Contextual and Contested: Reassessing Europeanization in the Case of Turkey

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Abstract
This article introduces a novel conceptual/analytical framework to Europeanization studies. Its main aims are twofold: first, it problematizes the mainstream usage of the term Europeanization, and the notion of change that it has embraced, and second, it develops a fuller account of the impact of European integration on societies. An analytical distinction is drawn between EU-ization as a formal process of alignment with the EU's body of law and institutions, and Europeanization as a wider sociopolitical and normative context. The impact of Europeanization in a given society is heavily conditioned by the extent and the ways in which Europe is used as a context by domestic actors. To substantiate its arguments, the article focuses on the Turkish case, where Europeanization as a normative–political context has extensively been implicated in its modernization and nation-building processes as well as in recent domestic debates concerning the country’s identity and future orientation.

Keywords
EU-ization, Europeanization, modernization, neoinstitutionalism, Turkey

Introduction
The successive fall of communist regimes in Central and Eastern European Countries (CEECs) has had tremendous implications for Europe, including the integration process it has been experiencing. Among others, it gave an unprecedented momentum to European integration toward Eastern and Central Europe. The European Union (EU) created ‘powerful tools to shape institutions’ and political structures in the CEEC's through the mechanisms of conditionality, financial aids, and other instruments, which

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were directly associated with accession to the EU. Therefore, the EU found the opportunity to impose its conception of development and modernization through accession; modernization ‘legitimated around a collective identity based on liberal norms of capitalist democracy’. After the 1980s’ Southern European enlargement, the EU has once more appeared as the external modernizing subject and ideal model to emulate for the countries undergoing postcommunist transformation. The political and economic models of its core members ‘were seen as normatively superior and readily transferable to displacing inferior models in candidate countries’.

The last wave of EU enlargement ran parallel to the rapid increase of a rather ‘post-ontological’ research agenda, and its literature on Europeanization was dedicated to understanding the domestic impact of the EU on the member and candidate countries. This is comparable with the rise of the 1950s’ neoevolutionist modernization school in the United States as a response to the wave of independence in the developing world from the colonial rulers. I argue that the current usage of the term Europeanization has resulted in teleologically fixated research, where the EU represents, a priori, the most developed, the most modern, and the to be adapted to. Change is not only taken as read, as a linear process of development in the member or applicant states but is also often associated exclusively with the EU, ‘thereby de facto excluding other processes which may also logically be regarded as Europeanization’. The EU’s norms, policies, and rules of conduct are often straightforwardly identified with that of Europe and assumed as established and even fixed identities to be exported to the less or non-European societies. Yet, as in the case of all other collective identities, the meaning, norms, and boundaries of European identity are always subject to change reflecting the inherent power relations, ideological premises, and cultural practices of a specific historical period of time and of a specific national context. Therefore, any scholarly reflection of Europeanization should consider the ‘historically contingent’ and politically constructed nature of Europe and the implications of that on the impact of Europeanization on different societies.

Thus, the current study rejects any notion of Europeanization as a linear and evolutionary process of adaptation, furthering stage by stage and experienced by all societies in similar modalities. To get a deeper insight into the impact of Europe in domestic settings, a novel epistemological and methodological approach to Europeanization is needed: Europeanization, not as a teleological process of change and development but as a context that is continually renegotiated by European societies in their domestic and European-level debates and Europeanization, not merely as a technical, formal process of adaptation to the EU, but as a context whereby domestic and European actors renegotiate European norms, policies, and institutions. While Europeanization as the EU-required domestic process of adaptation is already a subject of considerable academic interest, less attention has been paid to analyzing the various ways in which European integration is conceptualized and politically used by domestic actors. This lack is even sharper on the scholarly analyses regarding Turkey’s Europeanization where theoretical assumptions of the current study will be testified. Largely departing from the mainstream definition of the term, the literature on Turkey’s Europeanization often discusses the issue mainly in technical/institutional terms and in relation to the EU-induced legal and constitutional harmonization processes.
The aims of this article are mainly twofold: first, problematizing the mainstream usage of the term Europeanization, and the notion of change that it has embraced, and second, developing a fuller account of the impact of European integration on societies. This article is also an attempt to redefine the scope and boundaries of Europeanization and to relocate it within a broader sociological terrain. Analytically, it develops a clear distinction between EU-ization as a formal process of alignment with the EU’s institutions, policies, and legal structure and Europeanization as a wider sociopolitical and normative context. Such distinction allows us to reveal that Europeanization is more than the formal institutional and policy adaptation processes and transformations that it triggers and that it goes ‘much deeper than that’. This study argues that the impact of Europeanization in a given society is heavily conditioned by the extent of and the ways in which Europe is used as a context by domestic actors to promote their political/social projects. The mainstream literature on Europeanization often considers domestic actors only ‘as mediators’ of the European impact. However, as I will try to indicate with respect to the Turkish case, domestic actors are not ‘mediators’ but creators of Europeanization. It is also proposed that European-level developments overwhelmingly influence the ways in which domestic actors react to and make use of Europe and the context of Europeanization.

Turkey is a case where Europe has extensively been implicated in its modernization and nation-building processes long before the emergence of the European Community (EC)/EU. The Turkish case provides ample evidence about how Europeanization works out not as a linear process of adaptation but rather as a normative–political context, a context experienced and mobilized by different social groups in varying degrees and modalities in different historical periods of time. This is not only due to the fact that Europe and the Western modernity that it has symbolized have been extensively mobilized by the modernizing elite to justify their vision of state and society since the nineteenth century, but also because different political groups taking part in contemporary debates about the nature of the domestic regime in Turkey have often framed their political arguments by making reference to European norms, policies, and expectations. Therefore, different discourses of Europe and Europeanness have been an integral part of modernity and regime debates in Turkey. The current intervention argues that mainly two different rhetorics (‘Republicanist’ and ‘Integrationist’) of modernization and Europe have dominated these public debates. The Republicanist rhetoric foregrounds the Turkish Republican–Kemalist values, that is, Westernization, relentless secularism, and nationalism as the guiding principles of Turkish modernity and its relations with Europe. It uses a more state-centric conception of Europe: Europe as the birthplace of nation state, modernity, and Enlightenment. The Integrationist discourse advocating economic and political liberalization, and integration with globalized politics and market, associates Europe with pluralism, individual rights and freedoms, market economy, and economic welfare. It does not draw on a notion of modernity, which is necessarily linked to Westernization.

The article first examines and problematizes how change in the domestic actors through Europeanization is understood in the current new institutionalist literature. Second, it unpacks the distinction it has made between EU-ization and Europeanization and relocates the latter within a broader sociological terrain. Then, the article turns to the
Turkish case, with the aim of historicizing the experience of Europeanization as a normative–political context. Focusing on the post-1923 period, the study examines changing meanings of Europe–Europeanization for different segments of the Turkish society in different historical periods of time. Yet, the emphasis will be placed upon recent regime and identity debates that have been informed by the distinct perceptions and representations of Europe.

**Europeanization: change as institutional adaptation**

At the most fundamental level, Europeanization is a concept presuming a necessary relationship of diffusion between the EU-level ‘institution building and identity formation’ and the domestic change in member and applicant states. It suggests a ‘post-ontological’ research agenda through which the possible and materialized outcomes of this relationship are analyzed, but the causality behind this relationship is often omitted. To put it differently, the literature is largely inclined to explore the domestic effects of already established EU institutions. The common denominator in most usages of the term is its definition as a ‘process of change and adaptation which is understood to be a consequence of the development of the European Union’ both at the domestic and European levels. In the literature, ‘it has become common to use Europe with reference to the European Union and its member states’. The straightforward identification of Europe with the EU makes the EU the principal agent of change and the only body politic in which Europe-wide norms, policies, and institutions are (re)constructed and exported to the domestic polities of the member states. In their top–down approach, Boerzel and Risse understand Europeanization ‘as a process of change at the domestic level in which the member states adapt their processes, policies, and institutions to new practices, norms, rules, and procedures that emanate from the emergence of a European system of governance’. In essence, in its most usages, Europeanization refers to an EU-induced process of domestic adaptation to the penetrating ‘European values, directives and norms’, and hence, ‘the EU level is mostly treated as the starting point of a Europeanization study’. Thereby, to many, EU-ization ‘is a more relevant term’, since ‘it occurs in the context of, and can be seen as sparked off by, European integration’.

The Europeanization literature, overwhelmingly under the influence of rationalist and sociological variants of neoinstitutionalism, tends to explain patterns of domestic change in the member and associate countries ‘via the institutional goodness of fit of domestic and European arrangements’. ‘Changes in and among the key institutions’ are deemed as the fundamental and most reliable unit of analysis. The intensity of pressure for institutional and policy adaptation exerted by the EU is largely determined by the degree of misfit between the domestic and European-level institutions and policies. Misfit is often taken as the exclusive factor inducing Europeanization of domestic settings. The lower the compatibility between European and domestic processes, policies, and institutions, the higher the adaptational pressure. In the policy areas and institutions where compatibility between the domestic and European level has already been maintained, no fundamental change should be anticipated. In contrast, when the domestic structure does not resonate or clash with European arrangements, the compliance problems occur and
adaptational pressure increases, creating new opportunities or constraints for the domestic actors.  

Domestic actors are often ‘only considered as mediators’ of these top–down pressures, and they have no real political role and discretion. Rationalist institutionalism cites the number of domestic actors having veto power and provision of ideational and material support by formal institutions to the pro-European actors as the two factors mediating change through Europeanization. These mediating factors, for the sociological account, are the capacity of ‘norm entrepreneurs’ (e.g. epistemic communities, advocacy networks) to promote change and the existence or absence of political culture ‘conducive to consensus-building and cost-sharing’. According to the rationalist variance, the elimination of mismatch between domestic and European settings is contingent upon the ability of domestic pro-EU actors to use opportunities and constraints emerging from Europeanization at the expense of their rivals. The sociological variant, suspicious of, yet not totally rejecting this crude positivism, conceives change as a product of intersubjective, interpretative socialization processes. Domestic change occurs when ‘European elites and institutions socialize candidate states into changing first their identities and then their preferences and interests’.

To sum up, in both accounts, adaptational pressure comes from the EU; it is mediated by some domestic factors, and then ‘the domestic’ changes through Europeanization. In either case, change refers to a linear, empirically observable, and testable process, the success of which mainly depends on the adaptational ability and learning capacity of the European societies. It is a teleological process of progress toward ‘the more European’ and ‘the more modern’ embodied in the core Western members of the EU. The process of transformation through Europeanization is presumed to be unilinear and evolutionary and is applicable to and experienced by all societies engaged in Europeanization in similar modalities. For instance, according to Grabbe, the newcomers ‘are already subjected to substantially the same pressures of adaptation to the EU policies as current member states’. She also assumes that the same accession criteria are applied for the current and future applicants and ‘the same policy structure and implementation procedures are used’ by the EU. National institutions largely imagined as like-units and homogenous entities are thought to be subject to similar laws of change and adaptation under the impact of Europeanization.

Yet, one should note that unlike earlier studies, the recent research takes account of the fact that the domestic impacts of Europeanization are not fixed, pregiven, or even predictable. The response of different societies to change imposed by Europeanization differs by virtue of their different internal structures and specificities. All societies exposed to Europeanization experience it differently ‘depending on factors such as specific state formation, the patterns of policy making, the political culture, but also the balance of power between state and society on the one hand, and national and subnational units on the other’. As Brigid Laffan indicated, this is also related to the historical/political meanings and values assigned to Europe and Europeanness varying extensively across countries and domestic actors. Various meanings attached to Europe within a society determine to a large extent the distinct nature of its integration into Europe. Thus, the present task of the literature should be ‘to examine how structures,
behaviors, agency, and beliefs shape, or alter the ways in which the process of Europeanization works out—over countries, over time and over issue areas'.

**Unpacking the EU-ization/Europeanization distinction**

I suggest in this study that neoinstitutionalism tends to conceive the Europe-wide norms, principles, and institutions as established and even fixed identities to be internalized by the member states. The literature often hinges upon the presumption that European integration ‘takes place “up there”, while “down here” actors and institutions try to make sense of it and adapt as best they can’. Europeanization is imagined as a unidimensional process, whereby the norms, rules, and institutions that are typical of Europe are constructed at the EU level and diffused through various mechanisms into the domestic/national polities, policies, and political structures. It is at this stage that a fundamental question imposes itself: Which Europe are we talking about? Since the literature overwhelmingly ‘has not been reflexive about the concepts it is employing’, it does not need to problematize this notion of Europe, frequently identified with the EU or its member states. The commonly used formula in which the EU stands for Europe persistently reproduces the illusion that there is no Europe other than the EU. The EU is assigned a self-evident quality legitimately speaking on behalf of the whole of Europe. It is both the producer and exporter of the distinct European values and the mode of governance to the less European, that is, peripheral Europe and non-European societies.

Given the reductionist and essentialist presumptions of scholarly reflection on Europeanization, a consequential need arises to make an analytical distinction between EU-ization and Europeanization. As Tim Haughton reminded, such a distinction, though underdeveloped, was already drawn by Helen Wallace, where EU-ization denoted change required exclusively by EU membership. However, I do not use the category of EU demand, which may also include formal/informal utterances made by EU bureaucrats or Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) and political figures from different EU members, declarations of the European Parliament, and other documents speaking on behalf of the EU. The category of EU demand is too vague and not helpful enough as a criterion along which to differentiate Europeanization and EU-ization. In my distinction, EU-ization refers to a more concrete and restricted sphere of alignment with the EU’s body of law and institutions. It is a formal and overwhelmingly technical process of adjustment, the most radical impacts of which are manifested during the accession negotiations. Alignment with and implementation of the *acquis communautaire* is the sine qua non and the yardstick against which to measure the achieved level of EU-ization. It denotes more or less a process of progression, albeit open to deviancies, easier to measure and leading to the convergence of the domestic and the EU-level laws, institutions, and policies.

On the other hand, Europeanization, rather than being a process, refers to a context or a situation ‘where certain effects can be shown to have occurred’. As Buller and Gamble suggest, defining it in this way is important to reveal ‘its variable and contingent nature’ and not to assign it any irreversibility and inevitability. Europeanization develops as a wider historical context embracing also other institutions of European integration, whose main object of reference is not the EU, but Europe. As put by Vink,
“European integration” in itself covers a wider range of processes and institutions. Europeanization is more than just EU-ization. To illustrate, the gradual liberalization of Greece’s minority and citizenship policies from the 1990s onward was much more closely connected to the Council of Europe’s activism and reports than to the endeavors of the EU.\textsuperscript{46}

The norms and values generating the transformative impact of Europe are always redefined by European societies in their domestic/national and European-level debates. Intensifying relations with Europe, particularly the EU, make (EU)rope increasingly involved in the reconstructions of ‘systems of meanings and collective understandings’\textsuperscript{47} in these societies. The varying conceptions of Europe and Europeanness articulated by different segments of society increasingly come to determine their visions of change and vice versa. The more the national- and European-level political, bureaucratic, and civil societal actors make reference to specific European norms, policies, or institutions, the more Europe can be expected to have an impact on domestic policies, polities, and political structures. In the same vein, the more the domestic/national issues are discussed in a European frame of reference, and the more European-level actors are involved in these debates as speakers or addressees of claims, the more penetration of Europeanization as a context can be expected. All utterances and actions by domestic and European-level actors making reference to Europe and Europeanness reconfigure Europeanization as a context from which varying ideas, norms, and values can be extracted and used at subnational, national, and supranational politics.

This study argues that the impact of Europeanization in a given society is largely determined by the extent of and the ways in which Europe is used as a normative–political context by domestic actors. Europeanization penetrates into domestic politics, if and when these actors use the European context as a ‘mobilising political instrument’\textsuperscript{48} to promote their political, social agenda. As Jacquot and Woll propose\textsuperscript{49} ‘political usage is necessary for any impact of the European integration process on national political systems’. Europeanization exists as a context to the extent that the European norms, values, and institutions are incorporated into the public narratives by domestic actors. Domestic elites support EU-ization reforms and consolidation of Europeanization as a normative–political context only when they think that this best serves either the national interest or their own electoral purposes. To do this, they often frame EU-ization–Europeanization demands in a way as ‘to fit the already broadly shared views in society. We are European we deserve to be in Europe’.\textsuperscript{50} National actors strategically emphasize already existing domestic norms and values, which they consider resonate with that of Europe’s. For instance, the Turkish foreign ministry, in a document justifying Turkey’s integration with the European Economic Community (EEC), stated that Turkey, since its foundation, has become ‘an inseparable part of Western world’ and has joined various Western organizations ‘whose economic and political principles were commensurate with those of Turkey’ in the postwar period.\textsuperscript{51}

Thus, unlike what the relevant literature often implies, domestic actors are not ‘mediators’ but creators of Europeanization. Yet, they are not the only creators of Europeanization either. European-level developments (policy making, the scope of integration, and Europe-wide debates) shape perceptions of domestic actors and the political structure within which they react to and make use of this context. There is no doubt that how
Europeanization is experienced in a society also depends on the actions and discourses of European-level actors shaping the normative, ideational, and institutional structure of Europe–Europeanization. Europeanization manifests itself as a context where various meanings of Europe and being European have emerged, have been negotiated, and have been mobilized by domestic and European-level actors. Change in such a context occurs ‘not simply because it is imposed from the outside, but also because it interacts with domestic developments on the inside’.\(^5^2\) In view of the theoretical arguments advanced so far, the remainder of this study is dedicated to understanding the Turkish experience of Europeanization.

**Turkey: Europeanization as a context for political contestation and modernity**

Turkey’s centuries-long and arduous integration with Europe delivered a historical breakthrough when its candidacy status was formally recognized in the EU’s Helsinki summit of 1999. Yet, the implications of Europeanization as a context of norm definition, modernization, and identity confirmation may well be traced back to the nineteenth-century Ottoman Empire. The historically constructed perceptions that societies have of Europe to a large extent determines how they make sense of Europeanization and how they associate themselves with it. Then, it may be helpful at least to glance through the changing meanings of Europe for different segments of the Turkish society to shed light on how they experience Europeanization. Due to limited space, the current intervention rather focuses on the post-1923 period and recent identity debates in particular where different conceptions of Europe have been disseminated and mobilized.

**Changing meanings of Europe**

For both the Ottoman and Republican modernizers, the aspiration was to make Turkey a part of the ostensible family of European societies by ‘attaining European standards’.\(^5^3\) Particularly, the Republican modernizing elite led by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk established an intimate relation between modernity and the West, with which they meant ‘Europe more than the United States’.\(^5^4\) The establishment of a secular, ethnically homogenous, and strong nation state was the prerequisite of modernization defined as ‘embracing and internalizing all the cultural dimensions that made Europe modern’.\(^5^5\) Therefore, staunchly defined authoritarian nationalism and strictly interpreted secularism opposing almost all ‘forms of religious populism in politics’,\(^5^6\) have been presupposed as the two fundamental tenets of the Turkish modernization. Hence, in the Republicanist imagery, the modernization–Europeanization (in more accurate terms, West Europeanization) link was articulated in a way to consolidate the state’s control over and autonomy from the Turkish society ‘while democratization took a back seat’.\(^5^7\) The Europe of the 1920s and the 1930s was much more conducive to be associated with the strong and homogenous nation states and with the Republican Jacobian values, that is, secularism, nationalism, and top–down reformism rather than the liberal, democratic values and principles. This is made possible for the modernizing state elite and the intelligentsia to benefit from
West Europeanization as a political and normative context through which they presented themselves as the bearers of modernity, civilization, and progress.

However, the oppression of opposing social groups, disenchanted with the state’s project of radical modernization, triggered the growth of mutual suspicion ‘between the bureaucratic centre and the rest of the population’ in Turkey. That Europe and its values have been readily identified with the strong nation state and its authoritarian modernization by the ruling elite alienated large segments of the society from Europeanization as a context by means of which they legitimately expressed themselves. The large masses loyal to Islamic values and community relations have tended to view Westernization and Europeanization as antithetical to their Islamic and traditional values. The Islamist political movements that began to strengthen in the late 1960s have conceived the prospects of Turkey’s integration with the EC/EU ‘as the last stage of the assimilation of Turkey’s Islamic identity into the Christian West’. Meanwhile, for the strengthening leftist groups, the EC, far from being a leverage for democratization, was part of the imperialist block, an understanding manifesting itself in the colloquial saying ‘Onlar Ortak Biz Pazar’ (which can be translated as ‘They are the Common, [meaning Partners/Associates] We are the Market [meaning those to be exploited]’ by referring to the Common Market. The Socialist Turkish Worker’s Party (Türkiye İşçi Partisi (TIP)) was the only political organization explicitly questioning the signing of the Association Agreement between Turkey and the EEC in 1963 by publishing a declaration entitled ‘No to the Common Market’. TIP argued that this agreement would endanger Turkey’s independence, ruin its domestic industry, and cripple social rights of the working class. For the leftist ‘anti-establishment’ groups, (the socialist parties, youth and student associations, and trade unions), Europe was weak as a normative–political context through which they could problematize illiberal tenets of Turkish modernity and push for democratization.

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, for the Turkish political establishment, the EC membership was nothing but ‘a logical extension of Turkey’s inclusion in other Western organizations, since it was seen as the economic dimension supplementing and cementing the Western alliances’. When Turkey applied to the EEC in July 1959, this was introduced as the ‘reasonable outcome of Turkey’s desire of being regarded as European’. The Turkish media, business, and political elite were all highlighting the symbolic and political importance of joining the EEC expressed as Turkey’s determination of being a permanent member of the ‘European society of states’, an ideal prescribed by the founder of the republic, Kemal Atatürk. Similarly, despite its overwhelmingly economic character, the signing of the association agreement has taken place in Turkish press as the ‘reaffirmation of Turkey’s Western identity’ and Europeanness. Europeanization through further integration into Western institutions was deemed as a context whereby Turkey’s Western identity was approved and its place in the Eastern–Western divide of the Cold War politics was consolidated. Interestingly, the vehement support coming from right-wing and far right–wing politicians to EEC membership in the 1960s was ‘an extension of their anti-communism’. They tended to regard the EEC as a new and additional context of struggle against socialist and communist groups inside Turkey.

Turkish modernity evolved into an authoritarian and repressive regime through the 1980s military coup and the subsequent highly restrictive 1982 constitution, which
denotes a traumatic experience for all politicized sectors of the society. When the Turkish parliament was disbanded, freedom of expression and assembly were severely restricted and intense human rights violations by the state authorities were reported, Europe began to be heard as a critical voice. Europe, throughout the 1980s, became an albeit thin normative–political context for groups (most notably socialist left, human rights activists, and Kurdish groups) who were seriously monitored, prosecuted, and suppressed by the state authorities. Some European institutions, most notably the European Parliament, criticized antidemocratic practices and human rights violations in Turkey. That Turkey recognized its citizens’ right to apply to the European Court of Human Rights represents a historic milestone for Europeanization to influence the Turkish society and politics as a normative–political context. With this decision of the then Turkish government, European law and principles have not only become an integral part of the Turkish law but also, more importantly, Europe has turned out to be an accessible and legitimate arena for ordinary Turkish citizens seeking justice and compensation for breach of their individual rights and freedom, particularly by the Turkish state authorities. Yet, a substantive paradigmatic change occurred in the 1990s, when the political regime in Turkey came to lose its immunity from ‘the intense penetration of modern globalized artefacts and ideas’. Throughout this decade, due to various reasons, such as clientelism, economic and financial crises, political corruption, and the devastating Marmara earthquakes of 1999, the social contract between the ‘status quo-oriented middle classes’ and the state was broken:

Thenceforth, the drive toward an accountable, transparent and efficient government ruled by law would go forward on a stronger social basis than ever before. EU membership became all the more prized as an aid to this cause; some even saw it as a panacea.

Soon after Turkey was granted candidacy status, EU-ization as a process of legislative and institutional engineering, and Europeanization as a wider sociopolitical context, began to penetrate into the Turkish politics and society more deeply than ever before. In the late 1990s, for vast majority of the Turkish society, Europe, in general, and the EU, in particular, turned out to be a new normative, political context, where the demands to democratize and liberalize the domestic political order have been articulated and justified. Heightening of expectations from democratic reforms due to the increasing impact of Europeanization has encouraged various actors ‘to enter the political arena and to engage in the struggles of recognition’. Hence, strengthening of Turkey’s integration with Europe in that era has given a significant momentum to the ‘development of a more pluralist civil society’ throughout Turkey. The civil society movement in the late 1990s, showing ‘signs of activation of social spaces’ toward democratization, has started to legitimize its existence through the discourse of Europeanization. Up until the late 1990s, the political and civil societal groups were accepted as legitimate actors by the state elite in so far as they agreed to act inside the secular and nationalist paradigm of modernity. Therefore, until recently, the sphere of public deliberation and discussion was solely open to groups that were not challenging already ‘compromised’ social and cultural values and core premises of the regime.
In the post-1999 period, civil society organizations began to use the Europeanization context more extensively and efficiently both to increase their influence and visibility, and to promote their political–social agenda. For instance, some Islamic, Kurdish, and other groups defending political liberalization have increasingly exploited Europe as a normative–political context to emphasize and criticize the authoritarian aspects of the Kemalist regime. Meanwhile, the so-called post-modern coup of 28 February 1997 became a real turning point for the Islamists who had traditionally opposed Turkey’s integration into Europe since the 1960s. This military intervention, also coined as the 28 February Process, aimed to put an end to the increasing influence of Islamic groups in political, economic, and cultural spheres. This forced at least a substantial part of the Islamic political cadres and business elite to review and amend their positions on Turkey’s integration to Europe associated with democratizing reforms. In the late 1990s, in tandem with other segments of the Turkish society, they began to experience extensive socialization into penetrating European norms, values, and institutions, which resulted in a shift in their arguments from Islamization to democratization of the Turkish republic.

The AKP era and rising regime debates

When the Islamist-rooted Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (AKP)) came to power in November 2002, it initiated a vigorous campaign to accelerate Turkey’s pace toward Europe. Given the then explicit and strong support of the Turkish society to EU membership, strengthening of Turkey’s European perspective has been quite instrumental for the AKP to consolidate its place within the political establishment. The AKP government, blamed for challenging the core premises of the regime by its secular opponents, needed the European context to reveal its commitment to Western values and enhance its legitimacy in domestic and international politics. Hence, the first AKP government mobilized Europeanization as a normative–political context: a context whereby they can frame and justify their reformist agenda in domestic and foreign policy issues. Europe, particularly the EU, was seen as a window of opportunity by the AKP leaders to broaden the political, economic, and cultural spaces that had shrunk as a result of the 28 February Process. Instead of being the antithesis of Islamic values, Europe transformed into a possibility where some ‘authoritarian’ aspects of the regime, that is, the grip of military and civilian bureaucracy on politics can be challenged and eliminated in Turkey. As Kandiyoti suggests, Europe also moved from ‘being a civilizational threat to an arena where religiously based political and social demands could be transmuted into democracy based demands in the language of human rights and multi-culturalism’.

The successive legal harmonization packages and constitutional reforms accelerating in the period from 2003 to 2004 have not only opened up new spaces for public debates concerning hitherto untouchable political issues, but these EU-ization reforms have also made it possible for the new Islamic leaders to forge a coalition with liberal-oriented political and business elite and intelligentsia vis-à-vis the Kemalist establishment. This Islamic liberal camp championed a more integrationist paradigm for Turkey; integrationist in two senses: Turkey’s integration into Europe and integration of so far discriminated
segments of the society into politics. The Integrationists associated Europe with pluralism, individual rights and freedoms, a market economy, and economic welfare. European integration is also a means for Turkey to be a regional and global actor and to integrate with globalizing world politics and economy. In particular, the Islamist wing of the Integrationists does not forge a necessary linkage between modernity and the West. To them, a Turkey that reconciles the Eastern and Western elements of its identity can achieve an alternative model of modernization. For Kemalists, modernization understood as Westernization and contemporarization is an aim in itself for which society should be mobilized by the state and its elite. Yet for the Integrationists, the Islamic and Middle Eastern elements of Turkey’s identity are not incompatible with liberal democracy as a defining property of modernization. Conversely, Turkey’s ability to fuse its Islamic and modern values relocates it in contemporary global politics as a pivotal state.

In the Islamic, liberal discourse, the notion of modernity is disengaged from state-led Westernization and is rather articulated as an adaptation to the ‘global rules of the game’. In the early 2000s, the issue of Turkey’s European integration as well as its meanings and modalities turned out to be a primary cleavage in Turkish politics transcending preexisting ones. A strong Republicanist–Kemalist discourse, espoused by a coalition of the military-led secular establishment, the Republican People’s Party (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi (CHP)), and other nationalist groups from left and right wings, has also joined public debates on the issue. For Republicanists, Europe still represents the Europe of nation states and the birthplace of modernization as a universal project of enlightenment. Secularism and nationalism have been the two indispensable pillars of Western modernity and culture with which Turkey should be engaged. Turkey can be part of this Europe only if it can safeguard the Republican values (i.e. secularism, rule of law, Kemalist nationalism) enshrined in the constitution, and even against the West, if necessary. They promulgate a totalistic vision of modernity where any deviancy from the fundamental tenets of Kemalist regime would end up endangering the survival of Turkish state and its modernization project. In the Republicanist imagination, Turkey has undoubtedly been a country ‘striving to be Western and taking her place in the front ranks of Western civilization’. The EU membership is the culmination of Turkey’s historical march toward the contemporary civilization and modernization set off by the Kemalist revolutions in the early Republican era.

Even though this teleological and linear interpretation of history implies inevitability for the future of Turkey, the Republicanists are aware of the fact that Europe is not the same Europe, of which they once wanted to be a part. Europe, which is increasingly becoming postnational and post-Western, more heterogeneous, and fragmented, vocalizes demands on Turkey that could jeopardize her territorial integrity, indivisibility, and secularist characteristics. It is a Europe demanding Turkey to recognize new claims to identity, most notably Kurdish and Islamic, which were already pushed by Kemalist/Republicanist paradigm to the sphere of the illegitimate, the anachronistic, the subversive, and the disintegrative. To them, Islamic groups, most notably the AKP, were exploiting ‘the excuse of EU harmonization to redefine the secularism principle and bolster the domination of a religious way of life over Turkish society’. The Republicanist imagery and rhetoric reflect a defensive notion of modernization invested with enormous skepticism vis-à-vis the calls for change, especially if these are voiced.
by the members of the Islamic elite or European political figures. The EU-demanded reforms are all too often interpreted within an interstate framework and represented at best as an ‘interference in Turkey’s domestic affairs’ and at worst as ‘attempts to carve out portions of Turkey’s territory’. In the extreme version of this discourse, EU/Europe is depicted as an actor in the plans, crippling the state authority and diluting the secular characteristic of the regime by converting it into a moderate Islamic order. Meanwhile, the rise of Kurdish and Islamic identity claims since the late 1990s was deemed as an existential threat by the Westernized political–military elite to the secular and unitary nature of the Turkish state. That the demands voiced by rising Kurdish and Islamic groups for political liberalization have resonated with reforms required by the EU have distanced the secular-Kemalist establishment from Europe at least for a certain period of time. Westernized and nationalist groups have increasingly adopted reactionary and sometimes even reactionist stances against Europeanization throughout the first decade of the 2000s.

However, there have occurred some unignorable, but not reversible changes in the position of the Republican camp in recent years that may be defined as the softening of their Euro-skeptic stance. Particularly, the CHP, the flag bearer of the ‘Republican’ discourse, shows signs of returning to the Europeanization context soon after the replacement of its Euro-skeptic leader Deniz Baykal by Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu as the chair of the party on 22 May 2010. The CHP began to make positive references to the practices of the EU countries and the reports of the European Commission, while expressing its views on critical issues of domestic politics, that is, the Kurdish issue, freedom of expression, independence and reform of the judiciary, freedom of religion, rural development, social services, and financial reform. An illustrative example has been Kılıçdaroğlu’s proposal to solve the Kurdish issue through political and social consensus on the basis of a new approach incorporating ‘economic, democratic and security matters’ and ‘by human rights and freedoms as set out in EU standards’. Kılıçdaroğlu suggested implementing the Council of Europe’s Charter of Local Self-Government without reservations and proposed local administration reform for decentralization and broader rights for local administrations ‘based on the universal norms accepted by the European Union’. The Charter was passed by the Turkish Parliament as early as 1988, yet with reservations on seven critical clauses. The standards and demands of the EU became a main staple of the CHP’s party program, general elections manifesto, and policy proposals to the Parliament in 2011.

On the other hand, the Euro-enthusiasm of the AKP cadres in the early 2000s was replaced by Euro-fatigue and postponement of the implementation of EU reform strategy by the incumbent government. The second and third terms of the AKP rule (2007 to the present time) are marked by Euro-skepticism and a drift from Europeanization. In its 2010 progress report, the European Commission criticized the Turkish government unequivocally for the ‘significant slowdown in the reform agenda over the last few years’. According to the Commission, Turkish politics, suffering from a confrontational political climate and ‘lack of dialogue and spirit of compromise between the main political parties and the government’, fell short of achieving the expected level in constitutional amendments, reforms for freedom of expression, freedom of the press, protection of minorities, and economic and social rights. Furthermore, ‘the high number of legal suas
against journalists and undue pressure on the media undermined freedom of the press in practice. The 2011 Progress Report stresses the concerns of the EU over the worsening level of freedom of the press in Turkey, arrest of journalists on the grounds of the Anti-Terror Law, the high levels of severe violations of the freedom of expression and the length of pretrial detention, and the hampering of the reform process due to the polarization of the government and the opposition.

One can observe that the AKP adopted a blurred rhetoric with regards to the future of the Turkish–EU relations in its party program for 2011 general elections in Turkey. To the program, the AKP believes that Turkey’s relations with the EU and other international institutions ‘must be maintained along the lines of the requirements of our economy and our national interests’. The AKP made scarce references to the requirements and standards of the Union and other European bodies to streamline fundamental rights and freedoms, public administration, social policies, economic and financial reform. The party program cited the EU/European standards only when it mentioned the reforms to restructure the National Security Council and harmonize the Turkish judicial system on the basis of the Copenhagen Criteria. These two issues have become strategically important regarding the power-domination relations between the AKP cadres and the secular establishment in Turkey. The instrumentalization of EU-ization/Europeanization in that way and the stress on national interests testify our theoretical affirmation that domestic actors support Europeanization only when they think that this best serves either the national interest or their own electoral purposes. This holds true for the CHP as well, adopting a new strategy of mobilizing Europe to redefine its deliberative position and to criticize the government’s policies. The CHP embraced a more nuanced and softened approach to the EU as the Union hardened its criticism of the new laws and practices, restricting the freedom of the press and of expression in Turkey, and particularly, the government’s policies to that effect. Hence, one can suggest that there has occurred a shifting of grounds at least between the main elements of the Republicanist and Integrationist camps concerning the usage of Europe in accordance with the domestic power relations.

Conclusion

The central aims of this contribution have been to problematize the mainstream usage of the term Europeanization and to develop a fuller account of the impact of Europe. It rejected the notion of Europeanization as a top–down and evolutionary process of adaptation furthering stage by stage and experienced by all societies in similar modalities. This study ventured to develop a clear analytical distinction between EU-ization as EU-induced process of legislative, institutional, and policy engineering and Europeanization as a wider political and normative context. Drawing on Buller and Gamble, it argued that Europeanization exists as a normative–political context where all European societies have been contributing to negotiating European norms, values, and policies. EU-ization is an integral part, and may currently be the most important instrument, of Europeanization, but not the whole of it. The penetration of Europeanization into domestic political structures of European societies is overwhelmingly contingent upon the willingness of national actors to mobilize this context to promote their political
agenda. Therefore, this study suggested that domestic actors as the interpreters and implementers of European norms, rules, and policies in domestic settings are not ‘mediators’ but creators of Europeanization. It is also argued that European-level developments overwhelmingly influence the ways in which these actors react to and make use of Europe. This reconceptualization allows us to imagine Europeanization as a context (a) the only source of which is not the EU, (b) experienced in different societies in different modalities, and (c) which cannot be thought in isolation from other domestic and external processes. It also allows us to problematize the evolutionary and universalistic tendencies of the current scholarly reflection on the issue.

This article revealed that Europeanization as a normative–political context has extensively been implicated in Turkey’s modernization as well as in the recent debates concerning its identity and future orientation. By exploring changing notions of Europe within the Turkish society, this study indicated how Europeanization has been experienced by different social groups in varying degrees and modalities in different historical periods of time. It also suggested that the contemporary regime debates that have been dominated by the ‘Republicanist’ and the ‘Integrationist’ narratives have been informed by the distinct perceptions and representations of Europe and Europeanization. The Republicanists and Integrationists are converging on the idea that values, institutions, and policies described as modern and associated with democracy are largely embedded in the European model of society—mostly West European—of which Turkey should be a part. However, they are diverging in both the definition of these values and institutions and the ways in which Turkey should appropriate them (i.e. the speed, content, timing, and extent of the appropriation). The debates about Turkey’s place in world politics and its identity are not in any conditions grounded on the rejection of modernity and Europe but rather on their different interpretations. As these debates have increasingly been framed with reference to Europe, Europeanization has penetrated into Turkish politics as a normative–political context through which the participants of these debates justify and promote their deliberative positions and political agenda.

Turkey’s EU membership is viewed by society with growing suspicion thanks to various factors, such as the ongoing debate in Europe ‘on the desirability of Turkey’s membership’, ‘lack of a clear and consistent EU strategy and commitment’, and exclusionary discourses of some European leaders against Turkey. However, the society’s growing suspicion on EU membership should not be taken to mean that Turkey is distancing itself from European values, norms, and institutions. Europe is increasingly becoming a vantage point for Turkish society to compare and contrast the characteristics of the political regime and the course of daily life in Turkey with those of European states. In early October 2011, the Turkish parliament started to work on modern Turkey’s fifth, yet the first civilian constitution. The previous ones, which were authoritarian and statist in nature, were either heavily influenced or explicitly dictated by the military top brass. The political parties represented in the parliament, and other societal, economic actors, converge on the idea that this new constitution should be inspired by the constitutions in West European democracies in that it should be concise, clearly written, and based on protection of individual rights and liberties. Various actors taking part in the process made it clear that the soul and the text of the new constitution should draw on European norms, values, and principles. Thereby, one might expect that even if Turkey’s accession
negotiations with the EU are currently stalled, Europeanization as a normative–political context will continue to influence politics and society in the near future.

The impact of Europeanization on Turkey and her contributions to the European experience are not reducible to the ebbs and flows of Turkey–EU relations. These issues deserve to be the object of a more sophisticated and nuanced analytical inquiry, which may be possible only through a clear distinction between EU-ization and Europeanization. This distinction would allow us to comprehend better varying impacts of Europe on the Turkish society and politics in different historical periods of time. It helps us to understand how and why Europeanization can still impact the varying discourses of modernization and change in Turkey, despite the substantial slowing down of the EU-ization reforms since 2005. EU-ization reforms may be passed by the national parliaments, or the technical–institutional and policy requirements of the acquis could be implemented by the relevant bodies and institutions. However, as the Turkish case has clearly indicated, translation of these reforms into daily practices and their internalization by societies are taking a much longer time and effort and are dependent on the extent to which Europeanization penetrates into domestic politics as a normative–political context. Such a distinction could finally provide new insights about how and in what ways Europe-inspired reforms are appropriated, negotiated, and implemented by the European societies.

Acknowledgement

I would like to thank the Editor and anonymous reviewers for their valuable comments and suggestions, which were helpful in improving the article.

Funding

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

Notes

12. However, one should note that the proponents of these two visions of modernization are far from being homogenous and consist of clusters with diverging views, backgrounds, and fault lines. Yet a specific perception of modernity and Europe is shared among its members. The Republicanist and Integrationist narratives should be accepted as two main discursive strands dominating the modernity and Europeanization debates in Turkey, but this does not mean to deny the existence of other discourses and conceptions of Europe, which rather occupy a marginal position throughout these debates.


30. Boerzel and Risse, ‘Conceptualizing the Domestic Impact of Europe’, for the critique of this linear account of Europeanisation, see Radaelli, ‘Europeanization: Solution or the Problem?’, p. 7.


40. Buller and Gamble, ‘Conceptualising Europeanization’, p. 4.
41. For the changing meanings and borders of Europe in different historical time periods, see Gerard Delanty and Chris Rumford, *Rethinking Europe: Social Theory and the Implications of Europeanization* (London: Routledge, 2005), pp. 31ff.
44. Buller and Gamble, ‘Conceptualising Europeanization’, p. 17.
47. Green Cowles, Caporaso and Risse (eds.), *Transforming Europe*, p. 219.
50. Subotic, ‘Europe is a State of Mind’, p. 313.
52. Nathalie Tocci, ‘Europeanization in Turkey: Trigger or Anchor for Reform?’, *South European Society and Politics*, 10(1), 2005, p. 79.
64. Çalış, *Türkiye-Avrupa Birliği İlişkileri*, p. 125.
73. Kemalism can be defined as the state ideology of the Turkish Republic named after its founder, Mustafa Kemal Ataturk.
74. On 28 February 1997, the military-dominated National Security Council of Turkey issued 18 recommendations-cum-ultimatums, which led to the resignation of the coalition government comprising the Islamist Welfare Party and the right-wing True Path Party. Since the government was brought down without the dissolution of the parliament or suspension of the constitution, this incident has been generally labeled a ‘postmodern coup’.
76. Duran, ‘Islamist Redefinition(s) of European and Islamic Identities in Turkey’, pp. 125–46.
77. Deniz Kandiyoti, ‘Secularism Contested: Debate and Dissent in Turkey’, (seminar at the Contemporary Turkish Studies, London School of Economics and Political Science, 15 February 2010).
78. To Cizre and Walker (Ümit Cizre and Joshua Walker, ‘Conceiving the New Turkey after Ergenekon’, *International Spectator*, 45(1), 2010, p. 89), the Kemalist establishment is mainly composed of ‘the segment of the judiciary dealing with regime issues (i.e. public prosecutors and the Constitutional Court), some elements of the civilian bureaucracy (especially the Foreign Ministry), and a sizeable cluster of civil society actors’. One must also include the Republican People’s Party (CHP), founded by Mustafa Kemal Ataturk in 1923, which has always been one of the main elements of Turkish political establishment since then, except for a short period when it was closed down in 1980 by the military regime.
82. Davutoğlu, ‘Türkiye Merkez Ülke Olmalı’.
100. Tocci, ‘Europeanization in Turkey’, p. 77.

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