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Turkey: identity politics and reticent Europeanisation

Turkey constitutes a particularly challenging case with regard to European-isation studies as well as the importance of identity politics in its relations to the European Union (EU). While Turkey can certainly count itself among Europe's neighbours, it is also much more than that. A candidate country with EU aspirations, an emerging economy comprising a mostly young and increasingly better educated population, Turkey's cultural diversity and regional importance make it a particularly worthy case study.

Starting from the 1960s and the signing of the Turkey–EU (then the European Economic Community (EEC)) Association Agreement, the relationship between the two sides has been, and remains, tumultuous, subject to calculations and tactical manoeuvring resulting from a changing political and economic landscape. While EU accession has long been at the core of Turkey's Westernisation and modernisation strategy, which would cement its role within the Western security and political economy nexus, this approach has been subject to change in recent years. Interestingly, this development has occurred precisely at the time when relations with the EU have strengthened, negotiations to join the EU have been launched and partnership with the Union has extended to more policy fields. To explain this rather paradoxical development, one needs to approach the issue from another perspective too, namely that of the EU.

Enlargement to Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) proved controversial among the EU-15 public and the notion of 'enlargement fatigue' swiftly entered the European elites' vocabulary. Hesitation and (in some quarters) outright hostility to the prospect of Turkish EU accession have led to a serious backlash in Turkey. Domestic political elites have signalled, in turn, their unwillingness to 'bow' to EU pressure, leading to an escalating war of words that has – perhaps fatally – undermined the prospects of Turkish accession in the future.

Nevertheless, Turkey's key geographic location, ample economic potential and assertive policies in the region render the EU–Turkey relationship subject to contingent factors with long-term repercussions and do not

afford the elites of either the opportunity to draw a concluding line to this relationship. Instead, the politics of pragmatism and the need for mutual cooperation have resurfaced in recent times, not least due to the spill-over effects of the Syrian civil war and the huge migration and refugee crisis (European Commission, 2015d). The latter has placed a premium on EU–Turkey relations and both sides, however unwillingly, are conscious of their mutual dependence in such turbulent times.

In line with one of the key themes of this book, this chapter considers the tensions between values and interests in the Turkey–EU relationship, using a longitudinal method. It engages with the Europeanisation literature in exploring the values and interests nexus, not least because of the frequent application of the Europeanisation research agenda to Turkey. In bringing values and interests into the debate and by engaging with the extent to which Turkey has been subject to the dynamics of Europeanisation, the chapter also sheds light on the role of domestic political and economic elites as well as public opinion. Finally, the chapter addresses recent developments in Turkey–EU relations that go beyond bilateralism, underscoring the salience of factors such as migration and instability in the Middle East as added variables to this relationship.

The chapter argues that Turkey's Europeanisation trajectory is far from straightforward. While the country's intensified relationship with EU institutions since the late 1990s has led to important political and economic reforms, pointing to a sort of Europeanisation effect, this process has been neither steady – given recent reversals – nor linear. Therefore, it is crucial to make a distinction between different periods. While the early phase (roughly from the late 1990s to 2007) was characterised by an enthusiastic adoption of EU conditionality to achieve the aim of launching accession talks, subsequent phases have led to a slowdown and partial reversion of this adoption. More importantly, the early phase was driven by top-down conditionality. Considerable legislative changes were introduced to pursue the accession objective without serious consideration of the possible repercussions of these changes and the need for proper implementation. A form of 'thin' Europeanisation had emerged by the mid-2000s and the deteriorating relations with the EU then led to a freezing of relations. Though the country maintains an accession perspective (albeit blurry and uncertain), its adaptation of EU values and norms, the identity-driven element of Europeanisation, is far from present. In addition, domestic political considerations now interact heavily with the country's foreign policy orientation – majoritarian politics and heavy societal and party political polarisation have undermined Turkey's EU prospects. Just when Europeanisation was supposed to kick in and 'lock in' progressive political reforms, these have been undermined – and the EU has been little more than an observer to the process.

This chapter continues with a theoretical discussion on Europeanisation and applies this framework to accession countries through the prism of

conditionality and the specific role of candidate countries. The next section introduces EU–Turkey relations by analysing some of the main patterns of Turkey's identity politics that have contributed to its domestic as well as international political outlook since the foundation of the Republic. The following two sections discuss both the 'opening' of Turkey since it acquired EU candidate country status in 1999, as well as subsequent developments that have undermined its EU aspirations. The final section, prior to the conclusion, accounts for these reversals and underlines how the 'thick' domestic-foreign policy nexus of the present time has led to policy choices and priorities incompatible with the country's membership desire.

Europeanisation: member states and candidate countries

Europeanisation studies have traditionally concentrated on the ways in which the Union has been able (or unable) to affect domestic political structures within member states (Börzel and Risse, 2003). In order to examine the precise conditions in which this works, the relative 'distance' between domestic and EU legislative and institutional practices often becomes the focus point ('goodness of fit'). It is at this conjuncture that institutionalist theory could enter the realm of EU studies by offering the opportunity to use sociological, historical or rationally grounded approaches to observe the degree to which Europeanisation can actually work (Tsar-ouhas, 2012).

There is, however, an alternative, 'bottom-up', approach less focused on elite interactions and more concerned with the absorption of EU norms and practices at a societal as well as political level. Here the EU becomes an intermediate variable while the search for causal explanations begins and ends at the national level, that is, with the member state concerned (Vink and Graziano, 2008: 9). The biggest obstacle in searching for convincing evidence of the Europeanisation effect is to identify the precise mechanisms through which the process occurs and in that way move beyond anecdotal evidence. One important contributor in that direction is Knill (2001), who has offered: a) changing domestic opportunity structures; b) framing beliefs and expectations; and c) institutional compliance. In line with Chapter 1 of this volume, it is crucial to underline that Europeanisation cannot and should not be seen as an a priori fixed and static process. It is subject to ideational diffusion travelling across space and time and subject to a variety of influences (Flockhart, 2010). The Turkish case study reveals the potency of such a depiction of Europeanisation.

The following analysis discusses the high relevance of such a typology to Turkey. As the mechanism on domestic opportunity structures suggests, the EU accession process did indeed offer the opportunity for a rebalancing of political forces within Turkey as a result of EU conditionality and the

introduction of important institutional changes. Although institutional compliance is more applicable to member states bound by EU law, this third mechanism on framing is also relevant to Turkey. The expectation of accession mobilised dormant forces and led to the active participation of civil society in Turkey by way of reforming policies and institutions. This mechanism is important in that it underlines the agency role of the EU, which seeks to mould beliefs and expectations along an EU trajectory and operates cognitively rather than through 'hard' mechanisms. It also does so through particular political discourse that legitimises certain types of policy behaviour as more 'appropriate' than others (Radaelli and Schmidt, 2004).

Europeanisation and the politics of conditionality

The Europeanisation literature has developed a framework to examine EU influence on candidate countries as well. This framework is by necessity different from the one directly applicable to member states by use of hard law. Instead, candidate countries have to be enticed through a carrot-and-stick strategy to adjust their policy paradigms to those prevalent among member states (Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier, 2005). This is a less formal, but not necessarily less powerful, set of incentives to arrive at desired policy outcomes (Bulmer and Radaelli, 2004).

The credibility of conditionality is central to this literature. For reform to be implemented in candidate states, the EU should guarantee to offer membership to them upon fulfilment of the specific criteria (political, economic and administrative) set out in the 1993 Copenhagen Summit (Avety, 2004). The chapter discusses this at length, pointing to the lack of credible commitment on the part of the EU towards Turkey, which eventually led to the deterioration of bilateral relations. A second key factor is the salience placed by the EU on specific policy areas. The literature assumes that conformity to EU norms and policies is much greater in those policy areas on which the EU places a premium, and that there is less pressure in those the EU regards as less important.

Turkey's multiple identities and relations with Europe: 1923–1980s

Relations between Turkey and the then EEC stretch back to the early 1960s and the signing of the 1963 Association Agreement. The Agreement envisaged a step-by-step approximation of the two sides on economic matters, which would then lead to the signing of a Customs Union, and then examine the possibility of Turkey's participation in the Community (European Economic Community, 1963). In this important respect Turkey has always enjoyed a privileged relationship with the Community, prior to receiving a

date to start accession negotiations. The Association Agreement, also known as 'the Ankara Agreement', is significant for two further reasons. First, it was indicative of Turkey's early recognition that the EEC would come to play a leading role in terms of economic cooperation in Europe and that Turkey ought to engage with this new entity to obtain maximum benefits from its existence. The fact that Greece had signed an Association Agreement a few years earlier was a further motivation for policy makers in Ankara. Second, and as important as the economic potential of the EEC was, its significance for Turkey was larger still. The EEC, just like other institutions and organisations in the Western world (the Council of Europe and NATO, for instance) was a goal to strive for in terms of confirming the country's Western and secular identity.

The Republic established by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in 1923 attempted a clean break with the Ottoman past, and Turkey's full incorporation into Western structures and organisations became synonymous with Atatürk's vision of a nation fully in tune with modernity, technological prowess and enlightened thinking (Landau, 1983). The West was viewed as representing those ideals and the consolidation of a staunchly secular regime in Turkey went hand in hand with the country's conscious efforts to emulate Western practice in all spheres of political, economic and cultural life. Atatürk's revolution and Turkey's Western identity were two sides of the same coin. Finally, domestic political consensus on the desirability of Turkey's membership of the Community was widespread (Eralp, 2009).

During the1960s and 1970s, EEC integration stalled and the dynamic of integration was halted. A staunch intergovernmentalism acquired powerful dimensions during the de Gaulle era in France as the General successfully stalled Britain's EEC membership prospects twice within the space of seven years. Yet even after de Gaulle's departure from office, the Community faced serious obstacles on the way towards further integration: the 'golden era' of welfare capitalism came to an end in the 1970s while regional instability in the Middle East and the surge in oil prices contributed to stagnation. Rising unemployment and the stagflation phenomenon eventually acted as an impetus towards further integration in the 1980s, not least through the adoption of the Single Market project. However, the road was full of obstacles and Europe's inability to break the cycle of economic crisis and political discord became apparent (Gilbert, 2012).

On the surface, this period does not herald important changes regarding Turkey's approach to the EEC. The dynamics of the Cold War and Turkey's role in it led to no change in calculations regarding the usefulness of Turkey as a Western ally in the region and relations with the EEC were characterised by stability. Nevertheless, and through the prism of identity politics, this period is of utmost importance. The introduction of multi-party democracy in Turkey in 1950 and the successful challenge of the 'periphery' in the form of the Democratic Party under Prime Minister Menderes

demonstrate the existence of multiple identities within Turkey's domestic socio-economic and political landscape. The 'core', which comprised all major state institutions as well as the party created by Atatürk, the Republican Peoples' Party (CHP), was faced with the first set of objections to its dominant role in identifying the character of the Turkish Republic, as well as its desire to singlehandedly determine the country's future trajectory, based on a 'raw' interpretation of secularism and the ascribing of a particular political and cultural stance in the public as well as private sphere. It is no coincidence that the country's armed forces emerged in this period as the guardians of the Republican regime and intervened in political life to 'safeguard' the Republic's achievements from forces inside or outside the country suspected of seeking to undermine them.

In the same period and especially after the 1970s, political Islam emerged as an explicit party political force and set out a narrative about the country and its 'soul' in sharp contradiction to the state ideology (Ayata, 1996; Gülalp, 2001). In the context of the Cold War, its ability to determine the country's future direction was limited, but it helped contribute to an increase in dissenting voices that sought to pull Turkey away from the EEC. It succeeded, however, in creating a precedent in the country's approach towards the West in general and the EU in particular, which came sharply into focus after Turkey became an official candidate country and when negotiations for EU membership were launched.

Following the adoption of the '24 January' economic programme in 1980, Turkey sidestepped its import substitution model of development and liberalised its economy. The process continued in leaps and bounds for most of the following four decades, although the country was plagued by serious political instability. The military coup of 1980 put a hold on the nascent process of political pluralism that the radical 1960s had helped initiate, and appeared to confirm that a 'strong state' was necessary to guarantee tranquillity at home and the country's continued alliance with the Western world at the international level. The country's Prime Minister and later President, the late Turgut Özal, epitomised the 1980s and 1990s and his political and cultural legacy resonated heavily with the majority of Turkey's pious, conservative and centre-right voters.

During Özal's period of office, Turkey's complex dynamics and conflicting identities found their expression domestically as well as in foreign policy terms. Domestically, Özal represented the periphery in its modernised version: conservative and observant in social and cultural terms yet welcoming of a US-style capitalism that aimed to catapult Turkey into the frontrunners of neoliberal restructuring (Önis, 2004). Reminiscent of Thatcherism in Britain, Turkey's Özal favoured an ever-expanding role for the private sector in economic affairs and did not hesitate to set up state structures – parallel to the existing ones – to bypass administrative hurdles towards a free(r) market economy. On the international front, Özal recognised the salience

of the EEC following the adoption of the Single Market and the economic opportunities that it entailed for the nascent export-driven sectors of the Turkish economy. Yet he also inaugurated a careful but determined shift in foreign policy that came to embrace the newly independent Turkic Republics of Central Asia as constituting Turkey's 'near abroad' and stressed the need to cultivate much stronger cultural, economic and political ties with Turkey's 'cousin states', whose liberation from the 'communist yoke' offered ample opportunities for Turkey in the region (Aral, 2001).

This process is very significant because it resonates with one of Turkey's many identities, namely the idea of Pan-Turkism. This asserts a singular definition of Turkic identity which is inexorably linked with the idea of fraternal unity among all of its subjects and which prioritises the cultivation of unity among the Turkic peoples. This is not a de facto negation of Turkey's Western aspirations or its membership of institutions like the EU. It only becomes one to the (very real) extent that the EU presupposes the existence and implementation of a set of liberally minded values and practices (such as respect for minorities and cultural pluralism within member states) (Hintz, 2013). Since such values and practices cannot but impede the desired unity of the Turkic people, they stand in the way of realising the potential that such unity holds for its members. Further, this reading of Turkish identity finds little difficulty in articulating an opposition to 'Western imposed' practices and values that are deemed unworthy of Turkey and which can then be portrayed as reflecting the Western world's (or Europe's) 'hypocrisy' or 'double standards' against Turkey, whose cultural difference from 'Europe' can then be taken for granted (Kushner, 1997).

If the Republican and Pan-Turkic identities offer important clues about the complexity of Turkey, a third and vitally important one is that of a synthesis between religion and nationalism, sometimes described as 'Turkish-Islamic synthesis'. Nationalism and religion (the latter interpreted and understood strictly along the lines of the majority Sunni sect) are hereby combined and thus stand in sharp opposition to Europe's liberal premises. On both national and religious grounds, this line of reasoning identifies multiple incompatibilities between the European vocation and Turkey's role in international affairs. Sharing similarities and differences with both the Republican and pan-Turkic visions, this sub-identity has grown steadily over time. Its flexible nature has turned it into a potent sociological force in Turkey, and elements from its core premise of combining nationalism with religiosity are widespread within and across political parties.

Before turning to a more explicitly political analysis of EU–Turkey relations since the 1990s, it is important to clarify that the sub-identities are not exhaustive of Turkey's complexity. Moreover, they are adaptive and their political utilisation or expression can take place in ways that break down the analytical barriers between them. Such is the case with the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP), whose long period in office has

clearly revealed the coexistence of alternative versions of identity politics and the domination of one identity over another expressed in concrete political action. The interesting question (which this chapter attempts to answer) then becomes: which factors contribute to the rise of a particular interpretation of identity politics? The answer has vital repercussions with regard to Turkey's EU vocation and the extent to which it desires, and is able, to join the Union.

EU–Turkey relations post-Helsinki: Europeanisation or not?

The Helsinki EU Summit of 1999 is a milestone in Turkey's relations with the EU since it decided to grant Turkey the status of a candidate country. It was followed by a period of intense political reform (Yesilada, 2002). Both the 1999–2002 coalition government headed by the veteran Bülent Ecevit as well as the single-party AKP government were determined to capitalise on the momentum created by the Helsinki summit. For all the changes that Turkey and Europe had undergone since the original application was launched by Özal in 1987, EU membership remained a key point of majority convergence for the country's elites as well as vast swathes of the population. Pre-accession conditionality worked remarkably well in addressing some of the core issues of concern for Europe, especially with regard to civil–military relations (Duman and Tsarouhas, 2006; Sarigil, 2007), the abolition of the death penalty and the liberalisation of political discourse (Heper, 2005; Müftüler Bac, 2005). The start of accession negotiations in 2005 was seen in Turkey as the decisive step towards membership and the realisation of a foreign policy goal that had long symbolised the country's suitability in a Western community of values and principles derived from a liberal world view. In the post-9/11 world plagued by the rise of a culturalist reading of international affairs and rising Islamophobia fed by ignorance and/or prejudice, Turkey was now assuming a new position away from a Cold War-oriented calculus.

Turkey was being modelled, and sought to model itself, as the primary example of a Muslim majority country at ease with a liberal democratic set of principles governing its domestic and international political behaviour. Traces of this approach were evident long after relations with the EU deteriorated. The 'zero problems with neighbours' approach at the international level and successive 'openings' towards discriminated minorities or groups within Turkey (primarily Kurds and Alevis) sought to underline the break with Turkey's past and usher in an era of expanded pluralism for all citizens of Turkey. Importantly, this modelling of Turkey along the lines of a fully Europeanised identity was not limited to Turkey itself. For the United States, Turkey could now play a new model role that would display the rightness of Washington's attempts to coerce democratic reforms in the Middle East in the aftermath of the 2003 Iraq invasion.

Given Turkey's embrace of this role and its conscious cultivation of a 'soft power' image in the region by use of TV series, free trade deals and visa waiving agreements, the strategy bore fruit. For many in the Middle East, Turkey's EU vocation became an experiment of intense interest to gauge both Europe's readiness for such an embrace and Turkey's own handling of its membership bid. The apparent success of conditionality appeared not only to back the theoretical exposé on Europeanisation and its (desirable) effects discussed here; it also seemed to confirm the empirical reality of 'normative power Europe' (Manners, 2002), which can entice positive reform in candidate countries and confirm the centrality of a liberal approach to international affairs (Aydin and Açikmeşe, 2007; Oğuzlu, 2013). Turkey's privileged relations with the EU through the 1995 Customs Union could now take a more serious turn and expand to the political sphere in a way unimaginable just a decade earlier. The EU was happy to credit itself with Turkey's transformation and both sides appeared content, with self-congratulatory descriptions of change.

Relations between Turkey and the EU deteriorated rapidly soon after the accession negotiations were launched and the pro-reform momentum stalled. The Arab Spring events of 2010–11 have also led to the resurfacing of an old debate: Western commentators argued over 'who lost Turkey' (Pipes, 2014) and the country's depiction as part of the Middle East problem instead of a European solution soon gathered pace. In 2016, and despite the hesitant revival of EU–Turkey relations on the back of mutual needs and dependencies, Turkey was as far from membership of the EU as it ever was in recent memory.

What has gone wrong? Why has Europeanisation not worked in this case? Is Turkey a *sui generis* case whose analysis cannot, and should not, follow standard Europeanisation tools? What sorts of calculations and policy preferences have led to the current divergence, and under what conditions may Turkey be able to return to the sphere of EU influence? The next section argues that identity politics is of central importance to understand the deterioration of relations, both with regard to the EU and Turkey. Nevertheless, identity politics in itself says little about contemporary EU–Turkey relations if it is not combined with a careful tracing of domestic political developments since 2007–8 and the rise of majoritarian politics in Turkey which then combined with foreign policy developments and the EU's own ambivalence towards it to produce the current outcome.

The EU debate on Turkey since the 2000s

Europeanisation theory rightly argues that the credibility of conditionality is a decisive variable in gauging a candidate country's commitment to, and implementation of, EU-conforming reform. Turkey's EU accession story is

remarkable in that this credibility appeared to evaporate rapidly precisely at the time when the country's efforts towards membership started acquiring structural characteristics.

The period in question is the early 2000s. Owing to the multiple electoral cycles in EU member states, a centre-left Council majority was replaced by a conservative majority whose appreciation of Europe as a cultural, as much as a political, entity complicated Turkey's membership bid. The rise of identity politics in Europe had already started some years earlier, as mass immigration undermined traditional party political cleavages and starkly demonstrated the increasing divide between the 'winners' and 'losers' of globalisation in Europe as well as the rest of the world. In addition, enlargement to Central and Eastern Europe had by that time become a fait accompli, even if it would not include all candidate countries at the same time (Szolucha, 2010). Popular resentment towards enlargement, though often motivated by genuine concerns regarding the absence of socio-economic convergence between Western and Eastern Europe, revealed a growing discontent with the pace and direction of European integration. It was also symbolic of a rising wave of EU rejectionism whose most profound expression has been seen in the xenophobic and hard Eurosceptic parties that nowadays flourish across Europe and beyond.

These processes had direct consequences for Turkey and often in unpredictable ways. Regardless of the merits or not of treating Turkey as a special case compared to Eastern European candidates, many EU leaders made a conscious, well-calculated and deeply populist attempt to portray Turkey as a country culturally alien to 'Europe' and the values that go with it, instead of a candidate country whose future fulfilment of the Copenhagen criteria would lead, if and when achieved, to full EU membership (Müftüler Bac, 2000). President Sarkozy of France was explicit in that regard, arguing that Turkey is an 'Asia Minor' state and therefore not eligible for EU membership (Mahony and Spongenberg, 2007). Words were then matched with deeds as France unilaterally blocked five of the thirty-three *acquis* chapters, erroneously stressing that such chapters would lead to full membership and thus had to be placed off the table. Sarkozy's successor, François Hollande, lifted France's veto on one of those chapters, yet the other four remain blocked. Combined with blockages imposed by the Council and Cyprus, Turkey is the only candidate country which, after a decade of (nominal) negotiations, has only been able to provisionally close one chapter.

The divisions between a primarily political approach to Turkey *vis-à-vis* a culturalist/identity-driven one was not simply down to individual leaders or enlargement fatigue. It was also directly related to the crisis that European integration went through in that same period, namely the failure of the Constitutional Treaty and the strong backlash that Europe's leaders experienced at the time (Startin and Krouwel, 2013). The long institutional crisis, resolved through the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty in 2009, left a

bitter legacy and enlarged the (fictitious or real) divide between Europe's peoples and its leadership. Instead of being a sought-after prize for geopolitical influence, larger markets and a more assertive foreign policy, Turkey's EU membership bid now appeared as an unpredictable gamble in a crisis context and as grist in the mill of inward-looking populism.

Turkey's policy change and EU membership

Yet if identity politics matters regarding the Union's stance towards Turkey, it matters as much regarding Turkey's waning enthusiasm for membership. The earlier discussion on Turkey's multiple and conflicting identities demonstrates not only the pluralism inherent in Turkey, but also the extent to which such identities are subject to appropriation by policy entrepreneurs. After assuming office in 2002, the single-party AKP government made it immediately clear that its understanding of Turkey's role in regional and global affairs was very different from the exclusively Western-oriented rationale that had dominated, with some exceptions, the state bureaucracy and mainstream political parties until then. According to former Prime Minister and earlier adviser to Presidents Gül and Erdoğan, Ahmet Davutoğlu, Turkey has the unique potential to punch above its weight due to its geographical location, rich cultural resources and 'soft power' potential in regions such as the Balkans, the Middle East and the Caucasus region (Aras, 2009; Davutoğlu, 2001, 2008).

This was not (and is not) to deny the importance of EU membership for Turkey and the prestige and resources that would accompany it. After all, EU membership is still characerised by senior political figures in Turkey as the country's 'strategic goal'. It is, however, indicative of a mindset that acknowledges Turkey's special role and status *visà-vis* 'conventional' European powers and which sought to diversify Turkey's foreign policy as a sign of its increasing assertiveness. Multiple free trade deals and visa waiver agreements in the regions as well as mediation efforts in the Arab–Israeli conflict (Altunişik and Cuhadar, 2010) and elsewhere were used to imply that the Ottoman Empire may be no longer, but that the 'new' Turkey that emerged after the rise of AKP to power would do everything possible to reclaim a large part of the Ottoman past with regard to Turkey's central role in former Ottoman lands.

Until its re-election in 2007, the AKP government complied with EU requirements and appeared to freshen up Turkey's approach to regional disputes, not least with regard to its proactive policies for a settlement in the decades-old Cyprus dispute (Çelenk, 2007). The attempt to close down the AKP as a 'focal point' of 'religious extremism' reminded many in the party and outside it that old political habits die hard and that consolidating its ability to govern rather than administer the country still hang in the

balance. Able to count on stringent EU support, the AKP not only survived the crisis through a favourable Constitutional Court ruling but also returned to office with an increased majority and proceeded, over time, with the initiation of a careful set of tactical moves to transform the state apparatus in its favour (Saatçioğlu, 2014). Given the shortcomings of the opposition and the overwhelmingly positive view, by most Turkish citizens, of former Prime Minister and today's President Erdoğan, the party succeeded in monopolising the ability to dictate the political discourse and to transform the party system towards a dominant model (Ayan Musil, 2014). The process has been successful, but not without cost. Turkey's ability to act as a pole of attraction, at least for Middle Eastern countries, has by now been replaced by frozen conflicts and open animosity with most neighbours, including states with which relations flourished precisely due to AKP policy prescriptions in the early 2000s.

The Arab Spring has played a decisive role, albeit in an indirect way, in the deterioration of EU–Turkey relations. Previously, Turkish policy makers were able to match solid Western alliances with a bold rhetoric on 'regional power Turkey' and its ability to attract others due to its cultural resources, economic might and political stability (Davutoğlu, 2008). The Arab Spring changed all that. Turkey chose to follow a 'principled' foreign policy opposing authoritarian regimes, albeit in an inconsistent manner. Soon afterwards, Turkey became embroiled in conflicts in Libya, Egypt and, most of all, Syria. Though this is hardly inconsistent with the new leadership's self-image, it became increasingly problematic as Turkey's priorities and concrete policies started to openly contradict those of allies such as the United States and the EU. More importantly, foreign policy became part of a domestic political discourse and the portrayal of political adversaries as 'national traitors' in the case of foreign policy disagreements marked a new low in the history of the Turkish Republic. Upping the stakes and committing to the support of particular groups in countries such as Syria led to a largely unsustainable set of policy contradictions from which only a quick end to the Syrian civil war may provide an exit. Even then, the reversal of previous bold domestic reforms in a number of policy areas guarantees that Turkey's EU accession path will be fraught with near insurmountable obstacles for some years to come.

Conclusion

Among all the countries examined in this volume, Turkey has had the longest and most intense relationship with the EU. Mutual relations remain intense and active and the migration and refugee crisis is the best illustration of the fact that the two sides need each other more than they often care to admit. However, the analysis in this chapter has made it pretty clear that

the extent to which Turkey has been Europeanised is ambiguous at best. It has not hesitated to follow a set of policies that are at odds with EU priorities. It has occasionally doubted the wisdom of EU membership and has openly accused EU states of hypocrisy, double standards and more. More worryingly, 'reform fatigue' (Patton, 2007) has recently been replaced by regressive reforms in vital areas, such as the judicial system.

How can one begin to explain this emotional and, at least to many, irrational stance? In the preceding analysis we have discussed the existence of multiple identities that have historically coloured Turkey's approach towards the West in general and Europe in particular. The staunchly pro-Western stance of the early Cold War period reflected the dominant political consensus and brought the set of social forces espousing that goal to the fore. During the 1970s and 1980s, and as part of the rise in identity politics throughout the world, a more exclusive type of nationalism was coupled with the rise of political Islam to complicate Turkey's domestic dynamics. This had little bearing on Turkey's foreign policy priorities and outlook for as long as Cold War 'stability', relative economic backwardness, and the domestic political equilibrium could be taken for granted.

By the 2000s, Turkey had changed to an extent that would have been hard to foresee a few decades earlier. It had created a deregulated economy at ease with neoliberal globalisation and was actively pursuing a multi-dimensional foreign policy premised on a combination of soft power and geopolitical realities (Murinson, 2006). Domestic political developments, however, are by now intensely intertwined with its foreign policy goals and the separation line between the two has largely disappeared. Since the onslaught of the Arab Spring, Turkey's sense of foreign policy direction has been disturbed and its longstanding alliances are now shakier than ever in the post-Cold War period. More perilously still, relations with Russia have entered a dangerous downward spiral and averting the worst on multiple crisis fronts constitutes the only credible political alternative. Turkey's Europeanisation prospects are now very dim indeed, and a recovery in its relations with the EU does not merely hinge on a reversal of current trends within Turkey. As stressed earlier, Europeanisation is neither linear nor given. Finally, a genuine revival in EU–Turkey relations that goes beyond immediate, interest-based calculations also presupposes the ability of the EU to emerge successful from long-term, strategic challenges such as Brexit and economic stagnation. It is a tall order and hard to fathom the best ways to bring it about.