

Review section

Edited by Thomas Christiansen

TURKISH POLITICAL SCIENCE AND EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

Meltem Müftüler-Bac

INTRODUCTION

Political science is a relatively new field of study in Turkey, partly because the social sciences in Turkey have traditionally taken a back seat compared to disciplines such as engineering, medicine and law. Another factor accounting for the late development of political science is its evolution as a byproduct of philosophy, law and history. Since political science traditionally had a low profile in general, it was to be expected that European integration would attract even less scholarly attention from Turkish political scientists. This review assesses the interest of Turkish political scientists in European integration in terms of the evolution of research agenda and teaching specializations. It extends the insights generated in previous review articles on Italian, French, Spanish and Nordic political science and their respective positions on the study of European integration (Giuliani and Radaelli 1999; Smith 2000; León and Pasquier 2001; Miles and Mörth 2002). The review first assesses the nature of academic work in Turkish political science and identifies the factors that account for the relative lack of interest among political scientists towards European integration. Second, it analyses the factors behind the new popularity of the field since 1999 and, third, it addresses the nature of scholarly work on European integration in Turkey.

THE NATURE OF TURKISH POLITICAL SCIENCE AND EUROPEAN INTEGRATION STUDIES

As a Turkish political scientist researching the process of European integration since 1990, I have been able to witness the changing attitude towards European

studies in various Turkish institutions. At the beginning of the 1990s, relatively little attention was paid to European integration among political scientists in terms of both their teaching and research agendas; however, since 1999 there has been an increased emphasis on both in Turkey. This increase could be partly explained by the increased visibility of the European Union (EU) throughout the 1990s as a political force to be reckoned with. A more likely reason, however, is the profound transformation of Turkey's relations with the EU.

Turkey became an associate member of the European Community (EC) in 1963; however, its relations with the EC throughout the 1960s and 1970s could at best be described as rocky. In 1987, Turkey applied for full membership in the EC, only to be told that, despite its eligibility for membership, neither the EC nor Turkey was ready for it. In 1995, the signing of a customs union agreement between Turkey and the EU, as foreseen in Turkey's Association Agreement of 1963, increased academic interest in the EU, but mostly among economists who were concerned about the possible impact of the customs union on the Turkish economy. It is interesting to note that despite Turkey's association with the EC since 1963,¹ the Turkish political science community paid little attention to the evolution of integration in Europe. It should also be noted that political developments in Europe, especially something as significant as the process of European integration, would inevitably have an impact on Turkey. Thus, one might have expected greater academic involvement of Turkish political scientists in the study of EU affairs.

This outlook changed with the candidate status that Turkey received from the EU at the Helsinki Summit in 1999 and its subsequent inclusion in the EU enlargement process. In the present context, Turkey's candidate status is important for two reasons: first, it led to an enhanced need in Turkey to study the EU and generate awareness among the Turkish public as well as policy-making circles about the EU, its decision-making procedures and its institutions; second, Turkey has participated in various EU programmes through its candidate status, a development that, in turn, increased scholarly attention in the process of European integration.

Thus, following Turkey's candidacy for EU membership, political scientists became more interested in European integration. This does not mean, however, that there were no pioneers in the study of European integration in Turkey among Turkish political scientists. As will be discussed below, there were a few 'loners' in the political science community, mostly among international relations specialists who focused on the EU and Turkey's relations with it.

There are a number of factors that account for the relative lack of scholarly attention in Turkey to the EU before 1999. The first factor relates to the nature of political science in Turkey which tended to be normative. In the larger spectrum of academic work in Turkey, political science traditionally drew from philosophy, history and law in terms of its epistemological and methodological sources, whereas, for example, economics was closer to the natural sciences in these aspects. The normative and legalistic character of

Turkish political science had led to its relative confinement to research questions and methods of history and philosophy. The difficulty of posing normative questions in the EU context and the strong empirical undercurrents of European integration studies may have decreased political scientists' interest in European integration since among Turkish political scientists empirical work has been limited and marginal. There are some similarities here with the relationship between Spanish political science and European integration (León and Pasquier 2001: 1053).

The second factor is related to the institutionalization of political science as an academic field of study. The traditional venues for political science in Turkey were the Faculty of Political Sciences at Ankara and Istanbul Universities until well into the 1980s, when other notable universities such as the Middle East Technical University (METU), Bogazici University, Marmara University and Bilkent University became contenders in this field. The first generation of Turkish political scientists at these institutions were closer to philosophy and history in terms of their methods and research orientations, as noted above. Among the old guard of political scientists in Turkey, most of whom were either at Ankara or Istanbul University, research priorities were mostly Turkish politics, political theory, the role of political Islam, political development, and transition to and consolidation of democracy. Given that Turkey is a struggling democracy which experienced three military coups between 1960 and 1980, it is no small wonder that research in Turkish political science was geared mainly towards domestic political issues.

However, the tenure system at these universities also meant that even younger faculty members could not break away from these research agendas and focus on new research questions such as European integration since they were dependent on full professors with respect to academic promotion. In the traditional setting, there would be a chair of political science, with a full professor, associate and assistant professors under the full professor and several PhD students conducting their studies associated with that chair. The relative rigidity of this system – a Continental European educational system – prevented the introduction of new fields of inquiry, such as European integration, or the introduction of different methodologies, such as empirical and quantitative work. This picture began to change from the end of the 1980s onwards with the establishment of private universities, such as Bilkent, Koc and later on Sabanci, which did not follow the above-mentioned model but drew instead on American models of university organization. The academic freedom associated with the private universities and the influx of second- or third-generation political scientists into Turkish academia had somewhat changed the research orientation in Turkish political science by the end of the 1990s.

The third major factor that prevented Turkish political scientists' involvement in European integration was the tendency in the Turkish academic community to perceive European integration either as a process of economic integration or as a new legal system. The economic nature of these relations meant that economists in Turkey were relatively more interested in European

integration both in terms of economic integration and Turkey's trade relations, and academics in law schools studied the EC in this period as an experiment in a new legal structure.

The academic breakthrough in the study of European integration came after the Turkish application for full membership of the EC in 1987, which led to the emergence of a somewhat genuine desire to understand European integration among a small group of jurists and economists. Two institutions, Marmara University in Istanbul and Ankara University, negotiated deals and grants with the European Commission to establish research and teaching centres which would increase awareness about European integration. In 1987, the Institute for the European Community at Marmara University and the Centre for European Community Research and Implementation at Ankara University (ATAUM) were set up. These institutes increased scholarly attention to the study of European integration in Turkey, both in terms of research projects and certificate and graduate programmes. Haluk Kabaalioglu, a lawyer at Marmara, and Nihat Tore, an economist at Ankara, were the leading names at the end of the 1980s in the study of the EC in Turkey. It is therefore to be expected that, in these leading organizations in European integration studies, priority was given to the legal and economic aspects of the process of integration. Marmara University's institute was more academically oriented whereas ATAUM at Ankara remained a more pragmatic centre, disseminating information and know-how about the workings of the EC. In both these institutes, the political aspects of European integration were to some extent left untouched, as there were not many political scientists present.

Among political scientists, those who were interested in the EU were mostly international relations specialists. Nonetheless, among international relations scholars, war and security studies and Turkey's foreign policy ranked higher than European integration studies. The only pioneer political scientist who did work on European integration in the 1980s was Attila Eralp from METU.

In short, the low profile of European integration in the Turkish political science community was largely related to institutionalization and the normative nature of political science in Turkey, and research priorities.

This low profile began to change in the 1990s with the increase in the number of young scholars, second- or third-generation political scientists, who had been trained in American and/or European institutions in international relations. The increasing amount of academic work on international relations and European integration enhanced the study of Europe in Turkey in the 1990s. Nonetheless, a major breakthrough in terms of both scholarly publications and teaching activity came only after the Turkish candidacy for the EU was granted in December 1999 at the Helsinki European Council. A number of respected institutions such as METU, Bilkent and Bogazici set up centres for European studies and/or began to recruit EU specialists. In addition, several of these institutions launched Master's degrees in European studies when, before 1999, only Marmara University had a well-established Master's programme in this field. Formerly labelled as a marginal area of study, European integration now

began to be popular in academic circles, partly as a result of new 'market demand', and scholars who had once looked down on EU studies now became interested in the study of the integration process.

When in 2001 the Jean Monnet programme was opened to Turkish participation, the first Jean Monnet chair was given to a political scientist at Bogazici University, Kemal Kirisci, in the field of European political integration. Kirisci, however, is an international relations scholar rather than a European integration specialist, and his work focuses mainly on Turkey's foreign policy rather than the process of European political integration. The second round of Jean Monnet chair positions was granted in 2002 and only one out of three went to a political scientist who had been one of the pioneers working on the EU (Attila Eralp). The other two chairs were granted to economists. In addition, through the Jean Monnet programme, several permanent courses on the EU have been launched in various institutions in Turkey – a development that will undoubtedly increase interest in European integration in a new generation of political scientists.

An interesting aspect of political scientists' relative lack of interest in the EU might be the possible implications of Turkey's closer integration to the EU for her political system. There are two aspects to the specific problem: one is related to the concept of state sovereignty, the other to Turkey's Kurdish problem. With regard to the former, there is a potential conflict between the Turkish state being very protective of its sovereignty but membership in the EU implying a compromise about, if not some transfer of, member state sovereignty. Other candidate countries have seen an ongoing political and academic debate about this possible loss of sovereignty with EU membership. The implications of EU membership for state sovereignty require a thorough academic analysis of political integration in Europe. It is only recently that such work has become one of academic interest. The major works on this issue are Tuğrul Arat's and Isil Karakas's studies on European law and its impact on state sovereignty, and, from an economic nationalist perspective, the work of Erol Manisali. There are, however, currently several PhD candidates in political science in various institutions in Turkey who are working on the impact of the EU on state sovereignty, such as Petek Karatekelioglu, a PhD candidate at Bilkent University (dissertation on the impact of the EU on the nation-state).

The second interesting aspect of lack of scholarly interest relates to Turkey's Kurdish problem. The principle of subsidiarity and the federal character of the EU mean that, if Turkey becomes a member of the EU, it might be faced with new political arrangements in its south-east region. This automatically requires an in-depth comprehension of federal arrangements in the EU; however, there has been very little work on these in Turkey, and political and academic debate on this issue has also been almost completely lacking. However, a promising development in this respect is that in 2002 Turkey participated in the Civil Society Platform on the Convention on the Future of Europe. The Economic Development Foundation's (IKV's) initiative brought

Turkish scholars in political science, economics, law and sociology together to work on various aspects of European integration. This group prepared a series of reports and working papers on the institutional reform in the EU and started an academic debate about the impact of European integration on Turkey.

Thus, as a result of an influx of younger political scientists, Turkey's greater involvement in EU programmes and political developments in the EU, Turkish political scientists have begun to pay more attention to the process of European integration. The next section addresses the nature of scholarly work on European integration by Turkish political scientists.

SCHOLARLY WORK ON EUROPEAN INTEGRATION IN TURKEY

Given the low profile of the EU as a field of study among Turkish political scientists, one would expect a relative lack of published work by Turkish scholars on the European integration process or on the EU in general. However, this is not necessarily so as the political scientists who study the EU tend to publish quite impressively in internationally recognized outlets. This is, to some extent, in contrast with scholarly output in general by Turkish political scientists on other topics.

In other social sciences, such as economics or psychology, there is a level of international competitiveness in terms of scholarly publications that is to a certain degree absent among Turkish political scientists. To put it in other words, Turkish political scientists who have international visibility mostly publish on aspects of *Turkish* politics, whereas this is not necessarily the case among social scientists in economics or psychology. This, in turn, is reflected in the nature of published work on European integration by Turkish political scientists where there is a tendency to publish in English mostly on Turkish–EU relations.

There are two categories of scholarly work on European integration by Turkish political scientists: one published in English in refereed academic journals and with international publishers and university presses; the other published in Turkish. There is an overlap between these two where some Turkish scholars publish their work on the EU in both languages. In addition, the published work related to the EU can be categorized into two paths of inquiry. One category is on the description of the EU as a whole and its institutions with very little attention paid to the theories of political integration. The second, which is more extensive, is on Turkey's relations with the EU.

In the first group, the most important works in Turkish are written by either economists or jurists. The main examples are Haluk Gunugur (1998), Canan Balkır and Muzaffer Demirci (1988), and Tuğrul Arat (1989). The only volume written by a political scientist is Beril Dedeoğlu's *Adım Adım Avrupa Birliği (The European Union Step by Step)* (1996).

Since 1999, there has been a new area of inquiry among political scientists into the European integration process. More work is being conducted into the

EU's second pillar with the aim of understanding the EU's security aspirations, and consequently Turkey's future in the post-Cold War European security order. This includes Ülger's *Avrupa Birliğinde Siyasal Bütünleşme: Ortak Dış Politika* (*Political Integration in the EU: Common Foreign and Security Policy*) (2002) and Alkan's *Avrupa'da Sınırlar* (*Borders in Europe*) (2003). Nonetheless, in this group of publications, the tendency is to disseminate academic information about the European integration process in Turkish.

In the second category of scholarly work, there are a respectable number of publications in Turkish and in English by Turkish political scientists on EU–Turkey relations. Attila Eralp's *Türkiye ve Avrupa* (*Turkey and Europe*) (1997), Mehmet Uğur's *Avrupa Birliği ve Türkiye* (2000) in Turkish and his *The European Union and Turkey* (1999), and Meltem Müftüler-Bac's *Turkey's Relations with a Changing Europe* (1997) in English are the most notable examples. In addition, there is also a significant body of work published in well-known refereed journals in English by Turkish political scientists who are interested in European integration and its impact on Turkey. In other words, those Turkish political scientists who were working on European integration tended to publish their work in international outlets. This group included scholars such as Attila Eralp and Meltem Müftüler-Bac as well as Ziya Onis, a political economist. There are also Turkish political scientists at various European and American universities working on European integration; for example, Birol Yesilada at the University of Missouri and Mehmet Uğur at the University of Greenwich. These scholars have published extensively in English, mostly on European integration as well as on Turkey's place in the European integration process.

In addition, Marmara University's European Community Institute's *Marmara Journal of European Studies*, published twice a year since 1992, has been the most important journal in Turkey for the study of European integration. An editorial note in the journal states that the '*Marmara Journal of European Studies* is devoted mainly to studies of issues pertinent to European integration and the position of Turkey in that context.' It is published in Turkish and in English and so is open to both audiences. It is the only journal in Turkey specializing in European integration. In addition, Marmara University's Institute and ATAUM have since 1987 published a substantial body of work, mostly on the legal aspects of European integration, in both languages. They are the main sources of information dissemination in Turkey in the field of European integration.

To sum up, published work by Turkish scholars in English is mostly on the impact of European integration on Turkey, whereas publications in Turkish focus more on the EU and the wider process of integration; thus it seems that different work is being produced for different audiences. Recently, however, there has been more work on European integration generally by Turkish scholars in English. One should also note that, in the last couple of years, very good PhD dissertations have been written in English in Turkish institutions which have the potential to advance scholarly work in Turkey on European

integration. Two notable examples are Sevily Kahraman's *Institutional Reform and Political Change in the European Community: From the 1950s to the 1980s* at METU and Aylın Güney's *Regionalism as a Failure of National Integration: A Case Study of Italy* at Bilkent University. One might argue that a small minority of the Turkish political science community work on EU politics but that this small minority publishes a significant collection of work.

In short, this review has argued that the nature of political science in Turkey, with its normative, legalistic character, and the institutionalization of the discipline at various institutions have been effective in marginalizing the study of European integration in Turkey. The low profile of European integration seemed to change a little after 1999 with increased EU funding for the study of integration and as a result of greater academic interest in the EU among a new generation of Turkish political scientists. There is now significant interest in European integration among new PhD candidates in political science. Through the Turkish universities' participation in the Jean Monnet programme and access to other EU research grants, the future of European integration studies in Turkish political science seems to be assured.

Address for correspondence: Meltem Müftüler-Bac, Associate Professor of Political Science, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Sabancı University, Orhanlı 81474, Istanbul, Turkey. Tel: 90 216 4839247. Fax: 90 216 4839250, email: muftuler@sabanciuniv.edu.

NOTE

- 1 Turkey's Association Agreement was one of only two Association Agreements which the EC signed carrying the possibility of full membership in the future; the other was with Greece which became a member in 1981.

REFERENCES/BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Alkan, N. (2003) *Avrupa'da Sınırlar (Borders in Europe)*, Ankara: ATAUM Publications.
- Arat, T. (1989) *Avrupa Toplulukları Adalet Divanı (European Court of Justice)*, Ankara: ATAUM Publications.
- Balkır, C. and Demirci, M. (1998) *Uluslar arası Ekonomik Bütünleşme ve AT (International Economic Integration and the EEC)*, İzmir: Bilgehan Press.
- Dedeoğlu, B. (1996) *Adım Adım Avrupa Birliği (The European Union Step by Step)*, İstanbul: Çınar.
- Eralp, A. (ed.) (1997) *Türkiye ve Avrupa (Turkey and Europe)*, Ankara: İmge Kitabevi.
- Giuliani, M. and Radaelli, C. (1999) 'Italian political science and the European Union', *Journal of European Public Policy* 6(3): 517–24.
- Güney, A. (1998) *Regionalism as a Failure of National Integration: A Case Study of Italy*. Unpublished PhD dissertation, Bilkent University.
- Gunugur, H. (1998) *Avrupa Birliği ve Türkiye (The European Union and Turkey)*, İstanbul: BETA.
- Kahraman S. (1996) *Institutional Reform and Political Change in the European Community: From the 1950s to the 1980s*, Unpublished PhD dissertation, METU.

- Karakas, Isil (1997) *Avrupa Topluluğu Hukuk Düzeni ve Ulus devlet egemenliği (EC Legal System and State Sovereignty)*, İstanbul.
- León, M. and Pasquier, R. (2001) 'Spanish political science and European integration', *Journal of European Public Policy* 8(6): 1052–9.
- Manisalı, E. (2002) *Avrupa Çikmazı: Türkiye ve Avrupa Birliği İlişkileri (European Dead End: Turkey and EU Relations)*, İstanbul: Otopsi.
- Miles, L. and Mörrth, U. (2002) 'Nordic political science and the study of European integration', *Journal of European Public Policy* 9(3): 488–95.
- Müftüler-Bac, M. (1997) *Turkey's Relations with a Changing Europe*, Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Onis, Z. (2001) 'Greek–Turkish relations and the European Union: a critical perspective', *Mediterranean Politics* 6: 31–45.
- Smith, A. (2000) 'French political science and European integration', *Journal of European Public Policy* 7(4): 663–9.
- Uğur, M. (2000) *Avrupa Birliği ve Türkiye (The European Union and Turkey)*, İstanbul: Everest.
- Ülger, I.K. (2002) *Avrupa Birliğinde Siyasal Bütünleşme: Ortak Dış Politika (Political Integration in the EU Common Foreign and Security Policy)*, İstanbul: Gündoğan.