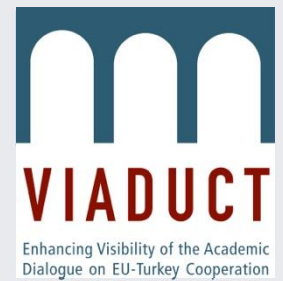


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EUROPEANIZATION AND DE-EUROPEANIZATION PROCESS OF TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY

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ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on changes in Turkey’s foreign policy in light of the framework of Europeanization. Although at the beginning Turkey was a candidate country which trying to fit it’s both domestic and foreign policy with the European Union, after 2010 it has diverged from the “EU path”. This paper aims to discuss where the Turkish foreign policy currently stands and how it has been shaped by external and internal factors.

CONTENTS

1. Introduction
2. What is Europeanization?
3. The Europeanization Process of Turkish Foreign Policy
4. The De-Europeanization of Turkish Foreign Policy
5. Recommendations
6. Conclusion

1. Introduction

At the beginning of the new millennium, the concept of Europeanization was coined by several scholars in the domain of European studies (Börzel, 2002; Graziano and Vink, 2008; Radaelli, 2004; Olsen, 2002). The definition of the concept and its effects on both the Union and member states and candidate countries have been studied. With the widening and deepening efforts of the European Union, Europeanization has become much more important especially on the issue of accepting new members because the Union was preparing for a major expansion wave which includes twelve countries. The candidate countries in the accession process, are highly influenced by the European policies, norms, and practices both in the domain of domestic and foreign policy. Once a state becomes a candidate, it has to make reforms in many areas such as jurisdiction, economy, and administration to comply with the rules of *acquis communautaire*. Besides, “...the EU-accession process is the most effective framework for

promoting reforms” (Oğuz, 2012). Adoption of these rules creates significant changes in the candidate countries towards European politics and, Turkey has experienced this for a very long time in the waiting room of the Union.

This paper claims that the Turkish foreign policy has been diverging from the European Union’s foreign policy norms. The article firstly will further focus on what Europeanization is and will continue with the Europeanization process of Turkish foreign policy since the Helsinki Summit in 1999 when Turkey became an official candidate country. In the third part of the paper, the de-Europeanization process of the Turkish foreign policy under the Justice and Development Party (JDP) government will be analyzed with examples, and it will be argued that the Turkish foreign policy has moved in a different direction from the European Union.

2. What is Europeanization?

As it is mentioned above, the issue of Europeanization is becoming a much more important issue in the area of European studies (Olsen, 2002; Graziano and Vink, 2008; Börzel and Risse, 2012). The interaction between the European Union and its members as well as its candidate countries are examined with the contribution of the Europeanization to European studies. Although there is no specific definition of the term of Europeanization, Radaelli’s (2004) definition is seen to be the most comprehensive one. He claims that Europeanization is made up of construction, diffusion, and institutionalization of all formal and informal procedures, rules, norms, beliefs and policy-making processes, which are first reinforced at the EU level and then at the domestic level (Radaelli, 2004). On the other hand, Tonra explains the Europeanization of foreign policy as “... transformation in the way in which national foreign policies are constructed, in the way in which professional roles are defined and pursued and in the consequent internalization of norms and expectations arising from a complex system of collective European policy-making” (Tonra, 2013).

Europeanization process is manifested in different guises in member states and candidate countries. According to Börzel, the Europeanization process occurs top-down or bottom-up ways in the member states. Usually, the decisions are taken at the Union level, and the member states must adopt it. However, in some cases, a member state can impose its policies towards the EU level to pursue its interests and to avoid the costs of policy adaptation. For example, Germany imposed its environmental policies to other member states, and the members implemented these policies into their systems (Börzel, 2002). On the other hand, the candidate states have to meet the requirements of the Union to become a part of it. The negotiations on the accession process represent enormous operation in policy transfer (Güney, and Tekin, 2016). While member states can impose their policies towards the EU level, candidate countries do not have such a chance; they are obliged to comply with the EU policies. Europeanization of candidate states is considered as a top-down process because an accession country is not in a position to affect the EU policies regarding bottom-up Europeanization; therefore, the nature of the negotiation process is asymmetrical (Güney, and Tekin, 2016).

The degree of policy changes towards the EU depends on fit or misfit between the EU and the target country. "Certain policies and institutions of the EU cause policy or institutional misfit in the member/candidate states" (Güney, and Tekin, 2016). Especially for the candidate countries, more misfit means more adaptational pressure. The policy or institutional structure in a candidate country must be changed as much as the difference between the EU and that state to comply with the accession requirements. Therefore, the goodness of fit is an essential dimension of the Europeanization process (Güney, and Tekin, 2016).

3. The Europeanization Process of Turkish Foreign Policy

Turkey is an emerging regional power in a neighborhood filled with conflict and uncertainty. As a Western-oriented Muslim country and a bridge between west and east, Turkey can play a key role in this region. Therefore, it is essential to understand Turkey's foreign policy strategies and its relations with its neighbors and partners. In order to comprehend the Europeanization process of the Turkish foreign policy, it is necessary to know the European foreign policy instruments and its dynamics. In 1993, the Treaty of Maastricht introduced the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) of the European Union. The CFSP aims to preserve peace, to strengthen international security, to promote international cooperation and, to develop and consolidate democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms (Genderen, and Legrand, 2016). Consequently, the most important tools of the EU foreign policy are diplomacy and dialog, and since the candidate countries have experienced the top-down process, they have to adapt the rules of the CFSP.

Turkey has made significant progress in both domestic and foreign policy areas to comply with the European Union standards, especially after the 1999 Helsinki Summit. Since the primary responsibility of a candidate country is to adopt the EU policies, institutions, norms and values, Turkey has had to display various improvements, particularly in the foreign policy area, to preserve its candidate status. In this process, the most dramatic change in Turkey's foreign policy has been the shift from hard power to soft power (Öniş, 2008). This shift led Turkey to implement a foreign policy based on dialogue and diplomacy.

Before 1999, the use of hard power was more common in the realm of Turkish foreign policy because there were external threats in the near region of Turkey and, this situation was causing misfit with the EU policies. For example, in 1995, there was a risk of war with Greece because of the coastal waters of the Aegean Sea and, in 1996 again a possibility of war with Greece threatened the relationship between the two countries because of islets in the Aegean Sea. Also, in the Southern borders, Turkey had hostile relations with Syria and Iraq. The issue of distribution of water from Euphrates and Tigris rivers and the PKK problem in the region brought Syria and Turkey on the edge of war in 1998. Moreover, the relationship with Iraq was unpleasant because of the safe zone of PKK in the Northern Iraq territory (Müftüler-Baç and Gürsoy, 2010).

The considerable change in the Turkish foreign policy towards the EU came after Helsinki Summit. Under the Justice and Development Party government, Turkey has pursued more diplomacy-oriented policy as it was mentioned above. For instance, in order to develop more positive relations, Greece and Turkey initiated a new rapprochement, and they increased dialogues between each other. Also, Turkey started to make connections with its Southern neighbors. For example, Turkey increased political dialogue, economic activities, investments and trade relations with its Middle East neighbors (Gürsoy, 2010).

In addition to the satisfactory change in the relations with Greece and the Middle East neighbors, Turkey has strengthened its connections with the Balkan countries. According to Bülent Aras, “Turkish policy makers consider regional cooperation and integration in the Balkans as an essential component of Turkey’s new regional policy as well as its stability at home.” Also, he states that the regional policy of Turkey is based on the “development of bilateral relations, strengthening the mechanisms of political and economic cooperation, and creating a regional sense of ownership and problem solving in the Balkans” (Aras, 2012). The growing network with the Balkan countries is also a sign of Turkey’s enthusiasm to adopt the EU norms thus, to get a seat in the EU and the globalizing world.

Moreover, the former foreign minister Ahmet Davutoğlu brought a new perspective into the Turkish foreign policy with his new foreign policy instruments. Davutoğlu’s approaches like zero problems with neighbors, rhythmic diplomacy, equidistance, and integrated foreign policy instruments provided beneficial relations between Turkey and its neighbors (Aras, 2009). With these developments, Turkey aimed to integrate the NGOs, business communities and other civil organizations into its foreign policy-making mechanism. Also, these instruments have encouraged Turkey to take a mediating role in the Balkans, Caucasus and in the Middle East (Aras, 2009). This progress has contributed to the converging relations between Turkey and the EU’s foreign policies regarding the use of soft power and it is indisputable proof of the Europeanizing Turkish foreign policy.

Another essential point in the Europeanizing Turkish foreign policy is that Turkey has begun to take place in the EU-led NATO operations. By this mean, Turkey has become the fifth-largest contributor to the EU force. Also, Müftüler-Baç and Gürsoy argued that “Turkey’s willingness to contribute to European security after 2003 shows that the Turkish military and government still support taking joint decisions with other European countries, at least for operations that draw upon NATO assets and provide for the security of the continent” (Müftüler-Baç and Gürsoy, 2010). In other words, the security concerns of Turkey have close parallels with the EU’s approach.

As can be understood from these examples, the Turkish foreign policy has evolved towards the EU foreign policy instruments, norms, and values after it became a candidate country. In this shining period of the foreign policy, Turkey has embraced cooperation and coordination, bilateral relations, economic activities, trade relations and diplomacy as foreign policy tools and it has respected to the international law. Also, Turkey has included NGOs and other organizations into the foreign policy-making process, and the military power over the foreign policy has been eliminated (Müftüler-Baç and Gürsoy, 2010). Therefore, Turkey's foreign policy has become more Europeanized.

4. The de-Europeanization of the Turkish Foreign Policy

Despite all the developments and convergences with the EU foreign policy, relations between Turkey and the European Union after 2010 have slowed down visibly. Concerns about the changing foreign policy of Turkey and moving away from the EU have begun to be expressed. Kadioğlu says that “The AKP government has been conducting an awkward dance of one step forward with reform and another step back, in order to strengthen its foot in politics” (Kadioğlu, 2012). Turkey has changed its way of improving its economic and geostrategic interests (Doğangil, 2013). Thus, the process of de-Europeanization of Turkey has begun.

First of all, Davutoğlu's foreign policy instruments did not bring any success because of the unpredictable Arab Spring. Turkey's “trade-oriented” and “soft-power” foreign policy has been replaced by a “security-oriented” one (Tziarras, 2018). The miscalculations in the Middle East region and increasing tension with the USA, the EU, and Russia have caused real troubles in Turkish foreign policy (Barkey, 2016). In addition, the rise of ISIS changed the game in the region, and Turkey has become an unreliable ally in the fight against ISIS because it considers the ISIS as an opportunity due to its hostility against Kurds and Assad regime (Vucsanovic, 2016).

Also, most scholars agreed that Turkey's foreign policy is shifting away from diplomacy and dialog in recent years. Jorgensen points out that negotiations with Armenia slowed down and relations with Syria changed from being cooperative to becoming highly hostile (Jorgensen, 2016). Likewise, relations with Israel are becoming unfavorable. For example, after Netanyahu's accusation that the Turkish army is killing women and children in Kurdish villages, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu claimed that “the biggest common feature of the PKK and Netanyahu is that they are both baby killers” (Deutsche Welle, 2018).

Additionally, after the anti-Morsi military coup in Egypt, the relationship has become poorer between the two parties (Jorgensen, 2016). The Egyptian Foreign Ministry accused Erdogan of interfering and inciting Egypt's internal affairs because Erdogan supported the ousted leader Morsi and the opposition Muslim Brotherhood. As a result of this tension, Egypt told the Turkish ambassador to leave the country, and in retaliation, Turkey declared the Egyptian ambassador as “persona non grata” (BBC News, 2013).

Another example that demonstrates Turkey's shift in its foreign policy stance is its involvement in the war in Syria. The Operation of Euphrates Shield shows that Turkey's external policy has begun to give greater impetus to realistic policies based on hard power. In 2018, Turkey initiated another operation called Operation Olive Branch in Syria and instead of dialog and negotiations, Erdoğan government insisted upon

military action. High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Federica Mogherini raised EU's concerns about Turkey's further operations in Syria which might fuel up instability in the region (Aktan, 2018). As a result, the Syrian politics of Turkey demonstrates that it is getting away from the soft power of diplomacy and dialog, and from the EU norms.

Moreover, recently Turkey has a tense relationship with the USA because of several reasons (Sloat, 2017). For instance, the two sides have different interests in the Middle East. The US support for PYD/YPG and the policy implemented by Turkey in Syria is causing tension between the two sides. In addition, the US's recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and extradition of Fethullah Gülen create an even more complex environment for the relationship.

Turkey created a policy which doesn't interfere in other countries' internal affairs and highlights friendship and trade relations. However, these examples show that this policy vanished away in a short time and that Turkey is maintaining an unfriendly foreign policy and, moving away from diplomacy, dialog, and cooperation which are the main EU foreign policy tools. This situation proves that the misfit between Turkey and the EU is increasing again because of Turkey's changing foreign policy.

Since the current President of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdoğan is the most dominant character in Turkish politics, his attitudes towards the European Union are crucial to understanding the de-Europeanization of Turkish foreign policy. The most obvious examples of Turkey's moving away from the EU are Erdoğan's speeches about the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. Firstly, he said that "Turkey should first of all feel relaxed about the EU and not be fixated" (Wang, 2016). By saying that Erdoğan gave the signals of leaving the EU path. Later, he added that "Some may criticize me, but I express my opinion. For example, I have said 'why shouldn't Turkey be in the Shanghai Five?'" (Wang, 2016). In this way, he showed that Turkey is seriously considering leaving the EU and turning its face to the Asian World. Also, he accused the EU of being unfair towards Turkey, and he said that "Double standards are no longer hidden. They have put more obstacles on Turkey's path. They have been keeping Turkey waiting at their door for 53 years." Moreover, he said that "I am saying now that the EU's approach to Turkey is Islamophobic," (European Dialogue, 2016). Furthermore, after the European Parliament's decision to freeze accession talks with Turkey, Erdoğan's attitudes became more aggressive. He said that "I want to say in advance from here and address the whole world watching on their TV screens -- this vote has no value at all, no matter what result emerges" (France24, 2016). It seems that Erdoğan has accelerated breaking ties with the EU and made clear that Turkey has other alternatives rather than the European Union.

Furthermore, the Western countries have become concerned about Turkey's radical and aggressive approach to human rights and freedom of the press. Turkey, under the leadership of Erdoğan, has gradually begun to show more authoritarian features "has turn into a difficult partner and ally" (Tziarras, 2018). Therefore, a more radicalized Turkey has become an unreliable partner in the eyes of the West.

There is no doubt that Turkey is a de-Europeanizing country regarding both domestic and foreign policy areas and there has been an increasing Euroscepticism among the Turkish decision makers. Several reasons might be shown why Turkey is moving away. First of all, Jorgensen argues that the business community has found other trade areas and with the growing economy, the EU membership has become less important. Also, he

says that because of economic crises in the EU member states, the Single Market has lost its attractiveness (Jorgensen, 2016). Moreover, since the nationalism is an essential part of the Turkish politics, the efforts of being fit with the EU policies might be considered by the national elite as an intervention to Turkish politics (Jorgensen, 2016).

Another reason might be the attractiveness of other cooperation and organizations. As can be understood by Erdoğan's speeches, Turkey is now aware of the alternatives and do not have to wait for the EU membership. On top of these, the rising far-right political parties all over Europe have created a divergence in relations between two sides (Aydın-Düzgüt and Kaliber, 2016) and led Turkey to estrangement from the Europeanization process.

Additionally, Turkey has waited for a very long time to become a member of the Union. Turkey applied for membership to the European Economic Community in 1987 and waited for eighteen years to start the accession negotiations. During this period, unlike the Central and Eastern European countries, Turkey has never been given clear deadlines for the process. For instance, while these countries had a clear participation date, Turkey has never received a specific date. This absence of certainty has led to a loss of credibility of the EU in the eyes of Turkey and has altered Turkish foreign policy towards the Union (Müftüler-Baç, 2017).

5. Recommendations

It is an indisputable fact that Turkey is moving away from the path of EU membership. However, the partnership is valuable for the two sides, and both should try to restore the relations. Firstly, Turkey should focus on multilateral solutions rather than unilateral "deals" in the realm of foreign policy. In recent years, Erdoğan and several Turkish policymakers have developed hostile rhetoric. This discourse harms bilateral relations where there is a need to collaborate in order to overcome current crises. Therefore, Turkey should build friendly relations with its peers, bring back the "trade-first" approach, quit the policy that interferes others' internal affairs, and decrease the misfit between itself and the EU.

Secondly, both sides should give due importance to the re-admission agreement which facilitates the return of irregular migrants. This agreement is both an effective humanitarian action and a great opportunity to reinforce the relationship. Also, the visa dialogue carried out under this agreement should be finalized in a positive way in order to create an environment that will ensure the convergence of the relationship.

Lastly, according to the 2018 EU report on Turkey, "Turkey aligned itself, when invited, with 10 out of 64 EU declarations and Council decisions representing an alignment rate of around 16 % during the reporting period". This numbers should be increased, and Turkey should be encouraged to participate in more CFSP activities, as well as the Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP) and the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP). Turkey's economic, military and political ties to the West and the East could be useful for these institutions, and in the long term, Turkey will be a valuable and effective actor for the EU (Özgöker, 2017). Likewise, the EU is a significant partner for Turkey and should take serious steps to improve its alignment with the CFSP, the CSDP and, the ENP.

6. Conclusion

This paper aimed to give an insight into the process of Europeanization in especially foreign politics and to discuss where the Turkish foreign policy stands. The main argument of the paper is that Turkish foreign policy has drifted away from the EU norm because of several reasons such as attractiveness of other economic alternatives and organizations, the EU crisis and the loss of credibility of the Union. The accession process provided a fertile environment to change Turkish foreign policy from hard power to soft power. Although that was the case during the first years of Turkey's candidacy, nevertheless recent developments and crises in world politics as well as in the relationship between Turkey and the EU have pushed Turkey away from the Union. Failed policies, unexpected conflicts and a government which gradually has become authoritarian, have led both sides to lose the motivation to pursue harmonization and integrations process. Today it seems that Turkey has lost its faith in becoming an EU member, hence started looking for new partners. On the other side, with increasing far-right parties and crises that the Union has to deal with, the Turkish accession has become less important in the EU's agenda. However, Turkey's role in the security policy of the EU is significant in coping with the ongoing crisis in the region. Besides, without the EU, Turkey is getting alienated in world politics. Therefore, Turkey should be more involved in the CFSP, and both parties should define their interests in a similar way because just as Turkey needs the EU, the EU also needs Turkey.

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ABOUT VIADUCT

The **historical complexity and volatility of EU-Turkey relations** are reflected by **research and teaching** in this field. There are international research projects as well as many smaller and nationally funded studies and projects dealing with Turkey, including its relationship with the EU. Linking these different projects, diffusing knowledge on the European Integration process and exploiting synergies between international players constitutes real added-value for European Integration studies.

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