

BOOK REVIEW

Constantine Arvanitopoulos (Ed.)

Turkey's Accession to the European Union: An Unusual Candidacy

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Turkey's accession to the European Union (EU) has probably been the most extraordinary case in the EU history. The reason why it is such an extraordinary case is because Turkey's European integration is related not just to the basis of the Copenhagen membership criteria but also to the ideational and religious components of the Union. That's why there needs to be a lot of research done in terms of cultural, ideological, political and economical aspects of the EU integration.

Fortunately, there has been a visible increase in the number of such studies recently. *Turkey's Accession to the European Union: An Unusual Candidacy* is a splendid combination of 17 research papers published under the editorship of Constantine Arvanitopoulos, Professor of International Relations at Panteion University (Athens) and the Director of the Constantinos Karamanlis Institute for Democracy, seeking to provide a comprehensive examination of political, security and socio-economical dimensions of Turkey's membership process.

The papers are full of insight with informative and contemporary debate from various scholars and researchers of different national backgrounds in order to make a better contribution to the ongoing public discussion of Turkey's accession. As Constantine Arvanitopoulos and Nikolaos Tzifakis state in the introduction part, the book is divided into three parts. While the first part (Chapters 1-6) discusses the institutional aspects of the EU such as EU enlargement, the fear of Turkey's integration from the perspectives of Europeans and Turks, the second part (Chapters 7-12) tries to come to grip the security implementations of Turkey's accession to European structures. Finally, the last chapter (Chapters 13-17) raises current socio-economic issues emphasising identity, religion, culture and political economy.

To cite an instance, the first chapter written by Constantine Arvanitopoulos and Nikolaos Tzifakis argues that employing enlargement as a foreign policy tool towards Turkey and the western Balkan countries has injected the deficiencies of the EU's external-relations policy into the enlargement process by raising the importance of 'expectations-capabilities' gap. Then, Julio Crespo MacLennan analyses the impact of negotiations between the EU and Turkey and the possible outcomes on the political



development of the two parties. While Diba Nigar Göksel stresses the need for predictability in EU-Turkish relations and suggests that the EU accession process should revitalize the enactment of much needed reforms, the chapter by Thomas Silberhorn points out that there needs to be a third way in the 'in or out' dichotomy of the EU membership which involves various forms of cooperation and integration between the EU and its neighbouring countries. Hakan Yılmaz examines the evolution of the major Eurosceptic themes and movements in Turkey, from the early years of the EEC-Turkey relations in the late 1950s until the Turkish general elections in 2007 and he illustrated that AKP (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi – The Justice and Development Party) is more likely to fail between Turkish Euroscepticism and European Turkoscepticism. Aristotle Tziampiris presents some basic factors against Turkey's EU membership, focusing on various perceptions and claims about the historical, social, cultural and demographic interactions of Islam with Europe.

In the second part, Thanos Dokos explains that Turkey could contribute to the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) as it has been a participant in peace-support operations under the command of UN and NATO. Therefore, he states that Turkey's EU membership would be an asset for the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). In the following chapter, Can Buharalı discusses the recent developments, particularly Cyprus' EU membership, and proposes some ideas to associate Turkey with the CFSP and ESDP structures and overcome the existing unwillingness along some member states. In the chapter by Özgür Ünal Eriş, the case of illegal migration has been considered and the new security threats to the EU have been examined. In relation to those threats, the chapter is analysed in the context of the relations between the EU and Turkey. Panayotis J. Tsakonas then discusses the Greek – Turkish conflict in the EU structure. Tsakonas argues that the EU can play a promising role in changing the interests of the parties involved by using its strength of the norms which is exerted on those parties and 'the type of socialisation' or 'the depth of internalisation' that the EU mechanisms produce. Kostas Ifantis discusses the Greek policy shift towards Turkey and concludes with Greece's overwhelming stake in a positive outcome for Turkey's EU accession process. Moreover, Ifantis even highlights some issues for future developments in Greece. Eugenia Vathakou then looks the Greek – Turkish conflict by exploring the emergence and development of governmental and nongovernmental initiatives, their nature and potential. Vathakou states that since Turkey's accession to the EU has increased the complexity of the environments of the Greek – Turkish conflict, this can both have positive and negative outcomes. While it encourages and creates themes, roles and institutions in the direction of peace, it can also cause chains of multiple connections among existing social systems on the side of the conflict.

In the last part, the chapter written by Dimitris Keridis starts exploring current socio-economic issues of the EU by discussing contemporary identity politics. Keridis correlates the current European identity with *today's post-war period* and states that reforming and adapting 'interwar Kemalism' would be the most appropriate way to deal with the debates over Turkey in Europe. In the following chapter, Ranier Fsadni continues the debate by discussing the main cultural arguments articulated both for and against Turkish membership in Europe such as religious dominance in



culture in Muslim countries and differences between Islam and the West. Fsadni also stresses that while the debate on Turkey's membership is taken into account, the current situation highlights the increasing Americanisation of European politics. While Ali İhsan Aydın looks at how 'Christian Europe' has positioned itself in relation to Turkey as a Muslim country, the chapter by Mustafa Akyol discusses Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's secularism and highlights that the flourishing of democracy, freedom and opportunity will be the only ways to adapt modernity in the Islamic world. Finally, Pantelis Sklias looks at the differences of Turkey's candidacy with other Central and Eastern European Countries and analyses Turkey's trade integration capacity, human capital, demographic dynamism and migration. Sklias concludes that the more Turkey compromise and try to change its political-economic environment, the closer it will become with the EU.

The collection brings together a number of knowledgeable authors with both academic and professional experience by showing interesting evidence and insights into current cultural, ideological, political and economical aspects of the EU integration. Therefore, the book has a very important contribution to the question of Turkey's admission to the EU structures undertaking a comprehensive and objective approach. I hope this promising study will herald many more like it in the future.

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