of the EU member states in which public opinion generally favoured EU enlargement, yet remained rather sceptical regarding Turkish EU membership.

In what follows, I first analyze whether the Italian public adopts a utilitarian approach in calculating the perceived costs and benefits of EU enlargement with Turkey. Do utilitarian calculations of egocentric or sociotropic costs and benefits in a wide range of

considerations affect Italian public opinion on Turkey's EU membership? Second, turning to identity-related explanations, I ask whether Italians consider Turkey's cultural and religious values to be compatible with those of the EU. To what extent do Italians feel that Christian values and principles, and shared European norms, such as belief in democracy, the rule of law and protection of and respect for human and minority rights, are shared with Muslim Turkey's values? Third, borrowing from threat-based explanations on EU enlargement, I examine whether Turcoscepticism is based on the fear of an influx of Turks into Europe, from both realistic and symbolic perspectives. To this end, I provide a theoretical overview of public opinion on EU enlargement in the first section. Following the methodological map, through binary logistic regression analysis of Eurobarometer surveys (2000-2008), I examine the determinants of Italian public opinion on Turkey's EU membership.

Theoretical Overview of Public Opinion on EU Enlargement

There is an extensive literature on the determinants of public support for the EU. This article concentrates on two main sets of theories on public opinion-utilitarian- and identity-based theories-while also developing a threat perception approach with specific reference to realistic and symbolic threats.

Utilitarian Theories: Sociotropic and Egocentric Calculations

Scholars have long debated whether utilitarian calculations are important determinants of public opinion about the EU.⁵ Utilitarian theories assume that individuals are rational actors who calculate costs and benefits when they make decisions. Among different alternatives, they choose the most advantageous option while rejecting the least beneficial ones. According to the utilitarian model of public opinion, there are two levels of calculations, namely the sociotropic and egocentric level of utilitarianism.

On the macro-economic level, sociotropic utilitarianism suggests that citizens' attitudes toward the EU and enlargement are based on how supranational economic policies at the EU level affect national economic conditions, such as inflation and unemployment rates, in the country.⁶ It assumes that if EU integration and further enlargement engender costs on member state economies, individuals tend to oppose integration. Considering the impacts of EU enlargement at the national economic level, sociotropic utilitarian theory argues that if the economic benefits of enlargement exceed the costs, individuals tend to support EU enlargement. Given that objective evaluations of macro-economic impacts increase support for European integration, I examine the role of three different

indicators of sociotropic utilitarianism on public opinion on Turkey: *macro-economic costs of enlargement on European and member state economies (Hypothesis 1)*; *compatibility between the levels of economic development of the candidate country and the EU (Hypothesis 2)*; and *financial benefits of enlargement for member states (Hypothesis 3)*.

At the micro level, egocentric utilitarianism concentrates on calculations of personal economic and financial costs and benefits as a determinant of support for enlargement. It claims that if individuals' economic and financial situations get better as a result of integration, then they tend to support integration. The personal economic utility of integration depends on an individual's human capital, which is closely related to their having the occupational skills to take advantage of free movement in the EU and of the internal market. Low-skilled individuals who are worse off in the internal market as a result of integration tend to develop negative views on the EU.⁷ Economic integration encourages production to migrate to locations with the cheapest labour, leaving local labour jobless if it is more costly.⁸ Therefore, unskilled workers develop negative attitudes towards further enlargement because it will either lower their own wages or risk them losing their jobs. In contrast with unskilled workers' negative approach to enlargement, skilled labour in the EU should support it because the new member state may also import skill-intensive goods and services from skill-abundant Western European

states. Concentrating on egocentric utilitarianism, I examine *the impact of the level of occupational skills of Europeans on the level of support for Turkey's membership in EU (Hypothesis 4)*.

Identity-Based Theories

Identity-based theories argue that utilitarian theories are simplistic because they assume that people are motivated primarily by economic incentives. Identity studies concentrate on how identities and values affect individual attitudes.⁹ Their main argument is that people tend to develop social identities and make distinctions between their group ('in-group') and outsiders ('out-group') on the basis of shared characteristics, such as cultural, geographical and historical traits, and 'we-feeling'. Individuals develop favourable feelings towards their in-group and maintain beliefs about in-group supremacy.¹⁰ Studies suggest that due to a sense of 'we-feeling' individuals tend to preserve inter-group distinctiveness, and develop scepticism and hostility towards outsiders.¹¹ Europeans might view those who do not share the common traits of European culture as 'others'.¹² Thus, such an identity should lead to increased protection of the in-group and favourable attitudes toward group members that share some common traits while rejecting the 'others'.¹³ On the issue of enlargement, I predict that *the perceived vicinity to Turkey according to cultural, geographical or historical commonalities determines the*

level of attitudes towards Turkey's inclusion in the EU (Hypothesis 5).

The other strand of identity theory suggests that Europeans share common values based on liberal democracy and respect for universal and human rights. Such values create a bond among EU citizens and differentiate them from other parts of the world. Scholars suggest that Europeans do not view Turkey as European since it does not have a consolidated democracy, it did not experience the Renaissance or reformist movements at the same time as Western Europe, and it has a problematic record of human rights.¹⁴ Regarding democracy, this may be a misperception, given that, as Casanova puts it, "Muslim democracy is as possible and viable today in Turkey as Christian democracy was half a century ago in Western Europe".¹⁵ On this issue of how rights-based European identities affect individuals' attitudes concerning Turkey's accession to the EU, I examine *if a candidate country meets European criteria regarding rights and democracy then public opinion becomes more pro-enlargement (Hypothesis 6)*.

Identity-based debates on rights and democracy also relate to the impact of religious identities on individual political attitudes. Scholars claim that the norms and values attached to religious identities provide heuristics for understanding politics and developing preferences.¹⁶ According to Casanova, the issue of Europe's cultural and religious identity, and the prospect of Turkey's joining the EU, have caused increasing unease

among Europeans, Christian and 'post-Christian' alike.¹⁷ In the context of EU integration, Huntington asserts that "the identification of Europe with Western Christendom provides a clear criterion for the admission of new members to the western organizations".¹⁸ From a viewpoint of compatibility between religion and rights, Alessandri and Canan argue that "[t]he contested nature of Islam and democracy in Europe among the public inextricably relates to the EU membership of Turkey- a predominantly Muslim but secular state founded on democratic values and principles".¹⁹ In light of this debate, I examine *if religious identities affect public opinion on predominantly Muslim Turkey's EU membership (Hypothesis 7)*.

Fears and Threat Perceptions

A number of researchers have taken a comprehensive threat-based approach to the problem of EU enlargement.²⁰ Matonyte and Morkevicius, for example, argue that historically the EU was created "to avoid internal and external threats that Europe faced".²¹ Because the EU evolved as a socio-cultural agent, with its supranational institutions and European polity, a social constructivist meaning of threats gained importance.²² However, as Kirchner and Sperling claim, there is neither a satisfactory typology of the threats confronting Europe nor a conceptual consensus on the content, form or agents of the threats posed.²³ I therefore aim to develop an immigration-related threat perception approach to

public opinion on EU enlargement by borrowing certain assumptions from utilitarian and identity-related theories.

Firstly, in the context of EU enlargement, immigration poses a perceived egocentric threat to an individual's pocket economy. As economic integration moves production to member states with cheap unskilled labour, foreigners and immigrants are perceived to be stealing jobs from the host country citizens.²⁴ McLaren describes these perceived threats of competing with foreigners for jobs available in the home country as 'realistic threats'.²⁵ "Members of the dominant group", McLaren argues, "may come to feel that certain resources belong to them, and when those resources are threatened by a minority group, members of the dominant group are likely to react with hostility".²⁶ Furthermore, as a result of Europe's aging population and low birth rate, competition in job markets with young immigrant labour is likely to be another future source of perceived challenge to Europeans.²⁷ Thus, we can expect Europeans (especially unskilled workers) to be against enlargement since (as they might believe) it will result in an influx of (probably cheaper and younger) foreign workers into Europe. I, therefore, examine *the role of perceived realistic threat of immigrants from EU enlargement with Turkey (Hypothesis 8)*.

Secondly, immigration also raises certain perceived threats to identity, considering people's tendency to distinguish between 'self' and

‘other’.²⁸ McLaren conceptualizes this ‘identitarian’²⁹ threat as a ‘symbolic threat’: the fear that others will change the domestic culture.³⁰ As Canan-Sokullu and Kentmen argue, “[t]he identity-centric public opinion research focuses on attitudes concerning political incorporation and social visibility of out-group- the ‘immigrants’- with reference to protection of shared in-group identity and xenophobia”.³¹ Scholars expect individuals who favour in-group protection to be less supportive of immigration into Europe as a result of enlargement because immigrants who have different morals, values, beliefs and attitudes than their own majority group pose a significant perceived ‘symbolic’ threat to the collective (national/ European) identity.³² As well, for Buzan, immigration threatens ‘communal identity and culture’ by changing the ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic characteristics of the population.³³ Thus, the out-group is seen as a symbolic threat to the ‘self’.³⁴ Following on from McLaren’s argument that “threats are likely to be at play in explaining extreme anti-immigrant hostility in Europe”,³⁵ I examine the impact of *the fear that Turkish immigrants pose a threat to the in-group identity on the popular debate on Turkey’s EU membership bid (Hypothesis 9)*.

Methodology

To explore Italian public attitudes towards Turkey’s EU membership bid, I utilized the pooled data from the

following Eurobarometer (EB) surveys: EB53 (April-May 2000), EB54.1 (November-December 2000), EB58.1 (October-November 2002), EB63.4 (May-June 2005), EB66.1 (September-October 2006), and EB69.2 (March-May 2008). These surveys explicitly covered the indicators that enable me to carry out empirical analysis of the three theories discussed earlier and to operationalise my dependent, independent and control variables.

The dependent variable in the analysis is ‘public opinion on Turkey’s EU membership’. To operationalise it, I used the following EB question: “For each of the following countries, would you be in favour of or against it becoming part of the European Union? Turkey” (Appendix I). The binary response to the dependent variable was whether individuals were ‘in favour of’ (y=1) or ‘against’ (y=0) Turkey’s EU membership.

I constructed six logit models. Since the EB surveys did not systematically incorporate identical questions and indicators in every round and even addressed some of them only once, each model gauged the different annual impacts of utilitarian calculations, identitarian evaluations, and threat perception. All models included the same control variables: age, gender and ideological self-placement.³⁶ Measurement of each independent and control variable is explained in Appendix I. Descriptive statistics for the variables used in the analysis are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Variables in the Analysis

Variable	Model EB53 (2000)		Model EB54.1 (2000)		Model EB58.1 (2002)		Model EB63.4 (2005)		Model EB66.1 (2006)		Model EB69.2 (2008)	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Turkey's membership 'in favour'	.325	.468	.329	.470	.323	.467	.321	.467	.258	.438	.251	.434
Turkey's membership 'against'	.456	.498	.491	.500	.484	.499	.526	.499	.595	.491	.581	.493
No costs for Italy	^a	^a	.782	.412	.305	.460	^a	^a	^a	^a	^a	^a
Compatible economic development	^a	^a	^a	^a	^a	^a	.728	.445	.756	.429	^a	^a
Less financial aid to Member States	^a	^a	.365	.481	.404	.491	^a	^a	^a	^a	^a	^a
Self-employed	.125	.330	.132	.339	.136	.343	.160	.367	.135	.342	.156	.363
Managers	.068	.251	.064	.246	.064	.245	.051	.221	.057	.233	.061	.240
Other white collars	.131	.337	.133	.340	.132	.338	.174	.379	.191	.393	.223	.416
Manual workers	.105	.306	.140	.348	.129	.335	.163	.369	.159	.365	.163	.369
House persons	.123	.328	.107	.309	.114	.318	.158	.365	.194	.396	.141	.349
Unemployed	.064	.244	.043	.202	.027	.164	.048	.198	.037	.190	.034	.181
Retired	.256	.436	.244	.429	.259	.438	.140	.347	.144	.311	.154	.361
Mutual comprehension of values	^a	^a	^a	^a	^a	^a	.389	.487	^a	^a	^a	^a
Turkey part of European geography	^a	^a	^a	^a	^a	^a	.531	.499	.562	.496	^a	^a
Turkey part of European history	^a	^a	^a	^a	^a	^a	.443	.497	.422	.496	^a	^a
Respect for human rights and democracy	.965	.183	^a	^a	^a	^a	^a	^a	^a	^a	^a	^a
Democracy best represents the EU	^a	^a	^a	^a	^a	^a	^a	^a	.294	.455	.238	.426
Religion best represents the EU	^a	^a	^a	^a	^a	^a	^a	^a	.031	.175	.023	.151
Religiosity: Strong	^a	^a	^a	^a	^a	^a	.316	.465	.284	.451	^a	^a
Religiosity: Weak	^a	^a	^a	^a	^a	^a	.360	.480	.389	.487	^a	^a
Transfer of jobs to countries with lower costs	^a	^a	.485	.500	^a	^a	.712	.452	^a	^a	^a	^a
Risk of immigration to the EU	^a	^a	^a	^a	^a	^a	.571	.495	.610	.487	^a	^a
Loss of identity and culture	^a	^a	.381	.485	^a	^a	.348	.476	^a	^a	^a	^a
Significant cultural differences	^a	^a	^a	^a	^a	^a	.567	.495	.644	.479	^a	^a
Immigrants from Muslim countries: Not accepted	.092	.289	^a	^a	^a	^a	^a	^a	^a	^a	^a	^a
Immigrants from Muslim countries: Accepted	.302	.459	^a	^a	^a	^a	^a	^a	^a	^a	^a	^a
Left	.229	.420	.252	.434	.276	.447	.287	.452	.245	.430	.279	.449
Right	.204	.403	.185	.388	.196	.397	.188	.391	.229	.420	.209	.407
Male	.478	.499	.487	.500	.468	.499	.396	.483	.357	.479	.458	.498
15-24 years	.182	.386	.141	.349	.151	.358	.127	.333	.107	.309	.089	.284
25-39 years	.274	.446	.286	.453	.279	.448	.369	.482	.326	.469	.305	.460
40-54 years	.221	.415	.224	.417	.229	.420	.264	.441	.330	.470	.345	.475
N	1000		987		1043		1004		1006		1022	

^a Variables not included in the Eurobarometer data and therefore excluded from the analysis.

Each model was tested through binary logistic regression to detect the relationship between the binary scale dependent variable and a set of independent categorical variables.³⁷ Logit models predicted the probability of favourable opinion on Turkey based on utilitarian or identitarian considerations, or threat perception. In order to predict the value associated with a positive or negative opinion category, I reconceptualised the problem of Turkey's EU membership as an attempt to predict the probability that an individual is either a *Turcosceptic* ($y=0$) or *Turcophile* ($y=1$). A coefficient of the independent and control variables with a positive coefficient indicated an increasing likelihood of favourable (Turcophile) opinion, while a negative coefficient indicated an increase in the likelihood of unfavourable (Turcosceptic) opinion on EU enlargement including Turkey. Standard errors provided the parameter estimates (log-odds) that I requested for 95% confidence intervals (CI) for the odds-ratios.³⁸

Empirical Analysis

Before proceeding with the logistic regression analysis, I checked for collinearity to test how much the independent variables are linearly related to each other. Menard suggests that a tolerance value less than 0.1 indicates a serious collinearity problem,³⁹ while Myers suggests that a variance inflation factor (VIF) greater than 10 is a cause for concern. In this study, VIF and tolerance values in all models were within

these bounds.⁴⁰ This indicates that in estimating the models in this study, collinearity between the independent variables is not a problem.

Table 2 presents the logit estimates of the six models. Model EB 53 included egocentric utilitarian measures (the level of occupational skills), the right-based identity measure of respect for human rights and democracy, and two measures of symbolic threat perception concerning immigration from Muslim countries. Among these three groups of measures, the findings of the first model (Model EB No: 53) showed that Italians who supported the idea that immigrants should be unconditionally accepted into the EU were significantly supportive of Muslim Turkey's EU membership in 2000. For every one-unit increase in support for immigration from Muslim countries into Europe, I expect a 0.758 unit increase in the log-odds of support for Turkey's EU membership, holding all other independent variables constant. On the contrary, given a one-unit increase in perceiving the threat of Muslim immigration as important, I can expect Italian public opinion to be more Turcosceptic. This model showed that Italians feared that Muslim and Turkish immigrants would threaten the in-group's Italian and European identities. The finding that Italians' concerns about Turkey were closely associated with their perceived symbolic fears about 'out-group' immigrants was confirmatory of Hypothesis 9. However, Italians' right-based concerns proved to be insignificant which rejected Hypothesis 6.

Table 2. Logit Results for Italian Public Opinion on Turkey's EU Membership (2000-2008)

Predictors	Coefficient (Standard Error)					
	Model EB53 (2000)	Model EB54.1 (2000)	Model EB58.1 (2002)	Model EB63.4 (2005)	Model EB66.1 (2006)	Model EB69.2 (2008)
Intercept	.188 (.580)	.890*** (.436)	-.793 (.422)	-.540 (.626)	-3.157*** (.663)	-.667*** (.083)
Utilitarian Calculations						
Sociotropic Utilitarianism	<i>a</i>	.512*** (.155)	.928*** (.155)	<i>a</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>a</i>
No costs for Italy						
Compatible economic development	<i>a</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>b</i>	.910*** (.276)	<i>a</i>
Less financial aid to Member States	<i>a</i>	-.290* (.158)	-.487*** (.153)	<i>a</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>a</i>
Egocentric Utilitarianism						
Managers	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>
Self-employed	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	-1.117** (.476)	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>
Other white collars	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	-1.91** (.079)
Manual workers	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	-1.76** (.073)
House persons	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	-2.65* (.087)
Unemployed	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>
Retired	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	-1.556** (.589)	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>
Identitarian Factors						
Cultural values	<i>a</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>a</i>	2.319*** (.223)	<i>a</i>	<i>a</i>
Mutual comprehension of values						

<i>Common geography</i>	<i>Turkey part of European geography</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>a</i>	.729** (.247)	1.250*** (.244)	<i>a</i>
<i>Common history</i>	<i>Turkey part of European history</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>a</i>	.825*** (.233)	1.412*** (.214)	<i>a</i>
<i>Rights</i>	<i>Respect for human rights and democracy</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>a</i>
<i>Religion</i>	<i>Democracy best represents the EU</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>
	<i>Religion best represents the EU</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>
	<i>Religiosity: Strong</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>a</i>
	<i>Religiosity: Weak</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>a</i>
Threat Perception						
<i>Realistic Threats</i>	<i>Transfer of jobs to countries with lower costs</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>a</i>
	<i>Risk of immigration to the EU</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>a</i>
<i>Symbolic Threats</i>	<i>Loss of national identity and culture</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>a</i>
	<i>Significant cultural differences</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>a</i>	-1.334*** (.215)	-1.569*** (.213)	<i>a</i>
	<i>Immigrants from Muslim countries: Not accepted</i>	-0.777* (.298)	<i>a</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>a</i>
	<i>Immigrants from Muslim countries: Accepted</i>	.758** (.169)	<i>a</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>a</i>
Control Variables						
<i>Ideology</i>	<i>Left</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	.143*** (.033)
	<i>Right</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	-1.109*** (.034)
<i>Gender</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	-.003 (.028)

<i>Age</i>									
15-24 years	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	.496*** (.070)
25-39 years	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	.379*** (.047)
40-54 years	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	.209*** (.045)
Cox and Snell R²	.069	.090	.082	.388	.265				.012
Nagelkerke R²	.093	.122	.110	.528	.374				.017
Log-likelihood	1004.431	1014.738	1061.740	712.021	789.402				30268.818

Note 1: *** p < .001, ** p < .01, * p < .05

^a Variables not included in the Eurobarometer data and therefore excluded from the analysis.

^b Variables not significant (p > .05) are not reported in Table 2 to make the interpretation of the table easier. Results available from the author upon request.

In the second model (Model EB No: 54.1) I tested the impacts of sociotropic costs of enlargement with Turkey concerning the possibility of less financial aid to Italy, realistic fears about the transfer of jobs to countries with lower costs and symbolic fears about the loss of national identity on Turkey. I found a direct association between support for enlargement and thinking that Turkey's EU membership would not cost 'more' to Italy. Given a one-unit increase in the costs of enlargement to Italy from important to unimportant, I expect Italian public opinion to be significantly more Turcophile. In contrast, when respondents believed that the cost of enlargement would mean less financial aid for Italy, there was an increased risk of Turcoscepticism. These findings confirmed Hypotheses 1 and 3 about sociotropic utilitarian calculations. Similarly, in 2002, the results of Model EB 58.1 showed that Italians were even more pro-Turkish in so far as the expansion would not impose any costs on themselves (Hypothesis 1) and would not result in cuts of financial aid for Italy, which confirmed also Hypothesis 3 about sociotropic utilitarian calculations. The results of Model EB 54.1 showed that the odds of being a Turcophile decreased as the odds ratio of the likelihood of the transfer of jobs to cheaper countries with lower production costs increased. This confirmed my expectations about the negative impacts of realistic threat perception (Hypothesis 8). However, as fears about the loss of national

and cultural identity as a result of enlargement remained insignificant, the symbolic threat hypothesis (Hypothesis 9) was rejected.

When respondents believed that the cost of enlargement would mean less financial aid for Italy, there was an increased risk of Turcoscepticism.

In Model EB 63.4 (2005), I tested the impacts of identitarian factors with the measures of shared values, and human rights, and of realistic and symbolic threat perceptions on Italians' support for Turkey's EU membership. Results showed that there was a strongly positive impact of believing that Turkey's accession to the EU would favour the mutual comprehension of Turkey's Muslim values and European values. Holding all other independent variables constant, a one-unit increase in shared values resulted in a dramatic 2,319 increase in the log-odds of being a Turcophile. Furthermore, the log-odds of being a Turcophile increased when the tendency to consider Turkey as a part of European history increased. These results confirmed the value-based identity hypothesis (Hypothesis 5) that the perceived vicinity to Turkey according to cultural, geographical or historical commonalities determined the level of attitudes towards Turkey's inclusion in the EU. However, since neither the rights-based values nor religiosity and religious values had statistically

significant effects on opinions about Turkey ($p > 0.05$), I rejected Hypotheses 6 and 7, respectively. On the other hand, for every one-unit increase in significant cultural differences a 1,334 decrease increase in the log-odds of Turcophilia was expected. This confirmed Hypothesis 9, as Italians who believed there are significant cultural differences between the 'out-group' Turkey and the 'in-group' Europe were much more Turcosceptic. From this result, I conclude that, while a belief in shared values is so important in increasing support for Turkey's EU accession, fears about the existence of a cultural gap creates a source of opposition to Turkey.

While a belief in shared values is so important in increasing support for Turkey's EU accession, fears about the existence of a cultural gap creates a source of opposition to Turkey.

In Table 2, the results of the Model EB 66.1 (2006) estimated that, like in 2005, Italians who thought that Turkey and Europe had shared cultural values, that Turkey was geographically a part of Europe, and that it shared a common history with Europe were more likely to support Turkey's EU membership. Coefficients of these three indicators were statistically significant ($p < 0.001$) in the expected direction. This finding of logit Model EB 66.1 confirmed Hypothesis 5 that the perceived vicinity to Turkey

according to cultural, geographical or historical commonalities increased favourable opinion on towards Turkey's EU membership. Concerning the sociotropic utilitarian calculations, the odds ratio associated with the belief that Turkey can achieve the required level of economic development significantly increased support for Turkey's EU membership (Hypothesis 2). Moreover, Italians' concerns about significant cultural differences between Turkey and Europe proved to be a remarkable deterring factor for them to support Turkey's EU membership.

Neither religious- nor rights-based concerns over liberal democratic values in Turkey had a significant impact on Italian public opinion. Like logit Model EB 63.4, Model EB 66.1 failed to confirm the hypotheses about the rights- or religion-based identity (Hypotheses 6 and 7, respectively). Predictions about the role of religion and values were rejected from the results of the EB 69.2 data. Model EB 69.2, which tested the impact of the importance of religion and of democracy, showed that, with other variables held constant, neither of these factors had a significant impact on public opinion in Italy about Turkey's accession to the EU. Thus, I rejected the religion- and rights- based hypotheses (Hypotheses 6 and 7). This indicates the need to study Italian public opinion concerning Turkey's EU membership with reference to explanations other than religion or rights based identities.

In all models, the control variables added hardly any interesting findings. Age, ideological self-placement and gender had statistically significant effects on opinions about Turkey's EU membership only in the logit estimates of Model EB 69.2. In this model, the 'left' dummy variable exerted a statistically significant positive effect on Italian public opinion on Turkey, indicating that individuals with left-wing ideological position were more likely to support Turkey's EU membership than those with right-wing ones. Similarly, this effect appears when 'democracy as the best value that represents the EU' variable was included in the model. Turning to the demographic characteristics of individuals, age shows a significant positive relationship with support for EU membership in Model EB 69.2. Younger Italians were more likely to support Turkey's EU membership.

Conclusion

This article investigated the determinants of Italian public opinion concerning Turkey's EU accession in the past decade. Theoretically, it concentrated on two mainstream approaches to public opinion prevalent in the literature, utilitarian and identitarian, and developed a third approach of threat perception. First, it suggested that utilitarian calculations of the costs and benefits of enlargement might play a role in the formation of Italians' attitudes toward Turkey. The findings

indicate strong support for utilitarian predictions. As far as sociotropic utilitarian calculations are concerned, an increase in the macro benefits of enlargement for Italy, in the forms of no specific costs of enlargement for Italy and continuation of the financial flows from the EU to Italy, is associated with an increase in public support for Turkey's EU membership. In contrast, egocentric concerns related to occupational skills of Italian citizens have only partial impact on attitudes toward Turkey.

Although the traditionally positive attitude of Italian foreign policy towards Turkey's entry into the EU is unlikely to be reversed in the foreseeable future.

Second, this study showed that identity-based concerns might affect attitudes towards Turkey's EU membership. Among value-based, rights-based and religion-based social identities, Turcophilia increased only in association with a 'we-feeling' based on beliefs that Italy, Europe and Turkey share a common past, geography and values. On the contrary, it revealed that Italian public opinion towards Turkey is neither shaped by concerns about Turkey's 'unconsolidated' democracy nor by 'problematic' human and minority rights record. Contrary to common sense, this article disproved 'Christian public opinion' assumptions and found

that religiosity does not have a significant effect on Italian public opinion on Turkey either.

The further strengthening of the comprehension of shared values and the economic benefits of Turkish accession could pave the way for reducing Turcoscepticism in Italy.

Third, this article included threat perception as an important indicator of attitudes toward enlargement, with a specific focus on realistic and symbolic considerations of threats posed by the out-group. The analysis demonstrated that, as well as sociotropic or egocentric utilitarianism significantly affecting people's calculations about enlargement, realistic and symbolic threats also influence their attitudes. Just as the Italian *vox populi* is Turcophile when there are shared cultural and geographical traits that bridge Turkey and Europe and if Turkish enlargement would add to cultural richness and mutual understanding of values, it becomes

excessively Turcosceptic if significant cultural differences are on top of minds.

In conclusion, this article produced an all-inclusive study of Turcoscepticism versus Turco-enthusiasm in Italy. It also offered a multidimensional approach to understanding the *vox populi* based on a complex set of dynamics rather than any single factor. The general implication of this article is as straightforward as it is important: *pragmatist sociotropic utilitarian considerations*, in concert with *mutual comprehension of values based on we-feeling, perceived symbolic threats of loss of in-group identity and culture* together have persistent effects on public opinion about Turkey's protracted EU membership bid. Although the traditionally positive attitude of Italian foreign policy towards Turkey's entry into the EU is unlikely to be reversed in the foreseeable future, Italian public opinion is likely to remain Turcosceptic due to macro-economic concerns and fears embedded in the public consciousness. Nevertheless, the further strengthening of the comprehension of shared values and the economic benefits of Turkish accession could pave the way for reducing Turcoscepticism in Italy.

Appendix I: Operationalisation of Variables

Dependent Variable	Variable	Hypothesis	Survey Question	Response categories
Utilitarian Calculations <i>Sociotropic Utilitarianism</i>	<i>Public opinion on Turkey's EU membership</i>		For each of the following countries, would you be in favour of or against it becoming part of the European Union? Turkey (EB No: 53, EB No: 54.1, EB No: 58.1, EB No: 63.4)	1 in favour 0 against (a)
	<i>No costs for Italy</i>	H1	For each of the following countries and territories, would you be in favour or against it becoming part of the European Union in the future? Turkey (EB No: 69.2)	1 in favour 0 against (a)
	<i>Compatible economic development</i>	H2	Thinking about the enlargement of the European Union to include new countries, do you tend to agree or tend to disagree with each of the following statements? The enlargement will not cost more to existing member countries like (our country) (EB No: 54.1, EB No: 58.1)	1 agree 0 disagree
Egocentric Utilitarianism	<i>Less financial aid to Member States</i>	H3	For each of the following please tell me whether you totally agree, tend to agree, tend to disagree or totally disagree: To join the European Union in about ten years, Turkey will have to significantly improve the state of its economy (EB No: 63.4, EB No: 66.1)	1 agree 0 disagree (b)
	<i>Occupational skills</i>	H4	Thinking about the enlargement of the European Union to include new countries, do you tend to agree or tend to disagree with each of the following statements? Once new countries have joined the European Union, (our country) will receive less financial aid from it (EB No: 54.1, EB No: 58.1) Occupation (self-reported)	1 agree 0 disagree (b)
				1 Self-employed 2 Managers 3 Other white collars 4 Manual workers 5 House person 6 Unemployed 7 Retired 8 Students(c)

Identity					
<i>Cultural values</i>	<i>Mutual comprehension of values</i>	H5	For each of the following please tell me whether you totally agree, tend to agree, tend to disagree or totally disagree: Turkey's accession to the European Union would favour the mutual comprehension of European and Muslim values (EB No: 63.4)	1 agree 0 disagree ^(b)	
<i>Common geography</i>	<i>Turkey part of European geography</i>	H5	For each of the following please tell me whether you totally agree, tend to agree, tend to disagree or totally disagree: Turkey partly belongs to Europe by its geography. (EB No: 63.4, EB No: 66.1)	1 agree 0 disagree ^(b)	
<i>Common history</i>	<i>Turkey part of European history</i>	H5	For each of the following please tell me whether you totally agree, tend to agree, tend to disagree or totally disagree: Turkey partly belongs to Europe by its history (EB No: 63.4, EB No: 66.1)	1 agree 0 disagree ^(b)	
<i>Rights</i>	<i>Respect for human rights and democracy</i>	H6	For each of the following criteria, please tell me if it seems important to you, or not in deciding whether a particular country should join the European Union, or not? The country has to respect Human Rights and the principles of democracy (EB No: 53, EB No: 54.1)	1 important 0 not important	
<i>Religion</i>	<i>Democracy best represents the EU</i>	H6	Which three of the following values, best represent the European Union? Democracy (EB No: 66.1, EB No: 69.2)	1 mentioned 0 not mentioned	
	<i>Religion best represents the EU</i>	H7	Which three of the following values, best represent the European Union? Religion (EB No: 66.1, EB No: 69.2)	1 mentioned 0 not mentioned	
	<i>Religiosity: Strong</i>	H7	Apart from weddings or funerals, about how often do you attend religious services? (EB No: 66.1)	1 Once or more than once a week 0 other ^(d)	
	<i>Religiosity: Weak</i>	H7	Apart from weddings or funerals, about how often do you attend religious services? (EB No: 66.1)	1 About once a year or less 0 other ^(e)	
Threat perception					
<i>Realistic threats</i>	<i>Transfer of jobs to countries with lower costs</i>	H8	Some people may have fears about the building of Europe, the European Union. Here is a list of things which some people say they are afraid of. For each one, please tell me if you - personally - are currently afraid of it, or not? The transfer of jobs to countries which have lower production costs (EB No: 54.1, EB No: 63.4,)	1 currently afraid of 0 currently not afraid of	
	<i>Risk of immigration to the EU</i>	H8	For each of the following please tell me whether you totally agree, tend to agree, tend to disagree or totally disagree: Turkey's joining could risk favouring immigration to more developed countries in the European Union (EB No: 63.4, EB No: 66.1)	1 agree 0 disagree ^(b)	

<i>Symbolic threats</i>	<i>H9</i>	Some people may have fears about the building of Europe, the European Union. Here is a list of things which some people say they are afraid of. For each one, please tell me if you - personally - are currently afraid of it, or not? The loss of our national identity and culture (EB No: 54.1, EB No: 63.4)	1 currently afraid of 0 currently not afraid of
<i>Significant cultural differences</i>	<i>H9</i>	For each of the following please tell me whether you totally agree, tend to agree, tend to disagree or totally disagree: The cultural differences between Turkey and the European Union Member States are too significant to allow for this accession (EB No: 63.4, EB No: 66.1)	1 agree 0 disagree ^(b)
<i>Immigrants from Muslim countries 'not accepted' / 'accepted'</i>	<i>H9</i>	If people from Muslim countries wish to work here in the European Union, do you think that they should... (EB No: 53)	1 not be accepted 2 accepted without restriction 3 accepted with restriction ^(c)
Control Variables			
<i>Age</i>			1 15-24; 2 25-39; 3 40-54; 4 55+
<i>Gender</i>			1 male 0 female
<i>Ideology</i>		Ideological self-placement on a 10-scale spectrum	1 Left (1-4); 2 Right (5-6); 3 Centre (7-10)

^(a) The 'don't know' category is treated as a missing value.

^(b) The original EB question comprised four categories: (1) totally agree, (2) tend to agree, (3) tend to disagree, (4) totally disagree. The scale is recoded into a categorical one with values of (1) 'agree' (merging values 1 and 2) and (0) 'disagree' (merging values 3 and 4).

^(c) Each of these response categories are created as dummies (with 'students' being the reference category).

^(d) The original EB question measuring religiosity comprised seven categories: (1) More than once a year, (2) Once a week, (3) About once a month, (4) About each 2 or 3 month, (5) Only on special holy days, (6) About once a year, (7) Less often. The 'religiosity: strong' variable was created as dummy which consisted of merging the values of 1 to 2 into 'religiosity: strong' (1) against the reference category of 'other' (0).

^(e) The original EB question measuring religiosity comprised seven categories: (1) More than once a week, (2) Once a week, (3) About once a month, (4) About each 2 or 3 month, (5) Only on special holy days, (6) About once a year, (7) Less often. The 'religiosity: weak' variable was created as dummy which consisted of merging the values of 6 to 7 into 'religiosity: weak' (1) against the reference category of 'other' (0).

^(f) I created two dummies as 'immigrants from Muslim countries not accepted' and 'immigrants from Muslim countries accepted'.

Endnotes

- 1 Emiliano Alessandri and Ebru Ş. Canan, "Mamma Li Turchi! Just and Old Italian Saying", in Nathalie Tocci (ed.), *Talking Turkey II*, Quaderno IAI – Istituto Affari Internazionali, Rome, 2008, p.11.
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Energy Cooperation between Import Dependent Countries: Cases of Italy and Turkey

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Abstract

As energy dependency increases in Europe, Turkey and Italy found it necessary to cooperate on pipeline projects to secure Europe's energy supply and to increase their role as transit countries in the Mediterranean and southeast Europe. At the end of the 1990s Italian and Turkish energy companies started to collaborate on such projects as Blue Stream, Samsun-Ceyhan, and Interconnector Turkey-Greece-Italy (ITGI). In these pipeline projects- both crude oil and natural gas- Russia has been a major player since it is one of the main energy-producing countries in the region and has a significant role in the energy policies of other energy-producing countries in the Caspian and the Caucasus. However, the competition among the regional countries in the Black Sea and the Mediterranean has decreased the effectiveness of the collaborative projects of Italy and Turkey. Thus it is argued that there is an urgent need for cooperation at the regional level- especially between Bulgaria, Turkey, Greece, Ukraine and Moldova- in order to secure the energy supply, and to diversify the routes and resources.

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Key Words

EU, energy dependency, regional cooperation, energy production, consuming and transit countries.

Introduction

Italian and Turkish energy needs and policies are somewhat similar as both countries are import dependent and situated at important junction points in the Mediterranean and southeast Europe. The energy-producing countries in the region, namely in the Caspian and Middle East, are separated from energy-consuming countries by natural boundaries, such as the Black Sea, the Mediterranean Sea and the Aegean Sea. Therefore, Turkey and Italy are essential to link these energy-rich regions with energy-poor ones, and cooperation with each other and the other countries surrounding them is increasingly important since industry is becoming more and more dependent on natural gas, not only in Italy and Turkey, but everywhere in the European Union (EU). The EU attaches importance to regular dialogue and security of supplies

in relations with energy-producing countries and regions. Thus, transit countries are increasingly important in maintaining and sustaining security of energy supply, which increases the importance of countries in the Mediterranean and Southeast Europe, and the importance of such projects as the Interconnector Turkey-Greece-Italy (ITGI) and Nabucco at the EU level. Also the EU's financial and political support is needed for the construction of these pipeline projects, maintaining their security and sustaining the secure flow of energy.

Italy, as one of the main energy-importing Mediterranean countries, plays a key role in the European energy market.

Natural gas is an important fuel for electricity generation in European countries since it is less expensive than nuclear or renewable energy sources.¹ Also natural gas is preferred by developing countries as it is an efficient source of energy and natural gas pipelines are quicker to construct than other forms of energy infrastructure,² although they need long-term cooperation agreements with the states where the pipelines pass. The largest natural gas resources are located in the Caspian, the Caucasus, and Middle East and Mediterranean countries such as Russia, Iran, Qatar,

Turkmenistan, Saudi Arabia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Algeria, Azerbaijan and Iraq.³ The transport of natural gas from these countries to energy-consuming countries requires close cooperation, stable and sustainable agreements among these energy-producing and the energy-consuming countries, as well as with transit countries such as Ukraine, Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey, Greece and Italy.

In the light of these issues, this paper aims to explain the needs and policies of Italy and Turkey regarding energy transport and natural gas and oil demand while focusing on the Italian and Turkish collaborative projects such as the Blue Stream pipeline, the Samsun-Ceyhan pipeline, and the ITGI project. In analyzing the energy needs of the two countries, the focus is on natural gas since there is a constant increase in demand for natural gas in industry and the daily lives of people in Italy and Turkey.

Italian Energy Needs, Policies and Projects

Italy's energy policies, needs and security is characterized by the increasing demand for energy resources, oil, gas, and electricity, with gas supply an imperative for Italian industry. In recent years the significance of natural gas has increased due to such reasons as the stresses on the international gas markets, the reduction of gas exports,

the crisis between Russia and Ukraine, the increase in natural gas demand for heating and power production, and the reduced hydroelectric production.⁴ Since Italy is not a very rich country regarding domestic energy supplies, it has always been dependent on imported energy resources. Italy, as one of the main energy-importing Mediterranean countries, plays a key role in the European energy market. At the end of the Second World War, Italy was importing coal and oil from neighboring countries, and in the 21st century, gas replaced coal and oil in industrial markets and power generation. In recent years it has been seen that there has been a strong increase in the share of natural gas in energy production which shows a deep transformation of the Italian energy system from oil to gas.⁵ Between 1971 and 2005 the average annual increase in gas consumption was 5.7% while oil consumption decreased by 0.2%, which makes Italy one of the largest energy importing countries in the world, seventh with reference to oil and fourth with reference to natural gas.⁶ Especially since 1995 natural gas consumption has increased by 59% due to its growing use in the energy sector. According to ENI's World Oil and Gas Review, national production of gas is constantly decreasing and the share of domestic gas in covering total demand is in decline. As a result

Italy's energy policies, needs and security are characterized by the increasing demand for energy resources, oil, gas, and electricity, with gas supply an imperative for Italian industry.

Italy is a country suffering from fast growing gas demand and bottlenecks in gas infrastructures such as in gas storage and import capacity.⁷

With the Italian energy market restructuring, which started at the beginning of the 2000s and continued especially after the gas crises in 2003 and 2006, Italy focused on security of supply, diversification of energy resources and infrastructure improvement. In 2006, winter weather conditions left Italy in a gas emergency situation which made policymakers think once again about structural problems, regulatory constraints on gas prices, climate change, lack of competition, and the rigidity of the regulatory mechanisms. As a result some measures were taken, such as arranging for the use of oil in power plants, maximizing imports of natural gas and increasing national production. However, these measures were not enough to secure the energy supply and overcome the gas emergency. Therefore, the building of new pipelines, the implementation of interconnections with foreign countries and the diversification of resources were required since Italy is heavily dependent on Algeria and Russia for its gas imports: 67% of Italy's gas comes from Russia (31%) and Algeria (36%).⁸

As the share of gas is increasing, the necessity of long-term security of supply has been stressed by not only Italian experts but also European ones. The whole of Europe needs sustainable and secure energy resources for their energy needs, not only for industry but also for daily lives. In this regard the EU also focuses on the diversification of resources and transit routes, long-term contracts with additional risk management tools, the right investment and regulatory climate, regular dialogue with producing countries and market-based measures in price formation for all energy sources.⁹ Italy, as a country close to energy-producing countries in the Mediterranean, feels the obligation for not only finding necessary long-term secure energy sources for itself but also for Europe. As a result, the Italian Energy Authority for Electricity and Gas (*Autorita per l'Energia Elettrica e il Gas*, AEEG) has started promoting the development of gas trading hubs to increase security of supply, the diversification of sources and also becoming a key trading center for the Mediterranean region.¹⁰

There are two main ways to import natural gas to a country: a) through pipelines, and b) in the form of liquefied natural gas (LNG). Storing LNG has been problematic for most countries as well as Italy. Italy has only one regasification plant in Panigaglia (Liguria). At full capacity, this terminal can input 3.5 bcm/y into the Italian gas network.¹¹ This plant is not by itself enough to be able to meet the demand for natural gas

in Italy. Therefore it has been suggested that Italy needs new regasification plants in order to store LNG and distribute it. However, the construction of storage units for LNG and transporting LNG from natural gas-producing countries is an expensive and troublesome process. The process includes transforming the natural gas into a liquefied form and then transporting it in specially designed vessels with insulated storage tanks. When these vessels reach their destinations, the LNG needs to be stored in regasification plants and transformed into a gas form to be used in households and industry. This process also includes several environmental risks. Therefore there is a general tendency to focus on pipelines rather than transporting LNG. Although new large pipeline projects are also expensive and take a long time to construct, it is believed that it is easier to sustain and distribute gas via pipelines.

Italy also has limited resources of natural gas in the Po Valley in northern Italy. When these resources were found after the Second World War, it was decided that natural gas would not only be a substitute for petroleum but a cheaper and more functional substitute for imported coal for the growing industrial activities of northern Italy.¹² However, since the post-war period it has been observed that natural gas has become an important energy resource not only for industrial purposes but also for heating. By 1965 Italy was the largest gas producer and consumer in Western Europe.

In the 1970s, and although it did not take petroleum's place in transportation, natural gas became the main energy source for industry as a whole and the economic growth brought an increase in energy consumption.¹³ Italy found it necessary to secure gas imports from other energy-producing countries, in this case Russia, the Netherlands, and southern Mediterranean countries such as Algeria and Libya.

In 1973 ENI¹⁴ signed a contract with Algeria to transport natural gas from Tunisia and Algeria to Italy via a pipeline to be constructed under the Mediterranean Sea. The contract foresaw transportation of 11.75 bcm/y of gas over 25 years.¹⁵ The Transmed pipeline, which brings Algerian gas to Italy, became operational in 1983 but was doubled in 1994 and has a capacity of carrying 6.5 bcm/y.¹⁶ Since the 1970s Italy's ENI has established dialogue and constructed several pipelines to

transport natural gas from different sources to Italy. One of these pipelines is the Green Stream project which became operational in 2004 and brings Libyan gas to Italy through a 600 km pipeline running under the Mediterranean Sea, transporting gas produced in the Wafa field and Bahr Essalam to Melitah and then Sicily where it joins Transmed.¹⁷ However, relations with Libya have been difficult due to the colonial heritage, the embargo imposed on Libya by Western countries and Qaddafi's policies towards Italians when he came to power in 1969.¹⁸

TAG is another pipeline which is 1,010 km long in Austria, and it brings Russian gas to Italy via Ukraine and Slovakia. The TENP (924 km) and Transitgas (291 km) pipelines are importing gas from the Netherlands and Norway while the TTPCS (742 km) and the TMPC (775 km) import from Algeria.

Table 1: Summary of pipelines carrying gas to Italy

Pipeline	Route	Year
Transmed	Tunisia-Algeria-Italy	Operational in 1983 Upgraded in 1994
TTPC & TMPC (part of Transmed)	Algeria-Italy	Operational in 1983 Upgraded in 1994 -2008
TAG	Russia-Ukraine-Austria-Italy	Late 1960s Upgraded in 2009
Green Stream	Libya-Italy	Operational in 2004
TENP	Netherlands-Germany-Italy	Operational in 1972-74 Upgraded in 1978-2009
Transitgas	Switzerland-France-Germany-Italy	Operational in 1998 Upgraded in 2003

As mentioned above, since demand exceeds domestic potential supply, the Italian energy system is dependent on imports, although domestic oil and gas reserves have the potential to increase production. There are three main scenarios dominating the Italian energy demand and supply structures.¹⁹ According to the first scenario, there will be medium growth of demand which will necessitate the upgrading of pipelines linking Russia and Algeria to Italy and the construction of two new regasification plants to further increase LNG transportation to Italy. In the second scenario, demand will be lower than expected, which will create an oversupply. In this scenario Italy needs more gas storage units built close to areas of major consumption to be able to store the excess gas and use it for domestic demand. The last scenario foresees a high demand for natural gas in Italy. According to this scenario, three new regasification plants are needed as well as the transportation of Caspian gas to Italy. Therefore, the third scenario is focusing more on the diversification of energy resources.

Taking these three scenarios and the growing demand for new energy sources, Italy has found it necessary to change to more market-oriented liberal energy policies. In this context, ENI has been privatized (but still 30% of company shares are in the hands of the state), a competitive and transparent energy market has been promoted, and administrative responsibilities have been decentralized.²⁰ The privatization of

Enel for electricity and ENI for natural gas changed their missions so they are no longer charged with guaranteeing the security of national energy supplies. It appears that the role of the state will be in providing the market institutions that create the context for private firms to take risks rather than providing the gas, dominating international trade, and signing state-to-state gas agreements in the coming years.²¹

The EU also pushes its member states to manage the growing energy dependency by;

- a- Diversifying resources and transit routes,
- b- Signing long-term contracts with additional risk management tools,
- c- Encouraging the right investment and regulatory climate, and
- d- Establishing regular dialogue with energy-producing countries.²²

The EU is concerned about natural gas security because of the rapid increase in dependence on imports from non-European suppliers and that most of the EU countries are 95% dependent on imports for gas supply.²³ Therefore, the EU stresses the importance of long-term adequacy of supply, infrastructure for delivering this supply to markets and the operational security of gas markets.²⁴ It is an established argument that Russia will always be a major supplier of gas to the EU;²⁵ therefore, instead of replacing Russian gas, increasing relations and dialogue with other energy-producing

countries as well as Russia has become crucial in EU energy policy. In such an environment, Italy has focused on furthering its relations with energy-producing countries, namely Russia and Azerbaijan, and transit countries, such as Turkey. It can be clearly argued that as the new deals on new gas connections are done, a special attention should be given to Russia due to its protectionist character of its Italian gas market.²⁶

Turkish Energy Needs, Policies and Projects

Turkey's energy policy is determined by the gap between supply and demand in the country and it is argued that this gap will continue to grow as economic development continues. The need for oil and gas increases every year and it is estimated that natural gas consumption will increase for the next 20 years.²⁷ Turkey has only a limited amount of domestic energy resources which cannot meet the demands of the growing Turkish economy. Therefore, Turkey, similar to EU countries, attaches special importance to the diversification of energy resources and securing energy supply. Turkish authorities find it important to ensure the flow of energy sources to the Turkish market without interruption in order to eliminate threats to its energy security.²⁸

Turkey's demand for natural gas has been growing (approximately 6% every year²⁹) since it has started to be used in energy production, particularly electricity

generation. Similar to the Italian case, Turkey, due to industrialization and urbanization, started to use natural gas for power generation and other energy production. Therefore, Turkey's energy policies aim to a) provide energy economically and reliably, b) meet the energy demand through the diversification of resources, c) increase efficiency while liberalizing the market, d) give priority to supply security, and e) take advantage of the geographical position to become an energy corridor.³⁰ Consequently it is argued that Turkey, while becoming a transit hub as it offers cost-effective transportation,³¹ aims to become a reseller to other markets as well.³²

Turkey has only a limited amount of domestic energy resources which cannot meet the demands of the growing Turkish economy.

Turkey is situated in a region where 71.8% of the world's proven gas reserves and 72.7% of the world's proven oil reserves are located.³³ Thus, both to secure its own energy supply and its role as a transit country, Turkey has started to attach more importance to multilateral or bilateral energy agreements with energy-producing countries, namely Russia, Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, Iran, Iraq and so on.

In the current situation, natural gas is largely used in power generation in the

European market and the International Energy Agency (IEA) estimated that gas demand in Europe will increase mainly in power generation. Therefore, the crisis between Russia and Ukraine in 2005-2006 increased the importance of diversifying both gas resources and transit countries. Russian and Algerian gas needs to cross transit countries, Ukraine, Belarus, Tunisia, and Morocco, where security of the pipelines creates concern for Italian and other European consumers. In 1997 there were terrorist attacks on an onshore Algerian section of Transmed; in the 2000s Ukraine did not have enough money to pay Gazprom for delivery of Russian gas.³⁴

Therefore, countries such as Azerbaijan, Egypt, Turkmenistan, Iran and Iraq have become more important as gas suppliers, and Turkey as a transit country to deliver the gas from these suppliers to Europe. Turkey can use the Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum (BTE), Nabucco, and Interconnector Turkey-Greece-Italy (ITGI) pipelines for natural gas transport and the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) and Samsun-Ceyhan pipelines for crude oil transport. As a result, Turkey is well placed to serve as a central transit country for the anticipated major increase in European demand.³⁵ Both Turkish and European officials see the potential and synergy between EU countries and Turkey in energy policies; therefore, the EU has allocated a significant amount of funding for both the Nabucco and ITGI pipelines which will supply new gas resources from the Caspian basin

and Iran to the internal gas market of the EU.³⁶

Before the EU started to increase funding and implement policies towards the Caspian region and Iran, Turkey had increased its efforts to construct and improve pipelines with Iran in the mid-1990s. Although there are now some pipelines that can be used for various routes to the West, US sanctions on Iran and Iran's unreliability in times of crises prevent effective usage of these pipelines.³⁷ Especially in the last decade Turkish authorities have attached significance to the development of energy relations with Iran to diversify at least its own energy resources in spite of US sanctions. The agreement between Iran and Turkey (1996) foresaw the purchase of \$23 billion worth of gas over the following two decades. It has been argued that it was an example of Turkey's economically driven energy policies rather than politically driven ones.³⁸ However, Turkey's energy policies, although they may not be politically driven at the beginning, have turned into political tools for Turkey to use in the region to become a regional actor³⁹ which has a stake in the Caspian states' economic viability.⁴⁰

The main aim of European and Turkish states is to ensure access to Caspian reserves and bring gas from the Caspian and the Middle East to European markets in order to increase European energy security by using fully commercially run pipeline systems passing through Turkey and the Balkans.⁴¹ This is crucial in an era when

the EU grapples with the interrelated problems of ensuring energy security and the provision of energy supplies from multiple sources at competitive prices.⁴² In this environment, Turkey has realized the necessity of investing in alternative projects to guarantee an affordable, secure, uninterrupted flow of resources both to benefit from its geopolitical position and to become an energy hub for the EU⁴³ since it is perceived as a natural transit point⁴⁴ for the region.

Both to secure its own energy supply and its role as a transit country, Turkey has started to attach more importance to multilateral or bilateral energy agreements with energy-producing countries.

However, the energy-rich regions of the Caspian and the Middle East are politically volatile and the dynamics of the internal and external affairs of the countries are complicated for outsiders to understand and limit the ability to realize projects. It has been argued that Caspian politics is like a complicated poker game that is being played within another game that has other rules, namely chess.⁴⁵ In this political environment, Turkey, as one of the biggest investors in the region, is willing to use its close historical, cultural and economic ties to link European energy-consuming countries with Caspian energy-producing countries while increasing its regional role in the Caspian, Middle East and Europe.⁴⁶

However, both European buyers and Turkish officials need to be aware of the strong effect of Russia on the Caspian region. For countries such as Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, supplying gas to the Russian domestic market is crucial as Russia is a huge market for these states and has an important, social, cultural, political and economic influence on those countries. Therefore, there is a dependency relationship between Russia and the Caspian states.⁴⁷

Italy and Turkey: Collaborative Projects

In such an economic and political setting, Turkey and Italy have started to cooperate in ensuring energy security for themselves and European countries. Italy and Turkey are very similar to each other in energy needs, demands and policies in that they are both import dependent, aiming to diversify energy resources, and trying to become energy hubs in their regions by distributing the gas that they get from the Caspian, the Middle East, the Mediterranean and Russia. Both Turkey and Italy are aware of the significance of Russia not only in regional politics but also in the energy security of both countries, and it is a crucial partner for both of them.

The first collaboration between Turkey, Italy and Russia was in the construction of the Blue Stream pipeline project which carries Russian natural gas to Turkey across the Black

Sea. This pipeline was constructed by ENI and Gazprom in the late 1990s and early 2000s. In 1997, Turkey and Russia agreed on Blue Stream, and then ENI and Gazprom signed a memorandum of understanding on its joint implementation. This pipeline is 1,213 km long and its design capacity is 16 bcm/y and since its opening it has conveyed more than 51 bcm of natural gas to Turkey.⁴⁸

Blue Stream has been an important success for all the partners involved since it was the first project that brought BOTAŞ of Turkey, Gazprom of Russia and ENI of Italy together for constructing the world's deepest undersea pipeline and increasing the reliability of gas supplies to Turkey.⁴⁹

However, not all the cooperation efforts and projects of Turkey, Russia and Italy have succeeded as well as the Blue Stream did. The Samsun-Ceyhan pipeline, also known as the Trans-Anatolian Pipeline Project, which would involve the construction of a crude oil transportation system from the Black Sea coast to Turkey's Mediterranean coast,⁵⁰ has been a disappointment so far, especially for Turkey. This pipeline, when it is constructed and fully operational, will decrease the number of tankers crossing the Bosphorus and Dardanelles straits while increasing Turkey's role as an energy hub. Russia has been criticizing Turkey's strict restrictions on transit through the straits in terms of speed, the types of tankers, and the time of day that transit is allowed.⁵¹ As the need for

transit and supply of crude oil increases, it has been argued that the restrictions on transit would create bottlenecks in the Turkish Straits. Also, Russia wanted to be involved in this pipeline in order to increase its control over the Kazakh oil that will pass through Turkey to reach Western markets. It has been argued that the Trans-Anatolian Pipeline Project will increase Russian leverage on Kazakhstan and Western companies working there,⁵² while increasing Turkey's role in the region regarding energy.

ITGI will be a crucial pipeline for Italy and the EU as its capacity will be much larger than the Algerian and Russian projects.

The pipeline is expected to be beneficial for all of the partners, Russia, Italy and Turkey, because:

- a- It is only in Turkey, which decreases the possibility of conflicts among transit countries,
- b- It benefits from existing facilities such as Ceyhan Loading Terminal,
- c- It is the shortest trans-shipment distance in the Black Sea, and
- d- It runs in a scarcely populated area which decreases the negative ecological effects of construction.⁵³

With all these reasons in mind, ENI and Çalık signed a memorandum of understanding in 2005 for the construction of this pipeline; the license

to construct and operate the pipeline was awarded to an ENI/Çalık joint venture in 2006. Another memorandum of understanding has been signed with Russia as well, which states that Transneft and Rosneft- the two main Russian state-owned oil companies- would supply the crude oil and the Russian state- owned maritime shipping company, Sovkomflot, would transport the oil from Black Sea ports to the Samsun terminal.⁵⁴ When the partners agreed on the pipeline construction, Russia and Turkey signed an intergovernmental agreement, guaranteeing a stable regulatory framework for oil transportation. In a related move, Turkey accepted geological exploration in the Black Sea economic zone as part of the South Stream project in which Gazprom and ENI work together. This was crucial to demonstrate the improved relations between Russia and Turkey and that they have developed a multi-dimensional energy partnership in oil, gas and nuclear power.⁵⁵

However none of these agreements have secured construction and crude oil transportation. There have been several delays and political concerns over the project. The lack of commitment of the producers, lack of oil resources, the Bulgarian and Greek emphasis on the Burgaz-Alexandropolis pipeline, and Russia's regional policies to secure its control over energy politics prevented⁵⁶ the Trans-Anatolian Pipeline Company (ENI and Çalık) to realize and manage the 550-km long Samsun-Ceyhan

pipeline. Although Russian authorities proposed joining the Samsun-Ceyhan and Burgaz-Alexandropolis pipelines by transporting different types of oil, Bulgarian authorities were opposed to this idea, which prevented it from being realized.⁵⁷

Blue Stream has been an important success for all the partners involved since it was the first project that brought BOTAŞ of Turkey, Gazprom of Russia and ENI of Italy together for constructing the world's deepest undersea pipeline.

In addition to these projects, Turkey and Italy are cooperating in the construction of the Interconnection Turkey-Greece-Italy (ITGI) in which Russia and Gazprom are not directly involved. Italy's Edison SpA, Turkish BOTAŞ and Greece's Depa SA are working on this project which will carry Caspian gas to Italy via Turkey and Greece. This project is fairly new, the agreement between the three companies was signed in 2010, and the pipeline is projected to be completed in 2017. In fact this agreement is the continuation of bilateral agreements signed between Greece and Turkey and Greece and Italy according to which the pipeline originates in Karacabey in Turkey, reaches Komotini in Greece via Alexandropolis, and the Italy-Greece interconnector begins from Thresprotia coast in Greece and passes through the Apulia region of Italy.⁵⁸

The ITGI has a top priority for the EU, Greece, Turkey and Italy for several reasons but mainly because it increases the diversification of transit routes and energy resources. The EU attaches special importance to this project since it is a part of the EU's Southern Corridor strategy which was adopted at the May 2009 Prague Summit⁵⁹ and therefore the EU has proposed to fund €100 million for the project, calling it a project of European interest in the European recovery plan.⁶⁰ The ITGI, while bringing three important transit countries together, is the first stage of the South European Natural Gas Corridor. It has been argued that this pipeline is able to open the Southern Corridor, thus enabling the shipment of Azeri gas to Europe.⁶¹ It is believed that Azerbaijan is the only energy-producing country that can deliver new supplies of natural gas to European markets with the development of Shah Deniz Stage 2.⁶² Therefore, Italy and Greece had signed agreements with Azerbaijan as early as 2007 to secure the necessary support in terms of supply.⁶³ The countries involved in the project and the EU believes that the ITGI is crucial since demand for natural gas is increasing every year in their respective countries and the EU in general. In order to prevent a natural gas shortage, the ITGI presents a strategic infrastructure which will significantly increase European

energy security as it will be the first link with the Caspian area.⁶⁴

ITGI comprises of three sections: a) the national Turkish gas grid, b) the Interconnector Greece-Turkey (IGT), and c) the Interconnector Greece-Italy (IGI) which will have a transport capacity of 8 bcm/y. The IGI is planned to have two main sections: IGI Poseidon and IGI Onshore. IGI Poseidon is a 200 km offshore pipeline that crosses under the Ionian Sea, and IGI Onshore is a 600 km onshore pipeline.⁶⁵ As Azerbaijan is seen as the main supplier for natural gas to these pipelines, the IGI

Turkey and Italy are cooperating in the construction of the Interconnection Turkey-Greece-Italy (ITGI) in which Russia and Gazprom are not directly involved.

Poseidon is planned to coincide with the new Azerbaijani gas coming on stream through Shah Deniz Stage 2, which will produce 8.6 bcm/y of natural gas, matching the capacity of IGI

Poseidon pipeline.⁶⁶ The ITGI will also connect Greece and Bulgaria with a 170 km long pipeline from Komotini in Greece to Stara Zagora in Bulgaria. Thus, southeast European countries will also benefit from this pipeline since it diversifies the supply routes and enhance the energy supply security in Greece, Italy and Bulgaria while increasing the EU's energy security in general.

There have been some concerns over the ITGI project due to the EU's interest in the construction of another pipeline which will bring Caspian energy sources

to Europe, namely Nabucco. Nabucco also aims to connect the Middle East, Caspian and Egypt to Europe as part of the Southern Corridor. The pipeline project will be 3,300 km long, and connect Caspian and Middle Eastern energy resources with Turkey, Bulgaria, Romania, Austria and Hungary. Construction is to be started in 2013 and solving issues between Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, and Russia regarding the Caspian Sea is crucial for the smooth functioning of this project. When the construction is completed, Nabucco and ITGI will be complementary pipelines, although they will receive natural gas from the same energy-producing countries, since they distribute it to EU countries from different routes through different transit countries. They will both increase the amount of natural gas to be carried from the Caspian region to the EU countries.

However, at present, the ITGI is a more mature project than Nabucco.⁶⁷ The pipeline connecting Greece and Turkey is already functioning and the technical and environmental studies of the link between Italy and Greece, as well as Bulgaria are completed. Also, it is argued that it is the cheapest project that can be implemented right away with the volumes of gas from Shah Deniz 2.⁶⁸ ITGI will be a crucial pipeline for Italy and the EU as its capacity will be much larger than the Algerian and Russian projects. It is estimated that ITGI will deliver 9 Gm³/y natural gas, whereas the pipelines from Algeria and Russia have capacity of 3.3-3.2 Gm³/y.⁶⁹

Conclusion

Both the Turkish and Italian governments aim to increase their roles in their particular regions as energy hubs through collaborative projects in the energy sector as the need for secure, stable and reliable transit countries is increasing. It can be argued that this need will continue to increase as the need for natural gas grows, especially for electricity generation in Europe. Since the 1970s, Italy has been active in constructing pipelines that bring Algerian and Libyan gas to Italy while Turkey was able to focus on Caspian, Middle Eastern and Russian gas since the 1990s and the end of the Cold War. It has also been realized that there is a certain need for cooperation among southeast European and the Mediterranean countries to secure energy supplies for the EU, thus cooperation increased between Greece, Turkey and Italy in the 2000s.

Nevertheless, the necessary energy resources for Europe can only be transported if Russia, the largest energy-producing country, is included in the pipeline projects. Russian influence on the Caspian and Caucasian countries cannot be denied as it is the biggest and most secure market for Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan and other countries in the Caspian region. As a result, as Turkey has increased its efforts to have concrete agreements with Russia, Italian energy companies, namely ENI, have joined in the cooperation between Russia and Turkey in building pipelines

that would pass from Turkey and will increase the security of energy supply for the EU countries.

The necessary energy resources for Europe can only be transported if Russia, the largest energy-producing country, is included in the pipeline projects.

However, the cooperation between Turkey, Italy and Russia in most projects has demonstrated that the good will of energy-producing, transit and energy-consuming countries is not enough for projects to be successful. The Samsun-Ceyhan crude oil pipeline and the Burgas-Alexandroupolis pipeline projects have especially showed that competition among regional countries, Bulgaria, Greece, and Turkey in this case, hinders efforts for diversifying energy resources and transit routes. As regional countries compete with each other to be the main energy hub for carrying Caspian, Middle Eastern and Russian oil and gas to the energy-consuming countries of Europe, there is a danger of collusion among the projects. Also, all the transit and energy-consuming countries aim for the same resources which decreases the efficiency of the pipeline projects. Therefore, there is an urgent need for cooperation at the regional level, in addition to bilateral and/or multilateral collaborative projects to be able to secure the energy needs of the EU as well as other energy import-dependent countries such as Turkey.

Thus, regional cooperation is most needed in the Black Sea region among Russia, Turkey, Bulgaria, Romania, Ukraine and Moldova. This cooperation would increase the effectiveness and quality of the energy transit, security of supply, and the implementation of cooperation agreements. Since the competition among the regional countries prevents the construction and smooth functioning of the pipeline projects, regional cooperation is very much needed to bring all the transit countries together to create a coherent transmission policy.

The debates over the Samsun-Ceyhan, Nabucco and ITGI projects demonstrate that as the energy-producing, consuming and transit countries try to increase their roles in the energy sector, the competition between projects hinders the construction of these pipelines as it delays the secure, stable and reliable energy transport to the EU. It needs to be remembered that the construction of pipelines is expensive and difficult due to the volatile political and economic situation in the Caspian, the Caucasus and the Middle East regions. It is believed that there is a need for a strong investor and a political and economic figure to sustain the projects, which, in most of the cases, is the EU. However, the EU's lack of a coherent energy policy affects the commitment of the producing and transit countries, and results in competing pipeline projects which aim at the same energy-producing countries.

Therefore, there is an urgent need for the EU to make a coherent, single-voiced policy with an aim to increase energy security, respond to the needs of the member states and the energy-

producing and transit countries in order to prevent self-destructive projects while increasing complementary projects to bring Russian, Turkmen, Azerbaijani, and Mediterranean gas to EU countries.

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Italian-Turkish Relations: Potential and Limits of a ‘Strategic Partnership’

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Abstract

Italy and Turkey have built over the decades a partnership based on economic cooperation, shared international concerns, and a common vision of Turkey's future as a member of the European Union. Italian perceptions of Turkey, however, are negatively affected by anti-Muslim sentiments among the Italian public. Negative views about Turkey's post-Kemalist establishment have become more widespread also among Italian elites in the context of the debate on Turkey's 'drift from the West'. The "Arab Spring" of 2011, which has forced Ankara to appreciate the common challenges it faces in the MENA region together with the rest of the West, has partly assuaged concerns of a "de-alignment", confirming that Turkey has specific ambitions but also broadly shares Western strategic assessments. While Rome remains committed to Turkey's EU aspirations, the fading of the membership perspective since 2005 has led Italian governments to support the accession process mainly as way to further strengthen bilateral ties. The relationship, finally, is adjusting to new power realities. Turkey's ascent at a time of economic and political difficulties in Italy and in the EU, raises questions of influence in areas of common

presence. Ongoing strategic realignments in the MENA region present opportunities for Italian-Turkish cooperation, but also highlight areas of friction.

Key Words

Italy, Turkish foreign policy, Arab Spring, European integration, Mediterranean, public opinion.

Introduction: Italian Arguments about Turkey and Turkey's EU Membership

Support for closer ties between Italy and Turkey and for Turkey's EU bid has been historically strong and largely bipartisan in Italy. Because of its long-standing commitment to Turkey's European integration and zealous advocacy of this goal among more skeptical EU members, Italy has been able to present itself as Turkey's "best friend" in Europe- a characterization that has probably not been taken literally by

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Ankara and to which Italians themselves have not always given proper follow up in terms of bold initiatives in the EU context.

Pro-Turkey arguments made by Italian politicians of progressive or conservative orientations are similar, even though they are sometimes ranked differently or are given different emphasis.¹ The central one is the “common Mediterranean identity” of Italy and Turkey. Italy still has historical legacies and interests in the Mediterranean region and has since long aspired to develop a successful “Mediterranean policy” as a third dimension of an international strategy that since World War II has been based on two main pillars: Europeanism (European integration) and Atlanticism (a firm alignment with the United States).² In fact, the emphasis put by Italian statesmen on Italy’s and Turkey’s “Mediterraneanness” is strictly linked to broader considerations about the future of the European project and Western security. From an Italian perspective, the enlargement of the EU to Turkey would help shift the axis of European integration towards the south, thus compensating for the eastern enlargements of 2004 and 2007.³ Italy has endorsed the “reunification” of the European continent after the fall of the Berlin Wall but has not hidden its frustrations with the comparatively

much less developed southern and Mediterranean dimensions of European cooperation. In a speech given at Ankara University in the fall of 2009, Italy’s President Giorgio Napolitano went so far as to argue that the EU needs Turkey if it wants to become a true “European power” (“*Europe puissance*”).⁴

Italy has also a vested interest in “Mediterranean stability” broadly defined, a goal that has been challenged by several developments, most recently the uprisings in the Arab world. The Mediterranean basin provides a gateway for Italian economic interests to foreign markets, but is also the backdoor for

Support for closer ties between Italy and Turkey and for Turkey’s EU bid has been historically strong and largely bipartisan in Italy.

illegal immigration and trafficking to the Italian peninsula. In this respect, Rome has been looking at Ankara as a natural and essential interlocutor. As both first-rank regional actors and NATO allies, Italy and Turkey are seen in Rome as natural partners in “Mediterranean security”. Common security priorities include control of terrorist and criminal activities and illicit trade flows across the Mediterranean basin, but also the shared concern that developments in the conflict-ridden Middle East do not spread or spill-over and transform the Mediterranean Sea into a transmission belt for instability in Europe and Eurasia. In the context of the current uprisings and conflicts in the EU’s southern neighborhood, Italian elites have largely subscribed to the popular

view that Turkey can represent a source of inspiration for other predominantly Muslim societies engaged in a process of democratic change. Whereas until recently Turkey was mainly seen as the regional power that could talk and mediate with Arab regimes that had ambiguous or adversarial relationships with the West, now it is seen as the actor that can pressure challenged dictators to adopt reform or to step down - the case of Syria- while influencing societal and political developments in countries such as post-Mubarak Egypt and post-Ben Ali Tunisia in which mass forces coming from "political Islam" are faced with the choice of whether to pursue political power through democratic means in secular, multi-party political systems or by establishing non-democratic Islamist regimes.

A second common pro-Turkey argument made by Italian elites and experts has a markedly geo-economic flavor: Turkey's geo-economic value to Europe is that of "energy hub" connecting the European mainland to the gas- and oil- rich regions in the south and east, namely the Caspian basin, Central Asia, Iran, and Iraq. Energy relations are a particularly important driver of Turkish-Italian bilateral cooperation given Italy's high level of dependency on foreign sources and the presence in the Turkish market of some of Italy's leading energy firms, such as Ente Nazionale Idrocarburi (ENI). Because of its historically active presence in gas- and oil- rich countries of North Africa and the Middle East, some

have argued that ENI has in effect been the main author of Italy's Mediterranean policy.⁵ The recent crisis in Libya, a country where both Turkey and Italy have been historically deeply engaged, has displayed the role that strategic firms in both countries play in the bilateral relationship while also highlighting the potential for competition on issues such as access to natural resources.

Civilizational and Religious Factors

Other pro-Turkey arguments made by Italian elites have to do with cultural or even 'civilizational' considerations. Italian politicians have fully bought into the metaphor of the 'bridge' that Western leaders and some Turkish politicians have used when trying to capture the defining element of Turkey's identity as a nation and its geopolitical role as a regional power. As a Muslim society with secular institutions and a republican form of government, Turkey has been presented to the Italian public, as was noted already, as a model of the successful encounter of Islam with democracy and of Eastern and Western cultures. The Italian center-right has placed particular emphasis on Turkey's assets as a Western country allied to the US and integrated in NATO that can conduct a credible and highly valuable dialogue with Middle East regimes. The Italian center-left has also often stressed the positive impact that Muslim Turkey's EU membership would have on the

future of the European project itself, making the EU a more open and plural multicultural entity.⁶

As both first-rank regional actors and NATO allies, Italy and Turkey are seen in Rome as natural partners in “Mediterranean security”.

Cultural and ‘geo-civilizational’ arguments, however, are far from uncontroversial in Italy and have, in fact, often been challenged, or even openly rebutted, by sections of the same establishment that is officially pro-Turkey, especially when it comes to Turkey’s EU bid. In fact, Italian conservatives seem currently divided on Turkey and Turkey’s European integration. Turkey’s very belonging to European and Western civilization is questioned by parties, or individual leaders within parties, that subscribe to the view that Europe’s response to the dangers and challenges of globalization should be to rediscover its roots and tradition, starting with Christianity. These are the same parties demanding that European officials in Brussels more rigorously and conservatively define Europe’s borders, geographically as well as culturally.⁷

The Northern League (NL), a powerful party and important partner of Prime Minister Berlusconi’s center-right coalition government, has been vocally opposed to Turkey’s EU membership from the start on the grounds that Turkey’s Muslim identity makes it simply unfit for what is seen, essentially, as a community

of Christian nations.⁸ A xenophobic and anti-immigration regionalist party, the NL has also repeatedly used Turkey as a proxy in other contentious domestic debates. In NL’s propaganda, Turkey has become synonymous with “Muslims” or the “Islamic threat”. The NL campaign against the construction of mosques in northern Italy, for instance, has been presented also as an “anti-Turkey” campaign (even though Turkish minorities in Italy are negligible, the large Muslim ones being made of Albanians, North Africans, and Pakistanis). Campaigns against multiculturalism and in favor of strict regulations on migration quotas and flows have too been presented as anti-Muslim/anti-Turkey initiatives. In fact, among the arguments that the NL and xenophobic groups in the Italian far right have made against Turkey is that, once admitted into the EU, Turkey would act as the spokesperson and agent for Muslim communities across Europe, thus fomenting anti-Christian fanaticism, perhaps Jihad, and working like a ‘Trojan horse’ for the collapse of the European integration project from within.⁹ Statements by some Arab leaders—including Libya’s Gaddafi in August 2010—according to which Turkey’s EU membership would help Arabs convert Europeans to Islam have undoubtedly reinforced this fear.¹⁰ Events in 2010, when Turkey was often openly criticized in Washington and other Western capitals for its de-alignment from Western policy towards Iran, gave further ammunition to arguments about a new international ‘Islamic coalition’ led by Ankara.

Despite the threat of an anti-Turkey referendum if Turkey's EU membership negotiations ever came to a successful end, however, it seems unlikely that the NL or any other Italian party would be truly willing to face the consequences of an Italian veto at the European level, moving from rhetoric to deeds. What is sure is that, directly or indirectly, anti-immigration and xenophobic Italian parties will keep working to the detriment of Turkey's image among Italians, finding support from other sections of the Italian political elite, especially those of conservative and populist orientations.

"Turkey-skeptics" are found in growing numbers, in fact, also in the ranks of Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi's Freedom's People, the largest center-right party. Despite the US government's long-standing advocacy of Turkey's European integration, sections of Italian conservatives have combined a strong pro-US, pro-Atlanticist orientation during the Bush years with a wariness of Islam and deep skepticism of Muslim cultures, including the Turkish one, which are seen as hard to integrate in "Western civilization" and prone to fanaticism.¹¹ This has led many to look at Turkey as only 'imperfectly Western'-a position common to Orientalists in Europe and in America who have often described Turkey as a "torn country". More recently, opinions of Italian conservatives have been influenced by the international debate on Turkey's alleged "drift from the West", which has only reinforced concerns of those

who have looked at Turkey since the 2000s as 'hanging on a balance' because of the rise of a political elite open to democratic principles but also "rooted in Islam".¹² Domestic developments, such as the "Ergenekon" investigation and the many controversies surrounding it, or the most recent attempts to change the Turkish Constitution without first reaching a broad consensus in the Turkish parliament, have been followed with concern by Italian elites. Their conclusion has often been that the new 'Islamic establishment's power agenda often takes priority over its democracy agenda, and that in any event Turkey's current ruling party sees democratization as inseparable from the complete defeat of Turkey's traditional secular and allegedly more pro-Western elites. Worries about ongoing Islamization, moreover, have been reinforced by episodes such as the killings of members of the small Christian community in Turkey, such as the assassination in Iskenderun in June 2010 of Archbishop Luigi Padovese, the Apostolic Vicar of Anatolia.¹³

Newspapers such as *Il Giornale* or *Libero* have been in some instances the vanguard of this campaign against Turkey based on a conflation of (often simplistic) arguments about Turkey's alleged simultaneous religious, political, and geopolitical drifts. News coming from Turkey are chosen selectively and alarm is created around episodes that send a negative image of Turkey and weaken its 'Western credentials'. The assassination of Mons. Padovese

offered fresh new material for this type of ideological stance on Turkey. Even though at the beginning the Pope himself had excluded religious motivations for the assassination, several newspapers made the case that this episode could not be underestimated as it tragically testified to the deeper and broader trends cutting across contemporary Turkey.¹⁴ Articles appeared soon after the event commenting not only on the condition of Christians in Turkey—described as the bearers of truth and the defenders of freedom in a society that excludes them and tries to repress them—but also on Turkey’s twin processes of democratization and modernization.¹⁵ The latter was presented as highly uncertain and in any case irrelevant as the defining dynamic of today’s Turkey would be “Islamization”.

Especially since the apostolic trip to Turkey in 2006, Benedict XVI has worked to promote interreligious dialogue between Catholic Christians and Muslims.

The presence of these views in the Italian debate should not be confused with a general opposition to Turkey among conservatives. A real debate, although not always sophisticated and informed enough, nonetheless seems to be ongoing. Silvio Berlusconi, for reasons that have to do also with his personal and often-publicized friendship with Turkish three-time Prime Minister Recep Tayyip

Erdoğan, is a self-proclaimed “friend of Turkey” and has been consistently a strong advocate of Turkey’s EU membership. The leader of the post-fascist Italian right, Gianfranco Fini, an outspoken supporter of closer ties between politics and the Catholic-Christian ethics, has expressed strong support for Turkey and its European future. Visiting the tomb of Atatürk in 2008 as president of the Italian parliament’s lower chamber, Fini praised Turkey for its progress towards democracy and called for a fight against negative stereotypes of Turkish culture and religion among the Italian and European public. Farefuturo, a think-tank of the Italian right engaged in developing a new ‘worldview’ for Italian conservatives, also closely follows developments in Turkey and has often highlighted the value that closer Turkish-Italian and EU-Turkish relations could have on the future of Europe as a whole.¹⁶

Italian Catholics of conservative orientations are currently divided on Turkey.¹⁷ The Union of the Center (*Unione di Centro*), the party closest to the Catholic Church in Italy, hosts among its ranks both intransigent opponents of Turkey’s European integration and supporters of a dialogue between Turkish Islamic moderates and Europe’s Christian democrats.¹⁸ Rocco Buttiglione, an old-time leader of Italian “Catholic moderates” and a Turkey skeptic himself, has nonetheless lent strength to the argument that the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) can be seen in many ways as a

Turkish version of *Democrazia Cristiana* (the Christian Democratic Party that ruled Italy throughout the Cold War years).¹⁹ Consequently, he and other “moderates” have worked so that the AKP can establish formal ties with the European People’s Party in the European Parliament. Their argument is that both moderate Christians and Islamists are interested, from their respective religious standpoints, in a renegotiation of the place of religion in the public sphere. Both favor an understanding of secular institutions as non-religious and not anti-religious, as implied by secularism. They also both reject relativism, and insist on a notion of progress as a progression towards the religious truth, rather than departure from tradition.

The perspective of the Vatican itself is arguably even more critical in influencing Italian Christian public opinion. Opposed to Turkey’s EU membership on the grounds that Europe must be defined in Christian terms, after being elected Pope Benedict XVI has been more restrained in his statements.²⁰ Especially since the apostolic trip to Turkey in 2006, Benedict XVI has worked to promote interreligious dialogue between Catholic Christians and Muslims and has concentrated on verifying Turkish authorities’ commitment to the protection of the Christian community in Anatolia, generally avoiding comments that could be read as a “no” to Turkey in the EU.²¹ Some in the Vatican have criticized the opportunistic use of Christian rhetoric

to support a message that at the bottom is xenophobic and intolerant- a critique that seems aimed at certain initiatives of the NL in particular.²²

A last note on the supporters of Turkey is needed. Those in the Italian elites who have advocated Turkey’s full integration into the EU precisely on the grounds that Turkey’s identity as a Muslim country would strengthen Europe, showing that the EU is not an exclusive club of Christian nations and that a “clash of civilizations” is avoidable, have indirectly (and inadvertently) lent substance to the view that Turkey is indeed a ‘different’ country. In other words, the very choice to see Muslim culture as the outstanding feature of contemporary Turkish identity and the core element of the “New Turkey” emerged in the past decade from the crumbling of the Kemalist establishment has reinforced the slippery “civilizational discourse” on Turkey, weakening in parallel alternative approaches.

The Economic Argument

If cultural and civilizational arguments about Turkey have engendered controversy, especially in recent years, the economic argument has kept many otherwise potential Turkey skeptics restrained. Turkey has become over the decades one of the main markets for Italian products and foreign investment. Italy has had a trade surplus with Turkey in the past years, while bilateral trade has passed from around 7 billion dollars

in 2004 to 16 billion dollars in 2010.²³ The economic crisis of 2008-2009 has negatively affected the relationship (Italian exports suffered greatly from the contraction of Turkish demand between 2008 and 2009) and the ongoing diversification of Turkey's import and export patterns has confronted Italy with the reality of fast-rising competitors, such as China (the Italian share in Turkey's import market has fallen in recent years from 7.1% in 2004 to 5.5% in 2008 and 2009). Despite this, Italy was one of Turkey's top trade partners in 2010. The level of interpenetration of the Italian and Turkish economies is such that powerful established economic lobbies in both countries favor even closer ties. In Italy, thirst for investment in the Turkish market seems to be on the rise (Italian investment in Turkey has increased by 26% between 2008 and 2010) and has been notably accompanied by the call for a swift integration of Turkey in the EU. Many of Italy's firms in the field of energy (ENI, ENEL), defense (Finmeccanica), banking (Unicredit), and automobiles (FIAT) do business or have joint ventures in Turkey. Their position is well represented by the former head of the Italian business association and the chairman of Ferrari, Luca Cordero di Montezemolo, who argued already in 2007 that, from an economic standpoint, Turkey is already largely integrated into the European Union and should therefore also officially become a member.²⁴ The role that the 1995 Customs Union between Turkey and the EU has played in creating this situation, however, leads to a question:

is Turkey's full membership in the EU seen as really necessary from a business perspective? The answer from leading sectors of the Italian business is a "yes". Companies making massive structural investments in Turkey, such as Unicredit in banking, admit that they have a vested interest in full membership as this would have a direct bearing on sovereign and political risks estimates from which their investment plans and long-term profit prospects depend.²⁵ The inflow of foreign capital in Turkey would also be served by Turkey's full membership into the European economic union. In other words, many among Italian firms are interested not just in further growth of the Turkish market, but in Turkish modernization and democratization through Europeanization as a guarantee that the Turkish market will continue to be stable, open, and free. These quite established views, however, have been put to test as a result of recent international economic developments. The Euro crisis of 2010-2011, happening at a time of Chinese-level growth rates for the Turkish economy, could not offer a starker contrast between the Euro zone and the Turkish market. This has led a growing number of Italian elites to acknowledge that Turkey's economic future and performance can be safe, if not brighter, outside the EU.

The inflow of foreign capital in Turkey would also be served by Turkey's full membership into the European economic union.

Elites and Public Opinion

“Pro-Turkey” arguments have managed to neutralize, or at least contain, negative views of Turkey among elites, but the Italian public remains ill-disposed overall about Turkey. Available polls reveal that there is a significant gap between the position of Italian elites (which overall have a good opinion of Turkey) and public opinion (which holds more negative views).²⁶ This gap is particularly noticeable in the center-left in which the elites are very much in favor of Turkey’s EU integration whereas the public is skeptical. In the center-right the gap is narrower apparently only because, as has already been pointed out, even elites are divided.

Prejudice, stereotype and, most often, sheer ignorance still affect Italians’ views on Turkey. The average Italian has only second-hand information about Turkey as Turkey is still not among their favorite touristic destinations in the Mediterranean. Italy’s share of tourism to Turkey was a tiny 2.4% in 2009. Italian tourists prefer Greece over Turkey and traditionally choose Egypt, Tunisia and Morocco as Mediterranean destinations.²⁷ The current turmoil in North Africa and the Middle East may perhaps help rebalancing touristic flows to Turkey’s advantage. Many Italians seem to nonetheless ignore simple basic facts about Turkey’s culture, history and identity, including it being a republic with secular institutions and a long-standing member of Western

organizations such as NATO.²⁸ Many Italians believe that Turkey is an Arab country. When asked about issues concerning religious tolerance, gender equality, and development, Italians tend to put Turkey on a lower level than Arab countries that are given much lower ratings by international agencies. On some issues, such as democratization, Italians underestimate, or simply ignore, the progress made by Turkey in recent years.

The Italian public is comparatively less opposed to its possible membership than other Europeans, in particular the French, the Austrians and the Germans.

Despite these attitudes, Italians seem nonetheless relatively open when it comes to the question of Turkey’s European integration. The Italian public is comparatively less opposed to its possible membership than other Europeans, in particular the French, the Austrians and the Germans. The public also seems to be convinced that membership is set to come some day, displaying less cynicism about the end result of currently stalling EU-Turkey talks than other European publics and Turks themselves.²⁹ Reforms in Turkey, especially as regards gender equality and religious tolerance, moreover, are seen by Italians as capable of changing their views in the future on Turkey itself and this country’s value for the European

project.³⁰ The existence of this dynamic element in Italian perceptions of Turkey can be perhaps connected to the messages from Italian elites. Italians seem to have gotten the point made by the main Italian political parties that, on balance, Turkey means opportunities for Italy and that a democratic and fast developing Turkey is an asset for the EU when addressing the multiple challenges arising from Europe's southern and eastern neighborhoods.

Italy and Turkey in an Evolving International Context

The phrase that Italian politicians generally use to describe the relationship between Italy and Turkey is “strategic partnership”.³¹ The term “strategic” underscores long-standing ties, a convergence of interests that is not contingent but structural, and a long-term commitment to cooperation. In many respects, this characterization is not an overstatement. As has already been pointed out, Italy has for several decades been one of Turkey's key trading partners and an outspoken supporter of Turkey's EU aspirations among EU members. Convergence of interests, moreover, has often translated into concrete cooperation at the bilateral and multilateral levels. Italy and Turkey have both actively worked for the stabilization of the Balkans, often finding themselves as contributing countries to the same international missions. Both Italy and

Turkey have a clear priority in the full stabilization of the Balkans. Italy can rely on historical ties with Albania (in which it led a UN-mandated stabilization effort in 1997, the “Alba Mission”) and strong economic, cultural ties with Slovenia, and areas of Croatia. Turkey, through its Ottoman legacy, has an influence in the entire region, but particularly in Muslim-populated countries, such as Bosnia-Herzegovina.³² This has led to a broad division of responsibilities between Italy and Turkey in the region and joint efforts in some areas.

Italy and Turkey have worked together also in other places of their common neighborhood, including in Lebanon. Lebanon provides the example of Italy and Turkey working together for the solution of a conflict which has threatened to inflame the entire Mediterranean and Middle East. Italy took the lead of the international effort to stabilize Lebanon after the war between Hezbollah and Israel in 2006. Rome was head of the UN-mandated peacekeeping force in the south of the country (UNIFIL II) until January 2010.³³ Turkey, for its part, has combined a presence on the field with indirect mediation between the Syrian and Israeli governments in 2008.³⁴

Italy and Turkey have also cooperated closely within NATO, bringing to the transatlantic alliance a Mediterranean/Southern perspective of security priorities. Recent cooperation included the stabilization of Afghanistan. Traditionally, moreover, Italy and Turkey

are the most reluctant among countries hosting US nuclear capabilities on their territory to accept a major review of US nuclear standing in Europe, as would be instead preferred by Germany. In 2009, Prime Minister Berlusconi claimed credit for having used his personal ties with Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan to remove the initial Turkish veto on the election of Anders Rasmussen to secretary general of NATO.³⁵

Italy and Turkey have both actively worked for the stabilization of the Balkans, often finding themselves as contributing countries to the same international missions.

Another field in which Italy and Turkey have found some alignment is the relationship with Russia. Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin, Prime Minister Berlusconi, and Prime Minister Erdoğan have developed strong personal and political ties. Their cooperation has concentrated on business- especially energy which is at the core of this trilateral relationship. Italy's leading energy firm, ENI, has worked closely with both Moscow and Ankara on opening new routes for gas and oil exports to Europe. In October 2009, Italy, Turkey and Russia signed a joint declaration on the construction of the Samsun-Ceyhan oil pipeline, connecting Turkey's Black Sea coast to the Mediterranean, which will be open to the cooperation of firms from all three countries.³⁶

Moving from regional to international cooperation, in recent years a convergence of interests between Italy and Turkey has emerged on some global issues such as the reform of the UN and a close dialogue with other Western partners on how to develop new international fora such as the G-20.

Challenges to the Partnership

Such wide-ranging cooperation speaks of a strong partnership between Italy and Turkey. In order to be truly "strategic", however, the partnership has to be based on shared priorities and supported by mutually reinforcing national dynamics. Recent trends in both Italian and Turkish foreign policy invite some caution on whether the latter two elements are to be taken for granted.

The main challenge to the partnership mainly comes from what seem to be different national trajectories: on the one hand, a fast-growing economy and rising regional actor with aspirations in the post-Ottoman space and beyond (Turkey); and on the other hand, a mid-sized power with a weakening economy, whose future remains firmly anchored in Euro-Atlantic structures (Italy).

As it comes to the Mediterranean, it is true that both Italy and Turkey are interested in security and stability, but a contrast has emerged about the respective standing and on the strategy to follow in relation to broadly shared strategic objectives. In the transition from the Cold War to the post-bipolar

world, Italy's focus has remained the Mediterranean, traditionally understood as the group of countries facing the Mediterranean basin.³⁷ For Turkey, which during the Cold War had a role in Mediterranean security defending NATO's southern flank, the focus has widened increasingly as to encompass the "Greater Middle East"- which after the fall of the Ottoman Empire was for a long time considered Turkey's backyard from which Ankara should keep disengaged.³⁸ If Italy's engagement in Afghanistan, as with other EU countries, can be best explained as an expression of solidarity with the US, Turkey's engagements in the Afghanistan and Iraq wars directly had to do with Turkey's geopolitical interests and national security concerns, as currently defined. The future of Afghanistan is key to the stability of Central Asia, on which Turkey aims to exert an influence based on cultural and ethnic ties and interest that Italy (despite some recent attempts in countries such as Kazakhstan) cannot parallel.³⁹ The future of Iraq is critical not only to the general political and security equation of the Middle East of which Turkey wants to a leading factor but, more specifically, to the solution of the Kurdish question-still a first-rank security priority for Ankara as dramatically highlighted by the recrudescence of violent acts by PKK in recent months.⁴⁰

Combined with a different geopolitical focus and strategic projection is also a different relationship with the US. In fact, as Italy has concentrated on its Mediterranean priorities, generally

following America's lead in the Middle East, Turkey's re-appreciated interests and security concerns in the region have sometimes led Ankara to question or openly challenge the US strategy on core Middle-East issues.⁴¹ America's occupation of Iraq in 2003, which the Italian government at the time supported (and became later opposed to mainly on the grounds that US action had been unilateral and not in accordance with international law), was instead met with resistance in Turkey, based not just on reservations about US interference in Middle Eastern affairs but on considerations of national interest.⁴² Because of its security concerns, Turkey was forced to promptly develop its own policy towards post-Saddam Iraq, including cross-border armed intervention against the Kurdish separatists of the PKK and, coterminous with the gradual stabilization of Iraq, a new policy of engagement with Kurdish Iraqi authorities.

Lebanon provides the example of Italy and Turkey working together for the solution of a conflict which has threatened to inflame the entire Mediterranean and Middle East.

When it comes to Iran, Italy and Turkey (both economic partners of Teheran) have been supporters of a policy of engagement, as pursued by the Obama administration after taking office in 2009, opposing in any case a

drift towards military confrontation.⁴³ Because of their different position (Turkey shares a long border with the Iranian republic), weight, and ambitions, however, this convergence has proved less strong than it could have initially seemed. Italy's attempt to act as a facilitator of dialogue between the West and Teheran was soon exhausted in 2009 when Foreign Minister Franco Frattini tried to take advantage of Italy's rotating presidency of the G-8 to involve Iran in the international discussions over the future of Afghanistan. This attempt failed not just because of bad timing (the G 8 Summit in Italy took place only weeks after the bloody riots in Teheran following the last presidential elections), but because the strategy of engagement laid out by the US did not achieve the hoped for results, leading the Obama administration to gradually move towards a more assertive stance including a push for global economic sanctions. Considering alignment with America and the rest of the EU as ultimately inescapable, Italy supported the adoption of new economic sanctions against Iran, although insisting that they received wide international support and that were not accompanied by the threat of military intervention-which Frattini had warned would lead to a "catastrophic scenario".⁴⁴

Turkey, for its part, attempted to mediate between the US and Iran in 2009-2010 directly on the nuclear question, fully sharing the goal of preventing Teheran from developing military nuclear weapons- seen as a

threat not only to Western security but to Turkey itself. This role was appreciated and actually urged by the Obama administration. When the Iranian regime suppressed demonstrations after the June 2009 presidential elections, however, the AKP government was among the first to recognize the re-elected president, and, unlike Italy, avoided public condemnation of the bloodshed. More critically, while the Obama administration gradually concluded that engagement did not work, or at least would never deliver if not accompanied by coercive measures such as sanctions, Turkey continued to believe in the potential of dialogue without coercion. The "nuclear fuel deal" signed in May 2010 by Turkey, Brazil and Iran-although similar in many respects to one earlier promoted by the US in the fall of 2009-was criticized in Washington and in Europe as undermining efforts to build a global consensus on a policy of isolation of the Iranian leadership.⁴⁵ Turkey was accused in various Western capitals of 'de-alignment'. Turkish leaders argued instead that their objective has invariably remained that of preventing Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons in a way that avoids a drift towards military confrontation.⁴⁶ As a country with close ties with Turkey and with a similar view of the Iranian problem, Italy was asked by the Obama administration to pressure Ankara to vote together with the other members of the UN Security Council in the run up to the adoption of a new UN resolution demanding sanctions. This attempt clearly failed.⁴⁷ The "no"

vote of Turkey in the UNSC marked a low point in US-Turkish relations and engendered tensions in Western-Turkish relations more broadly. The more recent process of convergence in the context of the Arab Spring, most notably Turkish-Iranian divergent responses to the crisis of the Assad regime in Syria and Ankara's decision to deploy an early warning radar system in Turkey in the framework of the NATO missile defense architecture has helped a great deal in extinguishing anxieties about Turkish-Iranian engagement that were manifested in Western capitals in 2010. As the region remains in flux and Turkish foreign policy under constant review, however, new divergences in Turkish-Western approaches to Iran and other Middle Eastern actors are not to be ruled out.

Ankara has contended that, on the contrary, the deterioration of Turkey-Israeli relations has been caused by Israel's increasingly uncompromising approach to foreign relations.

Another area in which the limits of the Italian-Turkish strategic convergence have become apparent is the Arab-Israeli peace process and attitudes towards Israel in particular. Both countries have long been committed to a solution of what they see as the central source of instability in the Middle East. Both, as already pointed out, have worked to limit the spread of conflict, as evidenced by their engagement in Lebanon. Both,

finally, have worked for the solution of humanitarian emergencies and poverty among Palestinians. While Italy has remained a committed ally of Israel even in the presence of growing international isolation of Jerusalem, however, Turkey has changed its policy towards Israel since the Gaza offensive of December 2008. Turkish-Israeli bilateral relations have moved from good, to fraying in 2010, to zero in 2011.⁴⁸ The debate is open on whether this has been the case.

Critics of Turkey, in Rome as in other Western capitals, sometimes see this dangerous shift towards open rivalry as the manifestation of a larger "shift of axis" in Turkey's foreign policy motivated by Muslim solidarity and a re-appreciation of Turkey's alleged "Islamic vocation".⁴⁹ According to this view, Ankara would have an interest in the isolation of Israel and a weakening of the West's standing in the region. Ankara has contended that, on the contrary, the deterioration of Turkey-Israeli relations has been caused by Israel's increasingly uncompromising approach to foreign relations.⁵⁰ The Gaza offensive undercut Turkey's role as a mediator between Israel and its rival Syria. This was a particularly negative development as the Turkish government was apparently not informed of the launch of the military operation. Turkish officials therefore felt bypassed and humiliated at a very delicate moment of what they saw as a generous and demanding mediation effort. The Gaza embargo and the policy of *divide et impera* over Palestinians pursued by Israel since then have made

the possibility of a peace agreement much harder while giving Israel's rivals, such as Iran, a justification for a policy of even greater assertiveness and arm-wrestling with the West. All this, according to Turkish officials, has not only seriously affected Israel's image in the world, but also discredited Jerusalem as one of Turkey's key partners in regional stability. With the so-called "flotilla crisis" of May 2010, which claimed the lives of several Turkish citizens by Israeli security forces, and failure to reach reconciliation thereafter, Turkish-Israeli relations have come to a complete breakdown.

Italy, by contrast, has seen bilateral relations with Israel warm up in recent years, with the Berlusconi governments in particular striving to present Rome as Israel's "number-one European friend".⁵¹ The reasons for this are to be found in the international as much as in the domestic context (part of the Italian center-right has become resolutely pro-Israel as a consequence of both its pro-Americanism and its fears of Islamic politics in the region). Consequences have been tangible. Italy's stance on the "flotilla crisis", in which Rome was skeptical about the establishment of an independent international investigation commission as proposed by Turkey, irritated Turkish officials.⁵² Italy's position on Israel and Palestine in the context of the most recent attempt by Palestinian authorities to gain statehood recognition at the UN has also highlighted very significant divergences with Turkish policy. In fact, Italy's friendships with both Israel and Turkey have clearly been

put to a test by recent developments. For the time being, the Italian government has downplayed the problem, stressing the positive role that Rome wants to play as a facilitator of dialogue among all Mediterranean and Middle-East actors. Doubts are growing, however, on whether this approach can be maintained in the presence of exacerbating Turkish-Israeli divisions.

Conclusion: A Look Ahead

The recent Arab uprisings have added great uncertainty and fluidity to already highly unstable international relations in the MENA region. Main regional players are struggling to chart a new course, taking into account the new challenges to security and peace as well as the new opportunities for stabilization and development through democratization that the crumbling regional order offers. Both in America and in Europe, the widespread view is that Turkey will be an even more prominent factor in the new strategic and security equation of the new Middle East, and that Western-Turkish engagement is therefore necessary and of great strategic importance. In this context, Italy has been among the most outspoken in Europe about the need for closer strategic coordination between Ankara and EU capitals, pending progress in the accession process, in their respective policies and initiatives towards the southern neighborhood.⁵³ The opinion in Rome is that Turkey can be a key partner in the EU's effort to support the ongoing political transitions. Turkey's influence is also seen as critical

to put pressure on those regimes that by refusing to adopt reforms are left with the prospect of protracted domestic unrest and conflict.

The recent Arab uprisings have added great uncertainty and fluidity to already highly unstable international relations in the MENA region.

As much as Italy and Turkey will undoubtedly find new opportunities for cooperation in the new context, the logic of the “Arab Spring” seems to be only reinforcing trends highlighted earlier, including Turkey’s ascent to a position of influence in the region that European countries traditionally engaged across the Mediterranean, such as Italy, will hardly match. In some cases, Italy will find it useful to seek greater coordination with Turkey, and to promote such cooperation in the European context, as a way to advance its national interests and the EU’s. In others, such as post-Gaddafi Libya, cooperation will develop side by side with competition for influence and economic advantage. While Italy seems set to maintain a leading position among European countries engaged in Libya, Ankara will try to leverage its historically closer ties with the local elites in Benghazi, currently leading the transition effort, to build a stronger economic and political relationship with new Libya than the one that it had developed with the Gaddafi regime. This could over time alter the balance of foreign influence in the country, including as concerns the highly lucrative

oil market. Italian-Turkish cooperation, also as a way to offset France’s regional influence and possible advances in Libya and elsewhere, is a possibility, but will encounter problems if taken too far. Rome needs full support from France in the EU context as long as it remains economically and financially weak.

More broadly, Turkey will use its newly gained status as a prominent Muslim regional power and its appeal as a fast developing economy to further its influence, partly “stealing the scene” from European countries in the region for which power projection in the area will require greater work. This will not necessarily lead Italy to downgrade its partnership with Turkey or to end its sponsorship of Turkey’s EU membership in Brussels, but it may nonetheless create greater fluidity in the relationship. As attention shifts even further from what Italy and the EU can do for Turkey to what Turkey and the EU can do together, the Italian elites’ major preoccupation will indeed have to be finding ways to adjust what has become over the years a very valuable partnership to the new international realities. In other words, although still conceived of in a wider European framework and aimed at larger international results, the development of the “strategic partnership” between Italy and Turkey will require in the months and years ahead an even more prominent bilateral component focused on the reaffirmation of mutual interests over emerging divergences.

Endnotes

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- 12 See, for instance, Mario Rimini, "'Freedom Flotilla', l'Europa non deve darla vinta alla Turchia", *L'Occidentale*, 1 June 2010, at <http://www.loccidentale.it/articolo/ dopo+i+morti+di+gaza,+l%27e uropa+non +deve+darla+vinta+alla+turchia.0091640> [last visited 25 June 2011]; Enzo Bettiza, "La Turchia più lontana dall'Europa", *La Stampa*, 2 June 2010; Carlo Panella, "Nostalgia ottomana. La Turchia non sogna più l'Europa", *Libero*, 6 June 2010; Luigi de Biase, "Supremazia Turca", *Il Foglio*, 11 June 2010.
- 13 See, "Turchia. Ucciso a coltellate a Iskenderun monsignore Padovese, vicario dell'Anatolia", at <http://www.ilmattino.it/articolo.php?id=104799&sez=MONDO> [last visited 28 June 2011]. Mons. Padovese was killed by his own driver, a Turkish Muslim recently converted to Catholicism. Padovese had been a strong advocate of interreligious dialogue.

- 14 Soon after the assassination of Mons. Padovese, Pope Benedict XVI declared that the killing had no religious and political motivations and that the dialogue between Christians and Muslims shall not be interrupted by such tragic episodes. Later, several news agencies, in particular AsiaNews, and some in the Catholic clergy explained that the assassination had clear religious motivations. See, "Interview with Pope Benedict XVI during his trip to Cyprus", 4 June 2010, at http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2010/june/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20100604_intervista-cipro_en.html. [last visited 10 June 2011]; On later developments, see, Gabriel Bertinetto, "Vescovo italiano ucciso in Turchia: 'il killer urlava Allah è grande'", *L'Unità*, 8 June 2010.
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- 33 See, Lucia Marta, "The UNIFIL II Mission in Lebanon: Italy's Contribution", Real Instituto Elcano Papers, at http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/wps/portal/rielcano_eng/Content?WCM_GLOBAL_CONTEXT=/elcano/elcano_in/zonas_in/defense+security/ari125-2009 [last visited 12 August 2011].
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