



LUND UNIVERSITY  
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# The Southern Gas Corridor and Turkey's Pipeline Politics at the Post-Cold War Period

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## **1. Abstract**

The energy resources (notably oil and gas) are of strategic significance for national power. The resources are significant in both economic terms constituting the drivers of global economy and in political terms. The political essentials of the resources make their “high card” status in the international political gamble. The “high card” status stems from the assessment that the holder of the “card” (oil and gas resources or resource supply routes) can throw its “power card” and change the balance of power, power distribution in the international politics. Turkey, a state actively involved in the international political gamble, also pursues to hold the “high card”. At the post-Cold War period Turkey has come up with the foreign policy vision of a potentially achievable hegemony in the regions such as the broader Caspian, the Middle East. In line with its new foreign policy vision Turkey seeks to balance relations with Iran, Russia, EU and U.S. and to increase its power in the respective relations. Implementing proactive pipeline politics, Turkey is interested in becoming a central “energy-bridge” linking the regions such as the broader Caspian, the Middle East, prospectively the Black Sea and Europe. The regions coincide with the regions where Turkey strategically views itself as a hegemon or an influential power. In this respect the research aims to explore the “empowering effect” of Turkey’s pipeline politics.

Key words: international politics, balance of power, geopolitics, Turkey’s pipeline politics, Southern Gas Corridor.

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## 2. List of Abbreviations

Bcm	Billion cubic meters
Bcf	Billion cubic feet
BP	British Petroleum
BTC	Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline
BTE	Baku-Tbilisi-Erzerum gas pipeline
EIA	U.S. Energy Information Administration
EU	European Union
IEA	International Energy Agency
KRG	Kurdish Regional Government
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
OPEC	Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries
RFE/RL	Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty
TANAP	Trans-Anatolian gas pipeline
TAP	Trans-Adriatic gas pipeline
Tcf	Trillion cubic feet
TGI	Turkey-Greece-Italy Interconnector
TPAO	Turkish Petroleum
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
U.S.	The United States of America
USSR	The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (the Soviet Union)

### **3. Introduction**

#### ***3.1 Introducing the research***

In the 1990s the collapse of the Soviet Union shifted the global and regional balance of power. Since the fall of the Soviet Union a new system of balance of power (distribution of power) has started to emerge in the regions such as the broader Caspian, the Middle East and the Black Sea. Turkey, interested in expansion in the regions, views potential opportunities given the changed political landscape. With the fall of the Soviets the assumed threat of military and ideological expansion into Turkey has disappeared. NATO respectively has lost its former strategic significance for Turkey stemming from the guaranteeing of Turkey's national security. Turkey hence considers the chances to implement a foreign policy more of independent of U.S. and NATO "supervision". Furthermore, from the beginning of 2000s already Turkey strategically views itself as an established hegemon. The strategic vision (of Turkey's foreign policy) suggests that Turkey owns the potential to achieve a dominant power position in the regions such as the broader Caspian, the Middle East, and to increase its power in relations with traditional NATO ally U.S. and EU states.

The collapse of the Soviet Union has opened up the Caspian holding oil and gas resources provoking power struggle for the access to and control over the energy resources and supply routes (strategically significant factors for regional influence). The power struggle, meantime, is observed in the oil and gas rich Middle Eastern region. Actively involved in the power struggle, Turkey seeks to gain access to the energy resources for its developing economy "hungry" for oil and gas consumption. Turkey's power struggle, however, is not solely limited to its objective economic demand. Turkey demonstrates a proven interest in becoming a "central bridge" (a centre of gravity) in the Southern Gas Corridor. Implementing proactive politics, Turkey has been promoting the crossing of pipelines delivering energy to Europe via its territory (the Turkish route). Turkey pursues

to link the Caspian “bridge” (pipelines from the Caspian), prospectively Iranian (gas pipeline from Iran) and Russian (gas pipeline from Russia) “bridges” to itself as a central “bridge” and then to link with the European “bridge”. The regions to be “bridged” coincide with the areas where Turkey strategically views itself as a hegemon.

### ***3.2 The research purpose and questions***

The research, “The Southern Gas Corridor and Turkey’s Pipeline Politics at the Post-Cold War Period” focuses on Turkey’s pipeline politics at the post-Cold War period. Applying to the case study method and critically evaluating the secondary sources (the relevant data collected from books, journals, newspapers, publications by leading think tanks), the research purports to explore the correlation between Turkey’s broader foreign policy strategy and its pipeline politics.

Framing the analyses on the theory of political realism as an intellectual bases, the research seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What is Turkey’s available power: what are the conducted pipelines, have and how the pipelines changed the balance of power in favour of Turkey in the broader Caspian region, and in relations with Iran, Russia and EU?
2. What is Turkey’s potential power: what are the planned pipelines, is it realistic to expect the planned pipelines will change the distribution of power in favour of Turkey in the broader Caspian region, and in relations with Iran, Russia and EU?

### ***3.3 The structure of the research***

The research is divided into three main chapters entitled

1. The New Great Game and Turkey.
2. Political Realism and the Challenging Schools.
3. Building “Bridges” between Caspian Sea, Black Sea, the Middle East and Europe:  
The Relativity of Turkey’s Available and Potential Power.

The chapter, “The New Great Game and Turkey” addresses and critically assesses the dominant discourses and debates in the literature related to Turkey’s interests in the international politics of energy. The discourses and debates evolve around the issues such as the Caspian “New Great Game”, the geopolitical and geo-economic interests of Turkey in the Caspian “New Great Game” and in the East-West Energy Corridor, and around the limiting factors for the realization of Turkey’s policy agenda.

In the chapter, “Political Realism and the Challenging Schools” the main focus is on three prominent schools of thought in the field of international politics; political realism, constructivism and liberalism. The elaborated issues are the critical points, areas of convergence and divergence among the schools related to international politics and in this broader context to energy politics.

“Building “Bridges” between Caspian Sea, Black Sea, the Middle East and Europe: The Relativity of Turkey’s Available and Potential Power” explores and analyses the basic findings aimed at answering the research questions.

## **4. The Research Method**

### ***4.1 The rationale for the case study method***

The studied research problem is affiliated with the field of political science broadly and international politics specifically. The research deals with a case study method as it focuses on Turkey, particularly on Turkey's pipeline politics at the post-Cold War period. The studied issue, Turkey's pipeline politics at the post-Cold War period and the context, the broader strategy of Turkey's foreign policy are vastly interconnected. The mentioned interconnection constitutes yet another important aspect for the relevance of the applied case study method (Blaxter, Hughes & Tight, 2006). The employed method is also relevant in the sense that it enables to address the studied problem thoroughly (Rugg & Petre, 2007). The method helps to obtain a comprehensive and deep knowledge about the issue.

### ***4.2 Assessing biases***

A very significant aspect of the method is to address biases according to the research purpose. The studied research problem is affiliated with the field of politics, which indicates the issue of biases supporting a certain position in politics is especially relevant to consider. Turkey seeks to promote its own national interests and foreign policy agenda as an ambitious actor in international politics. Turkey can apply different mechanisms to construct a reality in order to push forward its foreign policy agenda. In this sense the creation of a biased knowledge is not an exception. The biased knowledge (largely based on the distortion of facts and populism) can be produced by scholars, politicians, political analysts, policy experts, think tanks, online newspapers and magazines, web sites standing close to the Turkish government propaganda machine and strongly supporting its policy course. The biased information may have the purpose

- to serve as an additional tool to push forward Turkey's pipeline politics and foreign policy agenda, to support the standpoint of Turkey,
- to grant credibility to and attract investment for the construction and conduct of the oil and gas pipelines passing via Turkey,
- to create a perception that the conduct of energy projects such as NABUCCO, TAP-TANAP are politically vital and economically justified, mutually beneficial for Europe and Turkey, are the only and best available alternatives,
- to gain advantage in information wars over main competitors in energy politics such as Russia and Iran,
- to push forward the assumption that the energy pipelines via Turkey can be serious alternatives to the Russian ones and will contribute to Europe's endeavours to diversify its supply routes and highly reduce the dependency on the Russian energy resources,
- to persuade Turkey is capable to guarantee the security of energy routes crossing Turkey,
- generally, to make the key players to adopt a pro-Turkish position with the primary strategic objective to achieve the realization of its foreign and in this broader context energy policy priorities.

#### ***4.3 The data collection and analyses***

The collected data is largely from secondary sources such as books, journals, newspapers and publications by think tanks. As the research problem deals with the field of international politics, the used material relates to the mentioned field in terms of content and represents the works by politicians, policy makers, experts in political science and international affairs, security and economy analysts and academics in the field of political science (see more detailed in bibliography).

The research is conducted in accordance with a critical evaluation of the collected data in order to reveal constructed biases and guarantee accuracy and credibility of the knowledge. While analysing the collected data close attention is paid to such issues as who is the author, from what point of view writes, to which purposes the research/article serves.

It is necessary to determine who is the publisher (think tank, web site, online newspaper, magazine, journal), what is the primary goal of its existence, is it politically involved or affiliated, whose interests it supports (Creswell, 2009).

## 5. The New Great Game and Turkey: Literature Review

*In international politics states act in accordance with national interests defined in terms of power. States ask: "How does the policy affect the power of the nation?"*

*Hans J. Morgenthau (1959)*

The reviewed literature focuses on the dominant discourses and debates relevant to the study subject. The discourses evolve around the issues such as “the Caspian Great Game”, the primary objectives of Turkey’s energy strategy, Turkey’s geopolitical and geo-economic interests in the Caspian region, the Middle East and in the East-West energy corridor. While the viewpoints divide, the advancing debate, simultaneously, touches upon the prospective limiting factors for the implementation of Turkey’s ambitious policy agenda.

### **5.1 The New Great Game in the Caspian region**

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the oil and gas rich Caspian region has become an arena of the New Great Game, an intense geopolitical rivalry for the extraction and transportation of oil and gas from the region. According to Alam (2002), the New Great Game for influence in the region, the control over its energy resources and supply routes is characterized by the convergence of several complex factors and new players. Iran-U.S., Russia-Turkey, Turkey-Iran, Iran-Russia vs U.S.-Turkey, all these gambles shape the New Game. Turkey is viewed as an increasingly key actor and U.S. ally in the new geopolitics of energy. However, Alam states, if Turkey is designed to play a major role in the U.S.

promoted East-West energy corridor, the main competitor, Russia still holds the key to the regional influence due to the existing energy infrastructure and Soviet legacy (Alam, 2002).

The Caspian “Great Game” apparently evolves around the strategic interests of the major powers. Meanwhile, promoting energy transit pipelines from the Caspian, the major powers seek to meet political rather than economic ends, argues Rasizade (2002). In this regard, the policy agendas, the one of U.S. and Turkey significantly differ. Growing economic demand for gas rather than geopolitical interests has predetermined Turkey’s gas trade deals with countries such as Iran, Russia, and Azerbaijan. On the contrary, U.S.’s political objectives to reduce Russia’s influence in the Caucasus by pushing it out of the Caspian Sea and to isolate Iran explain Washington’s lobbying for the economically non-viable Turkish route (Rasizade, 2002).

The collapse of the Soviet Union, Biresselioglu (2011) points out, indeed, has opened up the room for the New Great Game in the Greater Caspian region involving U.S., Russia, Iran, Turkey and EU as the major players. The pipeline routes for the transportation of oil and natural gas from the region are the main competition subject of the Game. Turkey, owing to its “strategic geopolitical location”, has the prospect to establish itself as a main energy route, an “energy supermarket” in the East-West energy corridor, argues the author. NATO member Turkey with its close ethno-linguistic ties with the oil and gas rich Caspian states, with the geographical proximity to world’s 71% of energy resources is believed to obtain the potential to become the key energy transit route, meanwhile, contributing to EU’s energy security. According to Biresselioglu (2011), Turkey’s role is especially enhancing given the fact that EU’s energy security, a major geopolitical issue itself, faces significant challenges stemming from the increasing demand in oil and gas, lack of supply diversification and reliable energy partners.

## *5.2 Turkey's geopolitical and geo-economic interests*

Turkey, actively involved in international politics and in “the Caspian New Great Game” with strong commitment to play a central role in the proposed East-West energy corridor, pursues certain geopolitical and geo-economic interests.

Turkey's energy policy, Babali (2010) states, is not solely limited to the “regional energy hub” aspiration, but rather is within the context of its broader political agenda. Turkey's energy strategy is one of the major pillars of Turkey's re-emergence as a regional geopolitical force.

According to Babali, Turkey's energy strategy has three main thrusts:

1. “to ensure a diversified, reliable, and a cost-effective supply for domestic consumption”,
2. “to liberalize its energy market”,
3. “to become a key transit country and energy hub between the energy producing countries to its east and the energy consuming countries to its west” (Babali, 2010).

Meanwhile, in order to succeed in its energy strategy, Ankara needs reliable suppliers for its domestic market, especially for its gas market, and for cross-border projects like the Turkey-Greece-Italy Interconnector (TGI), NABUCCO and the Trans-Caspian pipeline, argues Babali (2010). If Turkey's neighbouring Azerbaijan, Iran, Iraq and Turkmenistan could be the potential suppliers, several factors such as instability and conflicts make Iran and Iraq politically problematic (Babali, 2010).

The realization of the objectives of Turkey's energy strategy (the reduction of dependency on a single energy supplier and the emergence of the country as a regional energy hub) will enable Ankara to use the energy factor also as a political leverage, argue Coskun and Carlson (2010). In this regard, the authors view the competition from Russia in the form of promoted alternative pipelines and of readiness to use military force (as in the case with Georgia) as limiting factors. However, Turkey's energy policy ambitions are

found realistic referring to the several planned pipelines such as Turkey-Greece-Italy Interconnector, NABUCCO (Coskun & Carlson, 2010).

According to Freifeld (2009), Turkey as an energy bridge between Middle East, Caspian and Europe can actually play a critical role for Europe's energy security providing a reliability. NATO member Turkey, which is also an emerging market, Freifeld (2009) states, can ensure the secure, uninterrupted transit of energy resources through its territory. NABUCCO pipeline project, "a non-Russian controlled gas pipeline passing through Turkey" once realized is predicted to significantly reduce Europe's energy dependency on "unreliable Russian gas supplies" (Freifeld, 2009).

According to Iseri (2007), the post-Soviet Caspian is, indeed, emerging as an alternative to the oil rich Saudi Arabia and becoming a leading source of energy for Europe with Turkey's central role as a transit hub. Receiving strong backing by U.S., NATO member Turkey, located at the crossroads of oil and gas pipelines connecting Caspian Sea, Middle East and Europe, certainly emerges as an energy hub in the region, argues the author. The operating and planned pipelines are destined to guarantee the operation of the East-West Energy corridor with Turkey's role as an energy hub. However, the absence of a common energy policy and vision from EU's side, and the uncertainty of supply sources from Turkey's one emerge as major shortcomings for the realization of Turkey's energy policy designs (Iseri, 2007).

In the view of Tekin and Walterova (2007) Turkey is more significant, than actually is recognized. Turkey is believed to be of geopolitical significance for the Euro-Atlantic community taking into consideration EU's growing energy demand and Turkey's advantageous location nearby major energy producers. The energy pipelines such as BTC, BTE and NABUCCO passing through Turkey will guarantee EU's energy supply diversification and security, one of EU's strategic priorities since 2000, argue Tekin and Walterova (2007). However, the issues related to the infrastructure development, Turkey's dependency on Russian gas supplies are significant limiting factors (Tekin & Walterova, 2007).

Bryza (2010), in addition, predicts that Turkey-KRG rapprochement can play a constructive role for the realization of Turkey's energy projects. If at the beginning of 2000s it would have been impossible, already in May 2012, at a conference in Erbil Turkish Minister of Energy Taner Yıldız referred to a strategic partnership between Turkey and the KRG. Yıldız also called for close cooperation in developing the KRG's oil and gas resources and exporting them via Turkey, mentions Bryza (2010). According to the author, the evolution in Turkey's position was generally motivated by the following factors:

- “economic considerations as Turkish banks, construction companies, and energy brokers started to profit from massive investments in the KRG's energy infrastructure and from the energy trade”,
- the desire to attract KRG's oil and gas into Turkey's energy infrastructure,
- “Ankara's political ambitions to elevate Turkey's geopolitical importance by attracting natural gas from the KRG into the Southern Corridor, and to elevate Turkey's strategic significance as an energy transit hub for Europe, the Caspian, and the Middle East”,
- Turkey's new foreign policy vision largely based on “zero problems with neighbours” principle, as due to the changed political thinking Turkey started to recognize “the potential strategic benefits of pulling Iraqi Kurds under Turkey's geo-economic wing” (Bryza, 2010).

### ***5.3 The limiting factors for Turkey's geopolitical ambitions***

Turkey's dependency on U.S. political support for the promotion of the conducted (BTC, BTE) and planned pipelines, its monopolized energy market, possible energy alliance with Russia are outlined among the limiting factors for Turkey's geopolitical ambitions.

Goldstein (2013), advancing further, finds direct correlation between Turkey's energy policy and its EU accession aspirations. Turkey's steps to become an important mediator between the East and the West by providing both material and diplomatic “bridges” are calculated to facilitate its EU accession process, emphasizes Goldstein (2013). Meanwhile,

U.S.'s promotion, firm backing and counterbalance to the Russian and Iranian influence played the decisive role for the construction and conduct of BTC and BTE pipelines. Simultaneously, Turkey's inability to gain significant lobbying for the energy projects without U.S. backing is problematic and perhaps is one of the major limitations and challenges to Turkey's desire to become a major energy hub, outlines Goldstein (2013). Economically there is a general consensus that Iran represents the cheapest and most viable long term route to transport oil and gas from the Caspian. If U.S. opposition to the Iranian route erodes in the future, Turkey's chances could be severely undermined in playing a major role in the East-West energy corridor. The frozen conflicts in the South Caucasus, the dispute around the legal status of the Caspian Sea can also serve as yet another limiting factors (Goldstein, 2013).

Roberts (2010), on the other hand, stresses the need for its energy market liberalization if Turkey seriously intends to become an energy hub (notably a trading hub, a market place where oil and gas are bought and sold). If Turkey's geographical location speaks in favour of its "regional energy hub" aspiration, its monopolized energy market drags it far behind. In terms of geography, Roberts (2010) mentions, Turkey has an advantageous proximity to major oil and gas rich countries of the Caspian, Black Sea and Middle Eastern regions. Hence, the geographical location may increase Turkey's chances of guaranteeing supply for or connecting with pipelines making for its bid for regional energy hub. On the contrary, Turkey's statist monopolized energy market with BOTAS's central role, with the lack of competition and market driven prices creates significant obstacles regarding the energy hub ambitions (Roberts, 2010).

Sidar and Winrow (2013), additionally, warn against the possible formation of Turkey-Russia "geo-economic alliance" which could threaten energy security of member states of the European Union (EU) given the option that Turkey and Russia could place a "chokehold" on gas supplies to Europe. Turkey and Russia have developed close economic and political ties. The established close economic and political ties, bargaining over the realization of a range of joint energy projects demarcating the contours of a "grand energy

package” contain the risk of evolving into a geo-economic alliance between Russia and Turkey (Sidar & Winrow, 2013).

#### ***5.4 Great power politics vs cooperation and profit making: a room for Turkey?***

As an important contribution to the debate, Labban (2009) offers a different perspective viewing geopolitical struggle around the Caspian as a part of great power politics living no role for Turkey. In international politics U.S. and Russia mainly, and the rising China and India increasingly are involved in “hybrid geopolitics, a process of exclusion or containment through economic, military, ideological expansion overlaid by processes of integration through the same processes of expansion” (Labban, 2009). Respectively, the former Soviet Trans-Caspian equals to one of the global “non-integrating parts” to be integrated into U.S. led economic, military and security structures. So, the geopolitical rivalry, Labban (2009) stresses, in the Trans-Caspian region is irreducible to the competition for the Caspian oil and gas. The global hegemony is the ultimate object of the competition rather than the Trans-Caspian energy resources per se (Labban, 2009).

In line with Labban (2009), Jaffe and Manning (1998) also view Turkey’s role in the broader context of U.S. geopolitical agenda. In the international arena U.S. and NATO have calculated to gain strategic geopolitical advantage over Russia, China and Iran and to solve West’s energy problem. Accordingly, U.S. strongly lobbied the Turkish route with the primary aim to reduce Russia’s influence and to prevent the potential rise of China’s and Iran’s influence regionally and globally. However, rich in only 3% of world’s proven oil reserves, the Caspian lacks sufficient capacity to guarantee the West’s long term energy security, argue the authors. The created myth around the Caspian as an alternative to the energy rich Middle East holding 55% of worlds proven oil reserves contains serious risks of drawing U.S. and NATO into an unnecessary contest with Russia, and in the complex regional conflicts, hence endangering West’s strategic interests (Jaffe & Manning, 1998).

Edwards (2003), on the opposite, questions the very accuracy of the term, the New Great Game. The perceived geopolitical struggle in the post-soviet Caspian referred to as

the New Great Game lacks adequate reasoning and fails to express the actual regional state of affairs, argues Edwards (2003). Making analogues with the Great Game of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Edwards points out that the regional states with their own interests and policy agendas rather than the great power's geopolitical struggle shape the Caspian politics. Furthermore, the multicultural companies involved in developing oil and gas fields value profit making and cooperation over competition. Multinational oil and gas companies' decisions are directed by financial liabilities and timely routes rather than comply with geostrategic interests. Competition remains part of market economics but oil and gas multinationals are linked to each other through various partnerships and consortiums throughout the world, stresses Edwards (2003).

Concluding, it is significant to mention that as Karagiannis (2002) argues there is a direct correlation between energy politics, security and geopolitics:

*Energy pipelines* can function as a basic feature of regional instability and intrastate conflicts as wars in Abkhazia, Ossetia or Iraq demonstrate, while at the same time the pipeline development has increased the incentives for peace settlements in regional conflicts.

*Pipeline competition* has fuelled interstate rivalry among existing and potential transit countries such as, for example, between Russia and Turkey, and destabilizes region, or in some cases strengthens relations and promotes regional cooperation as it is explicitly evident in the case of Turkey-Georgia-Azerbaijan close cooperation (Karagiannis, 2002).

### ***5.5 Critical assessment of the literature review***

As the reviewed literature indicates, a number of authors consider that at the post-Cold War period the Caspian region witnesses a "New Great Game", a fierce geopolitical competition for access to and control over the energy resources (notably oil and gas) of the region. In advance, the very applicability of the term, "the New Great Game" is questioned given the concrete historical events the term describes and some cooperative features in the relations between the states. The analyses of the Caspian geopolitics within the context

of the great powers' grand strategies aimed at hegemony rather than the control over the region's energy resources further enriches the debate. A number of authors, meantime, outline Turkey's "regional energy hub" aspirations, and view Turkey as "a reliable and secure energy route". The authors are keen to view Turkey as a central bridge in the East-West energy corridor, as a reliable guarantor of EU's energy security referring to Turkey's geographical proximity to the oil and gas rich Caspian Sea, Middle East. However, the question rises whether the geographical location is itself enough to attract oil and gas pipelines for the emergence of Turkey as a vibrant energy hub. Besides the geographical factor, Turkey's vibrant energy hub role is also connected with the widespread perception of Caspian containing large energy resources equalling to the ones of the Middle East. Meanwhile, what do the Caspian proven oil and gas reserves constitute, are the reserves strategically significant to guarantee the economic viability of the planned projects, are the political developments around and Turkey's power position in the Caspian beneficial for the transport of energy resources via Turkey's territory; these questions remain not deeply addressed. Several authors also give credit to Turkey's energy policy designs in relation to the possible internationalization of delivery pipelines from the Middle East (mainly from Iran and Iraq). In this regard, the complex political and security situation developing around the Middle East with its impact on the energy politics are among the issues demanding thorough consideration. In advance, the functionalist perspective of viewing oil and gas business as a tying factor and conflict resolution framework seems controversial rising the legitimate question of whether this single factor will be significant enough to overcome the dominating disputes and conflicts. On the other hand, Turkey's NATO membership is widely recalled to assure the stability and security of the Turkish route. Respectively, why NATO membership is significant for Turkish route's security, does the importance stem from the alleged relevance of NATO's collective defence principle (NATO, 2010); these questions also remain unanswered. Eventually, the positioning of Turkey as more of a servant to EU's energy interests than as an independent actor makes yet another problematic aspect. The East-West energy corridor increasingly touches bilateral interests of EU and Turkey, however are Turkey's energy policy undertakings

proportionally predetermined to meet EU's increasing energy demand or is the regional energy hub objective a tactical step or a primary strategic objective constitute issues to be thoroughly studied.

### ***5.6 The research purpose and questions***

The research, "The Southern Gas Corridor and Turkey's Pipeline Politics at the Post-Cold War Period" focuses on Turkey's post-Cold War pipeline politics. The research views Turkey's pipeline politics in the context of its broader foreign policy strategy. At the post-Cold War period Turkey strategically views itself as an established hegemon in the regions such as the broader Caspian and the Middle East, and an influential actor in relations with U.S. and EU. Accordingly, the research seeks to explore how Turkey's pipeline politics serves the broader foreign policy strategic vision to embrace hegemony and influence.

In this regard the research seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What is Turkey's available power: what are the conducted pipelines, have and how the pipelines changed the balance of power in favour of Turkey in the broader Caspian region, and in relations with Iran, Russia and EU?
2. What is Turkey's potential power: what are the planned pipelines, is it realistic to expect the planned pipelines will change the distribution of power in favour of Turkey in the broader Caspian region, and in relations with Iran, Russia and EU?

## 6. Political Realism and the Challenging Schools: Theoretical Framework

*The foreign policy of a state is always the result of an estimate of the power relations as they exist between different states at a certain period and as they are likely to develop in the immediate and distant future.*

*Hans J. Morgenthau (1959)*

### **6.1 Realism: Morgenthau 's balancing of power and Klare 's "resource wars"**

Realism believes that an ideal rational foreign policy and a stable peace (absence of war) is not achievable in international politics. Hence, realism seeks solutions aimed at minimizing risks and maximizing gains in the politics among nations. Realism finds such a relatively applicable solution in the processual power struggle (expansion-balancing-containment) and its immediate outgrowth, the balance of power.

Advancing the theory of political realism, Morgenthau (1959) argues that international politics, as politics in general, is a struggle for power: power struggle is universal in time and space. In the structurally anarchic international politics major actors, sovereign states (sovereignty is defined as centralized state's exercise of a law-making and law-enforcing authority within a certain territory) struggle for power. According to Morgenthau (1959), world public opinion, international world morality, international law, international institutions lack the "power" to function as effective balancers of power struggle and preserve stable peace. Hence, in international politics states exercise self-interest (national interest) based foreign policy aimed at acquiring power, maintaining power or increasing power. The interests pursued by states, meanwhile, are directly correlated with the power (national power) at the disposal or potentially available, state's power position in the system of balance of power and with the actual balance of power

(distribution of power). Depending upon balance of power, interests involved and power available, power struggle contains the risks of leading to a confrontation up in the form of war or to a cooperation in the form of a negotiated and compromised peace achieved by diplomacy.

In the anarchic international politics major actors, sovereign states struggle for power seeking either to keep power or to increase power corresponding to the policy of status quo and policy of imperialism.

The *policy of status quo* is defined as a foreign policy which tends toward maintaining power instead of changing the distribution of power (which exists at a particular moment in history) in the favour of the nation. A status quo policy, however, does not necessarily indicate an opposition to change; it refuses the very change of the distribution of power (among two or more nations) endangering the nation's power position in the dominating power relations (Morgenthau, 1959, pp. 35-40).

The *policy of imperialism*, on the contrary, seeks favourable change in power status with the establishment of the nation's dominant power position (hegemonic position) in power relations. A nation pursuing a policy of imperialism aims at acquiring more power than it actually has through a reversal of existing power relations. Imperialistic policy, in other words, finds its way of enhancing national power by the overthrow of the status quo. The policy of imperialism largely pursues one of the three specific objectives: 1. the domination of the whole politically organized space which is world imperialism, 2. the establishment of hegemony within continental boundaries, 3. the domination of the local political space (Morgenthau, 1959, pp. 41-66).

The power struggle among sovereign states, in pursuit of either maintaining or overthrowing the status quo, leads to a configuration that is called the balance of power and to policies that aim at preserving it (Morgenthau, 1959, pp. 155-200). According to Morgenthau (1959) balance of power conveys four different meanings:

1. "A policy aimed at a certain state of affairs".
2. "An actual state of affairs".
3. "An approximately equal distribution of power".

#### 4. "Any distribution of power".

The balance of power, deriving from power struggle, is viewed as an essential stabilizing factor in international politics. While operating successfully, the balancing policy deprives states of practical ability to endanger the security (security is defined as the absence of fear, risk of attack) of other nations, to threaten their independence and existence, and safeguards one nation from the domination by the other. In this regard, the holder of balance (or balancer) plays a central role in the balance of power system. The holder of the balance possesses essential power, follows the balancing policy and throws its power behind involved struggling states occasionally, hence contributing to the maintenance of the balance of power. However, the balance of power suffers from an inner contradiction lacking behind of being a stable stabilizing factor in international politics. The relations between states are dynamic, are subject to constant change; the change in state relations brings to the shift in balance of power, hence depriving it of the role of a stabilizer. The main methods of power balancing and guaranteeing of national interest-power and relative peace encompass but are not limited to the military build-up, armaments, disarmaments, the formation of alliances and counter-alliances, collective security, defensive and preventive wars and diplomacy (diplomacy—the promotion of national interests by peaceful means, power struggle by peaceful means).

States, indeed, struggle for power, power struggle brings to the balance of power (a shaky balance of power), but, according to Morgenthau (1959), states struggling for power seek not primarily a balance of power but an increase in national power; a domination, hegemony. As international politics lacks the effective structural balancing mechanism to preserve stable peace and security, states struggle to improve respective power positions, the determining guarantor of national interests.

National interest is defined in terms of power (Morgenthau, 1959, p. 5), and the national interest-power can constitute security, prosperity, balance of power and hegemony. The national power is measured based upon several parameters including geographical location, the quality of diplomacy, the quality of government, military potential and natural resources. Among the factors making for national power military

potential and natural resources (oil and gas) especially play significant roles. The military strength as a threat or a potentiality is viewed as the most important material factor for the political power of a nation (Morgenthau, 1959, pp. 102-137).

The other component, Morgenthau (1959) outlines, playing a significant role in determining the national power is the possession of natural resources specifically referring to oil and gas. With the mechanization of the warfare and the industrial development, national power has become more dependent on the possession of the raw materials (oil and nowadays gas) or otherwise on the control of the access to the sources of raw materials in war or in peace, elaborates Morgenthau. The possession of oil and gas enhances the strategic significance of the resource rich nations and, on the other hand, the control of the resource rich areas (meaning states, regions) gives strategic advantage in the relative power of the politically leading nations. Control over the oil and gas resource rich areas empowers the nation, gives strategic advantage in the distribution of power and respectively deprives the other competitors of the strength. Thus, states get actively involved in the power struggle for the establishment of spheres of influence guaranteeing exclusive access to the resource rich areas (Morgenthau, 1959, pp. 106-107).

Access to and control of natural resources, specifically energy resources such as oil and gas, indeed, constitute critical features of national power-interest. According to Klare (2001), the power struggle around access to and control of energy resources obtains the potential to grow fiercer as energy demand increases, energy resources become scarcer and energy supply routes more insecure. In this regard, power struggle over the oil and gas resources owns the prospect of leading to conflicts up till in the form of wars.

With the shift in the balance of power at the post-Cold War period, Klare (2001) extends, states, engaged in international politics, struggle harsher to gain or maintain access to and control of valuable energy (most notably oil and gas) resources. The post-Cold War shift in the balance of power largely stems from the economic rise of new powers causing the increase in oil and gas demand. Energy resources, meanwhile, are predicted to become scarcer due to rising demand and the prospect of ‘peak oil’ (maximum oil production, then sharp decline). The increasing demand in scarce energy resources hence provokes “resource

wars" (Dannreuther, 2010). Energy resources become a matter of great power politics, a part of great power's strategic agendas and eventually a source of conflict. The other problematic issue deals with the geographical location of the energy resources. Much of the world's supply of oil (and much of its new reserves) are located in weak, fragile states with multiple inter-state disputes and conflicts. So, the energy security issue, referring to the self-sufficiency or dependency on the energy resource supplies, to the delivery of energy resources, also encompasses the issue of the very security of supply routes. The energy security issue hence, indeed, becomes an essential determinant of national power, a national security priority of high significance (Dannreuther, 2010).

## ***6.2 Constructivist critique of realism: Adler and Barnett's security community vs power politics***

Contrary to realism, which associates relative peace and security with the distribution of power, constructivism finds direct correlation between international peace, security and community. If realism views international politics as structurally anarchic dominated by unbalanced power struggle, constructivism highlights the significance of international institutions, with norms and values, in shaping states' behaviour and identity and serving as a platform for cooperation. Constructivism views the possibility of cooperation, security community formation at the international level leading to the preservation of stable peace.

Advancing the concept of security community originally developed by Karl Deutsch, Adler and Barnett (1998) associate security with community. "Community exists at the international level, security politics is profoundly shaped by it, and the states dwelling within an international community might develop a pacific disposition", argue Adler and Barnett (1998). Security community is defined as a state of affairs when states become integrated to the point that they have a sense of community, which, in turn, creates the assurance that they will settle their differences short of war (Adler & Barnett, 1998, p. 3). Security communities, indeed, are not also immune to differences and discords, but the distinguishing feature of a security community from other communities constitutes its

members' dependable expectations for peaceful change. According to Adler and Barnett, the dependable expectations for peaceful change are determined by security community's characteristics such as mutual trust, shared values, norms and identity, collective understandings, loyalty driven from common institutions and mutual responsiveness (Adler & Barnett, 1998, pp. 3-59). The tiers, meanwhile, that contribute to a security community formation include economic, military, ideological, technological and social factors. In this regard, war or a common threat can especially play a decisive role leading to a cooperation and trust-building in security field, hence providing fertile ground for community development. With the development of a security community the meaning and purpose of security and power gain new values as community states cease to concern themselves with military threat from others within the community, stress Adler and Barnett. The concept of power in this sense is revisited to include the ability of a community to defend its values and expectations of proper behaviour against an external threat and to attract new states with ideas that convey a sense of national security and material progress (Adler & Barnett, 1998, p. 4).

According to the logic of constructivism, energy resources (notably oil and gas) obtain the potential of serving as a cornerstone for cooperation between states. As international institutions, norms and values prevail over power politics, so states are keener to prioritize cooperation over conflicts and wars in international politics. The issues of energy demand and supply or supply routes hence become subjected to a constructive cooperation.

### ***6.3 Liberalist critique of realism: The “Dark Underbelly”***

Liberalism, in opposition to realism, considers the possibility of democratic practices in international politics. Liberalism rejects the perceived disjuncture between domestic and international politics, enhances democracy to the international level stressing the must respect for human rights. Criticising realism, liberalism blames states' balancing policy, secret diplomatic gambles and unwillingness to develop working international norms and institutions for global disorder, wars and insecurity. Liberalism considers the possibility of

democratic practices in international politics, the democratization of closed regimes, the development of norms and institutions based on democratic principles, respect for universal fundamental human rights (Dannreuther, 2010). Liberalism finds democratization, “democratic peace” key to international peace and security indicating that democratic regimes don’t wage wars against each other. If regimes are democratic, cooperation platform providing institutions and norms developed and market liberalized the problems of peace and security are solved, believes liberalism.

Regarding the international energy politics, liberalist approach, expressed in the works of Goldthau, Witte, Kaldor, Karl, Munkler and others, exposes the issue of “Dark Underbelly” and discusses the solutions to the problem. The concept of the “Dark Underbelly” refers to the observed illiberal practices and perversions of the politics, economics and international relations of the energy industry (Dannreuther, 2010). The illiberal political, economic practises are explained by the concepts such as “resource curse”, “Dutch disease”, “rentier states”. The “resource curse” exposes the poor developmental records of resource-rich “rentier states” and the factors which contribute to this such as the “Dutch disease” (the negative impact on the development of economic sectors emanating largely from the discovery of oil resources) (Dannreuther, 2010). The authoritarian “rentier states” (largely refers to oil rich states), with oppressive governmental apparatus, lack of adherence to legal and constitutional norms, are viewed as stumbling blocks on the way of democratic practices. The “Dark Underbelly” also reveals the casual approach towards violations of human rights, towards thrive of illegal practices form the side of democratic states when it comes to rentier states. Criticising the mentioned undemocratic manifestations, liberalism finds the solution to the problems in transparency, the boost of the involvement of civil society, good governance, more open and cooperative arrangements in international energy politics (Dannreuther, 2010).

Turkey, a state actively involved in international politics, implements policy based on its national interests. At the post-Cold War period Turkey aspires to play a central role in energy politics. The possession of oil and gas enhances the strategic significance of the

resource rich nations and, on the other hand, the control of resource rich areas (meaning states, regions) gives strategic advantage in the relative power of politically leading nations (Morgenthau, 1959). Thus, Turkey is actively involved in the power struggle for the establishment of spheres of influence guaranteeing exclusive access to the resource rich areas. Turkey calculates that control over the oil and gas resource rich areas empowers the nation, gives strategic advantage in the distribution of power and respectively deprives the other competitors of the strength.

## **7. Building “Bridges” between Caspian Sea, Black Sea, the Middle East and Europe: The Relativity of Turkey’s Available and Potential Power**

*Whatever changes nations may seek in the status quo, they all have at least to recognize as unchangeable one factor, the existence of a pair of scales, the “status quo” of the balance of power itself. And whenever a nation may tend to forget that indispensable precondition of independence and stability, the consensus of all other nations will not allow it to forget that precondition for long.*

*Hans J. Morgenthau (1959)*

### **7.1 The strategic significance of oil and gas**

In 1973, during Yom Kippur war (Egypt and Syria launched a war against Israel to regain territories lost in 1967 Arab-Israeli Six Day War) oil magnate OPEC imposed an oil embargo on U.S. (and its allies) in retaliation for America’s military assistance to Israel. The embargo both banned petroleum exports to the targeted nations and introduced cuts in oil production causing skyrocketing in oil prices and global economic decline (U.S. domestic oil industry wasn’t developed enough to fill the shortage). In order to tackle the crises, U.S. launched negotiations with OPEC to lift the embargo, and with Israel, Syria and Egypt to end the war and withdraw Israeli troops from Sinai Peninsula and Golan Heights. In 1974 the talks culminated with the Egyptian-Israeli Disengagement Agreement securing the withdrawal of Israeli troops from Sinai, and a prospective diplomatic solution to the Israel-Syria dispute over the Golan Heights. The deal proved sufficient to convince OPEC to lift the embargo (U.S. State Department, 2013).

In 2013, during the Vilnius summit Ukraine refused to sign the long negotiated Association Agreement with the EU, which led to the vast anti-governmental demonstrations in Ukraine. Coinciding with the timeframe of the demonstrations, gas

magnate Russia offered a low gas fare deal to the pro-Russian Ukrainian authorities. Official Moscow expressed a readiness to cut gas tariffs from \$400 to \$268.5 per 1000 cubic meter for four years till 2019 (RFE/RL, 2013). On the contrary, in 2014 already, given the new political landscape (pro-Russian regime toppled and Russia-Ukraine relations sharply deteriorated), Russia raised gas prices from \$268.5 to \$385.5 with the trend to top \$485 per 1,000 cubic metres (Burmistrova & Zinets, 2014) having negative impact on Ukraine's deteriorated economy.

In 2014, at the meeting in Vienna Saudi Arabia (U.S. ally) led OPEC (OPEC members include oil rich Gulf Arab countries where U.S. holds military presence), which controls nearly 40% of world's oil market, failed to agree upon oil production curbs sending the price decline (The Economist, 2014). The decline in the oil prices coincides with the timing of the Ukrainian crises, a major source of tension between Russia and U.S. and EU, and has negatively affected Russia's economy (also holds oil reserves). So, the decline in oil prices is not excluded to have political motives. The political motive behind might be the provocation of a political crises, a regime change (Devitt, 2014) in Russia with the example of the Soviet Union in long-term basis (Sachs, 2005).

The above mentioned examples reveal two specific things related to oil and gas;

1. Oil and gas are globally demanded resources significant for the economic development. The statistical data indicates that oil and gas meet 30% of global energy demand (BP, IEA, 2014). According to the estimates, global energy dependency on oil and gas consumption will further increase by 1.4% annually equalling to 37-40% by 2035 (BP, IEA, 2014). 60% of the total oil and gas consumption, meanwhile, will be met by economically developing countries.
2. Oil and gas prove to be of strategic significance for national power; either the possession of or control over the resource rich regions empowers a nation politically. The control gives a strategic advantage to a state in the distribution of power depriving the competitors of the same strength (Morgenthau, 1959) and, meantime, enables to reverse power relations, to

change the distribution of power. Hence, oil and gas resources or resource rich regions can increasingly become conflict areas provoking also wars (Dannreuther, 2010).

Oil and gas are of strategic significance. The resources make important components of national power, hence also provoke power struggle. The power struggle evolves around the control over the resource riches or rich regions. At the post-Cold War period a compelling power struggle is especially observed in the former-Soviet Caspian containing oil and gas resources. The struggle increasingly expands to include the Middle Eastern region with vast oil and gas resources (here particularly refers to Iran). At the post-Cold War period Turkey, involved in the struggle, exercises politics to gain access to the resources and secure the flow of the resources via its territory.

## *7.2 Turkey's "bridging" pipeline politics*

According to the estimates, Turkey's energy dependency on oil and gas will increase 4.5% (annually) by 2035 (EIA, 2014). In this regard Turkey's politics to gain access to the energy resources are also determined by the growing economic demand. Turkey, furthermore, demonstrates a proven interest to play a central role in the Southern Gas Corridor. The Southern Gas Corridor is a range of pipeline route proposals and projects, which are designed to deliver gas from Caspian (Azerbaijan and prospectively Turkmenistan), in long term bases from Iran to Europe having Turkey as a central hub (Park, 2012).

In other words, the Sothern Gas Corridor is planned to build "bridges" between the Caspian, the Middle East and Europe having Turkey as a central "bridge". The regions which Turkey seeks to "bridge", meantime, coincide with the regions where Turkey aspires to play an influential role in line with its foreign policy strategic vision.

### *7.3 The strategic vision of Turkey's foreign policy*

The aspiration for hegemony (not apparently revealed as such) has already evolved into a primary strategic objective of Turkey's foreign policy since 2000s also referred to as a policy of neo-ottomanism, neo-imperialism. Since 2000s onward Turkey has come up with the vision of a potentially achievable hegemony (Sebnem & Fuat, 2014). Turkey strategically sees itself as a dominant power in regions such as the Middle East, the Balkans, the broader Caspian (meaning Caspian including the South Caucasus), and an influential power in relations with EU and U.S. (Walker, 2010). Turkey refers to its geographical proximity to the Middle East, the Balkans and the broader Caspian. Turkey calculates that owing to its geographical location accompanied with proactive diplomacy, multi-vector foreign policy (Davutoglu, 2012) she obtains the potential to achieve regional hegemony and globally increase its influence. As an additional legitimizer-facilitator for its hegemonic designs, Turkey recalls its Ottoman legacy. Turkey believes that owing to cultural and linguistic ties with the Caspian, and historical, cultural ties with the Balkans and the Middle East related to the common Ottoman past it has greater chances to reverse power relations and establish hegemony (Walker, 2010). Turkey believes the acquiring of the domination in the regions will also increase its influence in relations with U.S. and EU. In order to achieve its strategic objective, Turkey considers necessary to reassess its policy towards EU and U.S. (Davutoglu, 2008). The so far dominating Euro-Atlantic orientation, meaning the prioritization of relations with U.S. and EU, hence acting in accordance with EU and U.S. interests, is believed to be a serious limiting factor for its national power. Accordingly, Turkey finds necessary to implement balanced foreign policy based on pragmatic calculations of its national interests (Flanagan, 2008).

In line with its foreign policy strategy, Turkey purports to reverse power relations, to overthrow the balance of power and hold a hegemonic power position in the broader Caspian and the Middle East. The domination in the regions, meanwhile, is perceived to secure a leading role in international politics and in relations with U.S. and EU. The prioritization of relations with NATO ally U.S. and EU states are no more viewed as an

effective policy for the preservation of Turkey's national interests. In other words, implementing an imperialistic policy, Turkey acts based on pragmatic calculations of its national interests aimed at minimizing loses and maximizing gains and its influence in international politics. At the post-Cold War period Turkey, involved in the Caspian and Middle Eastern power struggle, promotes the supply of the energy resources via Turkish route. Turkey's interest is determined by the assessment of the strategic significance of the resources for the national power and for the influence in the regions. In other words, the control over the energy resources or supply routes make one of the main means to extend influence in the oil and gas rich Caspian, and increase its influence in relations with Iran, Russia, U.S. and EU.

#### *7.4 Gaining influence in the broader Caspian*

In the late 1990s the USSR, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics got structurally fragmented. The fragmentation of the Soviet Union has brought to the shift in the global and regional balance of power in terms of power distribution. After the fall of the Soviet Union a power struggle has emerged in the oil and gas rich Caspian around the access to the resources, resource supply routes, significant factors for the regional influence.

The struggle evolves around the following supply routes:

- The Northern, or Russian, route. The route refers to the Caspian oil and gas export via Russia's territory through the Central-Asia-Centre infrastructure operating since Soviet times,
- The Central or Turkish route: refers to the energy export from Azerbaijan, prospectively from Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan to Turkey's and via Turkey's territory to the European market,
- The Southern or Iranian route: refers to the export of the oil and gas to international markets via Iran's territory,
- The Eastern or Asian route: refers to the oil and gas deliveries to the Asian market, China, India, Pakistan (Zhiltsov, 2014, Sanei & Faraz, 2001).

Turkey, one of the states involved in the struggle around the access to the Caspian's oil and gas resources, actively promotes the Turkish route for the delivery of energy resources to Europe.

#### *7.4.1 Turkey's involvement in the Caspian energy sector*

The broader Caspian region (here notably Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, Georgia) was part of the Soviet Union with Russia's established role in the region's energy sector. In the 1990s the collapse of the Soviet Union opened up the Caspian containing oil and gas resources. Turkey's involvement in the Caspian's, specifically in Azerbaijan's oil industry started with the signing of the so called "contract of the century". In 1994 the so called "contract of the century" was signed between Azerbaijan and American, European and Turkish companies. The contract paved the way for the involvement of the American and European oil companies such as BP, Amoco, Statoil, Exxon, and Turkish TPAO (Turkish Petroleum) in the development of Azerbaijan's Azeri, Chirag, Guneshli oil fields of the Caspian (Karagiannis, 2002, Kandiyoti, 2012, Mufti, 2009). The contract also put an end to Russia's monopoly in Azerbaijan's energy sector (although Russian oil company Lukoil also got a share).

#### *7.4.2 The increase of Turkey's influence in the Caspian: BTC, BTE*

Turkey's influence in the Caspian (specifically Azerbaijan) has been increased with the conduct of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline and Baku-Tbilisi-Erzerum gas pipeline. Turkey calculates to reach further increase of its influence in the Caspian with construction and conduct of the proposed Trans-Caspian gas pipeline.

##### *Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) oil pipeline*

*Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) oil pipeline* system runs approximately 1768km carrying oil from Azerbaijan's Azeri-Chirag-Guneshli oilfields through Georgia to Turkey's

Mediterranean port of Ceyhan and then to world markets (Cornel, Jonsson, Nilsson & Haggstrom, 2006, Norling, 2007). Operating since 2006, the pipeline has a capacity of 1 million bbl/d, although the supply has not so far exceeded 790,000 bbl/d (EIA, 2014). The Azerbaijani oil meets only 1% (EIA, 2014) of Turkey's (and of world's) economic demand in oil.

*Baku-Tbilisi-Erzerum (BTE) or South Caucasus pipeline*

*Baku-Tbilisi-Erzerum (BTE) or South Caucasus gas pipeline* is a 692 km length and 300bcf (annually) capacity pipeline delivering gas from Azerbaijan's Shah Denis field across Georgia (Tbilisi) to Erzerum (Aliriza, Chow, Kuchins, Malka & Smith, 2009). The agreement for the pipeline construction was signed in 2001, and the pipeline has become operational since 2007. BTE meets 8% of Turkey's gas needs still leaving Turkey 56% dependant on supplies of gas from Russia (the largest supplier). BTE is considered to be upgraded for TANAP supply (Trans-Anatolian gas pipeline).

BTC meets only 1% of world and Turkey's oil demand indicating that in terms of economics the pipeline lacks sufficient viability. However, the pipeline has served to political ends enabling Turkey to change the distribution of power in the region and secure an advantageous position in the balance of power system.

BTC has outgrown form the "contract of the century" of 1994. The contract, as has already been mentioned, broke Russia's monopoly in Azerbaijan's energy sector as the American, European and Turkish companies got involved in the oil business. BTC, meanwhile, has come to replace Russian route with the Turkish one as the main export route. During the Soviet times Baku-Novorossiysk pipeline (Russian route) served as the main export route for the delivery of Azerbaijan's oil to world markets. With the conduct of the BTC, 80% of Azerbaijan's oil delivery has started to pass through Turkish route. In other words, Russia has lost its former advantageous position, instead Turkey has gained the same strength.

Baku-Tbilisi-Erzerum pipeline is so far limited to Turkey's domestic gas market, but Turkey promotes the internationalization of the project. BTE is considered to be

upgraded to become a part of Trans-Anatolian gas pipeline to be linked with Trans-Adriatic gas pipeline to deliver Azerbaijani gas to Europe having Turkey as the main export route. The realization of the project is calculated to further enhance Turkey's power.

BTC and BTE have served as "tiers" to boost Turkey-Azerbaijan-Georgia alliance. The energy alliance has also evolved into a close military cooperation between the states. Turkey, Azerbaijan and Georgia regularly hold joint military trainings and exercises also aimed at protecting the pipelines.

Turkey has gained access to Azerbaijan's energy field, Turkish route serves as the main export route for the resource deliveries. The energy issue has promoted close cooperation between Turkey and two South Caucasus states, Georgia and Azerbaijan. Turkey has improved its power position in the region, while Russia's influence has been undermined in the post-Soviet South Caucasus. The BTC and BTE pipelines have served to Turkey's imperialistic policy's objective to reverse power relations and increase its power in the Caspian.

#### *7.4.3 Trans-Caspian pipeline*

Turkey has also expressed an interest in the Trans-Caspian gas pipeline, with the conduct of which Turkey's influence (similar to the motives of BTC, BTE pipelines) in the region is calculated to increase further.

*Trans-Caspian gas pipeline* is a proposed pipeline to transport gas from Turkmenistan via Turkey to the European market as a part of the Southern Gas Corridor. It is suggested to construct a pipeline under the Caspian Sea to link Turkmenistan's gas fields to BTE and deliver gas to Europe (Tsereteli, 2008, Tekin & Williams, 2011). The discussions around the construction and conduct of the pipeline have been on place since 1990's, when Turkmenistan became independent from the Soviet Union. However, the talks have failed to produce tangible results so far.

The Trans-Caspian gas pipeline, leaving the choice with the Turkish route, could have served as a "tier" for enhancing cooperation between the Caspian states and Turkey, hence increasing Turkey's influence in the broader Caspian (traditionally Russian sphere

of influence). The conduct of the pipeline to deliver gas to Europe (as an alternative source to the Russian gas supplies to the market) could also be calculated to empower Turkey in relations with EU. However, the conduct of the pipeline faces several major obstacles.

One of the major issues is the power struggle among the Caspian littoral states, Russia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Iran. The struggle evolves around three main interconnected issues; the Caspian legal dispute, the unset boundaries and the oil and gas ownership rights.

Until 1990s, the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Caspian had two littoral states, Russia and Iran. Respectively, the Caspian Sea regime was established based on several bilateral agreements concluded between Iran and USSR. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, five littoral states, Russia, Iran, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Turkmenistan emerged bringing to the agenda the issue of Caspian legal status, the boundaries and resource (oil and gas) ownership rights. The littoral states dispute whether the “landlocked” Caspian is a sea or a lake (Adams, Emerson, Mee & Vahl, 2002). Given the lack of an agreement on whether the Caspian is a lake or a sea, two sets of international law could apply. If the Caspian is a sea in legal terms, coastal countries would apply the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 1982 (UNCLOS) (EIA, 2014). If the Caspian is legally defined as a lake, the countries could use the international law concerning border lakes to set boundaries. Under UNCLOS, if the Caspian is legally a sea, each littoral state receives a territorial boundary up to twelve nautical miles, an exclusive economic zone up to 200 nautical miles and a continental shelf (Amineh & Houwelling, 2007). Since the Caspian at its widest is less than 200 miles, UNCLOS dictates the states apply a median line between claimants. The issue of the Caspian legal status would affect the oil and gas ownership rights of the littoral states. If Caspian, for example, is a sea, states such as Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan would have exclusive access to offshore assets claimed also by Iran.

The unresolved dispute put even Turkey and Iran at confrontation. In 2001 significant oil or gas resources were identified in the Sharq/Alov oilfields, lying in an area disputed by Iran and Azerbaijan. Iranian warships forcibly evicted a BP-owned exploration vessel operating over the Sharq/Alov field (Cornell, McDermott D. O’Malley, Socor & Starr,

2004). This was followed by almost two weeks of daily overflights of Azerbaijani waters and land by the Iranian air force, which eventually prompted a Turkish reaction. In July of 2001, after a naval confrontation between Azerbaijan and Iran over drilling rights in the Caspian, Turkey dispatched ten F-16 fighter bombers to fly over Baku in a demonstration to Teheran of its readiness to provide the Azerbaijani government with military support (Alterman, Barnett, Kuchins & Mankof, 2013).

The issue of the Caspian legal status causes tensions and, meanwhile, drags behind the exploitation of the resources at full capacity making one of the stumbling blocks on the way of the conduct of Trans-Caspian gas pipeline with Turkey's central transit role.

The other issue is power politics among Russia, Iran and Turkey. Turkey has to contain Russia's and Iran's power of resistance, if aspires to achieve the implementation of the Trans-Caspian project. Russia and Iran, interested in limiting Turkey's potential increase of influence in the Caspian, oppose the conduct of the Trans-Caspian pipeline. Russia and Iran refer to the unsettled dispute over the sea status and consequently the ownership rights, also to environmental issues to balance and contain Turkey's ambitions. Russia, implementing a policy of status quo interested in keeping its position in the Caspian energy sector, promotes the flow of the resources via Central-Asia-Centre pipeline (Russian route). Iran, itself interested in preventing the emergence of a Turkey-dominated Caspian and in playing a leading role in the region, has already established close energy ties with Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan (the states hold oil and gas reserves).

In line with its imperialistic foreign policy seeking to reverse power relations and embrace hegemony, Turkey expresses interest in the Trans-Caspian pipeline calculated to serve as a "tier" to boost cooperation between the Caspian states and secure a dominant power position in the region. The talks for the construction and operation of the pipeline on the agenda since 1990s have failed to produce tangible results. The pipeline conduct, meanwhile, suffers from the controversies such as the legal dispute around the Caspian Sea status, the unset boundaries between the littoral states and ownership rights of the resources.

At the post-Cold War period the broader Caspian, containing oil and gas resources, has become an arena of a compelling power struggle for the regional influence. The struggle largely evolves around the access to the region's resources and resource supply routes, significant factors for the regional influence. Turkey, involved in the power struggle, promotes the resource supply pipelines via the Turkish route (its territory) calculating to meet its growing economic demand and to increase its influence in the region. The conducted pipelines, BTC, BTE lacking sufficient economic viability have mainly served to political ends securing a dominant position for Turkey. The operation of the planned Trans-Caspian gas pipeline, calculated to serve to Turkey's hegemonic designs, on the other hand, is less realistic to expect in short and mid-term bases. The setbacks on the way of the pipeline conduct constitute the factors such as power politics and divergent foreign policy objectives of Turkey, Russia, Iran, the disputes between the Caspian's littoral states. Even if realized, the Trans-Caspian project lacks the potential to change the power balance in the region in favour of Turkey. The energy export routes of the Caspian states are already diversified: oil and gas rich Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan already supply energy resources to China and to world market via Iran and Russia. So, if the Trans-Caspian pipeline is conducted, Turkey lacks the chance to become the strategic transport route for the resources, which could have led to the increase of its influence in the region.

It is not also realistic to expect that the proposed Trans-Caspian pipeline will lead to Turkey's desired power increase in relations with EU. Despite claims, the Trans-Caspian pipeline will lack economic viability from strategic perspective falling short of becoming a viable alternative to the Russian gas supplies to EU reducing EU's dependency on Russian gas supplies (Russia supplies 40% of EU's gas demand). The Caspian holds oil and gas reserves, but certainly it is not the second Middle East. The Caspian holds only 3% of world's proven oil reserves (Jaffe and Manning, 1998), while the Middle East, 55%. Turkmenistan is estimated to hold the 5<sup>th</sup> largest gas reserves (19 Tcf) in the world, but still lacks far behind Russia (1,688 Tcf, 1<sup>st</sup> in the world) and Iran (1193 Tcf, 2<sup>nd</sup> in the world) (EIA, 2014). So, it is not also realistic to expect that the Caspian resources will change the

“power distribution” in the EU’s energy market and in favour of Turkey in relations with EU.

Turkey, however, doesn’t solely connect its strategic objectives with the Caspian region and the energy pipelines running from the region. Despite Turkey-Russia, Turkey-Iran power struggle in the Caspian region, Turkey has established close energy cooperation both with Russia and Iran based on economic and political considerations.

In line with its foreign policy strategic vision, Turkey seeks to exercise balancing policy towards Iran, Russia and EU and U.S. based on pragmatic calculations of its national interest-power. Performing as a “balancer”, gaining an advantage of the difficulties in politics among Iran and U.S. and EU, among EU and U.S. and Russia Turkey “plays” the states vs each other. In other words, using the differences in the relations between the mentioned states, Turkey tries to maximize its gains and increase its influence. The policy is also reflected in the energy field.

### ***7.5 Balancing relations with Iran and U.S.***

Despite the power struggle in the Caspian front, Turkey and Iran have established energy cooperation based on the assessment of economic need and political considerations. Energy ties with Iran are of economic significance for Turkey. Iran is Turkey’s largest oil supplier; Iranian oil imports meet 35% (EIA, 2014) of Turkey’s consumption needs. Iran is also Turkey’s second largest gas supplier after Russia and meets 18% (EIA, 2014) of Turkey’s domestic gas consumption needs. Turkey receives Iranian gas via Tabriz-Ankara gas pipeline. *Tabriz-Ankara gas pipeline* is a 2577km pipeline supplying gas from Tabriz, Iran to Ankara, Turkey (Jenkins, 2012, Cordesman, 2013). The project deal was signed in 1996 and it has become operational since 2001. Turkey has maintained the energy cooperation with Iran even despite the negative reaction from the American side. The gas-for-gold deals with Iran (Turkey has paid for the Iranian gas by gold) have also been beneficial for Iran helping to circumvent the sanctions imposed by U.S. and EU.

Turkey's policy is also based on political considerations. Turkey may have calculated the long term option of becoming a major route for gas deliveries from Iran to EU increasing its influence in relations both with Iran and EU. Besides being Turkey's second largest gas supplier, Iran is also the second country in the world in terms of gas reserves (proven 1,193 Tcf) after Russia (EIA, 2014). However, sanctions imposed by U.S. and EU on Iran concerning Iran's nuclear program have vastly damaged the development of Iran's gas industry (and economy in general). In long term basis, if sanctions lifted, Iran may have the potential to become an influential actor, "game changer" in world gas market. In 2015 the nuclear talks between Iran and EU and U.S. have indicated signs of leading to the improvement of the political atmosphere and lifting of the sanctions. In this regard Iran has already expressed readiness to supply gas to Europe.

Given the prospect of the lift of sanctions and gas delivery option to EU, Turkey is not excluded to promote the Turkish route as the main export route for the Iranian gas export. However, the broader controversial issues in the relations between the countries may emerge as obstacles on the way of the realization of Turkey's strategic objectives.

The controversial issues in Iran-Turkey relations include but are not limited to the following aspects:

*Diverging policy agendas:* In line with Turkey, Iran also have hegemonic aspirations regarding the Middle East and the Caspian. Iran seeks to promote projects of its own initiation calculated to bring about the increase of its power potential. Since 1990s and onwards, for example, Iran has already expressed an interest in the revival of the Silk route, which is planned to establish transportation links between Central Asia, the Caucuses and the Persian Gulf (Naji, 2011),

*Strained relations:* Despite the cooperation in the energy field, Iran-Turkey relations remain strained especially when it comes to the issue of conflict in Syria (Zanioti, 2014).

*Security concerns:* Turkey's deployment of NATO's early radar system has emerged as yet another source of tension between Iran and Turkey. In 2011 Turkey deployed an early warning radar system on its territory as a part of NATO's missile defence shield. The radar is located at Incirlik air base, about 435 miles (700 km) west of the Iranian border.

Iran sees it as a direct threat. Iran is concerned that the radar could also be used by Israel, if it decides to launch an attack on Iran (Aliriza, Alterman & Kuchins, 2013).

Turkey maintains energy ties with Iran and, meantime, tries to balance relations with U.S. and EU. Turkey's energy cooperation with Iran is determined by its economic need and strategic calculations. Iranian oil and gas supplies meet significant portions of Turkey's energy demand. Gas imports from Iran (although Iran-Turkey gas pipeline is subjected to constant explosions, and gas supply from Iran, to regular cuts) also enable Turkey to avoid strategic dependency on Russian gas supplies (as it will be elaborated further Russia supplies 56% of Turkey's gas demand). From the strategic point of view, Turkey may have considered the option to become the main export route for the Iranian gas supplies to EU. With its vast gas reserves, Iran can change the "distribution of power" in world gas market. In this regard Turkey's driving interests make the perceived change of the power distribution in favour of itself. If Turkey becomes the main export route for the Iranian gas supplies, Turkey's power will increase in relations with Iran and EU: Iran will depend on Turkey as the main export route, and EU will have to deal with Turkey, which provides the energy supply route alternative to the supplies from Russia. In short and midterm bases, however, it is not realistic to expect Turkey to become the main supply route for the Iranian gas given Iran's economic hardships, lack of infrastructure and the controversies in Turkey-Iran relations. Hence, it is less realistic to expect the change of power distribution in favour of Turkey in relations with EU and Iran. Furthermore, Turkey needs to deal with its own heavy energy dependency on Russia and Iran.

### ***7.6 Balancing relations with Russia and EU and U.S.***

Turkey has established close energy ties with Russia. Russia is Turkey's major gas supplier, meets 56% of the gas demand. From 2002 Turkey receives gas from Russia also via Blue Stream pipeline (Gazprom, 2015) delivering gas to Turkey directly via Black Sea. Russia also supplies 10% of Turkey's oil needs (EIA, 2014). In this regard energy ties with Russia are of economic significance for Turkey.

Figure 1 Turkish Stream gas pipeline



Source: Gazprom

### 7.6.1 Turkish Stream gas pipeline

Turkish stream is a proposed 1100km pipeline to deliver gas from Russia to Turkey and through Turkey to Europe. The pipeline construction proposal was made in 2014, and it is planned to become operational already in 2016 (Beskid & Baranec, 2015). The planned capacity of the pipeline is 63 billion cubic meters per annum (equals to 2.2 trillion cubic feet per annum) of natural gas. Turkey would take about 14 billion cubic meters per annum (equals to 490 billion cubic feet per annum), the rest of the gas is planned to be exported to Europe. According to the plan, the pipeline will run under the Black Sea from Russia to the Turkish-Greek border and onward to Austria in order to also supply another 47 bcm to European markets. The countries such as Serbia, Macedonia and EU member states

Hungary and Greece have declared their interest in the Turkish Stream project. The negotiations for the pipeline conduct, meantime, are not concluded so far.

The controversial issue with the Turkish Stream is that the proposal of the project has been made at the time of intense confrontation among EU and U.S. and Russia over the issue of the Ukrainian conflict. EU and U.S. have imposed sanctions on Russia. While agreeing to the conduct of Turkish Stream pipeline, Turkey goes against the EU, U.S. policy (NATO allies). The policy provides Turkey with the room for maneuver to gain concessions both from Russia and EU. However, it is less realistic to predict Turkey's power shift in the respective affairs taking into account that only two of EU countries have expressed an interest in the project so far, and given the uncertainty about the conduct of the project.

### *7.7 Bridge for the Southern Gas Corridor*

As it has been mentioned, Turkey has proven interest in becoming the central bridge in the Southern Gas Corridor. The pipelines making some parts of the Southern Gas Corridor currently under conduct are Trans-Anatolian gas pipeline and Trans-Adriatic gas pipeline.

#### *Trans Anatolian gas pipeline (TANAP)*

*Trans-Anatolian gas pipeline* (see Figure 2) is a proposed pipeline to deliver gas from Azerbaijan's Shah Deniz 2 field via Turkey to Europe as a part of the Southern Gas Corridor (Botas, 2014, Atiyas, Gulen and Setin, 2012). The agreement for the pipeline was signed in 2014, and the pipeline is expected to become operational in 2018. The pipeline is estimated to cost \$10-11bln. The pipeline is concluded to supply 16 bcm (annually) natural gas (6cm to Turkey and 10bcm to European states) at the initial stage. In terms of the supply network, it is discussed either to upgrade BTE or to build a new pipeline. The pipeline is planned to be linked to the Trans-Adriatic pipeline and deliver gas to Europe (to Italy, Greece, and Albania) (EIA, 2014, Botas, 2014).

### *Trans-Adriatic pipeline (TAP)*

Trans-Adriatic pipeline is a proposed natural gas pipeline to be linked with the Trans-Anatolian pipeline and deliver gas to Europe (Greece, Italy, and Albania). Originally proposed in 2003, the pipeline received an approval by EU in 2013. The Trans-Adriatic Pipeline (TAP) is a proposed 870km long natural gas pipeline that will run from Greece to Italy via Albania and the Adriatic Sea (TAP, 2015). The pipeline will be connected with Trans-Anatolian gas pipeline via Turkey-Greece Interconnector (a gas pipeline running from Turkey to Greece) and deliver gas to Europe. At the initial stage the gas volume will constitute 10bcm with the potential to achieve 20bcm in long term. Bulgaria has also expressed an interest in joining the project.

Figure 2 Trans-Anatolian and Trans-Adriatic gas pipelines



Source: TAP

TAP-TANAP will barely meet 2-3% of EU's gas demand. In other words, the costly project lacks sufficient economic viability and it is less realistic to connect strategic interests with the project.

## **8. Conclusion**

The empirical data proves the theoretical outlines regarding the strategic significance of the access to or control over the energy resources, resource rich areas and supply routes for national power. Assessing the strategic significance of the energy resources for power position and distribution, states get actively involved in the power struggle to secure a favourable position in the energy field. At the post-Cold War period the compelling power struggle is especially observed in the broader Caspian region. The power struggle increasingly tends to involve the gas rich Middle Eastern region (here notably Iran). Turkey is also actively involved in the power struggle seeking to secure an access to the energy resources and the supply of the resources via the Turkish route (its territory). Turkey's pipeline politics meets the objective economic ends (the growing economic demand for energy). The pipeline politics, meanwhile, serves to the political purposes. With the conduct of BTC and BTE pipelines (the pipelines lack economic viability) the power distribution has changed in favour of Turkey in the broader Caspian region (here particularly in Azerbaijan). Interested in further increase of its influence in the Caspian, Turkey promotes Trans-Caspian gas pipeline project. However, the project lacks the chances to become operational in short and mid-term bases given the power struggle among the Caspian states, the unregulated dispute around the Caspian Sea status and geopolitical interests of Russia and Iran. From the strategic point of view, even if conducted, the Trans-Caspian pipeline will fall short of economic viability given the fact that the Caspian is not yet another oil rich Middle East and lacks far behind Russia and Iran in gas reserves. Turkey purports to increase its influence in relations with Russia, Iran, and EU. In this regard, Turkey tries to implement balancing policy gambling on the differences in EU-Russia, EU, U.S. and Iran relations. Turkey has agreed to the conduct of the controversial Turkish Stream pipeline. In long term bases Turkey might have also calculated to become the main export route for the Iranian gas supplies to EU. Turkey is

also involved in the construction of TAP-TANAP pipeline. However, it less realistic to expect the shift of balance of power in the respective relations with the conduct of the pipelines. In the case of the Turkish Stream pipeline, only two of EU countries have expressed an interest given the strained relations with Russia. It is also less realistic to expect Iran to empower Turkey by making her the main export route taking into account several problematic issues in the affairs. TAP-TANAP project will meet only 2-3% of EU's gas need; in other words, the projects will lack economic viability, hence the issue of influence and power is of little relevance to consider. Besides, Turkey first of all needs to deal with the fact of its own heavy dependency on gas supplies from Russia (56%) and Iran (18%).

Relating the issue to the broader theoretical context, it is significant to mention the data proves the realist perspective; the relations among states are apparently competitive, states pursue interest based foreign policy and struggle for power in international politics. Turkey, implementing policy of imperialism, is also actively engaged in international politics seeking reversal of power relations in its favour. Is there a room for constructivism? Politics among states indicates some cooperative features. In the studied case energy has served as a "tier" for close cooperation between Azerbaijan, Turkey and Georgia. However, the same cooperation is also for the sake of competition, struggle and power politics. The energy alliance has given the power to Turkey to contain Russia's and Iran's influence in the region. In other words, the pipeline politics is not solely about economics, it's about power, balancing, influence, hegemony and imperialism. So, Turkey's pipeline politics constitutes a tactical manoeuvre aimed at the strategic objective to embrace hegemony.

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