

INTERNATIONAL DIMENSION OF DEMOCRATIZATION:
THE IMPACT OF EU CREDIBILITY ON DEMOCRATIC CONSOLIDATION OF
TURKEY

A Master's Thesis

by
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September 2008

To my parents

INTERNATIONAL DIMENSION OF DEMOCRATIZATION:
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TURKEY

The Institute of Economics and Social Sciences
of
Bilkent University

by

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In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
MASTER OF ARTS

in

THE DEPARTMENT OF
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
BILKENT UNIVERSITY
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September 2008

I certify that I have read this thesis and have found that it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts in International Relations.

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ABSTRACT

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September 2008

The European Union (EU) has been a decisive actor in Turkey's long journey of democratization, and this is due to substantial impact of the EU democratic conditionality on Turkish reform process. However, whether this effect will be persistent or not, is depended on the existence of a credible EU approach towards Turkey. Slow down in Turkey's democratic consolidation in the post- 2004 period due to increasingly sided and discriminatory approaches of the EU as regards to Turkey's accession process is an indicator of this fact. In this respect, analyzing three different period (pre- 1999, 1999-2004 and post- 2004) of EU-Turkey relations, the thesis investigates how the variance in the credibility of the EU conditionality affects the variance in the speed and quality of democratic consolidation in Turkey.

Keywords: Credibility, Turkey and the European Union, democratic consolidation, conditionality.

ÖZET

DEMOKRATİKLEŞMENİN ULUSLARARASI BOYUTU: AVRUPA BİRLİĞİ'NİN GÜVENİLİRLİĞİNİN TÜRKİYE'DE DEMOKRASİNİN PEKİŞMESİNE ETKİSİ

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Yüksek Lisans, Uluslararası İlişkiler Bölümü

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Eylül 2008

Avrupa Birliği (AB), Türkiye'nin uzun yıllar süren demokratikleşme yolculuğunda belirleyici bir aktör olmuştur ve bu durum AB demokratik şartlılığının Türk reform süreci üzerindeki önemli etkisine bağlıdır. Fakat bu etkinin sürekli olabilmesi Türkiye'ye karşı güvenilir bir AB yaklaşımının varlığına bağlıdır. Özellikle 2004 sonrası dönemde AB'nin Türkiye'nin üyelik sürecine ilişkin giderek artan taraflı ve ayrımcı politikalar izlemesi sonucu Türkiye'deki demokratik pekişmenin yavaşlaması bu durumun bir göstergesidir. Bu tezde, AB- Türkiye ilişkilerinin 3 farklı dönemi (1999 öncesi, 1999- 2004 ve 2004 sonrası) süresince, AB demokratik şartlılığının güvenilirliğindeki değişimin Türkiye'deki demokratik pekişmenin hız ve kalitesindeki değişime nasıl etki ettiğini incelenmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Güvenilirlik, Avrupa Birliği ve Türkiye, demokratik pekişme, şartlılık.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank to Asst. Prof. Dr. Ali Tekin, Asst. Prof. Dr. Paul Williams and Asst. Prof. Dr. Aylin Güney for their valuable assistance and support. I also would like to express my thanks to my family for always being by my side with their constant support and encouragement.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Although international dimension of democratization still remains understudied and poorly understood by the scholars (Schrader, 2003: 21), there is a growing concern for international factors within the democratization literature. The new literature on democratization has underlined the role played by the European Union (EU)¹ democratic conditionality in facilitating democratic change in candidate countries. Closer examination of Turkish case is crucial in that respect. Though the Turkish democracy remained very much unconsolidated between 1946 when the country begun multi- party politics and the 2000s, it has recently taken significant steps towards consolidation of democracy stimulated by the EU accession process.

The thesis assumes that the EU conditionality has been the main factor in the process of democratic consolidation in Turkey, and investigates how the variance in the credibility of the EU conditionality shapes the variance in the speed and quality of democratic consolidation in Turkey. In other words, this thesis will be an attempt to “unpack the discourse on conditionality” (Tocci, 2007: 9). The central hypothesis

¹ In this thesis, I will use “the EU” to refer to the overall process of European integration since the 1950s, although the official name was European Communities (ECs) prior to Maastricht Treaty came into effect in 1993.

is that *the more credible the EU conditionality towards Turkey, the more likely Turkey's ability to make its democracy consolidated becomes in this process.*

However, this is not to argue that EU credibility is enough for the emergence of fully consolidated democracy in Turkey. Domestic factors, such as social acceptability and satisfaction with respect to democratic reforms and public's internalization of these democratic rules, norms and values are crucial for the emergence and continuation of consolidated democracy in Turkey. Therefore, the thesis will investigate the impact of EU credibility on Turkey's democratic consolidation throughout different time periods, without ignoring the significance of domestic considerations in this long process of democratic consolidation in Turkey.

The thesis will benefit both from rationalist and constructivist theories in order to explain the impact of the EU approach on different domains in Turkey. It will both look at the formal rule adoption at the governmental domain and the behavioral rule adoption at the societal domain that is crucial for the effective implementation of democratic reforms undertaken by governments.

In order to substantiate this argument, I will analyze three different periods of Turkey- EU relations (pre- 1999, 1999-2004 and post- 2004), with special emphasis on the post 2004 phase in which EU's discriminatory and sided approach towards Turkey has increased. Hence, the post- 2004 period is especially important for analyzing the possible impact of the change in the EU's credibility on Turkey's democratic consolidation and for commenting on the future of Turkey-EU relations.

The official relations between Turkey and the EU go back to 1959 when Turkey applied for associate membership. The process gained more strength with 1963 Ankara Agreement, which is the association agreement signed between the European Economic Community (EEC) and Turkey. Since then the relations with the

EU has had an important place in Turkey's foreign policy despite all ups and downs. Thus, it becomes crucial to answer how Turkey's ties with Western democracies (the EU in our case) have affected and continue to affect democratization in Turkey, with its ups and downs over more than 50 years (Kubicek, 2008: 22). In the period up to 1999 Helsinki Summit when Turkey was not given the credible incentive of membership, the impact of the EU on Turkey's democratic consolidation remained negligible.

1999 Helsinki Summit constitutes an important turning point in that long journey since Turkey was granted official candidate status. So, in the period after 1999 Helsinki Summit, this credible incentive by the EU intensified the reform attempts of the subsequent governments in Turkey in terms of transforming its democracy so as to comply with the so-called Copenhagen political criteria.²

Ironically however, in the post 2004 period, there has been a decrease on the level of credibility provided by the EU despite the beginning of official accession negotiations. Due to imposition of double standards on Turkey with emphasis on the 'open-endedness' of the process with Turkey, and on 'absorption capacity' of the Union to absorb new members³, credibility of the EU started to decline. Certain documents by the EU further emphasized such double standards. These have been complemented by negative demarches of the French and German political leaderships about Turkey's inclusion in the Union, the EU's stance in the Cyprus problem and negative public opinion in the EU as regards to Turkish membership.

² Copenhagen political criteria refer to stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities. There are two more Copenhagen criteria that requires the existence of a functioning market economy as well as the capacity to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the Union (economic criteria); and the ability to take on the obligations of membership including adherence to the aims of political, economic and monetary union.

³ For more detail, see Negotiation Framework for Turkey, available at: http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/st20002_05_tr_framedoc_en.pdf

Within this general framework, I will argue that with considerable decrease in the level of EU's credibility in the post 2004 period, there has been a decrease in the speed and quality of democratic consolidation in Turkey. This is similar to what happened in pre-Helsinki period, when Turkey was not given the official candidacy status as a credible incentive. Thus, by specifying under which conditions the EU democratic conditionality is more effective, this thesis will attempt to make a future analysis of Turkey- EU relations within the context of democratization, situating it with the larger framework of Turkish accession to the EU.

Touching upon the newly emphasized concepts like 'absorption capacity', and other differences in the EU's approach towards Turkey, this thesis will also try to demonstrate the paradox in the EU's recent policy of enlargement and democratization. While the EU increases its standards and makes its conditionality tougher to contribute more effectively to the process of democratization in candidate countries, it decreases its own credibility by emphasizing the open endedness of the process and the capacity of the Union to absorb new members.

Pridham (2007: 455) also mentions about the changing character of EU's conditionality and argues that conditionality policy of the EU during 2004-2007 can be characterized as having extended scope and intensity, but also as raising new doubts about its credibility over the candidate countries. This is exactly what happens in EU- Turkey relations in post- 2004 period. In this period, the EU did not only intensify its demands on Turkey during the process of accession, but also decreased its credibility that resulted in non- compliance at both governmental and societal domains.

On the bases of this general picture, this thesis is organized as follows. The second chapter will cover the research design of the thesis and explain the variables,

case selection and methodology in order to provide the necessary framework for such an analysis. This chapter is crucial in order to clarify how the central hypothesis of this thesis is formulated; to what extent it is justifiable in methodological terms and to what extent it can be analyzed by the chosen case. In the chapter, I will also make definitions of the main concepts to provide conceptual clarity and explain the intended contributions of the thesis to the field.

The third chapter is crucial and aims to provide the theoretical background on which the main argument of the thesis is established. Rationalist and constructivist theories are discussed in order to better conceptualize the impact of the EU on democratic consolidation of Turkey, not only in terms of governmental, but also in terms of societal domain. More specifically, the underlying rationale behind ‘external incentives model’ and ‘socialization model’ will be explained with an aim to better understand the impact of credibility on cost- benefit calculations of governments and perception of the society at large.

A general picture of the EU and its mechanism of democratic conditionality are provided in the fourth chapter in order to better explain the impact of the EU on Turkey’s democratic consolidation later in the thesis. Therefore, the fourth chapter aims to elaborate on the international dimension of democratization, with particular emphasis on the role of the EU as an influential democracy promoter in the external arena.

Depending on the general theoretical framework provided in the third chapter, the following chapters will be an analysis of the impact of credibility of EU conditionality on Turkey’s democratic consolidation in three different periods. Throughout these chapters, I will also refer to the main literature as regards to the developments and their impact on Turkey’s democratic consolidation. While making

an overall assessment of the EU's impact on Turkey's democratic consolidation at the end of each chapter, I will refer to the EU's Progress Reports and public opinion studies.

The progress reports are important documents in that they not only emphasize the change in legislation, but also its implementation and impact on the daily lives of citizens. They are crucial in demonstrating whether or not there has been a slow down in the speed and quality of democratic reforms in Turkey throughout the years, and in analyzing that if there is a slow down to what extent this corresponds to change in the EU's approach towards Turkey.

Similarly, public opinion studies and surveys are crucial in demonstrating to what extent people believe in the prospect of the EU membership and, therefore, how far they can internalize the changes required by the EU in the name of democracy. Hence, although there is no one to one correlation in the strict sense between the findings of these studies and decreasing credibility of the EU, the change in the findings throughout the years is crucial in illustrating how the change in the EU's approach towards Turkey affects public opinion in Turkey. The important point is to see whether the increase in level of public mistrust towards the Union is correlated with the decrease in the credibility of the EU or not. The existence of such correlation has important implications for Turkey's democratic consolidation process, since for a democratic consolidation in any country, public's acceptance and internalization of the reforms are crucial for effective implementation of the reforms undertaken by the governments.

The fifth chapter covers pre- 1999 period, when the EU did not offer a credible membership promise although the relations between Turkey and the EU dates back to 1963, when two sides signed the Ankara Agreement. Therefore,

depending on the rationalist and constructivist accounts, there will be explanations of why the EU could not be effective in helping Turkey consolidate its democracy and what the impacts of the EU approach are in governmental and societal domains in Turkey. In the absence of progress reports and public opinion surveys conducted in Turkey as regards to the issue of EU membership in this period, the overall assessment will mostly depend on the assumption that since there was no significant impact of the EU in this process, there was not much effort to measure and analyze the change.

The sixth chapter covers the 1999- 2004 period, which starts with Turkey getting the official candidacy status in 1999 Helsinki Summit that is considered to be a turning point in Turkey- EU relations. Throughout this period, Turkey adopted serious reform packages in line with the EU democratic conditionality with an aim to fulfill the Copenhagen criteria. In the chapter, the reforms and the EU's impact on Turkish governments and society will be elaborated in detail, again by relating them to rationalist and constructivist accounts. I will analyze progress reports since 1999 with an aim to analyze the developments in the process of Turkey's democratic consolidation and the EU's impact on it. I will also analyze the impact on society at large with reference to main literature and to limited number of public opinion surveys conducted in this period.

The seventh chapter is crucial for the main argument of the thesis and covers the post- 2004 period. In this period, some ambiguities have appeared in the EU's overall policy of enlargement, particularly towards Turkey, leading to considerable decrease in its credibility. The differences in the EU's approach, its manifestations and its consequences will be analyzed in order to depict a general picture of "how the modalities of EU behavior toward Turkey" (Patton, 2007) affect the process of

democratic consolidation in Turkey in governmental and societal domains. In the overall assessment part, I will refer to the evaluations of EU's progress reports and Freedom House results for the analysis of the EU's impact on democratic consolidation at the governmental domain, while I will benefit from several public opinion surveys for the analysis of the EU's impact on the societal domain.

The thesis will end with a conclusion briefly explaining the impact of the credibility of EU democratic conditionality on democratic consolidation of Turkey depending on the overall historical analysis outlined above. It concludes by arguing that the process of democratic consolidation in Turkey may enter into a stalemate due to decrease in the credibility of the EU and due to its impact on the governmental and societal domains. Moreover, the conclusion will include a brief analysis of what this would mean for the EU and Turkey, in terms of its normative role as a democracy promoter and its progress towards more substantive democracy, for the EU and Turkey respectively. Last, but not least, there will be some suggestions as to how this negative process can be reversed and what responsibilities fall on to each side.

CHAPTER II

RESEARCH DESIGN

This chapter covers the research design of the thesis and explains the variables, case selection and methodology in order to provide the necessary framework for the intended analysis. In the chapter, I will clarify how the central hypothesis of this thesis is formulated; to what extent it is justifiable in methodological terms and to what extent it can be analyzed by the Turkish case. I will also make definitions of the main concepts in order to prevent conceptual conflict. Last, I will mention about the intended contributions of the thesis to the field.

2. 1. Variables:

The independent variable (IV) of this study is ‘credibility of EU conditionality’. In other words, my work mainly draws upon the international dimension of democratization while at the same time emphasizing a specific character (credibility) of the international actor (EU).

Here, one can ask the question of why such an approach is taken and why domestic actors are treated as secondary in democratic consolidation of Turkey. First, external factors have a greater and deeper impact on the consolidation of democracy rather than on the starting of transitions to democracy (Gürleyen, 2004: 3).

Second, the thesis is interested in the impact of EU democratic conditionality (and more specifically its credibility) on democratic consolidation of Turkey, rather than in the causes of democratic consolidation more generally. The thesis does not argue that the EU credibility is the only factor for explaining democratic consolidation in Turkey; rather it aims to study how Turkey reacted to the demands of the EU and under what conditions it complied with these demands. Hence, I acknowledge that even if the EU- Turkey relations proceed smoothly without further problems, there may still be continuing problems in Turkey's democratic consolidation due to domestic obstacles in the process of internalization and implementation of the reforms.

Third, although democracy was established a long ago, it was not consolidated enough and "without pressure from the outside, it is highly doubtful that such reforms would have been adopted" (Kubicek, 2005c: 373). As Oğuzlu (2004: 110-111) states:

The democratization alongside the EU accession process and the democratization *per se* are not the same in the context of Turkey. The former is superior to the latter in the sense that the way in which the former unfolds would certainly affect the way in which Turkish elites would perceive the latter.

Moreover, notwithstanding the existence of several internal factors emphasized for the decrease in democratic reforms in the post- 2004 period, such as 'election fever' of the Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi- AKP) government and 'Kemalist institutional resistance' (Patton, 2007), I choose the

EU factor due to its significant impact on the domestic factors also. Therefore, while recognizing the plausibility of each factor and not ignoring any of them, decreasing level of EU credibility will be highlighted as the prime factor for explaining the slow down in Turkey's reform process most competently since it is the facilitating factor for understanding other considerations. There will be more emphasis on the impact of the EU and its credibility on domestic factors throughout the thesis.

In this thesis, I will take 'democratic consolidation' as my dependent variable (DV). Democratization covers a much wider process of regime change and includes liberalization and transition stages prior to consolidation. Since liberalization and transition stages of the overall process of democratization have long been completed in Turkey, the main focus of the thesis will be on the last stage; democratic consolidation.

Governmental and societal domains will be analyzed as the two main domains, on which we can observe the EU's impact on the Turkey's democratic consolidation. Although most of the studies on EU democratic conditionality tends to consider conditionality in a rationalist framework and emphasize the intergovernmental character of the process (e.g. Schimmelfenning et al. 2003), the thesis will argue that democratic consolidation is not just about making reforms in governmental domain, but also implementing them in societal domain. Thus, constructivist and sociological institutionalist approaches deserve attention due to their conceptual starting point of an assumption of a link between the social construction of institutions and the successful implementation of rules, norms and principles (Wiener, 2006: 54). Even if the reforms continue at the governmental level despite decreasing credibility of EU conditionality, the process of implementation

and internalization at the societal level may be at stake due to decrease in the perceived legitimacy of the EU.

2. 2. Case Selection, Why Turkey?:

Turkey is a crucial test case to analyze the impact of the EU on the democratization process. The process of reform in Turkey and the EU's incentives for Turkey to democratize follow the same direction. We observe increasing pace of democratic reform after the EU incentive of membership in the post-Helsinki Period. Similarly, "all the democratization bills were brought to the parliament in the form of packages aiming to harmonize with the EU" (Gürleyen, 2004: 11).

Second reason of why Turkey constitutes an important case to study stems from its problematic and uneasy nature. If we only focus on the EU role in countries where a consolidated democracy is established without any serious problem, we could easily conclude that the EU plays a crucial role in democratization (Kubicek, 2003a: 3). However, in cases of significant conflict that involve bigger challenges to conditionality (Schimmelfenning et al. 2003: 501); we can learn more about under what conditions conditionality is more effective. Moreover, in problematic cases, "it is easier to distinguish the international impact from endogenous change, that is, change that would have occurred in the absence of political conditionality" (Schimmelfenning, 2004: 11).

Third, Turkish case is a complex one and requires special attention due to its relation to the EU's other interests (Yeşilada, 2007: 4). Turkey is the only candidate that the EU behaves so ambiguously with so many double standards and changes in

its approach. Misrahi (2004: 22) comments that since the EU's approach to Turkey is distinctive, "more nuanced analysis" is necessary.

2. 3. Methodology:

As regards to the methodology, this thesis is a (crucial) case study to the international aspects of democratization and the EU democratic conditionality. Crucial case studies provide in-depth analysis of a specific case. So, this thesis gives detailed account of the EU-Turkey relations in terms of democratic consolidation. The method of the thesis is not comparative case study in the sense that Turkey is not directly compared to the other countries. However, there are some insights driven from the other similar cases to explain better the differences in the EU's approach towards the other candidates. Furthermore, the thesis could be regarded comparative in the sense that three different periods of EU-Turkey relations (pre- 1999, 1999-2004, post- 2004) are compared. This comparison reveals that the EU's impact on democratic consolidation in Turkey is highly correlated with a credible application of conditionality.

2. 4. Definitions of the Basic Concepts:

In this part, I will clarify what I mean by democracy, democratization, democratic consolidation, EU conditionality and credibility, and absorption capacity in order to prevent any confusion as regards to the meaning throughout the thesis.

2.4.1. Democracy:

The term democracy is one of the most problematic concepts in the literature and there are endless disputes as regards to its appropriate definition, meaning, indicators and measurement. It is “neither codified in international agreements nor widely agreed” (Smith, Karen, 2003: 131). So, it is above the capacity of this study to refer all of these different conceptualizations.

Although there is no consensus yet on the universal meaning of the term, Robert Dahl’s criteria for democracy has often been accepted for the minimal procedural definition of democracy. Dahl (1989: 221- 222) considers ‘polyarchy’ as bearing of democracy, and assigns seven institutions to it. These are; elected officials, free and fair elections, inclusive suffrage, right to run for office, freedom of expression, alternative information and associational autonomy.

Moreover, arguing that democracy signifies a political system, separate and apart from the economic and social systems, Diamond, Linz and Lipset (1995: 6- 7) set up three essential conditions for democracy. These are meaningful and extensive political competition among individuals and parties or other organizations, a highly inclusive level of political participation in the selection of leaders and policies and certain level of civil and political liberties, such as freedom of thought and expression, freedom of the press, freedom of assembly, guaranteed through political equality under rule of law.

As Videt (2006: 19) argues, definition of democracy, based on Dahl’s seven institutional requirements and Diamond, Linz and Lipset’s three dimensions of democracy is both similar to common understanding of democracy, and compatible

with the EU's Copenhagen political criteria requiring member states to achieve 'stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities.' It is important to note that the EU Commission prefers to use 'democratic principles' to 'democracy', since it emphasizes the universally accepted principles underpinning the organization of the state and guaranteeing the usage of fundamental rights and freedoms (Smith, Karen, 2003: 132).

In the existence of several approaches to define democracy, the thesis will follow the general tendency that is to divide them into two main groups. The first group includes 'procedural' (or 'minimalist') definitions of democracy as done by Dahl, and the second group includes substantive definitions of democracy, such as the definition of Diamond, Linz and Lipset provided above.

While procedural democracy is more concerned with rules and institutions, substantive democracy emphasizes free media, civil society, social pluralism, human rights and effective administration (Kubicek, 2003a: 21). In the substantive democracies, the emphasis is placed "on the normative primacy of individual rights and freedoms" (Keyman and Öniş, 2004: 176). This thesis utilizes the substantive definition that includes a wider range of rights, including "participatory and responsiveness elements" in addition to the procedural dimension (Kobzar, 2006: 3).

Notwithstanding the existence of various other definitions of democracy, it is important to note here that in the current era, with the spread of democracy and democratization to many regions of the world, the attention has shifted from concentration on democracy versus anti- democracy, the possible varieties of democracy and its evolving nature (Nagle, 1999: 12). In line with this trend, the

thesis's central focus will be on democratic consolidation of Turkey as a process rather than on the static concepts of democracy versus anti- democracy.

2. 4. 2. Democratization and Democratic Consolidation:

If we understand the concept of democracy as something that can be placed on a continuum, it is better to understand democratization as a process that can be ever ongoing. In the most general terms, “the word ‘democratization’ refers to political changes moving in a democratic direction” (Potter, 1997: 3). Thus, democratization should be understood as “the outcome of complex, contingent and prolonged processes of interaction among actors and between actors and context” (Renwick, 2006: 36), not just as “the establishment of sets of governing institutions” (Grugel, 1999: 11).

Democratization can be broken into three stages and democratic consolidation can best be understood as the final stage of this process (Kubicek, 2003a: 21). It is quite ironic that the European Commission has never defined clearly what a ‘democratic consolidation’ is, despite it regularly uses the term in its regular reports for candidate countries (Pridham, 2006: 377- 378). Liberalization is the initial stage when political restrictions are removed, transition is the process of regime change and consolidation refers to the “process, often a lengthy one and in a certain sense always ongoing, of stabilizing and institutionalizing democratic institutions and practices, as well as the internalization of democratic norms by elites and masses” (Kubicek, 2003a: 21).

Thus, the process of democratic consolidation is much lengthier process and has wider and deeper effects. The process involves the gradual removal of the remaining uncertainties surrounding transition and the internalization of rules and procedures and “dissemination of democratic values through a ‘remaking’ of the political culture” (Pridham, 2005: 12).

2. 4. 3. Conditionality (of the EU):

Conditionality is generally conceptualized as a top- down approach in which donors try to influence the governments of target countries by using certain incentives (Smith, Karen, 2003: 134) for the advancement of democratic principles and institutions in a ‘target’ state (Kubicek, 2005b: 273). Similarly, Schimmelfenning et al. (2003: 495) defines conditionality as a strategy of ‘reinforcement by reward’ which works through intergovernmental material bargaining”.

I acknowledge that conditionality has been more successful in institutional and legislative aspects than in implementation. (Pridham, 2006: 398). However, democratic conditionality is also dependent on the responsiveness of domestic actors and their European commitment is a decisive factor. In other words, “European signals are interpreted and modified through domestic traditions, institutions, identities and resources in ways that limit the degree of convergence and homogenization” (Olsen, 2002: 936).

Thus, the thesis argues that it is not only through material bargaining mechanism that democratic conditionality works. So, implementation and societal

change should also be considered as necessary and desirable outcomes of conditionality in the process of democratic consolidation. As stated by Doğan (2006: 256), the EU criticized Turkey mostly for the problems in the implementation of the reforms rather than the problems in legal reforms.

2. 4. 4. Credibility (of the EU):

There is a widespread consensus in the literature that credible and consistent application of conditionality is the most crucial factor for its effectiveness. Hence, one needs to analyze credibility of conditionality in order to account for its effectiveness.

Drazen and Masson (as cited in Bronk, 2002: 6) defined the credibility as “the expectation that an announced policy will be carried out”. In other words,

When a regime has credibility it will be able to alter the expectations of other actors favorably because it is trusted or at least believed. Credibility helps overcome the fear that a given policy may be short lived because it is ‘time inconsistent’ (Bronk, 2002: 6-7).

Tocci (2005) points to this ‘time inconsistency’ of the EU conditionality in Turkish case. She states that “the process is front- loaded with obligations and back-loaded on the delivery of the benefits” (2005: 78). Therefore, policy makers in Turkey are inclined to delay reforms until the time of the rewards becomes foreseeable and credible. Without doubt, the absence of credibility and existence of time inconsistency undermine the effectiveness of an ongoing policy.

Within this framework, I define credibility of the EU conditionality as the expectation that membership promise given by the EU will be kept as long as the

candidate fulfills its obligations. As long as the candidate fulfills its obligations arising out of the membership process, no other discrimination, such as the absorption capacity debate, should be allowed for a credible and effective policy making in the EU.

2. 4. 5. Absorption Capacity:

The concept is used first in the conclusion of the Copenhagen Summit of 1993 and it is stated here that “the Union’s capacity to absorb new members, while maintaining the momentum of European integration, is an important consideration in the general interest of both the Union and the candidate countries.”⁴ The debate about the concept has increased especially after the 2004 enlargement and rejection of the draft Constitution in 2005, and the revival of the concept in 2005 has been linked to further enlargements, especially Turkey’s possible membership (Emerson et al. 2006: 1- 2).

Therefore, with the increasing usage of the concept, there occurred a necessity to define it in official texts. In this vein, Enlargement Strategy Paper of the Commission on November 2005 (European Commission, 2005b: 3) defined it as the “capacity to act and decide according to a fair balance within institutions; respect budgetary limits and implement common policies that function well and achieve their objectives.”

In June 2006 European Council Summit the debate about the term has again intensified and Jacques Chirac defined the term as “an institutional, financial and

⁴ See European Council Meeting in Copenhagen, 21-22 June 1993, SN 180/1/93, p. 14.

political capacity, the latter concerning the views of the receiving population, which should be able to say if they accept or not” (as cited in Emerson et al., 2006: 2- 3).

It is possible to find many other definitions of the concept done by several member states and bodies of the Union. These definitions show great variation in the emphasis attached to the meaning depending on whether the state or the institution that makes the definition favor more enlargements (especially of Turkey) or not. However, there is still no clear-cut and agreed definition of the concept in the academic circles. Actually, due to its ambiguous and non- scientific character, Emerson et al. (2006: 1) even suggests that the term should not be used in official texts of the EU any more unless it is deconstructed into objective elements. There will be further reference to the vagueness of the absorption capacity term and the implications of the absorption capacity debate when analyzing change in the EU’s approach towards Turkey in post- 2004 period.

2. 5. The Intended Contributions of the Thesis to the Field:

First of all, the literature on democratization has mainly emphasized the importance of domestic factors. Similarly, “there has been little effort to analyze domestic politics in an interactive dynamic with the accession process” (Pridham, 2006: 376). The interaction between domestic structures and international pressure is crucial since the well functioning of the democratic reforms depends on the responsiveness of domestic actors and institutions in a country (Gürleyen, 2004: 5- 6).

Therefore, this thesis aims to contribute to the field with its emphasis, not only on the role of an international actor, but also on the interaction between the international and domestic actors in the process of democratic consolidation of Turkey. While mainly focusing on the impact of an international factor (EU credibility) on Turkey's democratic consolidation, the thesis also acknowledges the continuing importance of domestic factors in this process, and also investigates how these domestic factors are affected by credible application of EU conditionality.

The thesis utilizes both rationalist and constructivist accounts while analyzing this interaction. By so doing, the thesis will be an attempt to contribute to the studies of EU's impact on domestic change with its ability to analyze two different logics behind conditionality and its credibility. While the conditionality and credibility is generally used within a rationalist framework (Gürleyen, 2004: 7), the study will also consider the constructivist logic behind domestic transformation.

Last but not least, the thesis intends to fill the gap in the literature that stems from taking the transnational factors as given and unchanging. While the EU's accession policy's scope has been extended to further issues, the EU's leverage over candidate countries has been characterized by new doubts about the EU's credibility (Pridham, 2007: 455). So, the thesis gains its strength from explaining the change in the EU's conditionality approach (in terms of its credibility), which gets tougher in time, and analyzing its impact on the democratic consolidation of Turkish democracy.

CHAPTER III

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

This chapter will try to provide the necessary theoretical framework for our analysis of the impact of the EU's credibility on Turkey's democratic consolidation. There will be emphasis on both two key dimensions of change; first is about the changes in political organizations and governance, the second is about changes in people's minds and the structures of meaning (Olsen, 2002: 926). While the former will be explained with reference to rationalist accounts, the latter will be analyzed through the lenses of social constructivism.

More specifically, the analysis will be based on "two alternative models of international influence on domestic change: the external incentives model and the social learning model" (Schimmelfenning, 2004: 3), while differentiating itself in certain respects. My analysis recognizes the significance of the variables used by both the former (size of rewards and domestic adoption costs) as well as the latter (legitimacy, resonance and identity). Yet, the analysis emphasizes the concept of 'credibility' as the main explanatory variable having substantial impact on the above mentioned variables also. Hence, the basic question to answer is "how does variation in the size and credibility of EU conditionality impact on its effectiveness?" (Schimmelfenning and Scholtz, 2007: 4).

3.1. Rationalist Accounts- External Incentives Model and Its Reformulation:

External incentives model is a rationalist model, based on rationalist bargaining and cost- benefit calculations of decision makers. The underlying rationale is that the decision makers are interested in the maximization of their own power. So, the rationalist institutionalism assumes that rational actors follow ‘logic of consequentialism’ (March and Olsen: 1989 and 1998; as cited in Börzel, 2005: 52) and try to maximize their power by using the resources and knowledge available to them.

Rationalist institutionalism sees Europe as an emerging political opportunity structure that leads to redistribution of resources at domestic level in the existence of certain misfit between European and domestic policies (Börzel, 2005: 53). Thus, “Europeanization leads to domestic change through differential empowerment of actors resulting from a redistribution of resources at the domestic level” (Börzel and Risse, 2000: 2).

When applied to the EU, external incentives model holds that the EU pays the reward (ranging from trade agreements to full membership) if the target government complies with the criteria and withholds it in case of noncompliance. Hence, the dominant logic behind EU conditionality is a “bargaining strategy of reinforcement by reward under which the EU provides external incentives for a target government to comply with its conditions” (Schimmelfenning and Sedelmeier, 2004: 662).

Through the intergovernmental channel, the EU affects candidate governments directly. Therefore, accession governments are the central and pivotal domestic actors and their commitment to the process is significant (Pridham, 2005:

64). The external incentives model argues that cost- benefit calculations are more important than the commitment of the governments in this process. That is why although Turkish state elites are committed to the idea of Europe generally, compliance depended on and limited by political cost- benefit calculations (Schimmelfenning et al. 2003: 509).

Here, one should also note the importance of ‘domestic equilibrium’ that shows the “current distribution of preferences and bargaining power in domestic society” (Schimmelfenning, 2004: 4). The EU conditionality is significant since it contributes to the change in this equilibrium by providing incentives in case of compliance. In line with this reasoning the most general hypothesis of the external incentive model is that:

A state complies with the norms of the organization if the benefits of the rewards exceed the domestic adoption costs. More specifically, this cost- benefit balance depends on (i) the size of international rewards, (ii) the credibility of threats and promises, and (iii) the size of domestic adoption costs (Schimmelfenning, 2004: 4).

As regards to (i) and (iii), the likelihood of compliance increases with the increase in the size of the rewards and with the decrease in the power costs for the target government. As regards to (ii), the impact of external incentives increases with the clarity and credibility of EU conditionality.

Determinacy of conditions is also crucial in enhancing the credibility of conditionality. The reasoning is that when conditions are determinate, it becomes much more difficult for the EU to claim unjustly that they have not been fulfilled by the candidates and to withhold the reward due to noncompliance (Schimmelfenning and Sedelmeier, 2004: 664). So, in general, conditionality is more effective when the rewards are high, determinate and credible enough to exceed the domestic costs of compliance with EU requirements (Schimmelfenning and Schweltnus, 2006: 3).

Not ignoring the validity of the other two factors (size of the rewards and domestic adoption costs) given above, I argue that the credibility is a more central factor for explaining compliance/ non- compliance on part of the target state. Moreover, credibility factor is crucial due to its considerable impact on these two factors also.

The reasoning is that sizeable incentives result in compliance as long as they are credible and that when the incentives are credible, the domestic adoption costs are decreased significantly. The necessity of a credible EU or NATO membership perspective for the target country is the strongest determinant of an effective policy of human rights and democracy promotion (Schimmelfenning et al., 2006: 236). If the credibility factor is absent, there will not be compliance even if other conditions are highly favorable (Schimmelfenning et al., 2006: 236).

In relation to size, the argument is that higher credibility has a stronger positive impact on democracy for each size of the incentives provided (Schimmelfenning and Scholtz, 2007: 21). In relation to domestic costs, the related argument is that the EU's external incentives have been effective in removing domestic obstacles to further democratic reform in many of the cases (Schimmelfenning and Scholtz, 2007: 3). Similar argument holds that "once a credible membership perspective has been established, adoption costs in individual policy areas are discounted against the (aggregate) benefits of membership, rather than just the benefits in this particular policy area" (Schimmelfenning and Sedelmeier, 2004: 672).

Schimmelfenning and Scholtz (2007:23) also find out that countries with a credible EU membership perspective have three points more on the average (on the seven point Freedom House political rights scale) when compared to those without

tangible EU incentives. Moreover, they also found that measured in terms of Freedom House civil liberties scale, significance of conditionality decreases further and only highly credible conditionality produces significant impact (Schimmelfenning and Scholtz, 2007: 24). Their general finding is that the credible membership perspective is highly significant in all kind of specifications and consistently stronger when compared to lower levels of conditionality (Schimmelfenning and Scholtz, 2007: 26).

The credibility and the effectiveness of conditionality are at stake when the Union gives more importance to other considerations of the member states and employs different standards for different countries. In such situations, target state may believe that it will not get the rewards even if it complies with the conditions specified, and therefore may change its cost- benefit calculations according to the rationalist reasoning. In other words, “credibility depends on the consistency of an organization’s allocation of rewards” (Schimmelfenning and Sedelmeier, 2004: 666). If the EU’s capabilities are questionable, than the EU’s credibility may decrease in candidate countries and this would decrease the effectiveness of conditionality regardless of the conditions fulfilled by the candidates (Savic, 2007: 18). Thus, in the absence of credibility of policy maker or policy, it is rational that other actors will expect policy inconsistency over time, and therefore will act accordingly (Bronk, 2002: 7).

In sum, recognizing the importance of other variables specified by the external incentives model (size of the rewards and domestic adoption costs), the argument here holds that credibility is the main motive effecting both the cost-benefit calculations of domestic decision makers and the impact of sizeable

incentives. In the absence of credibility factor EU's conditionality policy will not work, or will not be as effective as it would be in the existence of credibility.

3. 2. Constructivist Accounts- Social Learning Model and Its Reformulation:

While the external incentives model is a rationalist model, social learning model is based on the social constructivism, and constitutes the most prominent alternative explanation to conditionality in our case. In general, socialization approaches belong to sociological strand of neo- institutionalism.

For sociological institutionalism, institutions do not only determine actors' behaviors by redistributing resources, rather they constitute these actors by providing them with the understanding of what their interests are and what appropriate means they may use to pursue these interests. Therefore, actors internalize the institutional norms and rules and follow them out of habit, not choose to comply with them to maximize power (Börzel, 2005: 54). In other words, there is a distinction between internalization of democratic norms and changes stimulated by instrumental, utilitarian calculations (Kubicek, 2005c: 364). For the successful integration of reforms, their acceptance, diffusion and legitimization in the society are essential (Erdoğan, 2006: 11).

While reinforcement strategies work through the usage of incentives, persuasion strategies work through convincing the target of their validity, and they result in internalization of the rules (Schimmelfenning et al. 2006: 31). This type of influence is also named as "framing integration" (Knill and Lehmkuhl, 1999: 14).

Within this general framework, social learning model follow ‘logic of appropriateness’ (March and Olsen, 1989: 160-161; as cited in Schimmelfenning, 2004: 8). This logic holds that there are collectively shared understandings of what constitutes proper behavior in a given rule structure and actors are shaped by these in their effort to ‘do the right thing’ (Börzel, 2005: 54). Within this regard, the EU represents a European community with collective identity, common values and norms, and the degree to which these common rules are deemed appropriate determines whether a non- member complies with these rules or not (Schimmelfenning, 2004: 8).

Hence, constructivist or sociological institutionalist approaches suggest that referring only to strategic and rational interest calculation at a particular point in time is not enough to understand democratization that is the result of a complex interaction of international and domestic factors, leading to slow re- framing of the interests and behaviors of the actors (Schmitz and Sell, 1999: 33). On the basis of information, I will cite the most commonly used hypothesis of the social learning model:

A state adopts EU rules if it is persuaded of the appropriateness of the EU rules. Three main factors impinge upon the persuasive power of European regional organizations: legitimacy, identity, and resonance (Schimmelfenning, 2004: 8- 9).

As regards to legitimacy, Gürleyen (2004: 6) mentions that the likelihood of target country’s compliance increases with the legitimacy of the democratic norm. In order to be legitimate, there must be commonly held organizational rules and demands on the target states must be based on these rules, not on the *ad hoc* interests of certain member states. For instance, the EU enjoyed strong prestige and

legitimacy in the CEECs during the accession process and this inhibited outright opposition to membership (Pridham, 2005: 95).

Not ignoring the validity of this factor, I argue that the credibility is a central factor with crucial impact also on the legitimacy. The underlying rationale is that in the absence of credible promises by the EU, it is nearly impossible that the target governments believe in the legitimacy of rules. The community must treat candidates impartially and equally according to legitimate conditions and thus it is constrained in the application of reinforcement conditions across target states (Schimmelfenning et al. 2006: 24). So, the perceived legitimacy of the organizational rules is highly dependent on whether or not the rule makers and their promises are deemed credible.

As regards to the identity, the social learning model argues that it is more likely that non- members are persuaded by international organizations if they identify themselves with these organizations (Schimmelfenning, 2004: 9). Therefore, the compliance is assumed to be high with the increase in the identification of non-members and actors with high identification strive to be recognized as part of the 'European family of democratic nations' (Schimmelfenning et al. 2003: 498).

Although Turkey has identified itself with the West since the last days of the Ottoman Empire, and has a history of democracy since the beginning of multi- party politics in 1946, the process of democratic consolidation has always been problematic due to serious identity conflicts over sensitive issues, such as minority rights (Öniş, 1999: 109). There is an unspoken assumption in the literature that "there is something inherently uncivilized in Turkish political culture, which prevents the realization of fully functioning democracy" (Gürleyen, 2004: 10).

In relation to this, Kubicek (2003b: 206) mentions about two discourses in Turkey. While one tries to identify Turkey with the West, the other emphasizes

Turkey's own traditions and special circumstances requiring attention as regards to the immediate adoption of Western norms. This prevents rhetorical 'spillover' due to ambiguous character of the rhetoric itself that complicates the perception of the EU in Turkey whose Europeanness has been subject to many debates. As observable in recent years, the public in Turkey have become more and more skeptical about the EU and its motives due to increasing ambiguity in the EU's approach in Turkey. Thus, in the absence of firmly established identity and internalization in Turkey despite long years of identification with Europe, credibility again turns out to be important variable with its impact on the process of identity formation.

The third variable used in social learning model, resonance, basically means the "cultural or institutional match of a specific external rule with the already existing domestic values, norms, practices, and discourses in a specific issue area" (Schimmelfenning, 2004: 9). Therefore, when the 'degree of normative fit' of an European rule, norm or practice is high and when they show similarity with those at the domestic level, it is more likely that these will be conceived as legitimate by the target government and translated into existing domestic institutions without much problem.

Similar to the problematic nature of identity, resonance is also fragile in Turkish case. Although there is certain degree of identification and resonance with the European values and rules in Turkey, the process is problematic due to certain ambiguities in the EU's approach and resulting ups and downs in the relations between Turkey and the EU. Even though there is a certain degree of resonance with respect to specific external rule in the beginning, due to change in the perceptions of public and decision makers, the degree may fluctuate throughout the process.

In sum, not ignoring the significance and validity of three constructivist variables used by the social learning model (legitimacy, identity and resonance), the study argues that credibility is a central factor due to its impact on shaping these three variables. This is an important point to consider in Turkish case where the process of constructing an identity, legitimacy and resonance is fragile and liable to ups and downs due to changes in the credibility of promises given by the EU.

3.3. Juxtaposition of Rationalist and Constructivist Models:

Overall, when we utilize credibility as our main variable that is suitable to conceptualization in both external incentives and social learning models; we are able to juxtapose these two models in our analysis of domestic change without prioritizing one over another. The related argument holds that “rationalist and constructivist perspectives are both useful frameworks for analysis, and are not necessarily mutually exclusive” (Bourne and Cini, 2006: 14). This is also in conformity with the recent direction in the theoretical debate away from either- or arguments between rationalism and constructivism towards underlining the need to comprehend the link between rationality and norm- conforming behavior (Schimmelfenning and Sedelmeier, 2005: 137).

Therefore it is more useful to consider these two institutionalisms as not only competing but also complementary sources of theoretical background while studying enlargement (Schimmelfenning and Sedelmeier, 2005: 10). Similarly, Checkel (2007: 18) argues that when practiced in isolation neither rationalist nor softer and more participatory approaches do not work. In his words, “advocates of both the

‘bring- them- into- the- club- where- we- can- socialize- them’ and the ‘keep- them- outside- the- club- until- they- are- already- compliant’ policies are wrong” (Checkel, 2007: 18).

In the end, although these models are competing explanations, they might be present also at different stages of political transformations. Therefore, in addition to purely intergovernmental channels of EU influence, we should give more attention “to the processes of elite socialization and learning, ideational changes, international legal frameworks, and EU influence coupled with domestic processes of change and the empowerment of new societal actors in Turkey” (Ulusoy, 2007: 478).

While conditionality can affect the target state directly through intergovernmental material bargaining, it may also have an indirect effect through the differential empowerment of domestic actors (Schimmelfenning and Sedelmeier, 2004: 664). This is because the establishment of democratic regimes is not the only objective of the democratization throughout the EU accession process, there is also the consideration of internalization of the EU’s identity (Oğuzlu, 2004: 97).

In this vein, the thesis does not claim the superiority of neither rationalist nor constructivist accounts; rather it aims to benefit from both perspectives while understanding different domains of influence throughout different periods of relations.

CHAPTER IV

THE EUROPEAN UNION AS AN ACTOR IN INTERNATIONAL DIMENSION OF DEMOCRATIZATION

Due to increasing significance of the international factors in explaining democratization, it is no longer proper to focus only on domestic actors and to ignore the reality that the international community has involved in the process with a lot of programmes and institutions (Bruneau and Trinkunas, 2006: 776). In this context, the EU and its mechanism of conditionality have become significant areas of concern. In this chapter, I will first, briefly mention about the international dimension of democratization, and then, analyze the EU's place in this area.

4.1. International Dimension of Democratization:

Due to the changed balance between hard security interests and the promotion of democracy in the 1990s, international actors started to have not only more diverse impact, but also more institutionalized channels of influence (Pridham, 2005: 4- 5). The policies, tools and institutions developed for promoting democracy have become consolidated and operational, as can be observed in the forms of democracy and

human rights clauses in the international agreements and foreign policies of several international actors (Buxton, 2006: 709).

Laurence Whitehead (1996: 4- 24) provides the most comprehensive assessment of the internal- external debate and talks about three sets of international dynamics under which international factors may be grouped and analyzed: contagion, control and consent. Schmitter adds one more crucial dynamic to the Whitehead's argument; 'conditionality' of which "hallmark is the deliberative use of coercion- by attaching specific conditions to the distribution of benefits to recipient countries- on the part of multilateral institutions" (Schmitter, 1996: 30).

However, despite increasing interest, the international dimension of democracy promotion is still understudied and poorly understood (Schraeder, 2002: 217- 224). Moreover, there are certain constraints and challenges of democratization by external actors. First serious challenge is related to the possibility of reverse effects of democracy promotion by external actors. For instance, the political conditionality used by the EU to fix institutional deficiencies in the candidates may widen the gap between elites and the public if there is lack of deliberation over new legislation (Dimitrova and Pridham, 2004: 108). Second, it is possible that clash occurs between democracy promotion and other foreign policy interests of the democracy promoters. The democracy promotion activities of the EU are severely constrained by the continuing importance of national interests of its members (Schraeder, 2003: 39). In the following part, I will analyze the EU's role in democracy promotion in more detail.

4.2. The European Union and Its Role in Democracy Promotion:

Besides other factors, the influence of multilateral organizations, such as the EU, in stimulating progress towards political democratization, is crucial (Pridham and Vanhanen, 1994: 259). Although the EU adopted the objective of promoting democracy relatively late compared to other international actors, it has been the most effective international actor in helping countries democratize since then. As the process of European integration continued to expand and deepen, the EU's capacity for democracy- building has become much more influential (Pridham, 2005: 5). Moreover, the EU has the capacity to affect larger areas of governance and institutions when compared to other regional or global organizations in Europe (Dimitrova and Pridham, 2004: 94).

Below, I will look at the legal base of the EU's role, the reasons for its promotion of democracy and the evolution of its main mechanism of conditionality in order to provide the necessary understanding of the EU's place in the area of democratization.

4.2.1. Legal Base of the EU's Role:

In order to understand why the EU has been the most influential external actor in democratization of third countries, it is better we first touch upon the

underlying importance of the principle of democracy in the Union by referring to its legal character embodied in several treaties⁵.

The EU recognizes the principle of democracy as a fundamental principle as stated in the Article 6 of the Treaty on EU (TEU), which holds that “The Union is founded on the principles of liberty, democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law, principles which are common to the Member States”. Moreover, Article 11 holds that the development and consolidation of democracy is among the objectives of the Union’s common foreign and security policy.

The Amsterdam Treaty further intensified and clarified the EU’s role in this area and strengthened the Maastricht provision by ‘stating unequivocally’ that the EU was “founded on the principles of liberty, democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and the rule of law, principles which are common to the member states.” A reference to the principle of democracy can also be found in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU, proclaimed by the Nice European Council of December 2000, stating that the Union is based, among others, on the principle of democracy.

The Treaty of Nice contains a new reference to democracy, in the framework of provisions on economic, financial and technical cooperation with third countries. According to Article 181a (1), Community policy in this area should contribute to the general objective of developing and consolidating democracy.

Moreover, The Draft Treaty Establishing a Constitution for Europe has many important references to democracy. While its Article 2 indicates democracy among the Union’s values, its Article 193 deals with the Union’s external action and states

⁵ For all the EU treaties and related articles that are mentioned, you can see <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/en/treaties/index.htm>

that the principle of democracy should inspire the Union's action on the international scene and should be advanced in the wider world in order to consolidate and support democracy.

In sum, the EU democracy promotion activity has a strong juridical basis. On the basis of this legal structure, the principle of democracy, as a common value of the Union, should be respected not only within its borders, but also in the context of the Union's external relations, including the relations with the candidates. However, although the EU insists that membership conditions are equal and objective for all candidates, it is obvious that EU actors are not equally enthusiastic for all candidates (Gürleyen, 2004: 8). Thus, this strong legal base for democracy promotion is disregarded most of the time, and resulting decline in the credibility of the EU is reflected on the limited ability of the EU for promoting democracy abroad.

4.2.2. The Reasons for the EU's Promotion of Democracy:

In addition to this strong legal framework in support of democratization, several internal and external reasons have led the EU to develop policies for promoting democratization. The EU's own *raison d'être* since its establishment, its enhanced vision as 'community of values', its normative role as a 'civilian superpower', advantages of being a regional institution and its sophisticated supranational bureaucracy, with organizational capacity and substantial material resources are counted as the five such internal factors (Baracani, 2004: 8- 9). In addition, it is argued that the promotion of democracy is a kind of response to public

opinion and interest group pressure, since donors have to justify the aid on other grounds other than geo- strategic objectives (Smith, Karen, 2003: 127).

The collapse of the Soviet Union and the resulting need to provide stability in the region, the EU's geographical location that makes the promotion of democracy also a security issue for the EU, and the EU's evolving identity as a 'community of values' on the world stage are among the external factors that necessitated active involvement of the EU in democratization efforts of other countries (Baracani, 2004: 8-9).

Although the success of the EU in the area of democratization is more or less accepted due to above mentioned reasons and the legal framework, the question of when and under what conditions the EU is most effective in its efforts to promote democracy are still of paramount importance for the EU literature. Therefore, it is crucial to analyze the evolution of EU democratic conditionality in order to see how the changes in the EU's policy of conditionality have resulted in declining credibility of EU and, thus, in limited success of democracy promotion.

4.2.3. The Evolution of EU Democratic Conditionality:

Although the need for democratic principles and respect for fundamental rights and freedoms were emphasized in the EU's 1962 Birkelbach Report, political conditionality was not the cornerstone of the EU's policy towards non- members at that time (Kubicek, 2003a: 8). The EU was established as an economic community and did not dedicate itself to the promotion of democracy until the mid- 1990s. In the time of accession of Greece, Portugal and Spain, there were only vague democratic

conditions for membership and there was no use of strict conditionality before the accession.

It has been with the break- up of the Soviet Union and the preparation of CEECs for EU membership that the EU developed its unique model of democracy promotion through integration with the help of the main mechanism of conditionality. Therefore, while the period up till the fall of communism can be regarded as a ‘preliminary phase’ in the EU’s political conditionality, the period after 1989 saw important changes in its “timing, scope, focus, priority and procedures” (Pridham, 2007: 451). This evolution demonstrates that the EU democratic conditionality is “of an ever- evolving nature, changing and deepening over time” (Savic, 2007: 13).

Employing extensive conditionality intensified after the Copenhagen European Council in June 1993 laid down the Copenhagen Criteria that the countries have to fulfill as a precondition for joining the Union. Among economic, political and administrative Copenhagen Criteria, the political one, saying that these countries must achieve ‘stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities’ is the most significant one to promote democracy.

The EU conditionality continued to evolve to include the strengthening of administrative capacity and pursuit of anti- corruption measures (Jora, 2006: 5). Hence, the EU has started to put more emphasis on aspects of substantive democracy, such as civil society, development of political parties, and protection of minorities (Kubicek, 2003a: 21). Due to this greater concern of the EU for important aspects of substantive democracy, the Union’s role on democratic consolidation became much more central and prominent (Pridham, 2005: 21).

However, while political conditionality has been a general feature of the EU's democracy promotion since the 1990s, there are differences with regard to the credibility of the threats and promises attached to conditionality for different targets (Schimmelfenning and Scholtz, 2007: 14). Certain inconsistencies and double standards of the EU conditionality policy have intensified with the debates about enlargement fatigue and absorption capacity, especially after 2004 enlargement. In the same vein, 'pre accession safeguard clauses' are created in order to accommodate the fears of existing members while keeping pressure on the candidates (Jora, 2006: 12). Hence,

Political conditionality has become broader in its scope, much tighter in its procedures, and less easy to control within a less enlargement- friendly environment in the EU and against less certainty about enlargement prospects (Pridham, 2007: 446).

These demonstrated that the EU is not always impartial and that the political factors will be a significant consideration in the future enlargements. As Jung (2007: 70) argues, "conditionality is indeed not merely a technical affair. Rather, it is part of and parcel of a political game which is conditioned by the changing political environments in both Turkey and the EU." This would have negative consequences for the overall success of conditionality due to the importance of credibility factor for compliance.

In conclusion, due to changes in the EU's policy of conditionality, the eventual accession to the Union is no longer guaranteed and this has created doubts over the EU's credibility, weakening the political will of candidate states in pushing through conditionality (Pridham, 2007: 455). Hence, it is better that conditionality evolve according to the situation, without becoming a pretext for blocking the road

toward accession (Le Gloannec, 2007: 79) and democratic consolidation in the candidates.

CHAPTER V

AN ANALYSIS OF TURKEY- EU RELATIONS: DEMOCRATIC CONSOLIDATION IN PRE- 1999 PERIOD

In the pre- 1999 period Turkey had neither the sizable incentive of membership, nor “political conditionality with high credibility of threats and / or promises” (Schimmelfenning and Scholtz, 2007: 15). Therefore, the conditionality was rather ineffective in promoting democratic reforms in Turkey and the impact of the EU on Turkey’s democratic consolidation remained negligible until 1999 Helsinki Summit when Turkey was given the credible incentive of membership.

In the following part, I will try to analyze the impact of the EU conditionality on Turkey’s democratic consolidation in pre- 1999 period. I will analyze the important developments in Turkey- EU relations in this period, the EU’s approach and the impact of it on governmental and societal domains in Turkey on the bases of the theoretical framework outlined in the second chapter. Then, I will make an overall assessment.

5.1. Developments in Turkey- EU Relations in Pre- 1999 Period:

Turkey applied for associate membership of the EEC in 1959 and since then, the relations with the EU have always occupied an important place in Turkish foreign policy. The EEC and Turkey signed the Ankara Agreement on 12 September 1963 and this agreement envisaged a three- stage evolution in Turkey- EU relations.⁶ However, due to the Article 28 of the Ankara Agreement (stating that Turkey shall be acceded to the Community if it performs its obligations arising out of the Treaty establishing the EU), the prospect of membership was always on the table from Turkish perspective (Kubicek, 2008: 29).

There were several problems and rising tensions between Turkey and the EU during the early 1980s due to the combination of the EU's increasing tendency to focus on democratic principles, and the 1980 military intervention in Turkey and Turkey's democratic deficit. With the establishment of civil government, the relationships improved in post-1983 period, and Turkey applied for full membership with the initiative of Prime Minister Turgut Özal on 14 April 1987. This has started the beginning of long debates about the Turkish membership issue in the EU and the world.

Turkey's membership application was refused in 1989 on the grounds that Turkey was not ready in terms of fulfilling the political and economic criteria for membership and there was also ongoing structural change within the Union. In the EU, the focus has shifted from emphasis on nominal democracy to an emphasis on the quality of democracy and human rights, and therefore, during the post- 1980

⁶ The preparatory (first) stage ended with the Additional Protocol signed in 1970. The transitional (second) stage lasted longer than envisaged and ended with the completion of the Customs Union in the end of 1995. The final (third) stage will continue until Turkey becomes the full member.

period, the EU started to focus more on the political factors and shortcomings of Turkish democracy in contrast to earlier periods (Aybar et al. 2007: 333). While refusing Turkish application, Commission still confirmed that Turkey was eligible for membership in the years to come. So, Customs Union that is planned to end in 1995 constituted the main lines of the cooperation between the EU and Turkey.

However, despite the entry into force of the Customs Union Agreement on 31 December 1995, and the inclusion of the all other candidates into the enlargement process with the Luxemburg Summit in 1997, Turkey was again excluded from the process of enlargement. This decision resulted in perceptions of exclusion and frustration among the Turkish public, and weakened the power of pro- EU groups in Turkey (Aybar et al. 2007: 334), since all the other applicants, even Slovakia that did not even meet the Copenhagen political criteria, were granted official candidacy status.

Although the EU rejected Turkey's claims of discrimination and reemphasized the eligibility of Turkey for full membership by developing a European Strategy and inviting Turkey to the European Conference, the Turkish government decided to suspend its relations with the EU, and Prime Minister Mesut Yılmaz boycotted the dinner that he was invited to with the heads of the EU states. These were the visible signs of the frustration and disappointment experienced by Turkey after Luxemburg.

When Turkey's application in 1987 was rejected while a confirmation for planned customs union was provided, this laid the grounds for the so- called 'Ankara Agreement Syndrome' that is the Turkish belief that further integration with Europe will simply be economically driven and political integration will not be possible (*ZEI EU-Turkey Monitor*, 2007: 1-2).

In this atmosphere, it did not become possible for the EU to soften the relations and to restart a political dialogue with Turkey until the 1999 Helsinki Summit. Due to unprecedented opposition both from the public and political elites in the member states, it took 12 years for Turkey to get formal candidate status at Helsinki Summit in 1999 after its 1987 application for membership (Verney, 2007b: 309).

5.2. The EU's Approach and Credibility:

It is important that the prospect of receiving the reward must be real and it must be certain that political change will be rewarded. This was the case for Spain, Greece and Portugal in the 1970s, but not for Turkey in the 1990s, and thus, Turkish democracy remained less consolidated (Kubicek, 2003a: 17). Moreover, there is also an inherent dilemma in the EU's approach towards CEECs and Turkey in the 1990s (Öniş, 1999: 117). While the problems in terms of democracy were the underlying reason of the EU's help to CEECs in this difficult period of adjustment, for Turkey, the similar flaws were given as a reason of why Turkey can not be granted full membership.

Therefore, it is difficult to argue that the EU's approach towards Turkey in the pre- 1999 period was objective, fair and credible. The EU did not offer Turkey neither the sizable incentive of membership, nor credible conditionality. That is why the conditionality was rather ineffective in promoting democratic reforms in Turkey in pre- 1999 period. That seems to be one of the important reasons of why Turkish democracy remained unconsolidated during the period. Below, I will refer to this

limited impact of the EU on Turkey's democratic consolidation at governmental and societal domains. While doing this, I will benefit from the theoretical framework outlined before.

5. 3. Impact on Governmental Domain, Rationalist Accounts:

The EU did not offer the credible promise of membership to Turkey in this period. Therefore, according to rationalist reasoning, compliance was low in the existence of insufficient reward and high domestic adoption costs. As emphasized before, external incentives model holds that cost- benefit calculation of the governments depends on the size of international rewards, the credibility of threats and promises, and the size of domestic adoption costs (Schimmelfenning, 2004: 4). In the absence sizable and credible reward, and in the existence of high domestic costs, Turkish government did not simply comply with the EU requirements for democracy. Therefore, the EU impact on Turkey's democratic consolidation remained negligible in this period.

Moreover, as argued before, the absence of credibility in the EU's approach had also far reaching effects on the other two factors specified by the external incentives model (size of the rewards and domestic adoption costs). Schimmelfenning (2004: 23) also states that in the absence of credible membership incentives, there will not be compliance even in the existence of other favorable conditions.

I have provided the reasoning in the theoretical chapter that sizeable incentives result in compliance as long as they are credible and that when the

incentives are credible the domestic adoption costs are decreased significantly. Turkish case is a very good example of this argument that the sizable reward of full membership had to be based on a credible promise. This credible promise was not given until 1999 Helsinki Summit decision, and therefore, governments' cost benefit calculations were done in the light of high domestic costs and no sizable incentive, as I try to explain below.

When the prospect of membership was far from being visible, the governments in Turkey could not risk losing their domestic support by undertaking certain reforms necessary for EU membership. At the time, these reforms seemed impossible and dangerous to undertake since most of them were related to sensitive issues related to national sovereignty, and since there was no tangible benefit provided in return. Therefore, the governments in Turkey were faced with high domestic costs, such as losing their electoral support.

In other words, the EU's incentives were not enough to change the 'domestic equilibrium' in Turkey in favor of the reform at a time when Turkey's exclusion from the list of the candidates in Luxemburg Summit "has strengthened the public impression that the EU was using 'prospective accession' to exploit Turkey through the Customs Union" (Taraktaş, 2008: 254) That is why Nationalist Action Party (Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi- MHP), a far right party, won 16.5 % of the vote in the April 1999 elections, and became the second largest party in the parliament and partner in the 1999- 2002 coalition government. (Smith, Thomas W., 2003: 119).

Hence, the striking pattern in the pre- Helsinki period was that neither right nor left political parties actively worked for the reforms, especially in the political arena. In addition to the absence of credibility of the EU towards Turkey, there were also issues of significant concern to the Turkish public, such as the Cyprus problem

and certain cultural rights. These issues were beyond normal political debate due to their relevance to state ideology (Öniş, 2005: 17). Domestic costs were high and rewards were far from being visible, and the partner was not credible. Therefore, it would be surprising if the EU could have a substantial impact on Turkey's democratic consolidation in this period.

Therefore, the general characteristic of the pre- 1999 period in governmental domain was the slow progress in domestic political reforms in Turkey. Minor amendments in the penal code⁷, reduction of police custody for suspected crimes and the removal of military judges from serving in the state security courts were the only improvements (Narbone and Tocci, 2007: 235). Within this regard, Smith, Thomas W. (2003: 127- 128) summarizes the period prior to Helsinki as such:

Before Helsinki, Turkish reform mirrored this half-hearted strategy. Measures taken were often less serious attempts to reform political norms than they were designed to silence specific criticisms or to fulfill minimal treaty obligations. Turkey has been willing to undertake political change in direct proportion to the size of the prize.

5.4. Impact on Societal Domain, Constructivist Accounts:

In order to understand the logic behind the EU's impact on societal domain, let's remember the basic tenets of constructivist approaches and the social learning model. According to the constructivist reasoning, "adaptation pressures emanating from the EU lead to domestic change, if socialization and collective learning processes result in norm internalization and the development of new identities" (Schimmelfenning and Sedelmeier, 2006: 109). More specifically, social learning

⁷ Amendments made to Sections 141, 142 and 163 in 1997, and to Sections 243, 245 and 354 in 1999 (Narbone and Tocci, 2007: 235).

model holds that legitimacy, identity and resonance are the main factors that impinge upon the effectiveness of the international actor. Hence, to understand democratization, it is not enough to refer only to strategic and rational interest calculations at a particular point in time.

Within this context, in the absence of credible membership promise in the pre- 1999 period, the EU's demands were regarded as illegitimate and Turkey's European identity and its place in the club were debated by Turkish public, further decreasing the possible resonance with European values. Indeed, the process of identity formation has always been fragile and problematic in Turkey due to conceptualization of the West both as a model, and historical enemy (Taraktaş, 2008: 254).

Therefore, in the absence of credible membership promise and resulting uncertainty about accession, public mistrust has again generated in Turkey. As a result, authoritarian brands of identity politics, such as political Islam and ethnic nationalism have emerged as major threats or challenges to Turkish democracy in the 1990s (Öniş, 1999: 109). These developments were largely due to the European ambivalence towards Turkey's claims to full membership and deeper questions related to European identity and boundaries of European project (Öniş, 1999: 109).

So, similar to the governmental domain and the reforms process, societal domain was also affected negatively by the EU's non- credible approach towards Turkey in the pre- 1999 period. The negative feelings and uncertainties reached their climax with the 1997 Luxemburg decision. Turkey was the only rejected country in the Luxemburg Summit and Turkey interpreted this decision as discrimination on the basis of civilizational difference, and as Europeans' desire to make the EU a

'Christian Club'. (Kütük, 2006: 276) The headline in Hürriyet, a major liberal Turkish daily, was "Go to Hell, Europe" (as cited in Smith, Thomas W., 2003: 119).

Although the EU did not offer Turkey the credible promise of membership in this period, Turkish public's support for EU membership was not in decline. This can be attributed to relatively higher credibility and legitimacy enjoyed by the EU in this period when compared to today. I will refer to this aspect in the overall assessment part. I will also make a more detailed analysis of the general characteristics of the Turkish public as regards to the issue of EU membership in the seventh chapter. For now, it is enough to say that in general, the EU's impact on societal domain in terms of transforming people's minds and contributing to the internalization of democratic values was relatively low in this period.

5.5. An overall assesment:

Since the EU did offer Turkey neither the sizable incentive of membership, nor credible conditionality, the EU was rather ineffective in promoting democratic reforms in Turkey in the pre- 1999 period. Hence, the absence of credibility in the EU's approach towards Turkey brought about insufficient democratic change both at the governmental domain and society at large that is crucial for the actual implementation.

In the absence of progress reports by the EU (except the 1998 Report) and surveys by several agencies and researchers, this period seems to be problematic for demonstrating the outcomes. However, this is a natural consequence of the fact that there was no significant impact of the EU on Turkey's democratic consolidation.

Below, I will try to analyze these limited data depending on the 1998 Progress Report by the Commission and some public opinion surveys.

5.5.1. 1998 Progress Report:

In its 1998 Report, the Commission highlights the existence of persistent human rights violations and important shortcomings in treatment of minorities (European Commission, 1998: 53). Moreover, Turkish legal system is criticized due to lack of civilian political control of the military and the existence of National Security Council (NSC) (European Commission, 1998: 21). State Security Courts are criticized as they are undemocratic and counter the principles of the European Convention on Human Rights (Avcı, 2005: 153).

In addition to these, the issues of torture, disappearances, extra-judicial executions, the conditions in prisons, freedom of expression, association and press are highlighted as problematic issues under a separate heading (Specific Problems in Turkey) in the report (European Commission, 1998: 15- 16). As regards to freedom of expression, the Report mentions that “despite some improvements in recent years, freedom of expression is not fully assured in Turkey” (European Commission, 1998: 15). The Report argues that the Constitution and other related legal provisions are interpreted in an excessively narrow manner so as to “charge and sentence elected politicians, journalists, writers, trade unionists or NGO workers for statements, public speeches, published articles or books that would be acceptable in EU Member States” (European Commission, 1998: 15).

In sum, in this only available report in this period of Turkey- EU relations, the Commission emphasized certain shortcomings in the important areas of human rights (with special emphasis on Turkey's specific problems), minority protection and civilian control of the army. In the conclusion part, the Commission acknowledges the Turkish government's commitment to combat human rights violations, but mentions that there have not been any significant effect of this commitment in practice so far (European Commission, 1998: 21).

5.5.2. Surveys and Public Opinion:

The collection of qualified data on Turkish public opinion about the EU and Turkish membership is not enough, and this aspect of Turkey- EU relations remains very much disregarded, while the Turkish academic circles has mainly focused on the "real processes" of accession (Şenyuva, 2006: 19 and 31). Indeed, this insufficiency of systematic studies on public opinion in Turkey is an indicator of the fact that public opinion itself is not considered as an important political determinant (Şenyuva, 2006: 21). This is also supported by the fact that Turkey has recently been part of the Eurobarometer surveys. In this context, my argument holding that the absence of credibility in the EU's approach in the pre- 1999 period resulted in insufficient democratic reforms and their internalization in Turkey, mainly dwells upon the general knowledge in the literature and the media that EU ambivalence towards Turkey is an important stumbling block behind Turkey's democratic consolidation efforts.

Still, despite the absence of credible membership promise to Turkey and resulting frustration among the public, the support for EU membership was not on decline in general in this period. Among the limited number of studies and surveys, the two surveys conducted in 1996 and 1998 asked the respondents whether “they would like Turkey to be a member of the EU” (Erder, 1996, 1999; as cited in Çarkoğlu, 2004: 22). According to results, 55% of respondents were found to support EU membership in 1996 spring, and 62 % support is found in 1998 spring (Çarkoğlu, 2004: 22). After the Helsinki Summit, public support increased further and 75% supported Turkey’s EU membership according to November 2001 survey (Çarkoğlu, 2003: 23) that used the similar question with 1996 and 1998 surveys mentioned above.

These figures may be explained partly by reference to the fact that the EU was still a relatively credible actor with less ambiguity in its application of certain standards towards Turkey when compared to today. Majority of people still believed that if Turkey was in line with EU standards, it would be accepted as a member. Stated differently, although the EU’s credibility in terms of giving the promise of membership was low in pre-1999 period, there was relatively less suspicion as regards to the EU’s ability to keep its promise after it is given. Hence, the EU’s credibility in terms of keeping the promises in pre- 1999 period was not as low as it is in the post- 2004 period, as I will demonstrate in the seventh chapter.

In sum, since international conditionality lacked credibility and domestic conditions were also unfavorable, the pre-1999 period was characterized by low compliance (Schimmelfenning et al. 2006: 103). In this period, the EU could not be an effective anchor for political reform, and Turkey did not have complete commitment towards the idea of Europeanization, and therefore, democracy

remained unconsolidated (Ulusoy, 2007: 473). In other words, “the carrot was insufficient, international- domestic linkages were weak, and Turkey could feel confident if it could circumvent any EC sanction” (Kubicek, 2003a: 9).

CHAPTER VI

AN ANALYSIS OF TURKEY- EU RELATIONS: DEMOCRATIC CONSOLIDATION IN 1999- 2004 PERIOD

1999 Helsinki Summit constitutes an important turning point in the long journey of Turkey- EU relations since Turkey was granted official candidate status then. This sizable incentive by the EU intensified the reform attempts of the subsequent governments in Turkey in terms of transforming its democracy so as to comply with the Copenhagen political criteria. In addition to increasing EU-related reforms, this period also experienced increasing support of Turkish public and pro-EU civil society for democratic consolidation process of Turkey.

So, in this period, Turkey had both the sizable incentive of membership and political conditionality with high credibility that are jointly sufficient for effective democratization process (Schimmelfenning and Scholtz, 2007: 16). This is in line with the argument that “the reward of EU and NATO membership was only effective in producing political change after the target country had attained a credible promise of accession” (Schimmelfenning et al. 2006: 55).

Below, I will analyze the developments in this period and investigate the impact of the change in the EU's approach on governmental and societal domains on the bases of the rationalist and constructivist accounts. Then, I will make an overall assessment.

6.1.Developments in Turkey- EU Relations in 1999- 2004 Period:

Turkey's democratization process has witnessed a remarkable change with getting official candidacy status at the Helsinki, and since then democratization has been on the front lines of Turkey's political agenda (Kubicek, 2005a: 20). It is argued that "the Turkish case reflects this evolution from economics leavened with declarations on democracy to concrete human rights criteria attached to formal candidacy" (Smith, Thomas W., 2003: 117- 118).

After Turkey has been granted the official candidacy status, the relations between the Union and Turkey have got an official character.⁸ While the EU accepted the Accession Partnership Document for Turkey on March 2001, Turkey replied with National Programme for the Adoption of the *acquis* afterwards. Moreover, the EU Commission's yearly progress reports provided a score card for the developments in Turkey during the period.

In this period, Turkey adopted serious reform packages in line with the EU democratic conditionality to fulfill the Copenhagen criteria. Ulusoy (2007: 472) mentions that "the principle dynamics driving recent democratization in Turkey were its newfound location within the European human-rights regime and the increasing

⁸ For more detailed chronology of Turkey- EU relations and important developments, you can see <http://www.abgs.gov.tr/index.php?p=112&l=2>

power of ‘European argument’ as an alternative way of resolving domestic conflicts”. Hence, this period is significant in terms of showing the importance of EU’s credibility in stimulating reform for a more consolidated democracy.

6. 2. The EU’s Approach and Credibility:

It is argued that “the EU was at its most powerful when it was deciding whether or not to begin accession negotiations with a particular state, because the demands laid down by the EU were tied to a credible offer of membership” (Haughton, 2007: 243). Hence, the EU was the most credible ever when it decided to grant Turkey official candidacy status in 1999. The atmosphere was generally friendly and cooperative following the Helsinki Summit, facilitating progress both by the Turkish government and society.

Uğur (2003: 176) states that EU has provided an external anchor after the Helsinki in three ways. First, the EU reduced the scope for policy choice and reversals by limiting the actions of the governments. Second, the EU gave the governments in Turkey the option of blaming the external actors and justifying the reforms process as a requirement imposed from above. Last, the EU created the opportunity for the government and other pro- reform social groups in the country to legitimize the reforms required by the EU for democratic consolidation. Thus, the EU’s credible approach had substantial impact on both governmental and social domains in this period, as will be detailed in the following part. I will not focus on theoretical details as much as before since the required understanding is provided in the preceding chapters.

6.3. Impact on Governmental Domain, Rationalist Accounts:

The sizable reward of full membership had to be based on a credible promise in Turkish case, as emphasized by the rationalist accounts and external incentive model. This credible promise was given when the 1999 Helsinki Summit decision granted official candidate status to Turkey and this resulted in decrease in the domestic adoption costs, and change in cost- benefit calculations of the governments, as the intensified reform process has demonstrated. Hence, the strengthening of the credibility of conditionality in the post- Helsinki period has created the opportunity to change the domestic equilibrium in favor of the reformers and led to several Constitutional amendments and harmonization packages in Turkey.

Under pressure to comply with the EU requirements and to complete the reforms to start accession negotiations, Turkey has made radical changes in its legal system for democratic consolidation after the 1999 Helsinki Summit. Therefore, this period represents a period of substantial change in Turkish history, and it is highly doubtful whether such profound change would be possible without “a powerful and highly institutionalized EU anchor in the direction of full membership” (Öniş, 2005: 13).

In the friendly and cooperative atmosphere following the Helsinki Summit, the European Council welcomed Turkey’s progress in implementing its pre-accession strategy. The Council of Ministers adopted an Accession Partnership for Turkey that is followed by the adoption of the National Programme for the adoption of the *acquis* by the Turkish government. In the light of this road map for certain legal and policy adaptations required for EU membership, the Turkish Parliament

adopted several amendments to the Constitution and carried out significant reforms. In the existence of several target dates for Turkey between 1999 and 2004 with an aim to start membership negotiations, the process of reform gained further momentum (Akçakoca, 2006: 16). For instance, the approaching Copenhagen European Council in December 2002 was crucial in further stimulating the reform process, since the Council would decide whether and when to open accession negotiations with Turkey in December 2004.

Examined with respect to timing after the announcement of Turkish candidacy at Helsinki, and its increasing pace thereafter, the reforms in the post-Helsinki era are clear indicators of how EU conditionality as a strategy of 'reinforcement by reward' works (Ulusoy: 2007: 476, 477). In other words, "the impact of having unambiguous targets with an unambiguous endgame has brought significant momentum to Turkish reforms since 2000" (Aybar et al, 2007: 336). Hence, credible membership perspective turned out to be crucial for the beginning of reforms in Turkey, as the correlation between EU deadlines for progress reports and Turkey's reform packages in October 2001 and August 2002 demonstrates clearly (Schimmelfenning et al. 2006: 107).

It is crucial to note that these reforms were regarded impolitic or dangerous in the mid- 1990s. So, it was quite clear that "something has dramatically changed the calculation of the Turkish decision makers" (Kubicek, 2005c: 373). This change is in line with the argument of the external incentives model which holds that cost- benefit calculation of the governments depends on the size of international rewards, the credibility of threats and promises, and the size of domestic adoption costs (Schimmelfenning, 2004: 4). In the existence of all of the favorable factors specified by the model, and considering the substantial impact of credibility factor, Turkish

government had good reasons to comply with the EU requirements. Therefore, the EU impact on Turkey's democratic consolidation was substantial and profound in this period.

Although substantial convergence in Turkey towards European standards was realized especially after the 2002 elections, with the Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi-AKP) coming to power, important reforms were also adopted during the time of Ecevit's fragile three party coalition government that also included the highly Eurosceptic right-wing Nationalist Action Party (Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi-MHP). Two years after the Helsinki decision, 34 constitutional articles were amended in October 2001, and in August 2002 parliament approved a more important and far-reaching reform (harmonization) package that included "the abolition of the death penalty, the right to broadcast and teach in languages other than Turkish, the liberalization of the freedoms of speech, association and assembly, and the recognition of religious minorities' property rights" (Narbone and Tocci, 2007: 235). These reforms were crucial since they were the first serious responses to EU conditionality.

After coming to power in November 2002, AKP has followed a more extensive reform agenda with an aim to fulfill the Copenhagen Criteria and finalize Turkey's long process of accession to the Union (Taşkın, 2008: 53). Doğan (2006: 256) also argues that the changes in the constitution and other laws, such as the Penal and Civil Codes, are proof of the extent of government's willingness to continue its reform process and consolidate Turkish democracy in order to become a full member of the Union. In line with the rationalist reasoning, Avcı (2004: 210) argued:

Opportunity structures offered by European integration have lured the AKP away from Euro-skepticism. The AKP's case shows that even in cases of a potential 'misfit', opportunities to advance your own cause may facilitate political strategies

that may lead to acceptable outcomes for all parties involved at the national, domestic and EU levels.

With the target of opening negotiations becoming more credible after 2002, the reform activity reached its peak in 2003 and 2004. During this time, another major constitutional reform, five additional legislative packages, a new penal code and numerous laws and regulations reformed many restrictive features of Turkey's legal and political system (Narbone and Tocci, 2007: 235- 237). These were the clear indicators of the impact of the strengthening of the credibility of conditionality, and in the end, these led to the EU's decision to open accession negotiations with Turkey at the Brussel Summit of 2004 (Emerson et al. 2005: 188). Hence, with this decision, Turkish efforts to fulfill the Copenhagen criteria increased further and the Turkish parliament passed highly controversial legislation with an aim to promote democracy and human rights (Aybar et al, 2007: 335).

Among the eight amendments to the Constitution (in 1987, 1993, 1995, two times in 1999, 2001, 2002, and 2004), the most fundamental one was that of 2001 that modified 34 articles and changed the overall approach to the restriction of fundamental rights and liberties (Özbudun, 2007: 180). In addition to many ordinary law and constitution amendments, the 'harmonization laws' (passed between February 2002 and July 2004 in the form of nine reform packages) are also crucial due to the resulting improvements in large number of ordinary legislation (Özbudun, 2007: 195). These changes are "fundamental and in crucial areas of law" (Örücü, 2004: 603).

However, I want to stress here that this study does not aim to provide a detailed analysis of the reforms undertaken. There are many studies undertaken with

this aim⁹, and this thesis aims to demonstrate the impact of the EU's credibility on Turkey's democratic consolidation throughout different time periods, rather than to give detailed account of all changes. Still, I will mention about the content of the some important reforms in order to situate my argument within a legal framework and demonstrate the impact of the EU credibility on Turkey's democratic consolidation. In this context, 'freedom of expression' (under the category of fundamental rights and liberties), 'rule of law', and 'civil military relations' (as grouped by Özbudun, 2007) will be given special emphasis here due to their importance in the analysis of the process of democratic consolidation in Turkey.

Freedom of expression is an important concern for such an analysis that operationalizes democracy as 'substantive'. In the substantive democracies, the emphasis is placed "on the normative primacy of individual rights and freedoms" (Keyman and Öniş, 2004: 176). So, power relations are regulated in a such a way as to "maximize the opportunities for individuals to influence the conditions in which they live, to participate in and influence debates about the key decisions that affect society" (Kaldor and Vejvoda 1999: 3; as cited in Warleigh, 2002: 3).

Rule of law should also be emphasized here, since it is a fundamental requirement for democratic consolidation of any country. It is one of the cornerstones of democratic society, basically meaning that everyone is subject to the law and there is nothing above the law. Indeed, changes on fundamental rights and liberties or on the nature of civil-military relations can all be placed under the category of rule of law due to all encompassing nature of the concept.

⁹ See for instance, Özbudun, Ergun. 2007. "Democratization Reforms in Turkey, 1993- 2004", Turkish Studies, Vol. 8, No. 2, pp. 179- 196; and Örucü, Esin. 2004. "Seven Packages towards Harmonization with the European Union", European Public Law, Vol. 10, No. 4, pp. 603- 621.

Civil- military relations are important for an analysis of Turkey's democratic consolidation due to Turkey's enduring tradition of military involvement in political life, and need for extensive reform in this respect. Therefore, in addition to rule of law and freedom of expression that is more or less required for democratic consolidation of any country, I also decided to focus on civil- military relations as it is one of the most contested and sensitive issues in the process of Turkey's democratic consolidation. Moreover, the EU has emphasized its concerns over the power of military in political life in each and every progress report on Turkey.

These three aspects (freedom of expression, rule of law and civil-military relations) are also crucial since they are mentioned frequently by the Commission in its yearly progress reports for Turkey. While rule of law and civil- military relations are analyzed under the heading of 'Democracy and Rule of Law'; freedom of expression is analyzed under the heading of 'Human Rights and Protection of Minorities' in the 'Enhanced Political Dialogue and Political Criteria' part in the Progress Reports. Below, I will look at the changes in these mentioned aspects.

As regards to the fundamental rights and liberties, 2001 constitutional amendments were the most crucial ones with far-reaching effects on these rights and liberties in general. These amendments changed the overall approach to the restriction of fundamental rights and liberties by deleting the general grounds for restriction in the Article 13 (Özbudun, 2007: 181). It is asserted that "fundamental rights and liberties may be restricted only by law and solely on the basis of the reasons stated in the relevant articles of the constitution without impinging upon their existence" (Özbudun, 2007: 181). Moreover, many of the circumstances constituting an abuse of rights under the previous version of the Article 14 were eliminated, and

the Article became much similar to Article 17 of the European Convention on Human Rights (Özbudun, 2007: 182).

Now, I will focus on ‘freedom of expression’ in more detail under the group of fundamental rights and liberties¹⁰ due to its crucial place in the process of democratic consolidation of Turkey. This is also the most emphasized and problematic aspect in the EU’s yearly progress reports for Turkey, therefore, deserves special attention.

In order to enhance ‘freedom of expression’, the preamble of the Constitution was changed so that the words ‘thoughts and opinions’ (to which no protection shall be accorded when they are contrary to Turkish national interests, the indivisibility of the State and Turkish historical and moral values) were replaced by the word ‘activity’ . This was an effort to punish concrete actions rather than the abstract opinions (Özbudun, 2007: 183). In addition to the constitutional reform, related changes were also done in ordinary legislation, which are:

- The first reform package (February 2002) amended Article 312 of the Penal Code, which punished incitement to hostility and hatred on the basis of differences in social class, race, religion, sect, and region.
- The third reform package (August 2002) changed Article 159 of the Penal Code, which criminalized insulting and deriding the Republic, “Turkishness”, the Grand National Assembly, the government, the ministries, the military

¹⁰ In addition to the ‘freedom of expression’ there are several other rights that are analyzed under the heading of ‘fundamental rights and liberties’. These are privacy of individual life, inviolability of domicile, freedom and secrecy of communication, freedom of residence and travel, freedom of religion, freedom of the press, freedom of association, freedom of assembly, the right to a fair trial, the abolition of the death penalty, prevention of torture and mistreatment, principles related to crimes and penalties, the protection of fundamental rights and liberties, equality of sexes, expropriation, privatization, the right to work, the right to form labor unions, and the right to fair wage.

For detailed account of the changes in these fields you can look at the Özbudun, Ergun. 2007. “Democratization Reforms in Turkey, 1993- 2004”, Turkish Studies, Vol. 8, No. 2, pp. 182- 189.

and the security forces, and the moral personality of the judiciary. This package also permitted the use of local languages in broadcasting.

- The sixth reform package (July 2003) abolished Article 8 of the Anti- Terror Law, which penalized separatist propaganda in order to eliminate the last sign of the so-called thought crimes (Özbudun, 2007: 184). This package also broadened the right of using local languages in broadcasting by permitting it in public channels also.

As regards to the civil-military relations, important changes were done in the structure and duties of National Security Council (NSC). While the origins of the NSC dates back to the 1961 Constitution, its powers were strengthened with the 1971 amendments and the 1982 Constitution (Özbudun, 2007: 193). The 1982 Constitution equalized the number of civil and military members of the Council, increased its political power and strengthened “the morally binding character of Council decisions” (Özbudun, 2007: 193). With the constitutional amendment of 2001, civilian members of the Council were increased by including the deputy prime ministers and the minister of justice, and third paragraph of Article 118 was changed to underline the advisory nature of the Council decisions (Özbudun, 2007: 193). With the seventh harmonization package of August 2003, many important reforms as regards to the powers of the Council and the civil- military relations in general are made. The main changes are as follows:

- Article 24 was changed and the function of submitting the advisory decisions of the NSC to the Council of Ministers were transferred to one of the deputy prime ministers from the secretary general of the NSC.
- Secretary General of the NSC lost most of his executive powers and his powers were limited to secretarial duties, with the change in Article 26.

- Article 27 amended the provision as regards to the appointment of the secretary general from among high ranking military officers and added that secretary general can also be appointed from among high- level civilian bureaucrats.
- Article 28 stated that the regulations about functions of the NSC Secretariat should be published in Official Newspaper to abolish secrecy and enhance transparency.
- The Court of Accounts was authorized to exercise financial control of the state properties used by the armed forces. This change was further confirmed by the 2004 Constitutional amendment (Özbudun, 2007: 194).

It is clear that EU pressure and conditionality has been effective in changing the balance within the NSC in favor of civilians, leading to more a civilianized foreign policy of Turkey. Remembering Turkey's enduring tradition of military involvement in political life, it is highly doubtful that such reforms would take place without EU conditionality and the prospect of membership (Aydın and Açıkmeşe, 2007: 269 -270).

Özbudun (2007: 194) also mentions other reforms in the area of civil-military relations with the constitutional amendments of 1999, 2001 and 2004. State Security Courts were civilianized with elimination of military judges and public prosecutors by the 1999 amendment, and they were totally abolished with the 2004 Constitutional amendment. Also with 2004 amendment, there would be no representative of the office of the chief of the general staff in the High Board of Education. With the 2001 amendment, immunity from the judicial review of law and decree laws passed during NSC Regime was removed. Thus, their constitutionality can be challenged before the Constitutional Court.

Although the military lost many of its powers and privileges with these amendments, one should also note that military have a huge political influence in Turkey due to historical, sociological and political reasons, rather than due to legal regulations (Özbudun, 2007: 195). Commission also states in its Progress Reports that the military continue to influence political life in Turkey through informal mechanisms. Thus, Turkey's overall consolidation of democracy will be important for the establishment of full civilian control over the military (Özbudun, 2007: 195).

In relation to 'rule of law', Özbudun (2007: 192) mentions that certain constitutional amendments on fundamental rights and liberties, such as those about the right to a fair trial and the abolition of the State Security Courts, are noteworthy. Moreover, with more directly related constitutional amendment in 2001 to the third paragraph of the Transitional Article 15, the Constitutional Court was empowered to review the laws and decree laws passed during the NSC time, thereby decreasing the authoritarian legacy of NSC Regime (Özbudun, 2007: 192).

In sum, in the period of 1999- 2004, Turkish governments undertook important reforms for Turkey's democratic consolidation and EU membership. With the reduction in the domestic adoption costs, and increase in size of the reward, together with the credibility attached to the process, governments in Turkey had good reasons to comply with the EU conditionality. In the following table, I will make a summary of these reforms to get a picture of democratic consolidation in Turkey during the period.

Table 1: Review of Democratization Reforms in the 1999-2004 Period

(Reforms by way of)	Freedom of Expression	Civil- Military Relations	Rule of Law
Constitutional Amendments	The preamble of the Constitution changed so that the words ‘thoughts and opinions’ replaced by ‘concrete actions’(2001)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * State Security Courts civilianized (1999) * State Security Courts totally abolished (2004). * Civilian members of the NSC increased.(2001) * Article 118 changed (2001). * Immunity from the judicial review of laws passed during NSC Regime removed (2001). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * The Constitutional Court empowered to review the laws and decree laws passed during the NSC time (2001). * State Security Courts totally abolished (2004). * Several other amendments on fundamental rights and liberties.
Reform Packages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Article 312 of the Penal Code (February 2002). * Article 159 of the Penal Code (August 2002). * Abolishment of Article 8 of the Anti- Terror Law July 2003). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (7th package of August 2003) * Change in Article 24, 25, 26, 27, 28. * The Court of Accounts authorized to exercise financial control of the state properties used by the armed forces. 	

6.4. Impact on Societal Domain, Constructivist Accounts:

While in the absence of credibility in the pre- 1999 period, the EU’s transformative impact on Turkish public and Turkish democracy remained limited,

the increasing credibility after 1999 had positive impact on the forming of positive public opinion and on the process of socialization.

The public opinion and their acceptance of the process are crucial since democratic regimes must be responsible to the public and operate to protect the rights of its citizens. There is need for a public organized for and believed in democracy in order to label a political system as a democracy. In this regard, the rule adoption at the formal- governmental level is only meaningful if it is supported by the mass public.

With the emergence of a credible EU, Turkish public started to see its demands as more legitimate. Moreover, debates about Turkey's European identity and its place in the Union have become more constructive, increasing the possible resonance with European rules and values. Post- Helsinki dynamics facilitated the development of a powerful 'pro- EU coalition' in Turkey that was both committed to EU membership as a general objective, and was ready to push for the reforms required to comply with the EU criteria (Keyman and Öniş, 2004: 182). So, similar to the governmental domain and the reforms process, societal domain was also affected positively by the EU's more credible and fair approach towards Turkey in the 1999- 2004 period.

In addition to the general issue of public opinion, here, I would like to refer to civil society in Turkey also, and the EU's impact on its development, since any discussion of democratization would be missing without including the civil society. By changing the balance of power between state and society in favor of the latter, by being a transmission belt between state and society, and by having a constitutive role in redefining the rules of the political game in line with democratic principles, civil society contribute to the process of democratization in any country (White, 2004: 13-

15). The literature on policy transfer also shows us that effective transfer requires more than governance structures. Strong networks of stakeholders and a strong civil society for facilitating the adoption of new policies at home is also required (Radaelli, 2006: 71).

Within this context, the EU started to play an important role in furthering the change in state- societal relations and provided legitimate ground for many civil society organizations that demand more democratic Turkey. In this context, the credible EU approach did not only result in intensified reform process through governmental means, but also contributed to the enlargement of the space of civil society in Turkey.

Human Rights Association, Third Sector Foundation of Turkey, Helsinki Citizens Assembly, Economic Development Foundation (IKV), Liberal Thinking Society, ARI Movement and Turkish History Foundation are among these civil society organizations in Turkey trying to contribute to the process of democratization in Turkey with EU support.¹¹ Through IKV's institutional coalitions, TUSIAD's demands for reform and TESEV's public opinion surveys, Turkish civil society have been able to articulate the European aspirations of Turkish public and the reforms by Turkish governments have become possible due to these efforts (Altınay, 2005: 114).

However, despite the increase in the number and activities of civil society organizations in Turkey, especially since the 1990s, it is difficult to argue that they are effective actors in the process of democratization. As argued by Şimşek (2004: 46), "although Turkey has elements of civil society in abundance; their qualitative impact on political life is relatively trivial." Toros (2007: 400) mentions that civil

¹¹ For more information about these organizations, you can look at Kubicek, Paul. 2005c. "The European Union and Grassroots Democratization in Turkey", Turkish Studies, Vol. 6, No. 3.

society should have “supportive legal, political, and sociocultural environments” in order to contribute to democratic consolidation.

When assessed in terms of its autonomy from the state and military, its fragmented structure, its civility and quality, Turkish civil society is still not powerful actor in the process of country’s democratization despite the increase in their number and activities since the 1990s. Thus, without addressing these problems, it is difficult to talk about Turkish civil society as an effective pro-democratizing factor on its own, although its existence and support is necessary for the process. There will be more reference to the problems of Turkish civil society in the seventh chapter while demonstrating the impact of EU credibility on societal domain.

In general, however the EU’s impact on societal domain in terms of transforming people’s minds and contributing to the internalization of democratic values was relatively higher in this period due to increase in the credibility attached to the process. This process has also contributed to the re-evaluation of Turkey’s European identity and consequently, resonance with European rules and norms have started to increase. However, it is important to ask to what extent Turkish people have internalized these changes and to what extent the changes in the EU’s approach towards Turkey can affect the ongoing process of transformation. I will try to answer these questions throughout the thesis.

6.5. An Overall Assesment:

Since the EU did offer Turkey both the sizable incentive of membership, and credible conditionality in this period, conditionality was more effective in promoting

democratic reforms and change in the minds of Turkish people. Hence, the EU approach in this period was contributive to domestic change in Turkey, not only in terms of reforms at the governmental domain, but also in terms of internalization of these reforms. This result is expected when looked through the lenses of rationalist and constructivist accounts, due to decrease in the size of the domestic adoption costs and increase in the size of the rewards for the former, and due to increased legitimacy, resonance and identification for the latter.

In the following parts, I will refer to the EU's Progress Reports and several public opinion studies in Turkey in order to make more comprehensive overall assessment of the EU's impact on Turkey's democratic consolidation of Turkey.

6.5.1. Progress Reports:

The 1999- 2004 period is crucial since six progress reports¹² are published by the European Commission that emphasize the change in Turkish legislation, and its implementation and impact on the daily lives of Turkish citizens. These reports are crucial in terms of measurement of democratic consolidation in Turkey.

6.5.1.1. 1999 Progress Report:

In 1999 Regular Report, the Reform of the State Security Court, especially the removal of the military judge from these courts was welcomed by the

¹² For more detailed account of the reforms, you can look at the web addresses for each report at the select bibliography part, or you can visit the official EU website: www.europa.eu

Commission (European Commission, 1999, 9). Moreover, some encouraging signs of democratization in recent months, such as working of the Parliament and the Government to adopt some keys laws regulating political life, the justice system and protection of human rights, were mentioned (European Commission, 1999: 46). However, the Commission emphasized that although the basic features of a democratic system exist, Turkey still was not able meet the Copenhagen political criteria (European Commission, 1999: 46).

While recognizing the efforts of the Turkish government to adopt certain reforms, the Commission specified some issues that have to be tackled, such as problems in human rights and minority protection, freedom of expression, emergency courts' system and torture (Külahcı, 2005: 390-391).

6.5.1.2. 2000 Progress Report:

In its 2000 Report, the Commission mentions about a positive development of “the launching in Turkish society of a wide-ranging debate on the political reforms necessary with a view to accession to the EU” (European Commission, 2000: 20). The signing of several international human rights conventions and the endorsement by the government of the work of the Supreme Board of Co-ordination for Human Rights, are mentioned as two initiatives taken in this context (European Commission, 2000: 20).

However, in terms of civilian control of the military, human rights situation in general, torture, corruption, the problems related to non- Muslim communities and cultural rights; the Commission emphasized certain shortcomings and stated that

Turkey still does not meet the Copenhagen political criteria. Moreover, the Commission highlighted the problem of implementation of the reforms in Turkey and the need for substantial effort to align with the *acquis*.

6.5.1.3. 2001 Progress Report:

2001 Report was the “most comprehensive evaluation of Turkey’s progress so far” (Avcı, 2005: 153). The Commission appreciated the constitutional amendments of October 2001 in Turkey (34 amendments to 1982 Constitution), and stated that this is a significant step towards strengthening guarantees in the field of human rights and fundamental freedoms (European Commission, 2001: 96). The amendments are emphasized as narrowing the grounds for limiting fundamental freedoms, such as the freedom of expression and dissemination of thought (European Commission, 2001: 31). However, “despite a number of constitutional, legislative and administrative changes, the actual human rights situation as it affects individuals in Turkey needs improvement” (European Commission, 2001: 32). So, the Report also emphasized the implementation problems.

As regards to rule of law and civil-military relations, the Report emphasized that reform of the judicial system begun, but the independence of the judiciary, the powers of State Security and military courts, and compliance with rulings of the European Court of Human Rights remained as matters of concern (European Commission, 2001: 96). Stating that the basic features of a democratic system exist in Turkey, the Commission emphasized that a number of fundamental issues, such as

civilian control over the military, are still problematic (European Commission, 2001: 32).

In the end, the Commission stated that although Turkey started making progress in certain areas, it does not yet meet the Copenhagen political criteria, and is encouraged to accelerate the reform process to ensure full protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms in law and practice throughout the country (European Commission, 2001: 97).

6.5.1.4. 2002 Progress Report:

2002 Report is crucial in terms of demonstrating the positive impact of EU approach on democratic consolidation of Turkey. It praised the constitutional reforms of October 2001 and the new Civil Code of November 2001. It stated:

The decision on the candidate status of Turkey in Helsinki in 1999 has encouraged Turkey to introduce a series of fundamental reforms. A major constitutional reform was introduced in October 2001 aimed at strengthening guarantees in the field of human rights and fundamental freedoms... A new Civil Code was adopted in November 2001. Three sets of reform packages were adopted in February, March and August 2002 (European Commission, 2002: 137).

The Commission further emphasizes that the adoption of these reforms is crucial in showing the determination of the Turkish politicians for further alignment with the EU values (European Commission, 2002: 45). The Commission highlights that the August reforms are particularly significant as they impinge upon traditionally sensitive issues and as they were adopted under difficult political and economic circumstances (European Commission, 2002: 137).

The Commission also welcomes other positive developments in the area of rule of law and fundamental freedoms. Some of these are: 1) the continuing reform of the prison system. 2) The reduction in the length of pre-trial detention periods. 3) Change to Article 159 of the Turkish Penal Code stating that the expression of opinion without the intention of insulting public institutions will no longer face criminal sanction. 4) Changes to Articles 312 of the Penal Code and to the Anti-Terror Law, the Press Law, the Law on Political Parties and the Law on Associations that eased certain restrictions on freedom of expression, association, the press and broadcasting. Thus, it is evident that more real and credible prospect of EU membership contributed to the emergence of effective conditionality in Turkish case.

Overall, the 2002 Report concludes that Turkey has made noticeable progress towards meeting the political criteria since the first report of 1998, and especially during the last year. The reforms are crucial in providing the ground for strengthening democracy and the protection of human rights in Turkey (European Commission, 2002: 139). The report also directs attention to the remaining areas to enable Turkey to overcome these obstacles for the fulfillment of political criteria.

It states that Turkey did not still fully meet the political criteria. It drew attention to the following matters. First, important restrictions to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly, association and religion remain. Secondly, many of the reforms require the adoption of regulations in line with European standards. Thirdly, a number of important issues, such as the fight against torture and ill-treatment, civilian control of the military, the situation of persons imprisoned for expressing non-violent opinions, and compliance with the decisions of the European Court of Human Rights, have to be addressed (European Commission, 2002: 139).

6.5.1.5. 2003 Progress Report:

2003 Report acknowledges the determination of Turkish government in the last year in accelerating the pace of reforms, in bringing far-reaching changes to the political and legal system and in ensuring their effective implementation (European Commission, 2003: 132). The Report mentions about the four major packages of political reform that introduced changes to sensitive areas, such as freedom of expression and civilian control of the military.

As regards to civil-military relations, the Report mentions that the powers and structure of the NSC have been substantially amended, and civil-military relations were brought closer to practice in EU Member States (European Commission, 2003: 43). Moreover, establishment of family courts, positive changes to the system of State Security Courts and the abolishment of the competence of military courts to try civilians were mentioned as important developments for the rule of law.

However, the Report also pointed to the remaining outstanding issues related to the independence and the functioning of the judiciary, the overall framework for the exercise of fundamental freedoms (e.g. expression) and further alignment of civil-military relations with European practice (European Commission, 2003: 45).

6.5.1.6. 2004 Progress Report:

In its 2004 Report, the Commission makes an overall assessment. The Report acknowledges that in three years time, there have been two major constitutional

reforms (in 2001, 2004) and eight legislative packages were adopted by Parliament between February 2002 and July 2004. It also recognizes that many other laws and regulations were issued, and the government undertook major steps for better implementation of the reforms. Therefore, this report is crucial in showing the impact of credible application of EU conditionality on Turkey's democratic consolidation.

However, the Report also highlights the problems and warns that the reforms are still unevenly implemented. Although the government has increasingly asserted its control over the military, the report states that military continues to exercise influence through certain informal mechanisms (European Commission, 2004a: 165). Corruption, cases of ill-treatment including torture and restrictions on freedom of expression are counted as the remaining problems in Turkey.

In relation to the process of internalization of the reforms, the 2004 Report states:

The changes to the Turkish political and legal system over the past years are part of a longer process and it will take time before the spirit of the reforms is fully reflected in the attitudes of executive and judicial bodies, at all levels and throughout the country (European Commission, 2004a: 167-168).

Recognizing the positive changes in Turkey, the Commission confirmed that Turkey had achieved significant legislative progress in a considerable number of areas, and for the first time the Commission concluded in its 2004 Communication to the Council and the Parliament that Turkey sufficiently fulfilled the Copenhagen political criteria in view of the overall progress of reforms and that accession negotiations be opened (European Commission, 2004b: 3).

Yet, in this document, there were also some initial signs of double standards for Turkey, signaling the beginning of a different period in terms of the change in the EU's credibility. The Commission expressed great caution in its recommendation

and suggested that the negotiation process include specific clauses that were not emphasized in the former accession negotiations, such as the ‘suspension clause’. With this clause, the Commission recommended to suspend and even break the accession negotiations “in the case of serious and persistent breaches of the principles of liberty, democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental rights and the rule of law on which the Union is founded” (European Commission, 2004b: 6).

Also, Commission emphasized that:

By its very nature, it is an open-ended process whose outcome cannot be guaranteed beforehand. Regardless of the outcome of the negotiations or the subsequent ratification process, the relations between the EU and Turkey must ensure that Turkey remains fully anchored in European structures (European Commission, 2004b: 10).

In the end, the European Council of December 2004 finally decided to open negotiations on 3 October for Turkey’s accession (European Council, 2004). While stating that Turkey’s accession is the objective, the European Council defines the negotiations as ‘open- ended’ with no guaranteed outcome beforehand following the Commission’s recommendation. There will be more emphasis on this issue of open-ended-ness while analyzing the post- 2004 period.

Overall, when we look at the nature of progress reports for Turkey between 1999 and 2004, we see increasingly positive evaluations by the Commission as regards to the democratic reforms undertaken in the emphasized areas of fundamental rights and freedoms (with special emphasis on freedom of expression), rule of law and civil-military relations. This successful transformation of Turkish democracy is in large part due to credible application of EU conditionality in the period between 1999 and 2004.

6.5.2. Surveys and Public opinion:

The more EU actors assured Turkish actors that political conditions are the sole criteria for Turkish membership, the more domestic actors supported democratic reforms (Gürleyen, 2004: 22, 23). Therefore, public image was clearly improved with nearly 75 percent of those questioned being in support of Turkey's EU membership according to November 2001 results (Çarkoğlu, 2004: 23). As Turkey's relations with the EU have witnessed very significant progress between 2001- 2005 (between adoption of the National Program in 2001 and the launch of the negotiations at the end of 2005), it is important to analyze the public opinion data covering this period (Şenyuva, 2006: 29).

According to a survey conducted in 2002, "a large majority (62- 90%) of the respondents either agrees or strongly agrees with the fact that EU accession will help improve the democratization process in Turkey" (Aybar et al, 2007: 339). Another finding of this survey is that "the perceived optimism about the impact of EU accession on the democratization process declines as the education level of the respondents rises" (Aybar et al, 2007: 339).

According to another survey done by A&G Research Company¹³, when people are asked about their opinion as regards to whether or not Turkey should enter into the Union, 56.5% of people thought that Turkey should certainly enter into the EU in 2002, while this ratio has increased to 58.7% in 2003 and to 67.5 % in 2004. After 2004, considerable decline is observed, as will be referred later.

¹³ More detailed analysis of this survey will be done in the seventh chapter.

Moreover, as European debate became more important in this period, the position of Turkish public opinion vis-à-vis the membership also came into the equation (Şenyuva, 2006: 22- 23). Thus, an increase has been observed in the number of surveys carried out in the last few years, not just in academic, but also in private circles. This is highly related with the fact that membership appeared to be feasible after getting the credible membership promise at Helsinki Summit.

However, the number of studies conducted in this period is still limited since the real breakthrough is observed after the date is set for the start of negotiations with Turkey. Therefore, in the chapter analyzing the post- 2004 period, I will provide more in-depth analysis of Turkish public opinion and make some comparisons among the years in relation to the credibility of the EU's approach towards Turkey.

In general, the EU conditionality became more credible for Turkey with getting the candidacy status, and consequently, domestic conditions also become more favorable in this period. Hence, the period after 1999 Helsinki Summit up to 2004 was characterized by higher commitment to the idea of democratic consolidation and EU membership by both Turkish governments and the public.

CHAPTER VII

AN ANALYSIS OF TURKEY- EU RELATIONS: POST- 2004

PERIOD

Historically, Turkey- EU relations have been a cyclical process...The period from 1999- 2004 can be interpreted as the upturn of the cycle, whereas the period since 2004 clearly corresponds to the downward phase (Öniş, 2007: 258).

In the post 2004 period, there has been decrease on the level of credibility provided by the EU due to certain reasons that will be specified in this chapter. The post- 2004 period is especially important for analyzing the impact of the change in the EU's credibility on Turkey's democratic consolidation and for commenting on the future of Turkey-EU relations. So, this chapter is central for the general argument of the thesis.

Although Turkey started accession negotiations in this period (October 2005) and had the sizable incentive of full membership, the process of reforms slowed down due to decrease in the credibility of this incentive. Therefore, Turkish case is crucial in supporting the general argument that "high incentives are a necessary but not sufficient condition of EU impact unless these incentives are also credible" (Schimmelfenning and Scholtz, 2007: 16). Credible application of conditionality and sizable prospect of membership had stimulated process of change in Turkey in the

1999- 2004 period. However, to sustain this change the membership promise by the EU had to be credible.

Below, I will try to analyze this relation between credibility and change by looking at the important developments in this period, the EU's approach and the impact of it on governmental and societal domains in Turkey on the bases of the theoretical framework outlined in the second chapter. I will make a more detailed analysis of the EU's credibility and the reasons for its decline in the post- 2004 period. I will emphasize discriminatory discourses of some EU leaders, double standards as specified in certain documents, new concepts such as the 'absorption capacity' and the 'open- ended process', the Cyprus Problem and the public opinion in the EU. Then, I will provide some important comparisons as regards to the change in the level of credibility and compliance, and then make an overall assessment.

7.1.Developments in Turkey- EU Relations in Post- 2004 Period:

At the Brussel Summit on 16- 17 December 2004 the EU leaders decided to start accession negotiations with Turkey on 3 October 2005 after long debates. In January 2006, European Council adopted the revised 'Accession Partnership' and Turkish government replied with its revised 'National Program.' Moreover, as usual, each year the EU kept publishing yearly Progress Reports for Turkey to make an assessment of the developments and remaining problems in Turkey.

With the opening of negotiations in October 2005, the screening of EU legislation has started. Screening proceeded smoothly throughout 2006, and negotiations in science and research chapter were opened and provisionally closed in

June 2006 (Narbone, 2007: 85). Then, due to a stalemate in the issue of opening up Turkish ports and airports to Cyprus, the negotiations were suspended in eight relevant chapters in December 2006. The Council left the door open for continuing negotiations. Therefore, a complete suspension of negotiations was avoided while the message was sent to Ankara.

However, negative developments such as the French decision to hold a referendum in the future on Turkey's EU accession and its criminalization of denial of the Armenian genocide, negative declarations of several European politicians for Turkey, the EU constitutional crisis and 'enlargement fatigue' debates, have created doubts about Turkey's EU future (Narbone and Tocci, 2007: 236).

Actually, the accession negotiations of Turkey began in an unfavorable environment. The EU had reached a saturation phase in terms of its governance structure and enlargement, as indicated by increasingly emphasized absorption capacity and public referenda arguments with regard to Turkish accession (Lagro, 2007: 7). Therefore, although the history of Turkey- EU relations experienced another turning point with the opening of accession negotiations, the terms of accession and whether Turkey will be accepted as a full member of the EU remain unclear (Ifantis, 2007: 223).

7. 2. The EU's Approach and Credibility:

While the EU's approach has gained credibility with granting Turkey the sizable incentive of membership at the 1999 Helsinki Summit, and it seemed quite fair and objective until the Brussels Summit decision in 2004 to open up negotiations

with Turkey, it has started to give signals of change afterwards. As a reason, Lagro (2007: 10) argues that such high tempo of reforms in Turkey after getting the candidacy status was quite unexpected and this urged the EU to opt for other possibilities for buying time.

Therefore, the resulting decrease in the credibility of EU conditionality over time indicates that extensive use of time rules can also be counterproductive from point of EU enlargement governance (Lagro, 2007: 8). While high credibility in the previous period contributed to the consolidation of democracy in Turkey on both domains of government and society, its decrease is expected to be detrimental not only for the future of Turkish accession to the Union, but also for the quality of Turkish democracy.

The terms under which Turkey negotiates its EU membership and European future are much more stringent than any candidate ever had to endure in the history of European integration (Ifantis, 2007: 223). Actually, it is more or less accepted that “Turkey’s accession to the EU goes beyond the Turkish ability to meet the accession criteria but depends on the EU’s internal dynamics and the EU’s readiness towards Turkey” (Müftüler- Baç, 2008b: 216). Therefore, Turkey’s EU membership is expected to remain as a distant possibility if the EU can not solve its own internal problems (Oğuzlu, 2008: 4).

This unfair approach of the EU should be considered as an important challenge to the principles of international ethics (Diez, 2007: 422). Moreover, this kind of approach is detrimental for the EU’s policy of enlargement and for the EU’s role as an international actor. That is why the accession of Turkey is critical for the future credibility of the EU’s foreign policy, its enlargement process and its role as a normative power (Müftüler- Baç, 2008a: 63). In the following part, I will classify the

reasons for the decrease in the EU's credibility in Turkey in post- 2004 period, and try to demonstrate their impact on the Turkey's democratic consolidation later in the thesis.

7.2.1. The Reasons for the Decrease in the EU's Credibility:

Although at the level of official discourse, the relations between the EU and Turkey are framed by the principles of 'fairness' and 'equal treatment', it is necessary to question whether the EU has adhered to these principles in reality (Düzgit, 2006: 2). As argued by Müftüleri- Baç (2008b: 202), "Turkey's adoption of the EU acquis /criteria is necessary but not sufficient on its own, as there are other factors at play in shaping Turkey's accession." Therefore, it is better to categorize the instances resulting in decreased credibility and low compliance in the post- 2004 period in order to understand the EU's impact on Turkey's democratic consolidation. These instances are also clear examples for explaining why domestic cost of alignment with the EU criteria has increased for Turkish government and society in the absence of credible and trustworthy actor in the post-2004 period.

7.2.1.1.Negative-Discriminatory Statements on Turkish Membership:

In 2004, when the EU was about to decide for a date for the starting of negotiations with Turkey, there were open opponents of Turkey's membership, including Fritz Bolkestein (European Commissioner), Valery Giscard d'Estaing

(European Convention Chairman) and Angela Merkel (German opposition leader). The Austrian government also opposed the opening of negotiations one year later, and after the elections in 2007.

France President Sarkozy publicly opposed the ongoing negotiations with Turkey. Sarkozy stated that “if Turkey were European, we would know it” (as cited in Düzgit, 2006: 4). He also claimed that that:

I am in favor of signing a contract with Turkey. I am in favor of a joint market with Turkey. But I am against Turkey’s integration into Europe. Turkey is a small Asia. And there is no reason for it to be a part of Europe...Turkey is a great civilization, but not a European one (as cited in Müftüleri-Baç, 2008a: 64- 65).

Moreover, as regards to the absorption capacity issue, Sarkozy stated:

The Union’s capacity to absorb new members is finite...The decision to accept each new applicant should be taken in the light of the EU’s internal objectives, its institutional limitations and the level of popular support. Such decisions should not be based upon foreign policy goals or a desire to encourage neighbors to reform (Sarkozy, 2006).

Samuel Huntington, the famous writer of ‘Clash of Civilizations’, also declared that it is not possible for Turkey to accede to the EU due to its huge cultural, historical, religious and economic differences. He suggested that Turkey should turn its face to Muslim World and be leader there (as cited in *Hürriyet*, 25 May 2005). Several statements against Turkey’s EU membership on grounds of ‘civilizational’ difference have also been made by EU politicians, such as by Valéry Giscard d’Estaing. He openly claimed that “its capital is not in Europe, 95 % of its population lives outside Europe, it is not a European country. [Turkish accession to the EU] would be the end of Europe” (as cited in Kubicek, 2008: 21).

Similarly, Chirac stated that even if Turkey succeeds in complying with the criteria, the final decision will belong to the French citizens (as cited in Kırıkkanat,

2005). It is important to note that since referendum idea has been raised only with regard to Turkey, and not for Croatia, this is seen as a means to exclude Turkey from EU membership (Günay, 2007: 55). These kinds of statements are important blows to 'credibility' factor and lessen the potential impact of the EU democratic conditionality.

The President of European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, Jean Lemierre, acknowledged that the lack of clarity about the EU's enlargement prospects makes it 'more and more difficult' to promote reforms in the candidate countries. He asked "what happens now if we talk to Turkey or to Serbia and they get the impression in these discussions that they are no longer welcome in Europe?" (Euractiv, 2005) Such inconsistency of EU member states over Turkey's place in the EU could undermine the reform process in Turkey as anti-reformist and anti-EU forces could benefit from European leaders' mixed signals and attempt to stop democratization in Turkey, triggered by the EU membership aspiration (Yeşilada, 2007: 19).

In fact, it is quite ironic that despite the official commitment to the candidate Turkey and the Commission's recommendation in this issue, many debates still focus on whether Turkey should become an EU member or not, rather than how Turkey should comply with the requirements (Düzgit, 2006: 4). Altunışık (2005: 55) also mentions that although Turkey's candidate status has provided an important incentive to reform in Turkey, an important observation reveals that the 'reality of membership' remains less certain due to the continuing debates in Europe as to whether or not Turkey should be granted full membership.

Although not every EU member state is against Turkish accession, the continuing divide inside the EU is a clear indicator that even if Turkey complies with

all the accession requirements, it might never be included as a full member (Müftüler- Baç, 2008a: 67). Indeed, European leaders were fully aware of the fact in 1999 when they gave Turkey candidate status that meeting the Copenhagen criteria was “an effective guarantee of entry” (Ananicz, 2007: 40).

This message given by the EU is against the principle of *pacta sunt servanda* and the consequence would be an image of the EU as a Union that is based on the interests rather than on legal rules and regulation, threatening the image of the EU as a reliable international actor (Yılmaz, 2007: 2). When the EU ignores this principle with regard to Turkey, it loses political credibility and ignores official EU policy, according to which Turkey should be treated like any other candidate (Karlsson, 2004: 1).

Altınay (2007: 1) argues that “the only way to end the deepening erosion in the EU’s foreign policy credibility is for other heads of state and European leaders to clearly restate their commitment to Turkey’s membership.” However, there are rather signs of restating obstacles. The statement of the former president of France, Valéry D’Estaing demonstrates this fact very sharply. D’estaing said that they have always given promises to Turks that they are not ready for; they should no longer tell lies to Turks who are not European (as cited in Kırbaki, 2004).

Although the current Commissioner Olli Rehn is more cautious and insisted on the importance of given promises in order not to hamper the effectiveness and credibility of EU conditionality in the candidates, the ongoing statements and debates by several EU leaders continues to be problematic for the future of the EU’s credibility and its impact on Turkey’s democratic consolidation. In this regard,

Every time that European politicians say that Turkey can never join because of other reasons- like having a Muslim population, or borders with Iran and Iraq- the EU loses more of its power because its promises look worthless. Every time

that it prevaricates about letting in the countries that have worked for over a decade to get ready, the EU damages its own credibility (Euractiv, 2007: 2).

7.2.1.2. Special Standards and Rules (Double Standards) for Turkey, as demonstrated by certain documents and concepts:

While all negotiations for membership have always been concluded successfully up to now, the Turkish case is emphasized as may be challenging this tradition due to being big, poor and different (Verney, 2007b: 309). While Kütük (2006: 275) argues that the EU is not applying membership criteria on equal footing for Turkey due to the civilizational outlook prevalent in the EU, Wood and Quaisser (2005: 171) argue that the conditions specified for the other candidates, such as the fulfillment of the Copenhagen criteria, are not enough to legitimate Turkey's entry into the EU. Kütük (2006: 276- 277) mentions in this regard that:

In the post- Cold War period, Turkey has seen- and will likely to see in the near future- other applicant countries jumping ahead in the EU's enlargement queue, as it has attempted to cope with the EU and some of its Member States' requirements, which have nothing directly to do with the Copenhagen criteria. One such example is references to the mass killing of the Armenians and the controversy over whether it was genocide or not.

These increasingly discriminatory practices of the EU toward Turkey “violate the Enlightenment principles upon which Europe itself is founded and endanger the formation of a Europe governed by Kantian ideals” (Düzgit, 2006: 1). Calling the EU's standards for Turkey as “Byzantine standards”, Gillingham (2006: 186) mentions about the last minute agreement to start the official accession process with

Turkey in Luxemburg Summit of October 2005 and its awful sessions passed with these standards.

Hence, Turkish entry is more related to the question of EU's economic and social integration capacities rather than to its ability to transform itself in line with the Copenhagen criteria. This is against the principle of fairness. Since the EU's ability to promote its foreign policy and security interests through conditionality depends on its credibility, its power is diminished to a large extent in Turkish case as illustrated by the slowing pace of reforms in Turkey (Müftüler- Baç, 2008a: 67).

Stating that conditionality may not always be technical due to salience of certain political considerations, Tocci (2007: 14) highlights that it should not be discriminatory, albeit not purely technical. In other words,

The task is that of retaining as much as possible the quality of credibility engendered by technical conditionality, without concealing the political attributes of this policy; attributes which if effectively channeled and articulated can serve the double purpose of helping transform candidate Turkey and bringing the European publics closer to the Union (Tocci, 2007: 14).

In relation to the excessively discussed issue of 'freedom of expression' and Article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code, there are also double standards applied by the EU. The EU is accused of using double standards after the recent developments in France and Netherlands. In France, a bill that makes it illegal to deny Armenian genocide has been passed, and in the Netherlands, members of parliament with Turkish origin who deny that there was genocide have been asked to leave their political parties.

Protection of minorities is another problematic issue that the EU applies double standards for Turkey. For instance, Latvia had still not ratified the Council of Europe's Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, and some

member states such as Greece, continue to experience problems in the area of human rights and minority protection, but get little reaction from the EU (Düzgit, 2006: 20). While Turkey is criticized harshly due to the shortcomings with respect to rights of non- Muslim communities, there are severe violations of the rights of Turkish minority in Greece, located in Western Thrace largely (Düzgit, 2006: 20). When the EU does not even warn Greece about the treatment of its Turkish citizens, but continuously criticize Turkey for its treatment of non- Muslim citizens, this approach can not be considered fair.

Permanent safeguard clauses, budget criteria, open- ended negotiations, the anchoring of Turkey to European values if it can not fulfill its obligations for membership and suspending the negotiations are also among the EU's special conditions developed for Turkey (as cited in Çakırözer, 2004). Below, I will analyze some of the important decisions, documents and concepts in Turkey- EU relations in order to demonstrate the existence of special standards for Turkey.

7.2.1.2.1. EU Strategy Paper:

Although this document belongs to the 1999-2004 period (November 2003) in my analysis, I will refer to it here in order to show the initial signals of double standards for Turkey, which in time evolved to include more with the approaching Turkish membership.

Türkeş and Gökgöz (2003) analyses the 'EU Strategy Paper' produced by the EU Commission on November 2003, and points out to growing divergence between the approach of the EU towards Turkey and Turkey's desire to be integrated. They

(2003: 61) argue that although Turkey worked hard to meet the conditions of the EU since the Helsinki Summit, the EU has not provided a positive environment and not addressed the promises given to Turkey, and undermined its own credibility. In such an atmosphere, they ask the question of how long Turkey can “target a moving objective with the moving conditions” (Türkeş and Gökgöz , 2003: 80).

As a striking example of discrimination towards Turkey, Türkeş and Gökgöz (2003: 71- 72) gives the example of the EU’s stance towards Croatia in the same document. While Cyprus problem was linked to the accession of Turkey to the EU, Croatia’s continuing border problems with Slovenia and the returnee problems with the Serbia and Montenegro did not constitute problem, and Commission explicitly stated its positive opinion for Croatia. Similarly, Romania was given a date for negotiations in spite of the continuing border problems with its eastern neighbors. This is an obvious example of ‘inner-contradiction’ with the assumed principles of the Union (Türkeş and Gökgöz, 2003: 72).

Türkeş and Gökgöz (2003: 63) argue that in the present stage of relations between the EU and Turkey, there are two paradoxical points to consider. There is not only certain level of rapprochement and increasingly intermingled relations, but also growing tension between the two. This tension, they argue, is the result of different perceptions between the Union and Turkey. While the EU sees the relations with Turkey as a simple foreign policy issue, for Turkey the relations with the EU are substantial for full membership at the end. Although this article was written before Turkey was given a certain date for accession, its main emphasis regarding the discriminatory stance of the EU is still very much prevalent, when we considered the continuing, and even increasing ambiguities in the EU’s approach towards Turkey.

7.2.1.2.2. Brussel Summit Decisions (16-17 December 2004):

Although Turkey was given a date for the start of accession negotiations in the Brussels Summit of 16- 17 December 2004, an unusual degree of conditionality was attached to this decision, and Turks evaluate this as an expression of discrimination of prejudice against them (Barchard, 2005: 88).

The decision made at the Brussel Summit with regard to Turkey's membership included special clauses that were not existent in previous rounds of enlargement (Kütük, 2006: 729- 730). For instance, the declaration after the Brussel Summit inserted the possibility of suspending the negotiations if Turkey fails to maintain progress in reforms required for fulfilling the membership criteria since the nature of negotiations was 'open- ended'. In addition, the EU inserted the possibility of 'permanent restrictions' in areas such as freedom of movement of persons, structural policies, and agriculture. Moreover, the toughest issue was related to extension of Turkey's Customs Union to cover the ten new EU members, including the Republic of Cyprus, before the start of accession negotiations.

These, together with the continued talk of privileged partnership as an alternative to membership, came as a shock to many Turks (Akçakoca, 2006: 16). This 'second class' offer is a sign of the limited EU's internal capabilities and diminishes the EU's credibility together with the transformative potentials of membership conditionality (Savic, 2007: 24). In such an atmosphere, even the most outspoken defenders of Turkey's EU membership expressed their dissatisfaction with Europe's attitude, and suggested not to start negotiations if the privileged partnership

position was officially accepted by the EU (Akgün, Mensur, 2005; as cited in Tiryaki, 2006: 185).

When we look at the background of such statements, we see the considerations of European leaders to balance the public opinion in their country in the face of upsurge in overt racist prejudice towards Turkey in the weeks before the Brussel Summit, ignoring the significant developments in contemporary Turkey and accusing Turkey for moral reasons (Barchard, 2005: 189).

A considerable rise of nationalist sentiment has also taken place in Turkey after the December 2004 European Council decision (Grigoriadis, 2006: 7). As “public manifestations of the new nationalist wave”, Grigoriadis gives the instances of rallying around the Turkish flag, two best selling books of ‘Those Mad Turks’ and ‘The Metal Storm’, and the movie of ‘The Valley of Wolves: Iraq’ (Grigoriadis, 2006: 13- 16).

7.2.1.2.3. Progress Reports:

When the content of progress reports is reviewed since 2000, it is observable that some requirements, such as making every effort to resolve any outstanding border disputes and to address the Cyprus problem, fall outside of the Copenhagen criteria and are not directly related to democratic consolidation of Turkey (Gürleyen, 2004: 14). This undermines the credibility of the EU again.

Although the EU does not officially state that the resolution of disputes is a political criterion, it is highlighted in every progress report. Therefore, “this type of conditionality deriving from EU values and incrementally introduced into progress

reports could be labeled as *conditionality through de facto political criteria*” (Aydın and Açıkmüşe, 2007: 269). When compared with *de jure* application of conditionality, *de facto* expansion of political criteria is less effective (Aydın and Açıkmüşe, 2007: 274). This has to do with the legitimacy of the EU rules. The reason is that in order to be legitimate, there must be commonly held organizational rules and demands on the target states must be based on these rules, not on the *ad hoc* interests of certain member states. Moreover, it is clear that in the absence of credibility and the existence of ‘time inconsistency’ it is difficult for these rules to be accepted as legitimate by Turkey.

7.2.1.2.4. Negotiation Framework, New Concepts for Turkey:

The negative stance of the EU is most visible in the Negotiation Framework for Turkey. In this document Commission establishes the general procedures and rules to be followed during negotiations with Turkey, but emphasizes that it is an open ended process, and thus there is no guarantee of the end result. It also emphasizes the Union’s capacity to absorb Turkey. Hence, this framework contains conditions that are much more restrictive and demanding than those imposed by the EU to former candidates. While these reflect the fear of certain member states that the EU is not capable of integrating Turkey, it damages the credibility of the EU by breaking past promises.

Düzgit (2006: 6- 7) emphasizes that only the framework document on Turkey contains the following section, and it is even non- existent in the text on Croatia.

While having full regard to Copenhagen criteria, including the absorption capacity of the Union, if Turkey is not in a

position to assume in full all the obligations of membership it must be ensured that Turkey is fully anchored in the European structures through the strongest possible bond (European Commission, 2005c: 1).

This stance of the EU created resentment in Turkey and according to public opinion- formers “the EU was not only treating Turkey differently from other accession countries, but also in a more discriminatory manner” (Eralp, 2007: 23). After providing a general understanding of the discriminatory nature of the Negotiation Framework for Turkey, now I will give more detailed account of the new concepts in this document that are used extensively first time for Turkey.

- *Open ended process:*

The Negotiation Framework for Turkey states for the first time for any candidate that the negotiations are:

An open-ended¹⁴ process, the outcome of which cannot be guaranteed beforehand. While having full regard to all Copenhagen criteria, including the absorption capacity of the Union, if Turkey is not in a position to assume in full all the obligations of membership it must be ensured that Turkey is fully anchored in the European structures through the strongest possible bond (European Commission 2005c: 1).

Eralp (2007: 24) argues that this formulation of a different framework emphasizing the open-ended-ness of the process creates difficulties for the consolidation of Europeanization in Turkey. The process becomes more difficult with the increase in the number of losers, and in political costs with the start of negotiations. Therefore, the only way for governments to maintain their political will is to have clear incentive of membership, which is non- existent in the Turkish

¹⁴ Emphasis mine.

context due to the ambivalence of the time table of negotiations and its open-ended nature (Eralp: 2007: 24).

In contrast, Jora (2006: 21) thinks that this is an ‘innovative solution’ for dealing with the cases with no specified accession date, especially for Turkey. He argues that this may be an acceptable situation for the problematic candidates since they may choose to be in the process via other means provided by the EU, such as financial assistance. However, this is not supported by the dominantly accepted fact that the EU conditionality is the most effective when it is backed up by the promise of full membership. Moreover, it is no longer acceptable to exclude Turkey from the process of enlargement and expect it to be satisfied with rewards other than the full membership.

- *Absorption capacity:*

In relation to absorption capacity issue, the Negotiation Framework states that:

The Union's capacity to *absorb*¹⁵ Turkey, while maintaining the momentum of European integration is an important consideration in the general interest of both the Union and Turkey. The Commission shall monitor this capacity during the negotiations ...in order to inform an assessment by the Council as to whether this condition of membership has been met (European Commission, 2005c: 1).

It is interesting that the concept of ‘absorption capacity’ has no official definition although it is increasingly used in official documents of the EU. Therefore, Emerson et al. (2006: 9) suggests that it should be deconstructed into several more objective and precise phenomena, such as “capacity of the EU’s budget to absorb new member states”, “capacity of society to absorb new member states” and

¹⁵ Emphasis mine.

“capacity of the EU to assure its strategic security.” Schockenhoff (2006: 93- 95) also suggests six criteria for defining the controversial concept of absorption capacity. These six criteria are listed as: Europe’s ability to act, a clear division of competences, the capacity to finance itself, the limits of the EU, foreign policy stability and lastly a common European identity.

Another argument is that if absorption capacity is continued to be used in official documents of the EU without better specification and deconstruction into objective elements, it would be used by populist political rhetoric and further damage the process of change (Emerson et al. 2006: 22). Moreover, these various dimensions are not static, and therefore, we should try to understand capacities for change, rather than to focus on static notions of absorption capacity (Emerson et al. 2006: 22).

Similarly, it is quite ironic that while the term is used widely in the official documents and statements of several leaders, there is even a disagreement on the very technical issue of whether absorption capacity is a fourth Copenhagen criterion or not. It is unfortunate that the growing insistence on absorption capacity changes the balance between official Copenhagen criteria and absorption capacity and undermines the credibility of the EU in candidates as well as the effectiveness of its conditionality (Savic, 2007: 6). In fact, although mentioned before, absorption capacity was not invoked actively until the question of Turkish membership. While the attitude of the Union is generally warmer towards Croatian accession, the concept of absorption capacity is revoked more in Turkish case (Esen, 2007: 1). When this was recognized by the Turkish public and policy makers, this further intensified the credibility problem.

Moreover, inside the Union, there are different opinions as regards to absorption capacity debate and Turkey’s place in it. While opposing countries to

Turkish accession and the Parliament tend to present absorption capacity as part of the Copenhagen criteria, The Council and the Commission emphasizes that this is only a consideration (Esen, 2007: 2). The European Parliament defined absorption capacity as a criterion for enlargement and its reports on Turkey emphasized the importance of “societal/ public absorption” (Düzgit, 2006: 9). On the other hand, European Commission, especially Commissioner Olli Rehn, is more cautious in order not to hamper the effectiveness of EU conditionality in candidates.

Among the opposing members to Turkey’s membership, especially for France and Germany, absorption capacity is an important consideration as regards to Turkish membership. The limitations imposed by the several dimensions of the ‘absorption capacity’ are perceived to apply especially to Turkey and it is considered as a serious threat to the institutional balances in the Union (Emerson et al. 2006: 3).

In relation to Turkey’s impact on the institutional structure of the EU in case of accession, there is an argument that if Constitutional Treaty voting rules are put into effect, the impact of Turkey’s membership on the EU’s capacity to act will be negligible (Baldwin and Widgren, 2005: 1). However, they argue that it is quite different if Constitutional Treaty is rejected and the Nice Treaty rules continue (Baldwin and Widgren, 2005: 9). As far as power issue concerned, they found that Turkey will have a big impact and will be the second most powerful member of the EU, under either Nice or Constitutional Treaty rules (Baldwin and Widgren, 2005: 9).

However, I agree that it is not reasonable to expect a concrete answer as regards to how Turkish membership will affect EU institutions, since the EU itself is in a critical period in terms of its constitutional status, and its future is difficult to predict (Tocci, 2007: 16). Similarly, the development of Turkey’s economy and

politics makes it impossible to predict how Turkey will look like in the time of accession, approximately in 2014. Moreover, on the economic front and budgetary matters, EU analyses of the ability to absorb Turkey will only be possible after the current financial perspective ends in 2013, and the EU decides whether to cover new members in the coming budgets or not. Therefore, today, “any evaluation of Turkey’s possible inclusion in the EU necessarily has a highly speculative character” (Ananicz, 2007: 38).

So, why the debate on the capacity of the Union to absorb Turkey has intensified so much recently? One argument is that as most Europeans did not expect such considerable progress from Turkey in complying with the EU criteria immediately after the Helsinki, the question of accommodating a big country with a predominantly Muslim population became a serious question that could no longer be treated as secondary (Keyman and Öniş, 2004: 189). So, it was realized that the issue is not just about Turkey’s ability to transform itself, but also about the future of European project.

Similarly, Narbone and Tocci (2007: 238) argue that as Turkey made important reforms to comply with the EU requirements, it became no longer possible for opponents of Turkish membership to hide behind Turkey’s domestic shortcomings when opposing Turkish membership. Therefore,

Other ‘non- Copenhagen criteria’ reasons started to be aired openly, summed up in the heightened concern about the EU’s ‘absorption capacity’...The existence of such debate raised Turkish mistrust...given the expectation that Europe would ultimately turn the cold shoulder to Turkey (Narbone and Tocci, 2007: 238).

In sum, since the EU has reached to “a saturation point in time”, it has the increasing tendency to buy time before future enlargements to consolidate its

governance structure by means of temporal devices and rules (Lagro, 2007: 5). Absorption capacity debate's popularity is a clear indicator of this fact.

Consequently, Turks started to believe more and more that even if Turkey meets the accession terms, its membership would still be too problematic for the EU since for many EU member states Turkey constitutes an absorption problem and a threat to the Union (Nugent, 2007: 486). Hence, if the Copenhagen political criteria is a necessary, but not a sufficient condition, "even though Turkey continues its democratic reform process and successfully implements these reforms, its full membership will still entail what has come to be known as 'the absorption capacity of Europe'" (Baban, 2006: 2). However, if there was a truth in such an argument that Europe is not powerful enough to absorb Turkey; it should have been deployed when the EU's eastward enlargement process started and when the main opponents of Turkish membership were the keenest advocates of enlargement (Karlsson, 2004: 2).

So, the debate about absorption capacity confuses the issues by proposing an additional criterion saying that candidates' accession to the Union is dependent not on their ability to meet the Copenhagen criteria but on the things they do not have control, such as the Union's capacity to absorb them (Savic, 2007: 29). In other words, "... the question is no longer only, are new members ready; it is also are old ones prepared? (*Economist*, 2006) To demonstrate the dilemma here, Tocci (2007: 20) argues that:

If the Union's right hand lectures Turkey on the Copenhagen criteria arguing that these are the sine qua non for EU entry, while the left hand engages in highly politicized and often populist debates over the desirability of Turkey's entry, then the Union's credibility in Turkey risks being seriously undermined.

In such an atmosphere, the important question to answer is:

How are we to account both the process of recent deepening and intensification in Turkey /the EU relations on the one hand, and the lack of commitment by the EU institutions to recognize Turkey as having a legitimate claim to full membership on the other? (Baban, 2006: 2)

It is in this context that the enlargement Commissioner Olli Rehn has warned that such debates are interpreted like “the devil reads the bible” by the people and politicians in Turkey and the increasing doubts about accession process is eroding support for the reforms (as cited in the United Kingdom Parliament, 2006). Therefore, Rehn argues that “the EU should not modify the list of the criteria or set them in stone by including them in a future treaty” (as cited in the United Kingdom Parliament, 2006).

In such a case that a candidate country is ready for membership, but the EU considers its absorption capacity as lacking; the EU will no longer be attractive for candidates (*ZEI EU-Turkey Monitor*, 2006: 5) and “it could easily become a way of stopping the enlargement- perhaps the EU’s greatest single achievement- altogether” (*Economist*,2006). Hence, in addition to its material and ideational contribution, Turkey’s EU accession has also crucial symbolic impact on EU’s foreign policy and on the success of its main tool; enlargement policy (Müftüleri- Baç: 2008a: 67).

As regards to the absorption capacity issue, *Economist* (2006) likens the EU to “communist- era toilet paper” that is “tougher and less absorbent than ever.” Stating that this sudden burst of interest in such a vague, misleading and dishonest concept is worrying, *Economist* (2006) argues that:

The term is fundamentally misleading when applied to an organization such as the EU. It originates in development economics, and it refers to a country’s ability to use external assistance effectively... the EU does not ‘absorb’ members. It simply adds them...The capacity to absorb other countries should not be a new requirement for it.

Vibert (2006) also criticizes the concept harshly and says that it is flawed, dishonest, shortsighted, misleading, politically driven, vague and unhelpful. He argues that the concept has very weak theoretical and practical underpinnings. Moreover, the approach is also remarkably shortsighted since it risks the EU's greatest function to help newly democratized countries and to provide them with incentives against backsliding (Vibert, 2006: 3). He criticizes the concept as being unhelpful and misleading in the context of institutional change also. The debate about absorption capacity is also not in line with the Union's real political problems such as rethinking its treaty base, economic reform, and its role in the world. Moreover, due to this inherently ambiguous and loosely defined character, the concept is highly prone to political distortion (TESEV, 2006: 10).

Similarly, a related 'final frontiers' argument is a bad idea and would undermine the EU's projection as an enlightened soft power, therefore it would damage the EU's fundamental long-term objective of extending Europe's democratic space (Emerson et al. 2006: 22). Because the EU Treaty gives any European country the right to apply for membership, an effort to draw a final boundary excluding some European countries would not be in conformity with the Treaty. It would also be undesirable politically since this would damage the EU's capacity to encourage positive change in potential candidates through its mechanism of political conditionality (The United Kingdom Parliament, 2006). Hence,

It seems totally unacceptable to pursue an argument in geographical terms and it would damage the credibility of the EU for the possible upcoming enlargements or policies towards the countries located around Turkey (Yılmaz, 2007: 2).

In sum, the debate about absorption capacity is harmful since the concept has inherent shortcomings as regards to both its definition and function. The concept is

open to interpretation in candidate countries and most often seen as an excuse for closing the Union's door even if the candidate is ready. Consequently, such debates lead to decrease in the level of credibility provided by the EU and in the compliance with the EU requirements in candidates. In this regard, Turkish case is crucial to study since the absorption capacity debate has been revoked especially for Turkey. Hence, Turkish case is not only crucial for the future of Turkey's place in the Union, but also for the future of the EU's foreign policy.

- *Long Transition Periods, derogations, specific arrangements and permanent safeguard clauses:*

In relation these concepts, the Negotiation Framework for Turkey states that:

Long transitional periods, derogations, specific arrangements or permanent safeguard clauses... may be considered. The Commission will include these, as appropriate, in its proposals in areas such as freedom of movement of persons, structural policies or agriculture. (European Commission, 2005c: 5).

When we compare the above mentioned negotiating framework for Turkey and the negotiating framework for Croatia, we can see the sharp difference in the EU attitude towards these two countries (Düzgit, 2006: 7). While the negotiating framework for Croatia states that “transitional measures and specific arrangements, in particular safeguard clauses, may also be agreed in the interest of the Union” (as cited in Düzgit, 2006: 7), the corresponding provision on Turkey, as mentioned above, is much more encompassing in terms of its limitations and their period.¹⁶

¹⁶ While the concept is “safeguard clause” for Croatia, it is “*permanent* safeguard clause” for Turkey. So, it can even be inferred from the text that safeguard clauses are temporary.

The emphasis on permanent safeguard clauses in the most crucial areas of concern for the government and society, such as the free movement of persons, structural funds and agriculture, is unique to Turkish case. In other cases, there are also such restrictions for some period of time until the new members adjust their system, but they are not permanent as in the Turkish case. If the safeguards can be permanent, there will be no benefit of the EU accession for Turkey even in the long run, and this certainly diminishes the will of the government and society to comply with the EU requirements for membership. Moreover, it is legally objectionable that a member is denied the rights of other members in the case of full compliance after several years of adjustment. Such exclusion is against the principle of *pacta sunt servanda* and rule of law, upon which the EU is founded.

Therefore, it is argued that “as a first in enlargement history, such violations of EU law are now proposed for Turkey to politically open the door to a ‘second-class membership’” (Düzgit, 2006: 7). Consequently, such debates lead to decrease in the level of credibility provided by the EU and in the compliance with the EU requirements for democracy in Turkey.

7.2.1.2.5. Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council, Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges 2006- 2007:

Affirming that the EU enlargement agenda faces major challenges during 2006- 2007, this document points to the main challenges in 2007 as regards to the candidate countries of Croatia, Turkey and the Former Yugoslav Republic of

Macedonia. Turkey deserves special attention in the document due to unequal emphasis on the relation between absorption capacity and Turkish accession.

While stating that “the pace of accession process depends on the pace of reforms in the candidate country”, it also highlights that “the EU’s integration capacity will be reviewed at all key stages of the accession process” (European Commission, 2006b: 15). So, this document emphasizes absorption capacity and puts a special report on the EU’s capacity to integrate new members. In this special report, it is stated that:

The EU’s absorption capacity, or rather integration capacity, is determined by the development of the EU’s policies and institutions, and by the transformation of applicants into well-prepared Member States. The capacity of would-be members to accede to the Union is rigorously assessed by the Commission on the basis of strict conditionality (European Commission, 2006b: 17).

It is important to note that the Commission tries to show its position towards Turkey as fair by stating that “the Union has assessed its capacity to integrate new members in previous enlargements” (European Commission, 2006b: 18). However, it is also a known fact that this was just a consideration till the Turkish case and was never presented as such important and visible.

Moreover, it is seen that the Commission tries to respond to criticisms as regards to the abstractness of the term of absorption capacity¹⁷, and specifies in the report that “the capacity of the Union to maintain the momentum of European integration as it enlarges has three main components: institutions, common policies and budget” and explain each of these briefly (European Commission, 2006b: 20-22). Moreover, the document emphasizes the significance of ‘strict application of

¹⁷ For instance, Emerson et al. (2006) had argued that the concept should not be used in official EU documents unless it is deconstructed into specific elements.

conditionality' during the pre- accession phase, 'rigorous approach' to accession negotiations and 'better communication' (European Commission, 2006b: 22- 23).

In general, however, this document is similar to the ones mentioned before in the sense that Turkey's accession to the EU is differentiated from the other cases and treated in a discriminatory manner. Consequently, such an approach has resulted in decreased credibility of the EU in the minds of Turkish policy makers and the public.

7.2.1.3. Cyprus Problem:

Another problematic issue that puts the EU's credibility at risk is the EU's stance towards the Cyprus problem and its solution. It is beyond the remit of this thesis to make a detailed analysis of the Cyprus problem and the EU's place in the debate. However, since I aim to demonstrate impact of the EU credibility on Turkey's democratic consolidation, I decided to refer to Cyprus problem briefly, considering its importance in demonstrating the one sided-ness in the EU's approach and resulting decrease in the EU's credibility in Turkey.

The feeling in Turkey is that "Turkey was faced with asymmetric incentives in terms of its ability to resolve the Cyprus dispute" (Keyman and Öniş, 2004: 182). It is quite ironic that the side that said 'yes' to the Annan Plan (the Turkish Cypriots, with 65 %), is still penalized while the other side saying 'no' (the Greek Cypriots, with 76%) became a member of the EU (Kirişçi, 2007: 8; Düzgit, 2006: 14).

This tolerant stance of the Union towards Greek Cypriots hampers its own commitments to the international law and its principle of equality in the face of heavy conditionality applied to Turkey between 1999 and 2004 due to Turkey's hard

line stance regarding the solution of the Cyprus problem (Düzgit, 2006: 17-18). This is actually a clear indicator that the intensity of conditionality varies from country to country and some are pressed more than others and on wider range of issue areas (Steunenberg and Dimitrova: 2007: 12). Some member states even encouraged Greek Cypriot efforts to blackmail Turkey through its right to veto (Düzgit, 2006:18).

Moreover, due to Turkey's non- implementation of the customs union protocol to include the Republic of Cyprus, the EU decided to suspend negotiations with Turkey on eight chapters of the *acquis* in December 2006, increasing the mistrust between the sides and resulting in a slowdown in negotiations, while also diminishing the domestic transformational potential of the accession process (Narbone and Tocci, 2007: 236).

Such developments also increased the domestic cost of complying with the EU requirements since these "have made concessions by the Turkish government hard to sell at home" (Schimmelfenning, 2008: 931). Moreover, Hakkı (2006: 469) believes that this uncertainty in Turkish accession process may affect whether Turkey will compromise or not over contested issues, Cyprus among the crucial ones.

In sum, such treatments of the EU during the Cyprus stalemate has hit a raw nerve in Turkey and is viewed as an unfair demand with one- sided concessions (Patton, 2007: 346). So, if the EU does not undertake steps to help the Turkish Cypriots, its credibility will continue to drop since many Turks perceive the EU's persistence in the problem as a clear proof that the EU does not want to give full membership to Turkey, as supported by about 20 % decrease in the support of EU membership in Turkey (Ananicz, 2007: 33).

7.2.1.4. Public Opinion in the EU:

It is true that sizeable majorities in Europe are against Turkey's accession and European elites do not give balanced treatment to fears about Turkish membership among the broader population (Düzgit, 2006: 10- 11). However, it is also true that the European public is also very much divided on the issue of Turkey.

While Austria, Germany, Greece, Cyprus and Luxemburg are the main opponents of Turkish accession, Spain, Italy, the UK, Sweden, Poland and Slovenia mainly support the Turkish accession. While France, Austria and Netherlands pushed for the establishment of absorption capacity as an official criterion for membership; UK, Spain and Italy strongly refused it (Emerson et al. 2006: 2). As a general trend, the opposition is higher in the old members of the Union with 49%, in comparison to 10 new members with 40% (Domaniç, 2006: 12).

However, it is important to keep in mind that these persisting divergences among member states over the desirability Turkey's accession into the Union and the enlargement process in general, is dangerous for the credibility of the continuing and forthcoming accession negotiations (Emerson et al. 2005: 227). It seems possible that in the long-term, accession referendums proposed by some EU member states, such as France and Austria will block Turkey's bid to join the EU even if it complies with all necessary criteria. The following table summarizes the attitudes of EU member states towards Turkish accession to the EU.

Table 2: Review of European societies' attitudes to Turkey's accession to the EU

Attitudes to Turkey's membership	Countries	Forecast
<u>Absolutely negative</u> (all polls)	Austria	No chance of changing the society's attitude.
<u>Negative</u> (definite majority of polls)	France, Germany, Greece, Belgium, Denmark, Luxembourg, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Finland, Latvia, Estonia and Cyprus	Small or moderate chance of changing the society's attitude.
<u>Indefinite</u> (mixed poll results)	Italy, Holland, Lithuania, Malta	An open-ended issue
<u>Moderately positive</u> (all or a definite majority of polls)	Spain, Ireland, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Sweden, United Kingdom, Hungary; Bulgaria and Romania (EU members since 2007)	Probable loss of societies' support

Source: Taken from Balcer et al, 2007: 11 that uses the Eurobarometer info.

As also understood from the Eurobarometer surveys, Turkey is by far the most problematic candidate. According to Special Eurobarometer 255, of all the candidate countries, Turkey's accession generates the most disapproval with 48% of European public declaring that they will oppose Turkish accession even if it complies with all the EU requirements (European Commission, 2006f: 70). Most opponents are in 15 member states, reaching 81 % disapproval rate in Austria (European Commission. 2006f: 71).¹⁸

Similarly, when the EU members were asked specifically in 2005 about the countries that they would like to welcome, Turkey faced sizable opposition with 55 % against (as cited Emerson et al. 2006: 7). This is in line with the fact that support

¹⁸ For more detail on the individual country percentages about the question see p. 71 of the *Special Eurobarometer 255* that is available at http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_255_en.pdf

for further EU enlargement has declined from 52% in the autumn 2004 to 45% in the spring 2006, due to decreasing popularity of enlargement after the inclusion of 10 members in 2004 (as cited in Emerson et al. 2006: 4).

As stated, Austria is among the hardliners, both on the governmental and societal level, on the issue of Turkish membership. This is due to the fact that Turkish issue is not discussed in a balanced fashion in Austria; rather it has been debated with xenophobic tendencies (Günay, 2007: 51). While disapproval for Turkey in Austria was around 50- 60% in the 1990s, it reached to 80% in 2005 and to over 90% in 2006 (Günay, 2007: 51). According to the results of a pole conducted by the Turkish Embassy in Vienna¹⁹, 74% of the participants stated that Turkey was not a European country, 40% claimed they would disapprove Turkish membership even if the country fulfilled all the criteria and no labor migration would take place, and 20% stated that Turkey must never be taken into the Union (as cited in Günay, 2007: 51).

Perceived cultural and religious differences are among the main reasons behind such high rates of disapproval of Turkish membership. Many Europeans fear Turkey since it is a big and poor Muslim country with different values and standards of living when compared to EU member states. For these Europeans, the inclusion of Turkey into the Union with over 70 million, and mainly Muslim, population poses a cultural threat. They believe that the integration of Turkey would be end of the EU and of the values it has been established upon. Turkey's underperforming economy, poor human rights records and its proximity to problematic regions are among the other reasons of why many Europeans are reluctant to accept Turkey's accession (Taraktaş, 2008: 254).

¹⁹ For the original version of the pole results, you can look at <http://wien.orf.at/stories/169524/>.

Moreover, partly due to growing hostility towards Muslims in Europe after the September 11 attacks, and partly due to the common history of Turkey and Europe, which conceptualized Turkey as ‘the Other’ of the Europe, we should expect increasing reactions from the European public in the future as Turkey gets closer to the EU membership (Kütük, 2006: 280).

On the other hand, as factors for such a negative opinion about Turkey among the EU member states, Tocci (2007: 26- 30) mentions about ‘domestic politics and interests’ of member states, ‘perceptions of Europe’ that are different within the EU and Turkey, and lastly ‘misperceptions and prejudices about Turkey’ itself. Moreover, whether in favor or against, many debaters often have little knowledge about the state of affairs in Turkey and most debate in the members as regards to Turkish membership is “often poisoned by misperception, misinformation and at times outright prejudice” (Tocci, 2007: 8).

Therefore, instead of involving in an informed and rational debate with facts and balanced arguments on Turkey’s accession, many EU leaders have stimulated the already existing public fears about Turkish membership, which is in sharp contrast to their unquestioning stance in the previous enlargement round (Düzgit, 2006: 13). Due to this discriminatory approach of the EU and resulting negative public opinion in the EU, the credibility of the EU’s promise of full membership has declined in Turkey.

In sum, considering all these examples, we can conclude that the EU’s claim to treat each candidate equally does not reflect the truth, and this situation gives rise to credibility problem in Turkey (Türkeş and Gökgöz, 2003: 73). As long as the EU continues to treat Turkey in not only different, but also in a discriminatory manner

such instances are expected to increase and impact not only the future of the EU-Turkey relations, but also Turkey's democratization journey negatively. As argued,

Reactions of some EU states to Turkey's membership and debates on alternative solutions like 'privileged partnership,' do not only risk the democratization process in Turkey but they also threaten the credibility of the EU in candidate states (Erdoğan, 2006: 32).

7.3. Impact on Governmental Domain, Rationalist Accounts:

While the strengthening of the EU's credibility in the post- Helsinki period has been reflected in the form of several Constitutional amendments and harmonization packages in Turkey, its decrease in the post- 2004 period (due to above mentioned factors) has started to change cost- benefit calculations of the government with increase in the domestic adoption costs.

Therefore, the reform momentum in Turkey has been slowed down since 2004. Among the several other domestic reasons (such as rising nationalism and absence of adequate structures for effective implementation), the EU's obviously decreasing commitment to Turkey's accession is crucial since this factor also impinges upon the already existing domestic problems in Turkey (Narbone and Tocci, 2007: 240). With the soaring of the EU's credibility, its conditionality is not taken as seriously as it used to be (Lagro, 2007: 11). Therefore, the logic is that the slow down in the reform process is the result of reduced effectiveness of EU conditionality (Steunenberg and Dimitrova, 2007: 13). As Tocci (2007: 12) argues,

While the emphasis on technical conditionality had been effective in spurring reforms in Turkey until 2005, it became powerful ammunition in the hands of those resisting change in Turkey thereafter.

While “the Turkish government has done everything short of ordering the de-circumcision of the cabinet in the effort to meet these exacting criteria” of the EU (Gillingham, 2006: 188), the EU did not provide Turkey the guarantee that it will be included in the Union as soon as the country completes the negotiations. Consequently, doubts about the ultimate reward of membership started to bring limits to the credibility of conditionality, affecting the “cost- benefit matrix of those policy makers who are responsible for calculating governmental adoption costs” (Kirişçi, 2007: 2).

Stated differently, the cost of complying with the EU requirements became higher than the benefit of complying with these requirements, since the EU’s promise of membership was not as credible as in the previous period. So, Turkish decision makers started to experience “a major dilemma provoked by their mistrust of the EU’s credibility in respect to the ultimate ‘reward’ of membership” (Kirişçi, 2007: 15). That is why there has been a decrease in Turkish government’s compliance with the EU requirements despite its continuing assurances that it remains committed to the reform process.

In such an uncertain and ambiguous climate, the negotiations could not do much progress. Therefore, due to the uncertainty prevailing in the process of Turkey’s EU membership, the EU started to lose its potential as an important international actor in the process of Turkey’s democratic consolidation. With the fading of the national consensus every reform has started to be portrayed as a “concession to an insincere, hostile; not- to- be- trusted Europe” (Ifantis, 2007: 228). Consequently, opposing voices for Turkey’s EU demanded reforms increased in Turkey’s governmental domain, both at the right and left part of the spectrum.

For instance, after the opening of negotiations with the EU, the leader of the main opposition party, Republican People's Party (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi-CHP), Deniz Baykal accused the EU of "not being sincere, and declared that the reference to the Union's 'capacity of absorption' could be utilized to put a final stop to the Turkish candidacy" (as cited in Visier, 2007:16). Such declarations from opposition leaders and their ramifications in the media have started to affect public opinion negatively in Turkey, increasing the cost of complying with the EU requirements for the AKP government.

Therefore, as a result of "EU modalities demanding high compliance costs but offering few immediate, tangible rewards", the nationalist anti- EU reform coalition started to hold the AKP government accountable for devitalizing the Turkish state (Patton, 2007: 347). In such an atmosphere of upsurging nationalism and resulting calls for early elections, domestic cost of complying with the EU requirements increased for the AKP government since this would mean loss of their electoral support. In other words, as Patton (2007: 344) argues "early election fever helped put the brakes on the government's reformist zeal."

Therefore, Turkish government is caught in a vicious circle in the sense that Turkey needs the carrot of EU membership to keep the pace of reforms, but the government also needs public support to implement them (Akçakoca, 2006: 16). This is in line with the argument of the external incentives model holding that "ruling political parties rarely comply with the EU's external requirements if the costs of compliance are too high and threaten to undermine the domestic sources of their political power" (Vachudova, 2008: 861). Similarly, Schimmelfenning (2008: 931) argues that "under these conditions, short- term domestic political considerations

could get in the way of compliance more easily than in endgames” for Turkey.

Therefore, from the perspective of domestic politics:

EU finger shaking, negative criticisms and nonreciprocal EU demands have given Turks the impression that their country is supplicant at Europe’s door, generating feelings of humiliation and indignation which nationalist hard- liners have been quick to turn to their advantage, placing the spotlight blame on the AKP for its government’s pro- EU policies (Patton, 2007: 345).

In this regard, following the Brussel Summit of December 2004, AKP was trapped between the EU’s failure to keep its promises and nationalist tendencies at home (Patton, 2007: 344), due to rise in the domestic costs of adjustment with the EU. Hence, from the early months of 2005 onwards, AKP appeared to lose its enthusiasm and initial reformist zeal as the pendulum has started to swing in the direction of the nationalists and Euro- skeptics (Öniş, 2007: 253).

The new Anti- Terror Law, reintroducing a set of clauses designed to curb individual liberties is a clear indicator of this trend of turning back to “old- style security state” (Öniş, 2007: 255). This new law also granted security forces more authority to deal with terrorism. Another indicator of such change in the cost benefit calculations of the government is the new penal code adopted in June 2005 that was both ineffective in protecting women’s rights with respect to honor killings and virginity testing, and in reducing the penalties for the expression of non- violent opinions in issues of national interest (Patton, 2007: 340).

It is crucial that such changes were done when the EU was already very critical of Article 301 that criminalizes insulting Turkishness, and expressed its high concern over its amendment very often. However, the government could not make such a delicate change in Article 301 at the time, since the EU did not provided the sizable and credible incentive required for change in domestic equilibrium, that is,

“current distribution of preferences and bargaining power in domestic society” (Schimmelfenning, 2004: 4). Hence, it would be too costly for the government to make an amendment to Article 301 at the time, since this would lead to intense public reaction that could be utilized by the opposition and nationalists in the coming elections easily.

The task of convincing the Turkish public that the EU really desire Turkish membership became even harder for the government in 2006 after the events of Danish cartoon scandal and violence against Catholic priests in Turkey, which are used by the Christian Democrats and Catholics in the EU to highlight their objections to integration of Muslim Turkey into the EU (Patton, 2007: 345). All of these developments were clear indicators of rising domestic costs of accession both for the EU and Turkey.

In sum, in this period, the signals from Ankara and Brussels indicated that “the virtuous cycle was dangerously slipping back into its vicious dynamics” in Turkey, as the slowed down reform momentum, and a new wave of prosecutions limiting the freedom of expression demonstrates clearly (Narbone and Tocci, 2007: 235). In this period, in addition to domestic reasons of decreasing commitment to the EU reform process, such as rising nationalism, the EU’s decreasing commitment to Turkey’s accession, and resulting decrease in its credibility in Turkey is crucial since this factor has also had crucial impact on the already existing domestic problems of internalization and implementation in Turkey. As rationalist accounts and external incentives model also support, with the increase in the domestic adoption costs, and decrease in size of the reward due to low level of credibility and high level of uncertainty attached to the process, Turkish government did not have enough reasons to comply with the EU conditionality in the post- 2004 period.

7.4. Impact on Societal Domain, Constructivist Accounts:

It is clear that the negative developments in Europe have created an unfavorable impact on the behavior and perception of the key actors in Turkey and encouraged a popular belief that EU membership was not a credible objective (Öniş, 2007: 253). Thus, the doubts of policy makers and the rest of the country over the EU's credibility as regards to whether it will grant full membership to Turkey even if Turkey complies with all the requirements have increased since 2004. Even, perhaps, the debate of whether or not Turkey will be included in the EU has been more pronounced in Turkey due to Turkish public's lack of confidence, compared to the debate in the EU member states and institutions (Tocci, 2007: 16). So, similar to the governmental domain and the reform process, societal domain was also affected negatively by the EU's less credible and more unfair approach towards Turkey in the post-2004 period.

Indeed, in Turkey, the skepticism as regards to Europe's sincere intentions to grant a Muslim country a full membership in the Union has always been high (Podeh, 2007: 325). Turkish mistrust of Europe has its origins in the memories of the European's role in the decline of the Ottoman Empire and in the trauma of the 1920 Treaty of Sevres, and that is why the questioning of Turkey's EU vocation in Europe provokes chain reactions in Turkey (Narbone, 2007: 88). Many Turks believed that the reforms required by the EU are similar to those required by the treaty of Sevres and that the EU wants to divide Turkey (as mentioned in Gordon and Taşpınar, 2006: 65; in Balcer et al, 2007: 36; in Günay, 2007: 53; in Kadioğlu, 2006). Thus, it is clear that the Sevres Syndrome has become one of the biggest obstacles in Turkey's

democratic consolidation process and can undermine support for EU membership (Balcer et al. 2007: 12).

Combined with the most severe psychological ordeal ever experienced and with the harshest conditions ever faced in order to start accession negotiations (Söylemez; as cited in Gillingham, 2006: 186), Turkish public has become deeply convinced that the EU is not handling Turkish accession in a manner similar to the other candidate countries (Kirişçi, 2007: 8). Therefore, the explanatory power of the EU conditionality as a motor of Europeanization is severely limited in Turkish case (Kirişçi, 2007: 19).

While it is true that time is needed for social learning and the internalization of the values embedded in the reforms, it is also crucial to understand the factors that have impact on this limited socialization in Turkey. In this regard, Jora (2006: 20) argues that the actors at the candidate state should believe that they will certainly be accepted to the Union in certain point in future so that they work for harder to speed up the long and difficult process of domestic reform for democratic consolidation. In this regard, Olli Rehn has also stated that:

Our conditionality works only if it is credible- countries have to be sure that they have a realistic chance of joining the EU- even if it is many years away- if reformist leaders are to convince their public that it is worth making enormous efforts to meet the EU's conditions (as cited in Pridham, 2007: 463).

However, “the idea that ‘whatever we do they will never accept us’ is strongly rooted by a large part of the Turkish population” (Narbone, 2007: 88), and therefore, conservative and nationalist forces can easily reawaken Turkish fears about Europe by referring to the instances of EU exclusion and double standards (Narbone and Tocci, 2007: 237- 238).

Consequently, when certain member states continuously criticized Turkey's political shortcomings, and when EU institutions linked progress in Turkey's negotiations to political conditions, as the suspension of eight chapters in 2006 due to Turkey's refusal to open its ports to Southern Cyprus demonstrates, these were harshly criticized in by Turks. The belief that the EU only aim at getting concessions from Turkey without giving anything in return have become prevalent among Turkish public (Günay, 2007: 53) Turks argued that the EU was politicizing political conditionality, and undermining its legitimacy and credibility due to these blatant signs of discrimination (Tocci, 2007: 12). Moreover, the belief that only Christian countries can be included in the Union has become increasingly prevalent among Turks (Patton, 2007: 345).

Similarly, when the EU described the accession process as not only open-ended but also conditional on the EU's absorption capacity, this was not lost on the many Turks who believe that the EU will always find reasons to exclude Turkey (Gordon and Taşpınar, 2006: 58). In the end, these were perceived as efforts to change the rules of the game after the game has started and as an imposition of double standards, irritating the entire society in Turkey (Tiryaki, 2006: 185). As argued;

Mistrust fuels the tendency- especially in Turkey- to presume that any argument has little meaning in and of itself, but simply reflects European prejudices and double standards against it. This reduces the credibility and transformative potential of EU conditionality ... and reinforces misperceptions of Europe within Turkey (Tocci, 2007: 9).

Majority of Turks also accuse the EU of supporting Kurdish separatism due to the EU requirements for cultural rights and the activity of Kurdish separatists in certain member states (Balcer et al. 2007: 14). The unwillingness of EU member

states to help Turkey in its fight against the separatist forces, which was a big network in the Union, has contributed to declining public support in Turkey (Akçakoca, 2006: 16).

Consequently, nationalism has intensified in Turkey due to the re- eruption of fight against the Kurdish guerilla forces in 2004, and this has further weakened the support for accession, resulting in a slowdown in the implementation of reforms (Balcer et al. 2007: 14). The general flux in relations with the EU and the stalling of negotiations in 2006 has also contributed to the rise of nationalism (Ifantis, 2007: 228). In this respect, the nationalist backlash and decreasing support for the EU membership in Turkey is highly correlated since the EU's double standards in settling the Cyprus issue or in freedom of expression and protection of minorities are among the main reasons of rising nationalism. Therefore, despite progress in the political reform process after 1999, nationalism has continued to be a substantial element of Turkish political discourse due to uncertainty in the course of Turkey's EU accession negotiations (Grigoriadis, 2006: 5).

In the end, ambiguous signals and controversial declarations from the EU have had a negative impact on the credibility of the EU's conditionality and undermined Turkish public opinion's support for EU membership (Eylemer, 2007: 561). While prior to 2005 Turkish public were supportive of the Turkish membership with approval rates of 60 to 70 % (Domaniç, 2006: 9), certain developments has led to the belief among Turks that the EU was applying double standards against Turkey, and consequently, to a considerable drop in support for Turkey's EU membership (Grigoriadis, 2006: 10). Support for Turkey's EU membership dropped from 74.3 % after the November 2002 elections to 57.3 % in April 2006 (Salman, 2006).

Similarly, opinion- polls conducted from 2002 onwards indicated that 45 % of Turks were of the belief that Europeans didn't want them (Visier, 2007: 14).

Generally, it is mentioned that the negotiating process may increase Euroscepticism in the candidate country, since the national government makes series of concessions to the Union, while the Union is not very understanding of the national problems (Verney, 2007b: 317). However, Turkish case entails more than that since the required concessions are very much different and demanding. Therefore, the EU's negotiations with Turkey have to be accompanied by open and frank debate between politicians and the public since there are clear indicators that the discursive climate strongly affects Turks, who are losing their faith in the European integration project (Jung, 2007: 74).

Moreover, the Eurosceptics in Turkey are not in general opposed to the EU membership, yet they see the process of democratization along the EU lines threatening in the absence of credible timetables for Turkey's accession to the Union (Oğuzlu, 2004:104). Hence, in Turkey, “soft- euroscepticism’, involving a certain dislike of the conditions associated with full membership if not the idea of membership itself” (Öniş, 2007: 249) is more widespread across political parties and public. In this context, while the majority of Turks still consider the EU membership as a good thing, they do not believe that the EU will let them join, since their patience is getting exhausted because of European double standards (Gordon and Taşpınar, 2006: 57). Therefore, we can attribute the decline in the Turkish support for the EU membership and the increasingly weakening overall image of the EU in Turkey to a parallel fall in the trust for the EU (Domaniç, 2006: 10).

Moreover, due to low level of knowledge on EU related matters in Turkey, people's choices are dependent on context and in sensitive issues they are less

supportive of the EU required reforms (Çarkoğlu, 2004: 25). Hence, the issue of public support is fragile and can easily be manipulated by anti-European camp in Turkey (Çarkoğlu, 2004: 41- 42).

Another important issue as regards to the public opinion in Turkey is related to the lack of internalization and implementation of the reforms. It is crucial that the reform process is internalized in the sense that the reforms needed to meet Copenhagen criteria should be seen as reforms which are intrinsically valuable, rather than simply accomplished to meet EU criteria in an instrumental manner (Öniş, 2005: 27). Similarly, implementation is crucial for the consolidation of democracy, and requires deeper process of change in political, economic and social behavior. Hence, although Turkey has made substantive legislative reforms, they have to be consolidated through continuous implementation “until it becomes part of the democratic routine and takes hold deeply within social forces” (Yeşilada, 2007: 12). In the absence of such support and implementation, there is always the risk that the democracy will not be consolidated, or even the reforms will be repealed (Kubicek, 2005a: 23).

In addition to the above mentioned characteristics of Turkish public, the issue of civil society in Turkey also deserves attention here. As emphasized in the sixth chapter, civil society is central to any debate on democracy and democratization, but is not strong enough in Turkey. Although Turk’s participation in non- governmental organizations grew by 45%, to 7 million between 2004 and 2005 (Radikal, 2006), civil society in Turkey is still much weaker in comparison with Western Europe. Hence, the democratization reforms in Turkey may create fragile and shallow democracy without further liberalization of the Turkish civil society (Şimşek, 2004: 70).

Civil society in Turkey does not have the certain characteristics to be supportive of and contributive to democratization. For instance, Toros (2007: 405-407) finds out that the formational dimension of civil society (referring to the strength and variety of civil society in accordance with the resources at hand) in Turkey is weak and determined by the presence of a strong state and weak political culture. This is also applicable to other dimensions of the civil society that is mentioned in his article, such as the legal, value and impact dimensions.

In sum, it is clear that the process of democratic consolidation can proceed more smoothly in Turkey as long as the EU, by creating an image of credible and trustworthy actor, helps Turkish public and civil society internalize democratic values and norms. As long as the public believes in the legitimacy of the EU, it will be easier for them to internalize the European values, implement the reforms, and contribute to the process of democratic consolidation in Turkey that has been ongoing for years.

7.5. An Overall Assessment:

In the post- 2004 period, the EU's positive impact on Turkey's democratic consolidation did not only remained limited, but also decreased significantly when compared to 1999-2004 period, both in governmental and societal domains. Due to decrease in the credibility of the EU as an actor of democratization, the size of international rewards decreased while the size of domestic adoption costs increased.

Hence, as argued by the rationalist logic, the changing cost- benefit balance of the government resulted in decreased commitment to comply with the EU

requirements. When the cost of siding with the EU demands increased for the AKP government as rising nationalist sentiments illustrate, this has been reflected in the form of slow down in Turkey's reform process invoked by the EU accession prospect. Similarly, from constructivist perspective, decreased credibility of the EU negatively affected the legitimacy of the EU, the resonance with the European values and the formation of European identity. Hence, Turkish public's support decreased and internalization of the EU demanded reforms, which was already difficult process, entered into a stalemate again.

In the following parts, I will again refer to the EU's Progress Reports and several public opinion studies in Turkey in order to make more comprehensive overall assessment of the EU's impact on Turkey's democratic consolidation of Turkey in post- 2004 period. In addition to the analysis of progress reports for demonstrating the EU's impact on governmental domain, I will also refer to Freedom House's²⁰ annual reports for rating Turkish democracy.

7.5.1. Progress Reports:

In post- 2004 period, yearly EU Progress Reports continue to remind Turkey that there is still much to be done for Turkey's democratic consolidation and that the reform process must include not only adoption by the Turkish government, but also implementation by Turkish public. In the reports of this period, there is also emphasis on the fact that although Turkey has continued to make progress in several

²⁰ Freedom House is a U.S-based international non-governmental organization that conducts research and advocacy on democracy, political freedom and human rights. Its annual assessment of the degree of democratic freedoms in each country is widely used in political science research.

important areas, the pace of the reform has slowed considerably. In the following parts, I will provide more detailed analysis of the progress reports in order to understand the impact of the EU on Turkey's democratic consolidation at the level of government.

7.5.1.1. 2005 Progress Report:

In its 2005 Progress Report, in addition to the evaluation of Turkey's progress in certain areas, the Commission also provides an overall assessment of to what extent the priorities of Turkey's Accession Partnership²¹ has been met. This assessment is crucial since it focuses on Turkey's progress in meeting the Copenhagen criteria. In relation to the political criteria, it is stated that although some progress has been achieved it is not enough and political reforms needs to be further consolidated and broadened (European Commission, 2005a: 137).

The Report mentions that despite various legal initiatives, freedom of expression still raises concern, since the amendments to the Penal Code provided only limited progress (European Commission, 2005a: 138). The Report states that "there have been a number of decisions, in particular in relation to the expression of opinions on traditionally sensitive subjects, which have led to both prosecutions and convictions" (European Commission, 2005a: 41). As regards democracy and the rule of law, although the Report acknowledges that important structural reforms were put in place, particularly in the area of the functioning of the judiciary, there is also

²¹ The Accession Partnership for Turkey was first adopted by the Council in 2001. In line with Turkey's development, a revised Accession Partnership was first adopted in 2003, and then in 2006. The aim of the Accession Partnership is to help the Turkish authorities in their efforts to meet the accession criteria. It covers in detail the priorities for accession preparations, in particular implementation of the *acquis*. A distinction is made between short-term and medium-term priorities.

emphasis on the unevenness of implementation on the ground (European Commission, 2005a: 41).

The Report also mentions that although reforms concerning civil-military relations continued, “the armed forces still exert significant influence by issuing public statements on political developments and government policies” (European Commission, 2005a: 41). Thus, for civil- military relations, the Report highlights the need for more efforts to ensure full civilian control of the military apart from the formal reforms (European Commission, 2005a: 138).

In sum, accepting that Turkey's political transition process is continuing and important legislative reforms have entered into force, particularly in the judiciary, the 2005 Report emphasized that the pace of the reforms has slowed in 2005. However, it is much more positive when compared to 2006 Report, as will be referred below.

7.5.1.2. 2006 Progress Report:

The 2006 Report is quite negative and emphasizes that reform process has slowed down in 2006 and there are still serious deficits in areas such as freedom of expression, minority rights and civil- military relations. In this regard, Jung (2007: 66) argues that “with regard to the reforms, stagnation seems to be the right word.”

The most important criticisms of the Report is directed at Turkey’s performance in relation to freedom of expression, freedom of religion, minority rights, the situation in the south- east of the country, trade union rights and civil military relations (Akçakoca, 2006: 11). The Report says that the Penal Code should be modified to protect freedom of expression. The Report expresses concern for

prosecutions for the expression of non- violent opinions under certain provisions of the Penal Code, especially Article 301. Therefore, the Report stresses the need to provide freedom of expression by amending Article 301 that criminalizes insulting Turkishness (European Commission, 2006a: 15). The Commission also warns that some legal restrictions on freedom of expression and media have been introduced with part of the antiterrorist law approved in June 2006 (European Commission, 2006a: 6 and 15).

The report also points out to the continuing political influence of the armed forces. It highlights that in terms of alignment of civil- military relations with the EU practices, there has been limited progress (European Commission, 2006a: 7- 8). As regards to rule of law, the report emphasizes that there should be more emphasis on the establishment of the independent judicial system (European Commission, 2006a: 10).

In the Press Release of the European Council's decision about the 2006 report, European Council also expresses its regret that the pace of the reform has slowed down in Turkey in 2006, and warns that Turkey should intensify the reform process and implement it with steady determination (European Council, 2006: 8). Similarly, in its Communication to the Council and the Parliament in 2006²², The Commission emphasizes the need for “determined efforts to broaden the reform momentum in Turkey during 2007” (European Commission, 2006b: 11).

In sum, similar to other reports in the post- 2004 period, the 2006 report on Turkey's progress towards accession has more to say as regards to deficiencies rather than to improvements in Turkish legal system in line with EU democratic criteria.

²² For the conclusion on Turkey' progress and shortcomings, see p. 53 of the document.

This is in large part due to the decreased credibility of the EU, and resulting decrease in the commitment of Turkish government for reform.

7.5.1.3. 2007 Progress Report:

The 2007 Report is also quite negative and once more emphasizes that the reform process has slowed down in Turkey recently. Similar to 2006 Report, 2007 Report voices concern for the continuing problems mainly in the area of judiciary, freedom of expression and civil- military relations.

In relation to rule of law, the 2007 Report highlights that “more needs to be done in terms of strengthening the independence and impartiality of the judiciary” (European Commission, 2007a: 10). It also emphasizes that there was no progress on the development of anti- corruption strategy and no body to perform anti corruption policies in Turkey (European Commission, 2007a: 11).

As regards to highly debated issue of freedom of expression, the 2007 Report is also negative. It mentions that the number of persons prosecuted (more than half under Article 301) almost doubled in 2006 when compared to 2005, and there was a further increase in 2007 (European Commission, 2007a: 14). So, the Report highlights again that Article 301, together with other legal provisions, needs to be brought in line with the EU standards. Otherwise, it is emphasized that “Turkish legal system does not fully guarantee freedom of expression in line with European standards” (European Commission, 2007a: 15). Olli Rehn also warned recently that freedom of expression as an important fundamental freedom still remains an area in which “reforms are badly overdue” and said that Article 301 that foresees up to four

years in prison for insulting Turkishness should be revised (as cited in Vucheva, 2008).

The 2007 Report also mentioned that the armed forces continued to exercise significant political influence, and the developments in this area are not enough (European Commission, 2007a: 9).

Therefore, it is obvious that democratic reforms undertaken in the emphasized areas of ‘fundamental rights and liberties’ (with special emphasis on freedom of expression), ‘rule of law’ and ‘civil- military relations’ have slowed down in the post- 2004 period. Hence, while the progress reports before 2004, and especially 2005, pointed to many important developments and reforms in these areas, parallel to the slow down in the reform momentum, progress reports since 2005 has more to say as to deficiencies, rather than to developments as regards to democracy. As Tocci argues,

Recent EU criticisms towards Turkey on its slowdown in political reform efforts stand as hard evidence that - despite continuing EU pressure – the Union has been unable to exert the same type and degree of positive political influence on Turkey as it had done in 2001-04 (in TESEV, 2006: 9).

In the following part, I will also analyze Freedom House Ratings for Turkish democracy in order to show how Turkish democracy has progressed throughout the years and to what extent this progress is attributable to EU’s impact.

7.5.2. Freedom House Reports:

Freedom House ratings for democracy is another important source of democracy and democratization that is widely used in political science research

worldwide. Since these ratings are mostly based on the level of political reform undertaken by the governments, I thought it would be suitable to analyze them to evaluate the impact of the EU's approach on Turkey's democratic consolidation at the governmental domain.

In the following table, I will illustrate the development of Turkish democracy throughout years, depending on the level of political rights and civil liberties, and then I will provide certain explanations of the Freedom House Country Reports as regards to the reasons of change or no- change.

Table 3: Freedom House Ratings for Turkish Democracy²³

<u>TURKEY</u>	1996	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Political Rights	5	4	3	3	3	3	3
Civil Liberties	Not available	5	4	4	3	3	3
Status	Partly Free	Partly Free	Partly Free	Partly Free	Partly Free	Partly Free	Partly Free

As seen clearly, there is continuous improvement in the quality of democracy in Turkey until 2005, both on the bases of political rights and civil liberties, although its status is still defined as 'partly free'. Here, the important point is not whether or not Turkey is fully democratic. Rather, the issue is whether there is improvement or not, since democratization is a process, not an end in itself.

²³ On a scale of 1 to 7, 1 being the best value, threshold is 2.5 as the minimum for liberal democracy.

Here, I will provide some of the evaluations of annual Freedom House Country Reports as regards to the change in Turkey and its underlying reasons²⁴. This analysis is crucial for the argument of this thesis, since the EU accession process is mentioned as an important factor in Turkey's path towards further reform and democratic consolidation.

2002: The debate over conditions for accession to the EU continued to dominate Turkey's political scene in 2001. In October, the Turkish parliament passed a series of 34 amendments to the constitution, including freedom of expression and association, gender equality, and the role of the military in the political process.

2003: Turkey's political rights rating improved from 4 to 3 due to a new openness in Turkish politics following the freely held November elections that brought to power the AKP. Its civil liberties rating improved from 5 to 4 due to progress on human rights framework and loosening of restrictions on Kurdish culture.

2004: In 2003, the AKP tried to reform some of Turkey's harsher laws, in hopes of being invited to negotiate with the EU for membership. These reforms included the easing of laws restricting the use of the Kurdish language, the curbing of the power of the military in political affairs. While the government has made a great deal of progress on the legal aspects of these reforms, actual practices have changed far more slowly.

2005: Turkey's civil liberties rating improved from 4 to 3 due to the passage of another round of major reforms, including a complete overhaul of the penal code,

²⁴ For more information on Turkey reports, you can look at the: <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=22&country=505&year=2003>

greater civilian control of the military, the initiation of broadcasts in minority languages, and a decrease in the severest forms of torture.²⁵

2006: Turkey continued to implement many reforms in 2005 as part of its effort to join the EU. However, the pace of reform slowed during the year. There is no change in terms of civil liberties and political rights when compared to 2005.

2007: EU accession talks were partially halted in December 2006. Public support for Turkish membership continued to fall in both the EU and Turkey during the year. There is no change in terms of civil liberties and political rights when compared to 2006.

In sum, similar to the evaluations of the progress reports, Freedom House Reports for Turkey also mentions that the progress has slowed down in Turkey. As discussed, this result is attributable to the change in the EU's approach towards Turkey.

7.5.3. Surveys and public opinion:

While the opinion polls up until 2005 regularly demonstrated over 70 % of public support for Turkish accession to the EU (Narbone and Tocci, 2007: 237), many recent opinion polls have underlined decrease in public support in Turkey. Turkish public is becoming cooler and more skeptical about the EU as a credible actor (*ZEI EU-Turkey Monitor*, 2006: 5), having accepted many painful domestic reforms as necessary for EU accession, but getting no guarantee of entry in the end. Therefore, we can attribute the decline in the Turkish support for the EU membership

²⁵ These are again reforms done to comply with the EU conditionality.

and the increasingly weakening overall image of the EU in Turkey to a parallel fall in the trust for the EU. This would have negative consequences for Turkey's ongoing democratic consolidation, keeping in mind the significance of implementation and internalization of the reforms undertaken by the governments.

In the following part, I will provide some key findings of important public opinion surveys done in Turkey as regard to the issue of EU membership and image in order to see how the change in the EU's approach towards Turkey is reflected in the minds of Turkish people. These surveys are crucial in our establishment of the linkage between the change in credibility of the EU and the impact of this change on public's overall image of the EU, since these two are highly sequential.

Similarly, although there is no one to one correlation between the findings of these surveys and the state of democratic consolidation in Turkey, it is crucial to analyze the changes in Turkish people's opinions as regards to the issue of EU membership and trust in the EU throughout the years, since internalization and implementation of the EU demanded democratic reforms is highly related to whether or not Turkish public believe in the credibility and legitimacy of the EU. In other words, the fate of democratic consolidation in Turkey that has been triggered by the EU accession process is depended on Turkish public's acceptance of the reforms demanded by a credible and trustworthy actor.

7.5.3.1. Eurobarometers (Standard):

Monitoring public opinion in the EU as regards to topics concerning European citizenship, such as enlargement, is the aim of the Standard Eurobarometer

surveys conducted on behalf of the Commission since 1973.²⁶ Although Turkey is not a member yet, it was also included in these surveys for the first time in 2004.

In the following table, I try to demonstrate the change in Turkish public opinion as regards to the perceptions and image of EU since 2004. Recognizing the importance of several other aspects mentioned in the survey, I have chosen to focus on four mentioned aspects due to their significance in analyzing the image of the EU and EU membership in Turkey. Hence, these findings are also crucial in demonstrating the extent to which Turkish people can internalize the changes required by the EU in the name of democracy in the existence of declining trust.

Table 4: Review of Eurobarometer Results

Date/Number of Eurobarometer	<u>EU membership would be a 'good thing'</u>		<u>EU membership would be advantage</u>		<u>Positive image of the EU</u>	<u>Trust in the EU</u>
	<i>Fall 04/ 62</i> ²⁷	71%	62%	75%	73%	63%
<i>Spring 05/ 63</i>	59%		68%		61%	41%
<i>Fall 05 /64</i>	55%		68%		60%	Stated to remain low.
<i>Spring 06/65</i>	44%		51%		43%	35%
<i>Fall 06/ 66</i>	54%		63%		55%	41%
<i>Spring 07/ 67</i>	52%		62%		53%	38%
<i>Fall 07/ 68</i>	49%		53%		Slightly less than 50%	25%

²⁶ For more information on Eurobarometer Surveys, you can look at: http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/index_en.htm. Similarly, you can look at European Commission, 2004 c, d; 2005 d, e; 2006 c, d, e; 2007 b, c; as specified in the select bibliography part.

²⁷ The first Eurobarometer for Turkey is the Fall 2004 one. However, in this survey, there are references to a survey done earlier in 2004, although it is not published in the form of official Eurobarometer. Therefore, the first box refers to earlier 2004 survey, whereas the second box refers to the official Eurobarometer 62 results.

As clearly seen in the table, Turkish public opinion as regards to whether membership would be a good thing and an advantage or not has developed in negative direction with one or two exceptions. Similarly, positive image and trust in the EU has shown considerable decline throughout years. Approximately, 26% decline in trust, 13% decline in considerations of membership as good thing, 20% decline in considerations of membership as advantage and 15% decline in the positive image of the EU is observed among Turkish public in about four years time.

Therefore, we can conclude that parallel to fall in the credibility provided by the EU in the post- 2004 period, we observe fall of trust in the EU and in perceptions of the EU membership as a good and advantageous thing among Turkish public. Consequently, we can expect limited socialization and increasing problems in the internalization of the EU demanded democratic reforms in Turkey in the post- 2004 period.

7.5.3.2. Transatlantic Trends:

Transatlantic Trends is an annual public opinion survey that examines American and European attitudes towards the transatlantic relationship, and analyses broad range of topics including Turkey's relations with the West.²⁸

In the table 5, I will review its results as regards to Turkey's attitudes towards the EU throughout the years. As argued before, examination of the change in the attitudes of Turkish public towards the Union is crucial due to two reasons. First, such examination demonstrates the parallelism between the decline in the credibility of the EU and the fall in the public's trust and warmth in the EU. Second, this

²⁸ For more information you can look at <http://www.transatlantictrends.org/trends/>

decrease in public's positive image of the EU is highly related to whether or not the process of democratic consolidation in Turkey will proceed smoothly without problems in internalization and implementation of the reforms, which are demanded by the EU.

Table 5: Review of Transatlantic Trends Results

Transatlantic trends	<u>Warmth towards EU in a 100 point thermometer scale</u>	<u>EU membership is a good thing</u>	<u>Support for EU leadership in world affairs</u>	
			support	See undesirable
2004 ²⁹	52 degrees	73%		
2005	52 degrees	63%	50%	
2006	45 degrees	54%	35%	47%
2007	26 degrees	40%		54%

Turkish attitudes towards the EU, measured in terms of warmth towards the EU in a 100 point thermometer scale, have shown 26% decline from 2004 to 2007. Similarly, those who consider the EU membership as good thing has declined from 73 % to 40%. In line with this trend, support for EU leadership in world affairs declined by 15% in one year, while those seeing this undesirable increased by 7%.

Therefore, it is clear that Turkish public is losing its enthusiasm for EU membership, which would have important consequences for the fate of Turkey's democratic consolidation. While the change in the EU's approach towards Turkey in the post- 2004 period can be linked to the decline in Turkish people's identification

²⁹ Turkey was first time included in this study in 2004.

with the Union, this trend would hamper the process of internalization and implementation in Turkey that is crucial for democratic consolidation in any country.

7.5.3.3. A&G Research Company:

The research by A&G Research Company is conducted in 7 geographical regions of Turkey, in 32 cities, 115 provinces, 134 villages with 2408 people that are above the age of 18 by face to face interview method on 23 – 24 September 2006.

In the table below, I will try to summarize the main findings of this study, again, in order to in order to depict a general picture of change in Turkish public opinion about the EU.³⁰

Table 6: Review of Findings of A&G Research Company

	Turkey should certainly enter to the EU	Turkey should certainly not enter to the EU	The EU will bring harsher conditions for Turkey during the accession	Trust in the EU
2002	56.5%	17.9%	–	–
2003	58.7%	9.1%	–	–
2004	67.5%	8.7%	51.1%	–
2005	57.4%	10.3%	65.4%	17.5%
2006	32.2%	25.6%	76.5%	7.2%

³⁰. For more detail and original version of the survey, you can look at <http://www.agarastirma.com.tr/abrapordosyasi.asp>

While 56.5% of the people thought that Turkey should certainly enter into the EU in 2002, this rate has fallen to 32.2% by 2006. Similarly, those believing that the EU will bring new harsher conditions for Turkey during the process of accessions have increased by 25.4%, while those trusting in the EU have fallen by 10.3% between 2004 and 2006.

Again, these findings signal the decrease not only in the credibility of the EU, but also in the Turkish public's support for the EU accession process that is crucial for real and persistent change in the quality of democracy in Turkey. It is clear that declining trust in the EU, together with increasing suspicion that the EU will bring harsher conditions for Turkey during the process of accession, signal the possibility of a lot of problems in terms of Turkish public's internalization of the EU required reforms.

7.5.3.4. Pew Global Attitudes Project:

The Pew Global Attitudes Project consists of series of worldwide public opinion surveys encompassing a wide area of subjects ranging from people's assessments of their own lives to their views about the world and important world actors.³¹ The following table in the next page summarizes the findings of one of the surveys included in the project, and it is another important source of showing the decline in Turkish support for the EU.

³¹ For more detailed information on the project, you can look at <http://pewglobal.org/reports/display.php?PageID=810>

Table 7: Review of “Rising Environmental Concern in 47-Nation Survey, Global unease with major world powers, 47-Nation Pew Global Attitudes Survey”

Pew Global Attitudes Survey	<u>Favorable view of the EU</u>	<u>Unfavorable view of the EU</u>
2004	58%	35%
2007	27%	58%

As seen, the ongoing frustration in Turkey as regards to the uncertainty prevailing in membership negotiations is also reflected by the survey of Pew Global Attitudes Project. According to findings of this survey, there is 31% decrease in the favorable opinions held by the Turkish public as regards to the EU, while a 17% increase is observed in the unfavorable opinions.

Similarly, according to another survey carried out in the 5 largest cities in Turkey after the opening of negotiations, only 55 % thought that Turkish membership would become a reality, while the rate was 61% previous year (Bulut, E. 2005; as cited in Visier, 2007: 15). It is important that such widely held opinions among the Turkish public endanger both the process of negotiations, and the success of EU’s conditionality by way of decreasing its credibility, which in the end could have serious consequences for ongoing democratic transformation in Turkey (Düzgit, 2006: 28).

In sum, as the above mentioned studies also demonstrate, public support and trust in the EU has decreased considerably in Turkey throughout the years. More and more people started to believe that the EU has treated Turkey with double standards,

and even if Turkey satisfies all necessary conditions the EU will not accept it as full member. Hence, growing public Euroscepticism is due to an overall mistrust of the EU fuelled by the European reluctance to include Turkey (Taraktaş, 2008: 254).

With the decline in the trust, positive image and credibility of the EU due to the EU's reducing support for Turkey's membership, identification with Europe and being European have also lessened in Turkey (Balcer et al. 2007: 35). In that sense, decreasing support for EU membership also means weaker identification with Europe (Balcer et al, 2007:13). As discussed; identification, legitimacy and resonance are key variables for successful socialization from the perspective of social learning model, and due to decrease in the credibility of the EU, these aspects are affected negatively in Turkey. Hence, by analyzing the change in Turkish public opinion towards the EU throughout the years, I have tried to demonstrate how decreasing credibility of the EU is reflected on the perceptions of Turkish public consequently, and what this would mean for the continuing process of democratic consolidation in Turkey from a social constructivist point of view.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

Depending on the historical analysis provided in the thesis, it is clear that the EU membership prospective and conditionality has had great deal of influence not only on Turkish political system, but also on Turkish public. However, the degree and nature of this impact on Turkey's democratic consolidation is closely correlated with whether the EU approach towards Turkey is credible or not.

Due to the recent emphasis of the EU on issues beyond Turkey's control, such as the absorption capacity of the Union and national referenda for the inclusion of Turkey in to the Union, the credibility of the EU and enlargement project is hampered in Turkish case (Aydın and Esen, 2007: 132- 133). Thus, the thesis concludes that the process of democratic consolidation in Turkey may enter into a stalemate due to impact of the decreasing credibility of the EU on the governmental and societal domains in Turkey in post- 2004 period. However, I want to stress here once more that the EU credibility is a necessary but not a sufficient factor for explaining democratic consolidation in Turkey. As Schimmelfenning (2008: 918) argues, although credible application of EU conditionality is crucial for domestic change, "it has to fall on fertile domestic ground" in order to be effective. As mentioned, democratic consolidation is a lengthy process that involves not only

stabilization of the institutions, but also internalization of the rules, norms and values by the public.

Therefore, it would be misleading to argue that only the EU's credible application of conditionality will lead to full democratic consolidation in Turkey all of a sudden. Even if the credible application of EU conditionality is existent, the process of democratic consolidation in Turkey may still be hampered due to continuing problems of internalization and implementation. However, it is also crucial to understand the external factors that have impact on this limited socialization in Turkey.

In this regard, acknowledging the significance of the domestic aspect of process of democratic consolidation, this thesis has studied the impact of the EU credibility on Turkey's democratic consolidation and has found that the EU factor has also crucial impact on the domestic actors in Turkey, both at the governmental and societal domains. In other words, whether or not democratic reforms and their implementation proceed smoothly in Turkey is found to be closely correlated with whether or not the EU approach towards Turkey is credible or not. Therefore, "EU support will be essential if the point of irreversibility in domestic reforms is to be reached" (Verney, 2007a: 219). Moreover, the credibility of the EU is crucial for the continuation of the EU's so called normative power in international arena.

The project of European integration is presented as a democratization project, especially since the time of Greek application. The EU's emphasis on democracy and human rights as central conditions for membership demonstrates the EU's self-image and role, and such a role conception reduces the ground for self-interested behavior of its members (Sedelmeier, 2006: 133). Hence, it is substantial that the EU upholds the law and the community effects constrain the aims and means while

reducing potential misuses of the community's bargaining power vis-à-vis the target countries (Schimmelfenning et al. 2006: 26). In that context, the EU's normative power is closely related to its credibility in the international arena.

However, in Turkish case, "the current downward spiral is underlining that domestic calculus and myopic interests are coming to the fore while the visionary idea of the EU is fading into the background" (ZEI EU-Turkey Monitor, 2007: 4). So, the existing "gap between the rhetoric and practice of what has been promised and expected" (Holland, 2002: 139) turns out to be dangerous for the EU's projection as a normative power.

In addition to its impact on the normative role of the EU, decreasing credibility of the EU has also significant consequences as regards to Turkey's progress towards democratic consolidation, as analyzed throughout the thesis. It is clear that such rapid improvements in Turkey's democratic order, especially during the period between 1999 and 2004, would not have been possible without a powerful EU anchor. While reforms have contributed to strengthening of democracy and rule of law, some important characteristics of Turkish state and society have started to change also and Turkey has experienced a kind of "silent revolution" (Narbone, 2007: 84).

However, it is also clear that for the EU to be effective on Turkey's democratic consolidation, its conditionality should be credible and accession should seem as a realistic option for Turkey. When more and more problems for Turkey's membership arise, and when more and more ambiguities appear in the EU's overall stance towards Turkey, as is the case in post- 2004 period, Turkey's prospects has become vague, and this has weakened the EU's impact on the country.

Indeed, it is quite ironic that although the political decision on the eligibility of Turkey's membership was already taken in 1999, many actors in the EU still concentrated on the adequacy of that decision rather than on how Turkish accession should be handled. Therefore, the offer of membership on the one hand and continuing doubts concerning Turkey's place in the EU on the other, is the underlying reason of the cynical trends in EU- Turkey relations and the fluctuations in the pace of Turkey's domestic transformation (Narbone and Tocci, 2007: 238).

Exclusion of Turkey would be a risky tactic, since this puts EU's own credibility at stake, and gives chance to Turkey to blame the EU for unfair treatment and discrimination (Grabbe, 2001: 1021). Moreover, Turkey's exclusion from the European project would strengthen the arguments of the fundamentalists that the Muslim world must turn inwards and unite against West.

Therefore, in order to reverse this "vicious circle of reversed commitment, weakened conditionality and stalled reforms" (Rehn, 2006: 6), both the EU and Turkey should be aware of their responsibilities, should be willing to finalize this process of accession. Hence, the point is that the EU should not employ double standards for Turkey and Turkey should remain committed to the idea of full membership as long as the reforms and their implementation continue. As Baban (2006: 13) argues, "the more Turkey- EU relations are framed by the principle of fairness and objectivity, the more likely Turkey's success in achieving democracy and human rights becomes."

In order for its conditionality to be credible and effective, the EU should stop giving the impression that factors other than Copenhagen criteria, such as the absorption capacity, are determinants of Turkey's EU membership. Similarly, the EU

leaders should not apply double standards when it comes to dealing with Turkey on sensitive issues of freedom of expression and minority rights.

Moreover, the EU should be sensitive to the internal dynamics of the process in Turkey, since domestic ownership of the process of Europeanization is very important. Similarly, EU elites have an important role to play in formation of more constructive debate on Turkish membership in Europe, by emphasizing the benefits of Turkish accession rather than just focusing on cultural or religious differences as a barrier to Turkey's accession. In this way, an enhanced relation of trust between Turkey and the EU may in the long run contribute to Turkey's democratic consolidation (Misrahi, 2004: 37).

Rehn provides a good summary of what the EU should do in order to contribute to credibility of the EU's conditionality and, consequently, to democratic consolidation in Turkey. He states that:

By keeping our word and sticking to the accession perspective, we can create a virtuous circle of credible commitment, rigorous conditionality and reinforced reforms. That means a more Europe-oriented Turkey. We must, at every stage, remain both firm and fair – not just firm (Rehn, 2006: 6).

In sum, "Turkey is the litmus test for the EU" (Euractiv, 2007: 2) in order to become an important foreign policy actor on the world and to use its most important foreign policy instrument, enlargement conditionality, more effectively. Similarly, the EU accession process is crucial for Turkey, since the EU conditionality has had an important transformative potential on Turkish political life and has contributed to consolidation of Turkish democracy, since the 1999 Helsinki Decision of the Union to grant Turkey an official membership status. Therefore, it is crucial that decisions of the EU on Turkey be universal, impartial and fair for both the continuation of the

credibility and normative power of the EU, and the success of Turkey's democratic consolidation in the long run.

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