



From modernisation to globalization Turkey's path

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Abstract

The people of different societies are feeling the effects of globalization very strongly in their daily life. The rapid advances in the technological arena as well as the high-speed communication made the transformation harsher for developing countries. Turkey is one of those countries which experiences transformation even harder than many other developing countries in the globe, as a result of turmoil it has been enduring in the last 30 years. In this paper we analyze why Turkey has been experiencing all this turbulence much more severe and in a more complex way. As a requirement, we have had a short look at the foundation of the Turkish republic and its progress towards modernization. Then, we have assessed the recent developments occurring in Turkey from the globalization perspective as well the effects of the globalization process on this country.

Keywords: Globalization, IMF, World Bank, Universalization, Islam, Kurdish Problem, EU, Custom Union.

INTRODUCTION

Today, globalization is the most important trend of the world. Economic, political and social aspects of globalization have an enormous impact on states, nations, and polities. In this world, cultural values and ideas move and circulate quickly from one place to another; so much so that waves of democracy, ecological problems, or some aspects of American culture might easily be encountered even in the far corners of the globe³. Since the beginning of 1970s, the consequences of globalization have been altering states ever than before. At present, the people of different societies are feeling the effects of globalization very strongly in their daily life. Fusion and fission made many utopias real and possible. There is no nation or polity being able to run away from the

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consequences of globalization. The world is never the same in comparison to 20 or 30 years ago. The established contours and the terms of politic are being weakened in an unpredictable direction by the rapid pace of political and social changes in our world ⁴. Fusion and fission is so strong that there is a huge difference between even generations which goes after one another. This is especially a reality for the developing countries, since they almost never lived through the industrialization process properly. The rapid advances in the technological arena as well as the high-speed communication also made the transformation harsher for them than the developed countries. Turkey is one of those countries which experiences transformation even harder than many other developing countries in the globe, as a result of turmoil it has been enduring in the last 30 years. Why Turkey has been experiencing all this turbulence much more severe and in a more complex way should be analyzed carefully, and this requires having a short look at the foundation of the modern Turkish republic. Indeed, many problematic issues regarding the globalization process experienced in Turkey currently goes back to the early times of the Turkish republic.

BEGINNING OF THE MODERN ERA IN TURKEY

With the declaration of the republic in 1923, a new and very different era began for the Turkish people. The founder of the Turkish republic, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, converted the Ottoman Empire into a Turkish republic and initiated a modernization project almost in every aspect of life from alphabet, wearing hat to changing of metric system. Like almost all the elite Turks before him, his goal was to achieve the transformation of the Turkish state and society, since he believed that his country's future have laid to the West which Turks have fallen behind for the last three centuries. One can say that after 1923, the Turkish people, who were generally living unaware of the developments in the world entered a new era in which they never experienced in their lifetime before. , As a matter of fact, the main reason why Atatürk had decided to transform the Turkish society and the state entirely was that he saw that the ruling system of Ottomans was quite outdated and was not able to compete with the West. According to Atatürk, this situation was the result of the dominance of the West against all other civilizations globally and therefore, other countries had to imitate the Western civilization if they wanted to reach the level of the West. As a result of this, the Turkish republic has emulated the western civilization. Indeed, in light of this transformation one can claim that the decision of following the footsteps of the Western civilization as a modernization project has changed a whole country and affected its society completely. Thus, “*the*

⁴ Keyman, E. F., & Özbudun, E. (2003). Cultural Globalization in Turkey: Actors, Discourses, Strategies. In P. L. Berger & S. P. Huntington (Eds.), *Many Globalizations: Cultural Diversity in the Contemporary World* (pp. 296-319). Oxford: Oxford University Press, USA.

*precarious young republic, which emerged out of the Ottoman defeat and almost had entirely lost its economic élite, became meanwhile a regional power with a set of democratic institutions and a dynamic economy*⁵.

JANUARY 24, 1980 PRONOUNCEMENT

Although military coup d'état happened two times after 1923, nothing changed exclusively for the Turkish people, since Turkey was out of date economic standards as a much closed country.. The economy and financial markets were under the strict control of the state. It was a financial crime for those who possessed foreign currency without permission of the authorities. Export and import were very limited, and there were few companies doing business outside the country. The means of communication and having a television were a rare privilege for ordinary people and most people did not have any contact with other countries. Economy of the country was in crises by the late 1970s⁶, and there was no longer a way-out for the country in its habits of governance. In 1980, with the January 24 pronouncements Turkey initiated a major shift on its fundamental developmental route from a closed-economy to a market-oriented one⁷. Thus, a journey of economic globalization began in Turkey. The main characteristic of this period was structural adjustment with export promotion as well as the expansion of market forces. On the other hand, all this process of economic liberalization and deregulation has induced the second cultural transformation since Atatürk, which has been very effective on the society due to the fact that the republic was entering a different epoch.

While Turkey has oriented a new path with the beginning of the 1980s, there was a new economic globalization wave in the world so much that it was certain that Turkey would be affected from this wave. In the 1980s, there were the Reagan and Thatcher administrations in the US and the UK, both of which were conservative. One can say that neo-liberalization ideology was very much intact in these countries. Especially Thatcher, the Prime minister of the U.K, launched a radical privatization and economic liberalization campaign in the UK.

The architect of the January 24 Pronouncement, Turgut Özal, who became the Prime Minister in 1983 after the third military coup in 1980, was also inspired by this new wave to the extent that this new neo-liberalization campaign was used as a justification tool in his economic liberalization project. He declared that freedom of enterprise, freedom of conscience and religion and freedom of expression were his three core political principles. When his principal of freedom of enterprise is scrutinized, one can see that it was affected from the Thatcher's economic liberalization policy. It is

⁵ Jung, D., & Piccoli, W. (1999). *Turkey at the Crossroads*. Copenhagen Copenhagen Peace Research Institute. p.15

⁶ Güllalp, H. (1997). Modernization policies and Islamist Politics in Turkey. In *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey* (pp. 52-63). Seattle: University of Washington Press.

⁷ *ibid*

fair to say that as a consequence of “Thatcherism” on the global arena, it would be possible for Ozal to implement his projects more easily. As a result, in the early 1980s, Turkey was espoused by the IMF as well as the World Bank, and received massive public foreign assistance in support of stabilization and structural adjustment programs⁸. It is obvious that these programs helped Turkey transform itself in economic terms from an ineffective and closed country to much more effective and vibrant one in its region. A new entrepreneurial class was emerged, and a class of young Turkish businessmen opened to the world in this era. They did business in foreign countries and inevitably, they learnt how to think globally. On the other hand, a large amount of Turkish people, who had never used the means of communication in their life, got acquainted with telephone and television. These gadgets brought a vital change in their life. They began to communicate with each other easily as well as watched the world affairs on TV. In other words, the information era started for the majority of Turkish society newly and after this time, the effects of globalization would be felt much more strongly in the country.

Unfortunately, its luck began to change at the end of the 80s. By the end of the decade there had been only mixed results, and Turkey could not achieve implementing much of the structural adjustment program and finally, she lost much of the interest of the IMF and the World Bank⁹. The 1990s were not so good for Turkey. So much so that in terms of its economic performance, Turkey had a serious trouble during these years. The main reason for this result was the populist policy of the governments, which partly stemmed from a global change in the world: the collapse of the Soviet Union. The emerging of new states in the global arena, obviously, attracted the global institutions interest. Instead of Turkey, as a perfect example of a wearing relationship, they fully focused on the old iron-curtain countries. Turkey was once again affected from the globalization in an adverse way.

CULTURAL AND POLITICAL EFFECTS OF GLOBALIZATION ON TURKEY

In Turkey, the impacts of economic liberalization process in 1980s were mainly felt on two areas: cultural and political. Turkey has been much more influenced by the globalization period than elsewhere in the region, a consequence of the country's more open polity and developed economy¹⁰. It is mostly agreed that the 1980s and 1990s brought radical changes in the Turkish modernization¹¹. This has created a paradox in Turkish society that the increasing dominance of

⁸ Henry, C. M., & Springborg, R. (2001). *Globalization and the Politics of Development in the Middle East*. Cambridge Cambridge University Press.

⁹ ibid

¹⁰ ibid

¹¹ Keyman, E. F., & Özbudun, E. (2003). Cultural Globalization in Turkey: Actors, Discourses, Strategies. In P. L. Berger & S. P. Huntington (Eds.), *Many Globalizations: Cultural Diversity in the Contemporary World* (pp. 296-319). Oxford:

economic liberalization because of economic globalization has induced the resurgence of Islam as a powerful political and cultural force in Turkish society and political life. The Turkish modernization since 1980s has been more and more distinguished by coexisting of the economic liberalization and the revival of traditionalism and its appeal to a return to authenticity¹². It is sure that resurgence of Islam has occurred not only at the national level but also at the global level. The crises of ideologies related to modernist assumptions have paved the way for a proliferation of post modernist and old-fashioned politics of identity across the world¹³. Due to this turbulence, although an Islamist party had already been in political arena in Turkey since the commencement of the 70s, the real power of politic Islam yet appeared in the first half of the 1990s. In this way, globalization trend in the world has gradually affected Turkey on cultural and political means.

*Cultural globalization (has) create(d) both the universalization of Western values and cultural patterns and at the same time the revitalization of local values and traditions... To put it another way, cultural globalization is the process in which we can observe both the universalization of Western modernity and emergence of alternative maternities a clear example of this, the resurgence of Islam in Turkey*¹⁴.

In the first half of the 1990s, the influence of politic Islam has been felt very strongly. In 1995, after having become the first party in general elections, as in the 1994 municipality elections, the Islamist Welfare Party established the government. This situation affected the secularist elite of the country to the extent that they feared that Turkey would be derailed from its Western route. Despite the fact that the Welfare Party had emerged as the first party from the 1995 general elections and formed the government, it was that fear that led to the army to topple it in 1997¹⁵. After banned from the political arena by the Constitutional Court, her successor and a new Islamist party, the Party of Virtue, was founded; yet, she was not able to escape being closed as well in 2002. Thus, the globalization dialectic was temporarily held back in Turkey by military backed elite with the aim of limiting, if not wiping out, the capacity of Islamism to formulate and enact its synthesis¹⁶. However, the globalization dialectic showed its influential power again and in spite of all the obstacles from the secularist elite, in 2002 elections, AKP (Justice and Development Party),

Oxford University Press, USA.

¹² ibid

¹³ Güllalp, H. (1997). Modernization policies and Islamist Politics in Turkey. In *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey* (pp. 52-63). Seattle: University of Washington Press.

¹⁴ Keyman, E. F., & Özbudun, E. (2003). Cultural Globalization in Turkey: Actors, Discourses, Strategies. In P. L. Berger & S. P. Huntington (Eds.), *Many Globalizations: Cultural Diversity in the Contemporary World* (pp. 296-319). Oxford: Oxford University Press, USA.

¹⁵ Henry, C. M., & Springborg, R. (2001). *Globalization and the Politics of Development in the Middle East*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

¹⁶ ibid 212

separated from the Party of Virtue, won the elections with 365 chairs of 550 in the Parliament and established the cabinet. While there is an open crack between the military backed elite and the AKP government, which has always been seen to pursue an Islamist agenda by this elite as a consequence of "the Greater Middle East Project" of the United States, military could only watch cautiously. Once more, the effect of globalization has been felt on Turkey. Otherwise, it is undoubtedly true that the AKP government would have had the same end like its predecessor.

KURDISH PROBLEM OF TURKEY

Another very important trouble of Turkey based on the effects of globalization is the Kurdish question in its southeastern region. Since the 1980s this question has affected Turkey and obviously, it will also be affecting in the near future. There is a connection between Kurdish problem and the historical and structural background of Turkey's modernization project. At the Ottoman times an identity trouble had never occurred for the polities, and they never felt themselves alienated from society. However, after the foundation of the Turkish republic, because the new regime refused the ethnic diversity, the Kurdish identity was not recognized as another ethnicity. The new government also declared that every Turkish citizen was Turk without his/her ethnic distinctiveness. While this point of view almost never appeared to cause any trouble at first excluding 1930 Dersim mayhem, at the beginning of 1980s with the effects of globalization process the Kurdish people has begun to have ambitions for their ethnic identity. Consequently, aspirations to live their identity brought a strict dilemma about the way through which they would follow. Unfortunately, a group then took the name of PKK (Kurdistan Salvation Party) chose terrorist actions as a tool for their goals and started an armed uprising against the Turkish republic which has lasted for more than 25 years. It should be emphasized that if the PKK had preferred to solve identity problems of the Kurdish people peacefully, the globalization process might have continued on its normal course in Turkey. At present, in spite of the PKK' last attacks on the security forces, after the capture of Abdullah Öcalan, leader of the PKK, many things have normalized in the region, and among the Kurdish people it has been understood that an armed uprising never become the part of a solution. Nowadays, with the impact of the EU, in addition to many dedicated Turkish and Kurdish intellectuals' efforts, regarding their identity concerns Kurdish people feel themselves much freer than in the past. As an example of this process, we can mention the broadcasting of public and private channels as well as several radio stations in Kurdish language. When these permissions are thought alongside the fact that some EU countries like Greece still has not given this permission to their ethnic minorities, the importance of the point that Turkey reached can be understood more easily.

For Turkey, the target of entering the EU absolutely induce her to find a balance in regard to her politics that ultimately, it will bow to pressure from the EU and will have to accept the rights of the minorities. This brings us Turkey's EU journey, which is very much affected by this globalization process.

IN TERMS OF GLOBALIZATION THE IMPACTS OF EU ON TURKEY

The EU is one of the most significant obstacles in Turkey's participation in the globalization process. Actually, it is a target that is compatible with Turkey's general inclination¹⁷. In light of the effects of globalization, we should discuss Turkey's long EU journey with all dimensions. Turkey's bid to enter the EU began in 1963, which was resulted an association agreement signed with the then the European Community. Subsequently, in 1996 the customs union agreement was signed. "On the occasion of the signing of the Ankara agreement, the then president of the EC commission, Walter Halstein, assured: Turkey is a part of Europe"¹⁸. It was certainly a quite arguable assertion that neither the Turkish people nor the Europeans would completely accept it as a real fact. First of all, despite all efforts of her elite, Turkey has never belonged to the European cultural and religious heritage. On the contrary, through the centuries Turkey has been perceived by Europeans as "the other" and there have always been considerable objections for Turkey from European people's side. In this regard,

there are a series of issues that need to be understood, and acted upon as constructively as possible. To begin with, the Austrian opposition to the negotiations seems mainly symbolic, with deep historic roots. Austria, now a minor country in Europe, remembers that its greatest moment was in 1658 when it stopped the Ottoman expansion at the gates of Vienna, the start of a rollback of Turkish influence that took centuries of struggle¹⁹.

While these beliefs are understandable to some degree, it is obvious that Turkey's acceptance into the EU will strengthen its institutional capacity and influence to tackle current global political issues that threaten international peace and prosperity. Today, many pundits around the world have similar thoughts about the fact that the Turkish accession to the EU would provide a potential to avert the clash of civilization, since a Turkey in the EU will more effectively fulfill its function to build a bridge between the West and the Muslim world²⁰. It is agreed by many people in Turkey

¹⁷ Platform, V. A. (2002). 5th Abant Meeting Final Declaration [Electronic Version]. *Abant Platform: Globalization: Political, Economic, and Cultural Dimensions* Retrieved 01/18/2011, from <http://www.abantplatform.org/main/component/option/frontpage/section/1/category/139/content/540>

¹⁸ Jung, D., & Piccoli, W. (1999). *Turkey at the Crossroads*. Copenhagen Copenhagen Peace Research Institute p.12

¹⁹ Elver, H., & Falk, R. (2005, 12/21/2005). Midnight Diplomacy: On Turkish Relations with Europe. *Zaman*,

²⁰ Emerson, M., & Tocci, N. (2004). Turkey as a Bridgehead and Spearhead: Integrating EU and Turkish foreign policy [Electronic Version]. *Centre for European Policy Studies: EU-Turkey Working Papers, 1*, from <http://www.ceps.eu/system/files/book/1143.pdf>

that as a result of her economic and social standards, it is not possible to accept Turkey into the EU immediately. However “...the beginning of negotiations with Turkey-whatever the uncertainty of the outcome is-would lead to a very different Turkey and a very different relations between Europe and the Islamic world”²¹. A string of constitutional and legislative reforms that Turkey has undertaken since 2001 including to abolish the death penalty, enactment of a new penal code, and extension of new rights and protections to minority groups are very important achievements of both the EU and Turkey²². Turkey's capacity to transformation should not be undervalued. “When the 10-year old EU-Turkey Customs Union required the implementation of sophisticated and complex EU-style competition policy, (Turkey) succeeded in doing in a relatively short period of time”²³. In the context of globalization if widespread Muslim trends are examined in the Turkish and Muslims world, two main lines are discerned in terms of their world views, the perspectives of the West and solution proposals for the Islamic world: The first Islamic line was evolved under the effect of colonialism and manipulated by the ideas exported to Muslim countries that a fully anti-Western attitude exists almost at an ontological level. The second is a rather different Islamic line, that apart from being aware of its colonial face, it comprehends the West with a partial feeling in which local elements are at the forefront. The most important distinction between these two lines is that those belonging to the first approach generally look for the West and other outside powers to put the blame for their troubles, whereas the second approach rather focus inside and lay emphasis on the main problems of Muslim nations, such as lack of freedom, poverty and illiteracy²⁴. Acceptance of Turkey into the EU will encourage the second line inside and outside Turkey and definitely it will serve the world peace and stability especially after the view of the claim about the clash of civilizations. As it can be seen, while the beginning of Turkey's EU journey has initially had an impact on locally and was a direct result of the modernization project, now, its EU perspective has become to produce very important global effects in a direct or indirect way. With the effect of EU, Turkey has begun a serious transformation process. It is sure that millions of people from the Islamic world are watching this process with a great interest.

²¹ Patten, C. (2004). Turkey - The EU's Gate to the Islamic World? [Electronic Version]. *The Globalist*. Retrieved 02/24/2011, from <http://www.theglobalist.com/StoryId.aspx?StoryId=3960>

²² Schilling, T. P. (2005). Turkey and EU: How inclusive can Europe Afford to Be?? [Electronic Version]. *Commonweal*. Retrieved 02/28/2011, from <http://www.commonwealmagazine.org/turkey-eu-1>

²³ Hakura, F. (2005). Turkey and the EU - Date with Destiny [Electronic Version]. *The World Today*, 61. Retrieved 10/19/2005,

²⁴ Bilici, A. (2005, 02/23/2005). Local Huntingtons. *Zaman*, from <http://www.todayszaman.com/columnist-16885-local-huntingtons.html>

CONCLUSION

*“Globalization manifests itself in many ways. Some sort of (certain) global consciousness is developing in which the world is conceived as one global unit transcending national borders”*²⁵. Every society in the world has been under the effects of globalization. Those who suppose that socially or economically they have been able to escape from the globalization process are absolutely wrong. To some degree they can hope to get away from the social or economical aspects of globalization; yet, they can never escape the impact of globalization which shows its face as terrorism, proliferation of nuclear weapons, the greenhouse effect, or the international drug trade²⁶. Thus, there is no doubt that in recent years the globalization process has been happening in a way which makes it difficult to keep up with the rapid pace of change. *“Turkey is no exception to this. On the contrary, during the last decade, Turkish society has undergone rapid social, cultural, economic and political change; the manifestations of which have been felt in every sphere of social life”*²⁷. From the beginning of the 1980s Turkey has come to an incredible point in a two-decade period. I remember the day a telephone was first installed at our home in 1985 which was almost a century after the telephone was invented. Today, 11-12 year old elementary school children carry cell phones, playing video games and chatting with each other via internet. 20 years ago almost all work force in business and industrial areas was male; two thirds of the population was living in the countryside. Today women are everywhere and in some areas like universities and schools they are much more numerous than men and, seventy percent of the population lives in cities. In 1993, when I first came to the police station where I worked for two and half years, one of the punishment methods was illegal corporal punishment, although it was banned by the law as it is today. Today with the impact of the EU regulations it is strictly forbidden to use prohibited techniques at police stations and those who break the rule might be punished by as much as an eight-year prison sentence.

In the past for the Kurdish people of Turkey it was impossible to use their native language, or open institutions in which they can learn how to write or read Kurdish. Today they see that all these restraints have been abolished. Another subdivision of an Islamic movement, AKP (Justice and Development Party), although it was separated from the main line and declared to abandon its Islamist views, is administrating the government and has become a foremost supporter of Turkey's EU membership which its main line, Milli Gorus (Nationalist View) has harshly criticized. Why this

²⁵ Lundestad, G. (2004). Why does Globalization Encourage Fragmentation? *International Politics*, 41(2), 265-276.

²⁶ Ferguson, Y. H., & Mansbach, R. W. (2004). *Remapping global politics: history's revenge and future shock*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

²⁷ Keyman, E. F., & Özbudun, E. (2003). Cultural Globalization in Turkey: Actors, Discourses, Strategies. In P. L. Berger & S. P. Huntington (Eds.), *Many Globalizations: Cultural Diversity in the Contemporary World* (pp. 296-319). Oxford: Oxford University Press, USA.p 316

Islamic movement has developed a pro-globalization movement? The answer is that it benefited from international opportunities to a great extent. As a result of the globalization effect it gained legitimacy in the international ground; otherwise, it was not possible for it to having been digested by the secularist elite in this manner. And also as the rule of fusion and fission, it affected the international arena in the sense of Islamic belief and policy.

It is clear that the Turkish people generally have a positive attitude towards the globalization process in Turkey, since they are well aware of the fact that this process is changing Turkey in a positive way and improving their lifestyle as an international leverage to solve its democratic and human rights problems. In the surveys, almost seventy percent of Turkish people state positive opinion on the effects of globalization except family matters²⁸. This situation shows us that the majority of Turkish public support globalization. It is sure that with its cultural and political diversity, Turkey will have a leading role in shaping this process in its region. Because the Turkish people see that many of the social and economic troubles confronting most Middle Eastern countries stem from their failure to become more integrated into the globalization process²⁹.

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²⁸ Forum, W. E. (2002). Global Public Opinion on Globalization [Electronic Version]. Retrieved 02/02/2011, from http://www.globescan.com/news_archives/WEF_Poll_Brief.pdf

²⁹ Looney, R. (2004). Why has globalization eluded the Middle East [Electronic Version]. *Strategic Insights, III*. Retrieved 03/25/2011, from <http://www.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?AD=ADA524482&Location=U2&doc=GetTRDoc.pdf>

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