



**NOT NECESSARILY EXISTENTIAL THREATS:
IDENTITY-CONSTITUTIVE ROLE OF THE FOREIGN
POLICY DISCOURSE ON DISTANT HUMANITARIAN
CRISES**

**VAROLUŞSAL TEHDİTLER OLMADAN: UZAK İNSANİ
KRİZLER HAKKINDAKİ DIŞ POLİTİKA SÖYLEMİNİN
KİMLİK ÜRETİCİ ROLÜ***

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ABSTRACT

The depiction of identity in foreign policy analysis is typically presented as inherent or predetermined. However, discursive approaches within the field, particularly poststructuralism, have emphasized foreign policy discourse's influence on identity formation. The main aim of this paper is to elucidate the performative relationship between identity and foreign policy through a poststructuralist lens, even in situations that are not existential or geographically proximate crises. This study employs a critical discourse analysis methodology to examine the performative dynamics between foreign policy discourse by the Justice and Development Party (AKP) policymakers and officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) about distant natural disasters and the construction of the Turkish national identity. The study presents three primary findings: firstly, the AKP's foreign policy discourse recognizes

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the Indonesia and Pakistan disasters as significant events, in contrast to the case of Haiti; secondly, this discourse constructs a homogenous Turkish identity; and thirdly, this homogeneous Turkish identity qualifies by several signifiers and is distinguished from external others.

Keywords: Natural Disasters, Foreign Policy, Critical Discourse Analysis, Poststructuralism, Identity.

ÖZ

Dış politika analizinde kimlik çoğu zaman verili kabul edilse de postyapısalcılık dâhil olmak üzere birçok söylemsel yaklaşım, dış politika söyleminin kimlik inşasındaki rolüne dikkat çekmektedir. Bu çalışmanın temel amacı, varoluşsal tehditler yaratmayan uzak krizlerde bile kimlik ve dış politika arasındaki edimsel bağlantıyı tartışmaktır. Daha spesifik olarak bu çalışma, eleştirel söylem analizi metodolojisini kullanarak, Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (AKP) ve Dışişleri Bakanlığı yetkililerinin uzak insani krizler hakkındaki dış politika söylemleri ile Türk kimliğinin inşası arasındaki edimsel bağlantıyı anlamayı amaçlamaktadır. Çalışmanın üç ana sonucu şu şekildedir: (i) Haiti'nin aksine, Endonezya ve Pakistan felaketleri AKP'nin dış politika söyleminde majör olaylar olarak üretilmiştir; (ii) Bu söylem, Türk kimliğini homojen bir topluluk olarak üretmiştir; (iii) Bu homojen Türk kimliği çeşitli "gösteren"lerle pozitif olarak ilişkilendirilirken, olumsuzlanan çeşitli dışsal ötekilerden ayrıştırılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Doğal Afetler, Dış Politika, Eleştirel Söylem Analizi, Postyapısalcılık, Kimlik.

INTRODUCTION

The objective of this study is to develop a comprehensive understanding of the constitutive link between identity and foreign policy, specifically focusing on the construction of a Turkish self within the discourses of Türkiye's MFA and the ruling party. This analysis will specifically examine the portrayal of Turkish identity in relation to three distinct natural disasters that took place in geographically distant regions from Türkiye without directly endangering its national security. In the context of this research, the tsunami that occurred in

Indonesia (2004), the earthquakes in Pakistan (2005), and the earthquake in Haiti (2010) have all been categorized as distant disasters. In accordance with the aforementioned objective, the primary inquiry guiding this investigation is formulated as follows: "To what extent does the discourse surrounding Turkish foreign policy (TFP) on remote humanitarian crises contribute to the construction of a distinct Turkish national identity?"

This inquiry elicits three initial responses. Firstly, despite the geographically distant occurrences of these tragedies, they have significantly influenced the foreign policy rhetoric of the AKP with its influential role in shaping identity. Furthermore, the Turkish self that is constructed has an essential homogeneity. The homogeneity of the Turkish nation in the foreign policy discourse fosters an internal sense of unity and differentiation from other communities. Thirdly, the process of self-constitution has persistently occurred inside this homogenous entity, primarily manifested through signifiers associated with Islam and the Muslim world.

From the 1980s onwards, scholars in the field of International Relations began employing poststructuralist methodologies to critically examine conventional foreign policy concepts and practices. The initial objective of poststructuralist scholars was to critically examine prevailing notions of foreign policy and international relations (Shapiro, 1989; Der Derian, 1989; Ashley, 1988; Ashley, 1984). Poststructuralist researchers then shifted their focus towards conducting case studies that scrutinized the potential of foreign policy discourses and actions to shape and construct identities. Such studies shared a focus on the concept of identity being shaped by foreign policy discourse and actions rather than being seen as an inherent determinant of decision-making (Campbell, 1992; Dalby, 1990; Klein, 1990; Doty, 1998; Bleiker, 2005; Hansen, 2006; Burke, 2008). These seminal works emphasize that discourse analysis serves a broader purpose beyond its use as a poststructuralist tool. It is considered an integral component of a comprehensive approach to studying foreign policy and international relations (Hansen, 2016: 97).

The volume of scholarly works on poststructuralist foreign policy analysis has experienced significant growth in subsequent decades. Nevertheless, a significant portion of these studies have focused on analyzing the deconstruction of foreign policy discourses on either existential threats, such as David Campbell's (1992) exploration of the construction of American identity in contrast to the USSR during the Cold War or proximate threats, as evidenced by Bleiker's (2005) inquiry into the reciprocal process of identity construction through discourses between North Korea and South Korea.

The unique aspect of this research, in comparison to the wider body of poststructuralist foreign policy analysis, is in its capacity to understand how even seemingly unimportant and geographically remote crises contribute to the formation of identity. The primary contention of this study is that the capacity to shape identity is not limited to proximate issues that pose a threat to national security but also extends to geographically distant issues that may not directly impact national security. Consequently, the objective of this study is to comprehend the manner in which foreign policy assigns significance to distant emergencies that do not pose a danger to national security and how this course of action constitutes one's self-identity. The study's main objective is of a theoretical nature, but it also seeks to make a scholarly contribution to the expanding body of literature on Türkiye's foreign policy and its capacity to shape a (contested) national identity (Hintz, 2018).

1. PREMISE OF POSTSTRUCTURALISM: FOREIGN POLICY AND CONTESTED IDENTITIES

This research employs a poststructuralist framework in order to comprehend the co-constitutive relationship between foreign policy discourse and identity. While other theories in International Relations, such as conventional and critical variants of constructivism, also address the relationship between foreign policy discourse and identity, it is important to note that there are epistemological and meta-theoretical distinctions among these approaches. These differences can be categorized as explicit foundationalism in conventional constructivism, minimal foundationalism in critical constructivism, and anti-foundationalism in poststructuralism (Hoffman, 1991). This study situates itself within the poststructuralist literature, still recognizing the substantial contributions made by other discursive approaches in the field of International Relations (IR). Poststructuralism, characterized by its anti-foundational stance, posits that meaning and identity are perpetually incomplete and inherently in the process of being.

The theoretical framework of poststructuralism begins by examining the state as the primary player in foreign policy due to its significant influence in shaping identity formation among other actors. According to Campbell (1992: 10), "any particular state is achieved not through a founding act, but rather a regulated process of repetition." Contrary to the assertions made by prevalent theories of Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA), it is argued that states are in a perpetual state of becoming and are not static entities. Foreign policy is a significant aspect of statecraft that enables the articulation of a state's identity.

According to Laclau and Mouffe (1985: 153), politics can be understood as a practice that involves the creation, reproduction, and transformation of social

relations. Similarly, Campbell (1992: 62) defines foreign policy as a distinct political performance that establishes boundaries, constructs perceptions of danger and fear, and delineates the distinctions between the internal and external, as well as the self and the other. The process of constructing one's identity is not limited in time, as it does not appear once and afterward becomes eternal. Yet, all endeavors to conquer the gap in one's sense of self are consistently unsuccessful, leading to an identity that is perpetually partial and never attains a state of whole or wholeness (Nabers, 2009: 195). Consequently, the meaning of identity derives its significance from the interplay of differentiation, namely by means of the exclusion of the other. Laclau (2014) posits that the fundamental process of constructing and reshaping identity within a society revolves around the hegemonic contestation between several identity claims, each competing to establish itself as the dominant and all-encompassing identity. It is a never-ending battle that manifests on a daily basis, repeatedly and continuously. As highlighted by Laclau (2002: 5), the pursuit of resolving the identity void is an unattainable objective. Consequently, there exists no moment at which the process of identity formation reaches a state of fullness and firm establishment. Nevertheless, it is an ongoing process in which identity and foreign policy mutually shape and influence each other.

Consequently, the poststructuralist foreign policy analysis largely focuses on the deconstruction of dominant foreign policy discourses in order to comprehend the relationship between these discourses and the development of national identities. According to David Campbell, the study of foreign policy analysis examines the process by which the prevailing view of foreign policy is shaped through a discursive economy that assigns significance to representational practices linked to a certain problematization (Campbell, 1992: 37). The endeavor to re-conceptualize foreign policy requires a critical examination of the prevailing narratives, both in theoretical frameworks and practical applications. Nevertheless, this motivation does not align with the objective of providing policymakers with improved recommendations through the implementation of correct and more precise evaluations of foreign policy. In contrast, the poststructuralist focus lies on the analysis of the impact of specific historical depictions on our comprehension of foreign policy (Campbell, 1992: 40).

2. RESEARCH DESIGN

The primary focus of this study is the interconnection between the TFP discourse under the AKP's governance concerning distant humanitarian crises and the construction of a Turkish national identity. The study is formulated within the ontological and epistemological foundations of poststructuralist foreign policy analysis. The research does not show a unidirectional or causal link between two variables, specifically the discourse on distant humanitarian crises in

TFP and Türkiye's national identity. Instead, the existence of a co-constitutive relationship between the two variables, foreign policy and identity, is posited by the poststructural theory of foreign policy. Furthermore, it suggests that both these factors are in a perpetual state of becoming.

Poststructuralist scholars have addressed the critiques regarding their perceived "lack of research program" (Keohane 1988) by asserting that the examination of discourse within the field of International Relations has evolved into a dynamic research program that merits further advancement (Milliken 1999: 248). Furthermore, they argue that the rejection of causality within the poststructuralist framework does not impede their ability to develop productive research designs that facilitate comprehension of the discursive structure (Hansen, 2016: 18). The research design suggested by Hansen (2006: 72) offers a very relevant foundation for investigating discourse within the field of International Relations as a whole, and more specifically, for comprehending the bidirectional relationship between foreign policy and identity (Diagram 1). Utilizing Hansen's framework, Diagram 2 provides an overview of the research design employed in this study. Specifically, it examines a singular self, namely the Turkish identity, in relation to various events that are interconnected temporally and thematically. These events include the 2004 Indonesia Tsunami, the 2005 Pakistan Earthquakes, and the 2010 Haiti Earthquake. The analysis is conducted within a specific timeframe, namely the period preceding 2011. The focus of the study centers on the discourse articulated by the AKP in the broader political discourse (official discourse of AKP).

Diagram.1: Research Design by Hansen

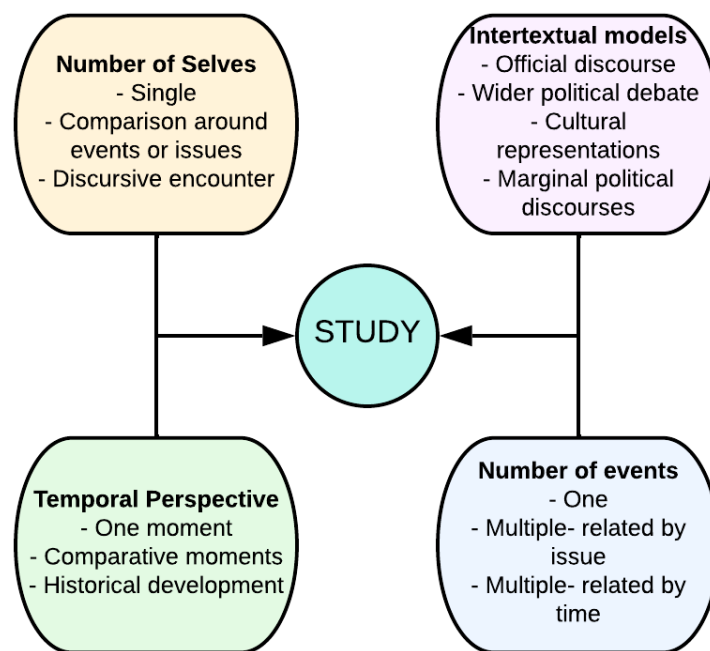
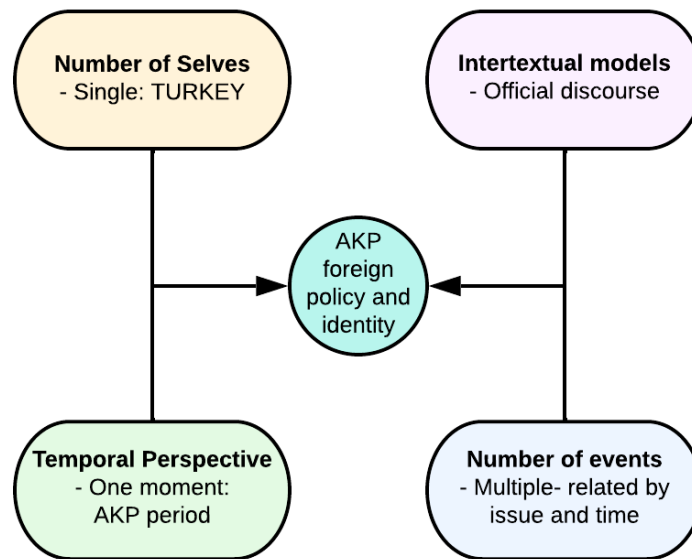


Diagram.2: Research Design of the Study

Hansen provides a range of alternatives related to self, time frame, cases, and intertextual model to be employed during the formulation of her research design. The identity being investigated as a constitution by foreign policy relates to the first element of Hansen's study design. This study focuses solely on the Turkish self, among several other alternatives. Hansen's method encompasses four intertextual alternatives in its second component, namely official discourse, wider political dialogue, marginal political discourses, and cultural representations. This study only concentrates on the examination of official speech as a means to comprehend the power of foreign policy discourse in shaping identity. This research encompasses the texts produced by the AKP and MFA officials as the official discourse.

The third component of the study focuses on the temporal view. This study specifically analyzes a particular era, which covers the initial years of the AKP's single-party administrations in Türkiye, spanning from 2002 to 2011. The AKP governments have significantly transformed Türkiye, leading to a shift away from the republican principles established since the country's founding in 1923. This has resulted in the adoption of more conservative democratic practices. The aforementioned transformation has been observed throughout several domains of Turkish politics, including the military establishment, local governance, the judicial framework, as well as diplomatic relations with mainly the European Union, the United States, Russia, and Middle Eastern nations. Consequently, since 2002, the AKP has effectively gained complete dominance over the state apparatus, positioning itself as the only authority in shaping Türkiye's official narrative in domestic and international matters.

The final component of Hansen's research design entails determining the number of cases to be examined. This study investigates a series of cases that are interconnected in terms of both temporal and thematic aspects. The analysis encompasses the remote emergencies resulting from disasters, including the 2004 Indonesia Tsunami, the 2005 Pakistan Earthquakes, and the 2010 Haiti Earthquake. The selection of these distant humanitarian crises is meant to illustrate that the impact of foreign policy discourse extends beyond strategic matters to encompass the formation of identity. The objective of this study is to illustrate the utilization of distant humanitarian crises in the discursive domain and their influence on the construction of identity in Türkiye. On the other hand, the rationale for selecting these three crises, in particular, is related to the fact that these humanitarian crises are the deadliest natural disasters that occurred prior to what is called an "imperialization" shift in TFP under AKP government (Akkoyunlu, 2021). Therefore, these three specific events and the related AKP discourse are capable of showing that the elements of imperialization aspirations among the AKP policymakers were also present even before 2011.

3. DATA AND METHOD

This study identified the official foreign policy discourse of Türkiye using four sources. The sources utilized in this study include the official website of AKP, the website of the MFA, the minutes of the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye, and speeches made by the AKP party committee within the Grand National Assembly. This analysis exclusively incorporates the discourses from the two months subsequent to the crises under examination. The reason for the time constraint is that a two-month duration is typically regarded as the period during which the event garners the most amount of attention on the global stage. As Nabers (2009) argues, "International crises are crucial in processes of change, as they are characterized by a void of meaning—that might be deliberately constructed—a structural gap that has to be filled, a situation of fragmentation and indeterminacy of articulations" (193). Consequently, throughout the subsequent two-month period following these catastrophes, there was a significant lack of meaning that required intervention from diverse discourses. Hence, the temporal scope is limited to the two-month period subsequent to the occurrence of the chosen natural calamities.

While each source employs distinct search mechanisms, the principal keywords employed to find the relevant texts included "deprem" (earthquake), "Asya" (Asia), and "tsunami" for the Indonesia case; "Pakistan" and "deprem" for the Pakistan case; and "deprem" and "Haiti" for the Haiti case. A total of sixty-one texts were detected throughout the data collection procedure, relevant to the three distant natural catastrophes.

In order to demonstrate the mechanisms of linking (positive identity) and differentiation (negative identity), this research employs a critical discourse analysis approach that aligns with Dillon's recognition of the significant influence of language on identity: "We come to presence in it [language] as we pass through it" (Dillon, 2013: 3). Dirk Nabers (2009) establishes a connection between critical discourse analysis and the theory of hegemony, as formulated by Laclau and Mouffe (1985), in his article examining the poststructuralist critique of the discourse surrounding the "war on terror" by the United States in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks. The theory of hegemony seeks to demonstrate "how hegemonic discourses serve as the nexus between crises and social structures and how they make identity construction possible" (194). Laclau and Mouffe argue that inside society, an ongoing fight for hegemony persists, wherein several discourses strive for dominance. Consequently, the concept of identity may be seen as a discursive construction (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 105), premised on the notion that all identities are inevitably incomplete and will perpetually remain such. The reason for that may be attributed to the fact that identity is established by means of a negation process (Behr, 2014), wherein there is consistently some individual or thing to be negated and a perceived lack or void that necessitates fulfillment. Laclau and Mouffe argue that articulations of identity are primarily shaped by the logics of equivalence and difference. As Žižek also discusses, "the two logics are not simply opposed, (...) a system of pure differentiability would lead to a pure equivalence of all its elements" (Žižek, 2008: 36). In contrast to the radically excluded other all elements possess equivalence due to their shared characteristic of negating the excluded other (Nabers, 2009: 195).

The relationship between the signifier and the signified is essential in filling the void of meaning. The signifier refers to the linguistic unit, encompassing words, sounds, or images. Conversely, the signified pertains to the underlying notion, meaning, or entity that is conveyed by the signifier. Empty or floating signifiers refer to signifiers that lack a direct referent, thereby giving "a particular demand a function of universal representation—that is to give it the value of a horizon giving coherence to the chain of equivalence and, at the same time, keeping it indefinitely open" (Laclau, 1996: 57–58). Instances of empty signifiers in the realm of global politics include terms such as "order," "democracy," "nation," "human rights," and "justice." These signifiers are commonly employed in international politics, yet there exists a lack of consensus over their precise definitions and interpretations. On the contrary, these signifiers are pivotal linguistic constructs employed by individuals and social groups to articulate and manifest their distinct sense of self. Due to the varying interpretations of these symbols across people and groups, a discursive conflict arises within society as each discourse strives to reconcile the divergence in representing one's identity.

The construction of identity is an ongoing and perpetual endeavor, and this battle for dominance is the underlying basis of political dynamics. Laclau and Mouffe (1985) argue that the concept of the social is contingent upon the endeavor to produce an object that is inherently unattainable (112). A specific discourse has the potential to establish hegemony and maintain dominance over a certain period of time. In light of conflicting discourses, the dominant discourse holds the power to shape the subjective experiences of individuals within a given society. This influence extends to the way individuals perceive and interpret linguistic signs. The capacity to influence the dominant perspective of reality has a significant influence on the expression of identity within that particular group.

If we consider the comprehension of speech as "an element of social life which is closely interconnected with other elements" (Fairclough, 2003: 3), intertextuality becomes the primary approach to "generate broader meanings" (Nabers, 2009: 199) through the texts. The creation of thoughts is not just a product of individual cognition but rather a result of broader social processes, including the production of texts and discourses. These thoughts are situated within a larger sociolinguistic context that has evolved through time (Nabers, 2009: 199). Intertextual analysis often derives its justification from the establishment of binary oppositions. The process of developing one's identity necessitates the act of excluding someone or something else. These binary oppositions serve as a means of expressing the self's identity by establishing connections and distinctions between signifiers that are used to describe both the self and the other. The initial phase of critical discourse analysis involves the identification of empty or floating signifiers within the texts under investigation, as the hegemonic fight revolves around the interplay between the logic of equivalence and the logic of differences. The objective of this identification process is to determine the prevalence of empty signifiers across all texts.

Recently, Nabers has framed this IR perspective based on Laclau and Mouffe's works as "a poststructuralist discourse theory of global politics" (Nabers, 2015; Stengel and Nabers, 2019). And this study aims to contribute to the same piece of literature. This study employs the theoretical framework of critical discourse analysis to examine the discourse surrounding TFP in relation to remote natural catastrophes. In the initial phase of the study, the chosen texts will be reviewed based on the below three inquiries:

- What is the number of texts that specifically discuss the three natural catastrophes that occurred within the two months following their respective occurrence dates?
- Among the four selected sources, how are the texts distributed?

- Who are the individuals delivering those particular speeches?

These inquiries will facilitate our comprehension of the portrayal of Türkiye's official foreign policy discourse concerning these disasters. The portrayal of these tragedies in TFP discourse can be understood by looking at the intensity of the statements delivered during each case, the sources from which these speeches were published, and the individuals who delivered these speeches. Therefore, this inquiry will enable us to ascertain if the official TFP discourse disregarded or prioritized the distant catastrophes.

In the second stage of the analysis, the elements of critical discourse analysis will play a crucial role where the signifier-signified link will be dug out. As the "we/us" pronouns are also empty or floating signifiers, they find their subjective meaning in the discourse. That is to say, what "we/us" pronouns refer to and what positive and negative signifiers are used to give meaning to the Turkish self will be vital to understanding how the AKP foreign policy on three distant humanitarian crises constitutes the Turkish identity. The fundamental questions of analysis in this second stage are:

- Who is represented by the pronouns "we" and "us" in the chosen texts?
- What are the signifiers utilized to signify the Turkish self?
- What are the signifiers that are utilized to signify the individuals affected by a disaster?

This study aims to identify various uses of "we/us" pronouns, as well as phrases employed to describe the Turkish self and several others. These will be categorized into two distinct groups: those that establish a connection between the Turkish identity and a comparable collective, culture, historical period, or favorable attribute, and those that highlight the unique characteristics of the Turkish identity in contrast to others. The utilization of linking and differentiating words serves to illustrate both positive and negative methods of signifying a signified, hence offering positive and negative identities for the self.

4. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Though this study applies a poststructuralist approach, as a prologue to the analysis, it will be beneficial to look at the constructivist literature on the link between humanitarian crises-foreign policy-identity to both benefit from their findings and also to locate this current study to that broad literature. Constructivism has discussed the link between foreign policy and identity, arguing that what determines foreign policy behavior is not just an interest-based material consideration by foreign policymakers but also that a norm-based ideational consideration. Agents in the international arena engage socially while shaping the

reality, which then constructs their identities and the pursuits they are expected to realize. Therefore, the decisions taken by a state in the international arena are not just the products of material calculations, but they also symbolize what these states value and what they think is suitable in light of their identities. Regarding foreign policy behavior vis-a-vis another state that requires assistance due to a disaster or long-time poverty, the role of ideational elements increases even more. Briefly visiting the cases of Japan (one of the best examples) and Türkiye (the country whose foreign policy discourse is under analysis in this study) could provide valuable insights into understanding the constructivist analysis of disaster-related foreign policies and the construction of state identities.

As stated above, Japan is one of the best examples considering the link among humanitarian crises, foreign policy, and identity; firstly, it is a natural disaster-prone country, and secondly, it has spent enormous efforts to reconstruct its national identity in the international arena since the end of the Second World War, to eradicate the past image of Japanese militarism and aggressive imperial aspirations (Miyashita, 2007). These two characteristics of Japan have resulted in active disaster diplomacy by the Japanese state: They have not only taken initiatives to transfer their experience and expertise in building disaster-resilient cities and disaster relief activities around the world but also have taken active roles in many UN-led initiatives and operations. Therefore, the active role played by the Japanese state in disaster diplomacy is more than just a rational risk management strategy. However, it is also considered an essential element of efforts to rebuild its post-WWII identity (Yamada and Clausen, 2015).

While Japan's disaster diplomacy is part of its identity reconstruction through a farewell to its past imperial ambitions, it is quite the opposite for Türkiye. As argued by Coşkun (2023: 18), humanitarian diplomacy by AKP governments differs from the previous Turkish governments in the sense that the share of the "Islamic undertones and Ottoman romanticism" has increased since 2002, the year when the AKP came to power in Türkiye. As directly stated by Ahmet Davutoğlu in 2013, who was the Minister of Foreign Affairs and also the architect of the proactive foreign policy in the ex-Ottoman geographies, Türkiye should act with a historical responsibility whose roots originate from the times of the Ottoman Empire: "We act on the same principle without differentiating between our citizens and the people with whom we share a common history" (Davutoğlu, 2013: 868). Although the foreign policy journey of Türkiye under the AKP governance has been full of ups and downs throughout the last 20 years, the motivation to build an identity as a moral and humanitarian actor with Ottoman and Islamic sources remained resilient (Altunışık, 2019: 3), proving the "continuity through change" argument by Taş (2022) in the AKP's populist foreign policy under the influence of Ottoman myth.

While focusing on the same nexus between disasters-foreign policy-identity, this study differentiates itself from the constructivist literature that highlights the role of the ideational motivations behind certain foreign policy decisions. First, this study does not take the concept of crises for granted. Instead, it argues that it is a discursive constitution if a humanitarian disaster in a distant geography is considered a "major event" in a particular country. Secondly, instead of the ambitious claim of revealing the identity-driven (and maybe "hidden") motivations in the discourses of foreign policymakers, this study focuses on the identity-constitutive power of the words by foreign policymakers. That is to say, this section will first discuss the constitution of "major events" out of distant humanitarian crises through discourse, and secondly, it will discuss the Turkish self that is imagined in these texts.

Jacques Derrida contends that the 9/11 attacks have been constructed as a "major event," warranting a unique evaluation different from previous events. According to Derrida, the reason why we perceive something as a major event is due to "the interpreted, interpretative and informed impression" by the prevailing system by various means such as language, communication, rhetoric, and media (2003: 89). Put differently, the term 'the thing' does not inherently signify a major event or a moment of crisis. It requires the discourse to interpret it. Therefore, a crisis is not just an "essentially contested concept," but it is also "an essential concept for the study of the social" (Nabers, 2015: 10).

In the context of a distant humanitarian disaster, a political entity, be it a prominent political party or a smaller NGO, is faced with two potential courses of action. This decision entails the choice between disregarding or emphasizing the humanitarian catastrophe. Put otherwise, it is possible to either convey the notion that the disaster is an event or refrain from doing so. Distant humanitarian crises exhibit distinct characteristics as compared to existential dangers or crises that occur in near geographical proximity. The occurrence of a humanitarian crisis in a neighboring region, whether arising from armed conflict or a natural disaster, elicits heightened political engagement and discourse inside the country due to the immediate implications that such a crisis has on the country itself, including the influx of asylum seekers and the potential for regional instability. Consequently, domestic political entities, including state authorities, are prone to develop their own narrative regarding the proximate humanitarian situation. In alternative terms, it is highly potential to perceive these proximate crises as an event. Conversely, the occurrence of a remote humanitarian disaster does not always give rise to existential anxieties, and the decision to publicly express or withhold commentary on the matter lies within the position and perspective of each respective political faction. The categorization of a distant humanitarian disaster ("the thing") necessitates further interpretation in order to conceptualize it as a "major event." The release of this impression and interpretation can occur through

the medium of published news in the media, as well as through political discussions and campaigns.

One potential course of action for a political group is to adopt a stance of disregard toward a remote humanitarian disaster, thereby excluding any discussion of this issue from the nation's domestic political discourse. In contrast, should the political faction opt to address the remote humanitarian situation, it would transform into a matter wherein many political groups vie for dominance in shaping the hegemonic discourse. The struggle for hegemony aims to address the void of meaning resulting from the acknowledgment of a humanitarian concern that is geographically distant and its subsequent incorporation into the realm of politics.

The subsequent paragraphs illustrate how policymakers from the AKP and officials from the MFA characterized the natural disasters in Indonesia and Pakistan as an event with the interpretation and impression they gave to "the thing" itself. On the other hand, inside the discourses of AKP leaders and MFA officials, the Haiti earthquake was not conceptualized as a major event. Consequently, policymakers from the AKP and officials from MFA have incorporated the instances of Pakistan and Indonesia into the ongoing discourse within the domestic political arena. The Haiti Earthquake, in contrast, did not receive significant attention within the broader political discourse.

Table.1: The Distribution of the Texts in the Selected Disasters and Destructiveness of the Disasters

	Number of Related Texts	Death Toll	Population	GDP per capita ranking
2004 Indonesia Tsunami	35	227,000	>225 million	107 th
2005 Pakistan Earthquakes	21	87,000	>157 million	127 th
2010 Haiti Earthquake	5	220,000	>9 million	142 nd

Table 1 presents a compilation of the texts and speeches delivered by representatives affiliated with AKP and officials from the MFA during the two-month period that followed the specified disasters. The allocation of texts across the three chosen events has significance. A total of 35 texts were detected pertaining to the Indonesia Tsunami, 21 texts for the Pakistan Earthquakes, and a mere five texts for the Haiti Earthquake. These numbers do not align with the severity of each catastrophe, as indicated by the number of fatalities, the population size, and the country's GDP per capita ranking at the time of the event, as presented in Table 1.

In summary, the severity of the events highlights Haiti as the most profoundly affected nation in comparison to others, facing a more challenging

recovery trajectory in the aftermath of the disaster. However, a comprehensive examination of the TFP discourse pertaining to these three natural disasters reveals that the Pakistan and Indonesia cases received a greater focus from politicians and officials from the MFA in comparison to the Haiti case. The differential emphasis placed on delivering speeches and texts by AKP politicians and MFA officials in response to the Pakistan earthquakes and Indonesia tsunami, as opposed to the Haiti earthquake, offers valuable insights into the manner in which these speeches framed the Pakistan and Indonesian disasters as major events warranting inclusion within the realm of Turkish political discourse.

The allocation of these texts across the four chosen sources and the speakers aligns with the preceding discussion. Table 2 illustrates the allocation of the texts across the four chosen sources. The presence of texts and speeches pertaining to the 2004 Indonesia Tsunami and the 2005 Pakistan Earthquakes is evident in all four sources, as indicated by the data presented in Table 2. Conversely, it is worth noting that all five texts pertaining to the Haiti case originate exclusively from the website of the MFA.

Table.2: How the Texts Are Distributed Among the Identified Sources

	AKP Official Website	AKP Group Meetings	General Assembly	MFA Website	Total
2004 Indonesia Tsunami	20	3	4	8	35
2005 Pakistan Earthquakes	9	3	6	3	21
2010 Haiti Earthquake	0	0	0	5	5

Table 2 can be comprehended by taking into account the distinctive characteristics of each source. The significance of the 2004 Indonesia Tsunami and the 2005 Pakistan Earthquakes is apparent from the abundance and diversity of texts and speeches found in each of the four sources. However, apart from the official website of the MFA, no other sources provided textual information regarding the 2010 Haiti earthquake. Consequently, texts by AKP policymakers and MFA officials on the Pakistan and Indonesia cases enjoyed broader public accessibility and exerted a more substantial impact in characterizing these cases as major events in comparison to the Haiti Earthquake.

This argument is substantiated by a more thorough analysis of the individuals delivering these speeches, as the texts and speeches pertaining to the disasters in Indonesia and Pakistan can be attributed to various speakers holding distinct titles. These titles include PM, Ministers, Deputy PM, MPs, MFA spokesperson, and MFA bulletin. Nevertheless, it is evident from Table 3 that the Haiti example lacks a diverse range of speakers, as all five texts pertaining to the Haiti Earthquake originate solely from MFA bulletins that have been officially published on the MFA's website. This also suggests that the situations in Indonesia

and Pakistan have been subjects of public discourse and political discussions. Nevertheless, the matter with Haiti has been limited to a regular focus by the MFA.

Table.3: The Distribution of the Texts among the Speakers

	PM	Minister of Foreign Affairs	Other ministers	MPs	MFA-spokesperson	MFA Bulletin	Total
2004 Indonesia Tsunami	22	2	1	3	3	4	35
2005 Pakistan Earthquakes	10	1	2	5	1	2	21
2010 Haiti Earthquake	0	0	0	0	0	5	5

In summary, the tragedies that took place in Pakistan and Indonesia were not perceived as negligible events in a distant and alienated geographical region for Türkiye. In contrast, the Haiti earthquake, unlike the aforementioned events, has not been characterized as an "event." AKP policymakers and MFA officials have chosen to include the Indonesia and Pakistan incidents in Türkiye's political discourse through their regular statements and texts across many sources. Nevertheless, the Haiti situation was omitted from these political discussions. This finding is significant to make sense of AKP policymakers' imagination of a supranational community. As crises have a long-term effect on societies, it is argued mainly that when confronted with grave problems such as natural disasters, the people of a region or country frequently feel more united than ever (Solnit, 2010). Therefore, natural catastrophes can inspire "imagined communities" because they pose a common threat (Jensen, 2021). Disasters happening in a local area and only affecting a limited number of people are perceived as "national experiences," they serve as a tool to reproduce the nation and the sense of collectivity, resembling the role of the national security threats that unite the people. Similarly, how policymakers, media, and societies react to a distant natural crisis in another country also has a similar function. Accordingly, while the high number of texts for the Indonesia and Pakistan cases produces these disasters as "major events" in the eyes of the Turkish public, the repeated calls to the Turkish people to raise funds to assist these countries also show that the discourses by the AKP officials imagine a community that goes beyond the national borders and that is rooted in the Islamic civilizational elements.

When these distant humanitarian crises were integrated into Turkish political debates at varying levels, Türkiye was not formed as a heterogeneous society. Instead, it is depicted as a homogeneous community that distinguishes itself from the rest of the world. One of the key features of foreign policy discourse

is its capacity to set a line between domestic and international politics. In contrast to foreign policy problems, all other community components are united as a single self. That is, as never-completed entities, states require the disciplining capacity of foreign policy to reproduce the self's identity. Throughout decades, Türkiye's foreign policy discourse has served as a battleground on which the discourses with hegemony claims clashed with each other while imagining a homogenous self in line with their political and ideological imaginations.

Since the foundation of the modern Turkish Republic in 1923 until the early 2000s, a Western-oriented and secular identity had been reproduced in the foreign policy discourse of the elites (Bilgin, 2009; Bozdaglioglu, 2003; Keyman and Gumuscu, 2014; Yavuz, 1998; Hintz, 2018). Though the state elite preserved its privileged and powerful position in foreign policymaking, the challengers were always present. As a country in constant search of its identity in a fluid geography, the words and deeds of the foreign policy makers contributed to this hegemonic struggle over Türkiye's foreign policy identity: towards the Western world, Turkic world, the Muslim world, and ex-Ottoman territories. TFP under the AKP rule is no exception (Arkan and Kınacıoğlu, 2016). Thanks to the gradually increased control over the state organs, including foreign policymaking, AKP has strengthened its power in this hegemonic struggle for asserting a homogenous Turkish self through foreign policy discourse and actions. As discussed below, AKP's discourse on these three distant humanitarian crises properly illustrates AKP's imagination of a homogenous Turkish self.

According to Nabers (2009), empty signifiers possess an ambiguous or non-existent referent, meaning that they might have several interpretations and so facilitate the convergence of diverse social movements (p. 196). The term "we" might be considered an empty signifier due to its representation of a nebulous or non-existent collective entity - the self, which can possess diverse interpretations across distinct groups. Foreign policy discourse and action are integral components of a nation's collective consciousness, as they underscore the notion of a cohesive internal group in contrast to the external world.

The utilization of pronouns such as "we" and "us" in the rhetoric of AKP policymakers and MFA officials underscores the importance of foreign policy in shaping national identity. This study examines the utilization of first-person plural pronouns (we/us) in the textual analysis of three distinct instances of remote natural disasters. According to linguistic studies, it is posited that every noun generates a distinction and asserts a realm of indifference. To put it differently, a noun serves the purpose of distinguishing the entity it denotes from other entities, but it also implies a uniform existence among the entities it represents, disregarding their intrinsic differences. Consequently, the utilization of terminology such as "people," "nation," "we," and "us" in the discourse of foreign

policy serves to establish a demarcation between the domestic and international spheres while simultaneously fostering a sense of collective affiliation and identification among disparate societal groups (Nabers, 2009: 202).

Table.4: Phrases in the Texts That Refer to "We" or "Us"

	Türkiye	Turkish people/ nation/citizens	Government/ Party	Muslim world
2004 Indonesia Tsunami	12	25	10	1
2005 Pakistan Earthquakes	8	26	0	1
2010 Haiti Earthquake	2	3	1	0
Total	22	54	11	2

Various self-perceptions may be observed within the rhetoric of AKP policymakers and MFA officials concerning these three remote disasters. The utilization of first-person plural pronouns, such as "we" and "us," serves to positively construct the self by establishing a connection between the self and a collective entity characterized by a distinct political structure that has evolved over time. The frequency of pronouns pertaining to Türkiye, the Turkish people, the Turkish nation, and Turkish citizens, as depicted in Table 4, signifies the establishment and perpetuation of the Turkish identity through the discourses employed by policymakers of the AKP and officials of the MFA in the aforementioned instances. The Turkish self is the central imagined community in these speeches and texts, with other imagined communities including the government, party, and Muslim world. In contrast to the initial expectations of the study, references pertaining to the Muslim world are found to be restricted to a mere two texts. These references associated with the Muslim world contribute to the formation of a collective identity that encompasses nations with predominantly Muslim populations. Additionally, the Turkish identity is also developed within the framework of this broader Muslim world.

It is essential to gain an understanding of how the concept of a homogeneous Turkish identity is constructed. In order to comprehend this constitution, it is useful to analyze the signifiers employed by policymakers of the AKP and officials of the MFA to symbolize the Turkish identity. These signifiers can be categorized as the ones establishing a positive association between the Turkish self and a certain attribute and the ones creating a negative distinction from a separate "other" group.

This section examines four signifiers that are utilized in a positive manner to depict the Turkish identity within the discourse surrounding distant natural disasters, as presented by officials from the AKP and MFA. The Turkish self can be understood through many positive signifiers, namely the memory of past disasters, the memory of Ottoman history, the conceptualization of a Turkish self through the framing of "our brothers and friends," and the conceptualization of a

mighty Turkish self. The presence of these positive signifiers illustrates the process through which the homogeneous Turkish identity has been constructed inside the nation, as evidenced by many texts.

References to history and traditions are among the signifiers that represent the Turkish identity in the context of the 2004 Indonesia Tsunami Case. The primary signifier in the texts was the focus on Türkiye's previous encounters with natural calamities. Most of the references pertain to the earthquake that occurred in Türkiye in 1999, resulting in a casualty count of over 17,000 individuals. The earthquake that occurred in Istanbul, the largest city in Türkiye, has had a significant and far-reaching effect on Türkiye. In his national address on January 26, 2005, Prime Minister (PM) Recep Tayyip Erdoğan extended an invitation to Turkish citizens to actively engage in a campaign of humanitarian aid as he emphasized that the Turkish nation is a "nation that has encountered similar sufferings in the past and understands how these disasters can harm communities. We will demonstrate the generosity in our hearts by assisting this region in need" Erdoğan (2005d). Other instances of such references to previous natural disasters experienced by the Turkish people can also be observed in other events. The frequent references to past calamities signify a collective Turkish identity that is inclined towards aiding individuals affected by disasters.

Other historical signifiers of the Turkish self include being a leading member of a charity-based civilization (Erdoğan, 2005b) and having deep historical relations with Indonesia from the 16th century (Erdoğan, 2005f). PM Erdoğan stated during his visit to Indonesia, "Our grief is as large as our responsibilities. We are here to share your sorrow and help you find a solution. This is a symbol of our friendship, which dates back to the 16th century" (Erdoğan, 2005f). To grasp the relevance of these references, one must recall the AKP's emphasis on the pre-republican and Ottoman history and legacy throughout its two-decade rule (Rabasa and Larrabee, 2008; Yavuz, 2020). In other words, the AKP asserts that TFP ought to draw its strength from the deep connection between contemporary Turkish society and its Muslim/Ottoman heritage.

Under the foreign policy of the AKP government, these references to the Turkish self contribute to the perpetuation of Türkiye's Ottoman-Islamic character. PM Erdoğan's statements during the AKP group meeting on February 23, 2005, are evident: "This emotion may be felt wherever, from Southeast Asia to the Balkans. Everywhere we visit, each nation and each country demonstrates that we are the descendants of such a tremendous civilization." (Erdoğan, 2005g).

Besides those deriving from the Turkish-Islam civilizations, several additional Islamic references are employed to signify the Turkish identity. PM Erdoğan employed the statement "as a country that loves mankind because of its

creator Allah" (Erdoğan, 2005a) in order to inspire the Turkish society to actively participate in aid efforts. These expressions found in the Quran serve as references to the Islamic faith while imagining the Turkish identity. Moreover, Erdoğan emphasized in his speech delivered on January 21, 2005, that the initiative towards Indonesia encompasses not only a moral duty rooted in humanitarian principles but also a religious duty grounded in Islamic teachings (Erdoğan, 2005c). PM further said that the appointment of the director of the Department of Religions Affairs in his delegation to Indonesia was motivated by the significance attributed to the spiritual dimensions of the disaster (Erdoğan, 2005e). In brief, PM Erdoğan used Islamic references to symbolize the Turkish identity and provide a rationale for the Turkish people to have concerns about the Indonesia Tsunami disaster, thereby perpetuating a self-perception rooted in Ottoman-Islamic values.

In the context of the Pakistan case, the signifiers show an apparent similarity to those seen in the Indonesia case. For instance, both cases include the identification of a country or nation that has previously had similar hardships. Additionally, both cases highlight the significance of being the first to extend assistance to the affected region. The signifiers employed to depict the Pakistani "other" are particularly prominent within the context of the Pakistan context. In the context of the 2004 tsunami instance, it is seen that the Indonesian other is shown by a total of 15 signifiers over 35 texts, but the Pakistani other is represented by 46 signifiers across 21 texts. Significantly, out of the total 46 signifiers, 39 specifically designate Pakistan as a "friend and brother" country. Notably, their rhetoric has contributed to the construction of a Turkish identity by establishing a connection with the people and nation of Pakistan through the notion of "friend and brother."

A simple glance at the historical relations between Türkiye and Pakistan reveals the employment of the "friend and brother nation" slogan for decades. This use may also be observed within the rhetoric of the AKP. During his speech on October 21, 2005, PM Erdoğan underscored the significance of the Türkiye-Pakistan friendship and brotherhood, characterizing it as a reciprocal relationship rooted in shared historical, cultural, and spiritual ties (Erdoğan, 2005i). While the terms "friend" and "brother" can be observed in Indonesian and Haitian contexts, their significance is comparatively diminished in wider discourses. In contrast to Pakistan, the reciprocal usage of the term "brother" between Türkiye and Indonesia/Haiti is not observed. However, it might be argued that this brotherhood is unidirectional in nature, lacking the essence of reciprocal collaboration and support between nations. To clarify, although the portrayal of the connection with Pakistan suggests a sense of equal fraternity, the ties with Indonesia and Haiti are characterized by a hierarchical dynamic, wherein an elder brother-younger brother relationship is shown.

In addition to utilizing discourses of friendship and brotherhood, the utilization of the signifier "Türkiye being among the first to send aid to the disaster zone" serves to establish a strong Turkish identity. As per Erdoğan's statement, Turkish individuals and the Turkish Red Crescent took the initiative to organize the initial aid convoys in Muzaffarabad city, Pakistan (Erdoğan, 2005h). The significance of this signifier's repetition, together with the revelation of the amount of aid provided to the regions, particularly by PM Erdoğan and MFA bulletins, is essential in portraying a strong and influential Turkish identity.

The language used by AKP policymakers and MFA officials often associates the Turkish identity with good attributes, historical events, or other groups. However, there are also instances where specific signifiers are used to create a negative distinction between the Turkish identity and others. These distinctive signifiers illustrate the process through which the boundary between the Turkish identity and the other has been established.

For example, the Christian aid personnel in Indonesia are portrayed as the "other" in relation to the Turkish self. This subject was emphasized by PM Erdoğan during his address on January 21, 2005, a matter that held significance for him:

We believe approaching the disaster area to convert Muslims to Christianity is inappropriate. Working for this goal during such a difficult moment is inappropriate. When we go there, we will not convert Christians to Islam. Our principal purpose is to discover solutions to get those people out of this challenging circumstance. In an oxygen tent, this should be the only thing you do. This will be done (Erdoğan, 2005c).

Erdoğan's words perpetuate the enduring portrayal of Western imperialism and missionary endeavors. According to White (2010: 217), the portrayal of missionaries plays a crucial role in the construction of national identity in Türkiye. Furthermore, Erdoğan's statements not only reiterate this fear but also establish a connection between Christians with utilitarianism, inhumanity, and a deficiency in demonstrating charitable acts. Simultaneously, these remarks differentiate the Turkish identity from these unfavorable connotations, constructing the Turkish identity as caring and generous.

The second group consisted of people from Argentina, Brazil, and Mexico, who were portrayed as the "other" in the construction of a Turkish identity. During his official visit to Pakistan, Erdoğan recounted an anecdote about an impoverished Turkish kid who expressed his willingness to participate in the humanitarian relief efforts. The PM proceeded to elaborate on this narrative:

Are not these values that make us strong? Without these principles, we would have witnessed the same images as Argentina, Brazil, and Mexico during the 2001 financial crisis. We have arrived at this point thanks to the virtues like solidarity and helping one another. It is now our turn. We must do what must be done; we must take the actions that must be taken (Erdoğan, 2005i).

Erdoğan's statements establish an apparent link between the looting incidents in Latin America amidst the economic crisis of 2001, creating a dichotomous relationship between the Latin American "other" and the Turkish national identity. The AKP has continuously portrayed the perceived immoral customs and behaviors of the Western and Christian world in order to bolster Turkish and Muslim culture. According to Atasoy (2009: 106), it is said that the AKP has consolidated its authority by integrating Islamic ethics with Western modernism. In essence, the portrayal of Western and Christian culture as lacking in moral values and ethics has emerged as a highly important strategy for sustaining the identity of the AKP and Turkish society. In the context of Latin American otherness compared to Turkish selfhood, one may observe the emergence of an other who is perceived as lacking the ethical principles necessary to avoid exploitation of the market, as well as the desirable qualities of solidarity and mutual assistance that enable individuals to endure challenging circumstances. Consequently, Erdoğan's statements serve to differentiate the Turkish identity from the perceived "immoral" other, ascribing contrasting qualities to the Turkish self. Erdoğan does not justify the assistance given to Indonesia and Pakistan with solely humanitarian reasoning, but he also claims, "they (houses to be built by Türkiye in Indonesia) are also indicators of the Muslim solidarity," which he argues as necessary steps to be taken both from a humanitarian and also an Islamic perspective (Erdoğan, 2005b).

To conclude this section, looking through the literature on TFP, the findings of the study could reveal that even before the 2010s -when it is believed that the TFP under the AKP governments performed a shift towards the stage of "imperialization" with Ottoman/Islamist aspirations (Akkoyunlu, 2021) when it is argued that Türkiye started to utilize humanitarian diplomacy as an essential foreign policy tool (Altunışık, 2019) and when it is argued that Türkiye started to produce and reproduce the identity of "humanitarian state" imagination (Keyman and Sazak, 2014; Coşkun, 2023)- the seeds of similar discourses had been present in the TFP under the AKP governments. As discussed above, even in the early years of the AKP rule in Türkiye, Turkish identity was imagined as strong, capable, and humanitarian: Firstly, Türkiye was a mighty country equipped with the required tools and resources to intervene in a distant humanitarian crisis, which could be explained through "middle power activism" (Gilley, 2015). Secondly, Türkiye was a humanitarian state that was willing to allocate its

resources to these countries in need only with "humanitarian" motivations, unlike its Western counterparts who had other motivations such as alleged "missionary activities" or political motivations through the conditionality principle (Coşkun, 2023: 5). And thirdly, this study reveals that Türkiye's "strong, capable and humanitarian" self-image has its limits: It is not a universal imagination, but it is limited by the imperial aspirations of the AKP policymakers through the legacy of the Ottoman/Islamist past. It is a matter of debt and responsibility for Türkiye against the Muslim populations of the world and the ex-Ottoman territories. This argument aligns with the findings of the study, which suggest that the examples of Indonesia and Pakistan were "major events" that warrant inclusion in the domestic political discourse. In contrast, the case of Haiti was mostly disregarded despite its far greater level of destructiveness.

5. CONCLUSION

This study primarily aims to have a comprehensive understanding of the performative link that exists between identity and foreign policy discourse. In order to get a more thorough understanding of this performative link, this research focused on analyzing the AKP's foreign policy discourse in relation to three different natural catastrophes that occurred in remote locations between the years 2002 and 2011. The selection of these instances serves to illustrate the potential of foreign policy discourse in shaping identities, especially in humanitarian situations that are geographically remote. The research has indicated that despite the geographical distance of these humanitarian crises, the foreign policy discourse pertaining to these "non-existential" incidents remains very pertinent and significant in the process of reconstruction of national identity.

The present study has generated three findings. The initial finding suggests that officials within the AKP and staff within the MFA considered the 2004 Indonesian Tsunami and the 2005 Pakistan Earthquakes to be "major events." However, the 2010 Haiti Earthquake was deemed less important and received less attention. Their construction as major events has included the tragedies in Pakistan and Indonesia to political discourse in Türkiye. Therefore, this conclusion validates the study's initial tentative response, which indicated that distant natural disasters, with their identity-constitutive power, are also crucial in the AKP's foreign policy discourse.

The second finding of the study indicates that the discourse of AKP officials and MFA representatives regarding these three remote natural catastrophes has had a role in shaping a homogenous Turkish identity. The finding provides support for the second preliminary conclusion of the study, which suggests that the frequent utilization of the pronouns "we" and "us" in reference to Türkiye and

Turkish people signifies a conceptualization of a homogenous Turkish identity that is internally uniform and distinct from other nations.

The third finding of this research contradicts the third tentative response presented in the Introduction, which posits that the Turkish homogeneous identity is primarily constructed through Islamic symbols in the discourses of AKP policymakers and MFA officials regarding remote natural calamities. The selected statements continue to exhibit Islamic elements that represent the Turkish identity. Nevertheless, the majority of symbols that represent the Turkish identity pertain to the recent disasters experienced by Türkiye. Additionally, several additional signifiers may be identified, including those that symbolize an Ottoman-Muslim identity, those that signify strong bonds of friendship and brotherhood with countries like Indonesia, Pakistan, and Haiti, and those that reflect Türkiye's aspirations for a prominent and influential position in the global arena. In addition to the positive identities that attribute certain features or qualities to the Turkish self, there are also negative identities that serve to differentiate the Turkish self from other groups. The category of "others" encompassed Latin Americans who were perceived as lacking the moral values upheld by the Turkish identity, as well as Christian relief teams in Indonesia who were depicted as carrying out missionary work.

The significance of these three results lies in their ability to effectively demonstrate the process of identity construction within foreign policy discourse around remote natural catastrophes. It is important to acknowledge that these characteristics do not pertain to an inherent Turkish identity that is awaiting revelation. Our research places significant emphasis on the role of discourse in shaping the Turkish identity within the ranks of AKP politicians and MFA personnel. Put differently, identity is always in a state of flux and is never fully constituted or completed. Many political factions possess distinct conceptions of selfhood for the nation, and they consistently strive to assert their discourse as the prevailing narrative on a particular matter. Therefore, it is important to acknowledge that this study just encompasses Türkiye's official discourse on remote natural catastrophes, thereby portraying merely one facet of the overarching hegemonic struggle.

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Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's Speeches Quoted in the Text (Details available in the Supplementary Material)

Erdoğan, Recep Tayyip (2005a), TEXT CODE: SEA-7

Erdoğan, Recep Tayyip (2005b), TEXT CODE: SEA-28

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