

Role of EU Funds in Molding Attitudes toward EU Integration:

The Case of Turkey

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Abstract

This study tries to answer the initial question of ‘to what extent do the EU funds as Europeanization instruments affect the attitudes of the individuals toward the EU in a candidate country’, namely Turkey. Europeanization is the natural process of creating awareness and knowledge on the EU in the candidate countries with the main aim of achieving the European identity. The EU funds of pre-accession tend to be the most influential tools in attaining a favorable attitude towards the EU. In this respect, the candidate countries are the ‘consumers’ of Europeanization . Therefore a multi-attribute attitude model widely used in consumer behavior is suitable for this study. The model regards attitudes as a function of individual’s perception and assessment of the key attributes or beliefs held toward a particular object. The attitude-toward-object model of Fishbein will be used to assess individuals’ attitude toward European Union. The model allows the researcher to study the attitude toward the object (EU), from a multi-attribute perspective, and provide insight into the formation of an attitude in terms of two dimensions – beliefs and evaluations. It will be a first study applying a consumer attitude model to understand the Europeanization process and molding of attitudes toward the EU.

Keywords: Europeanization, EU, Turkey, Attitude, Funds

Introduction

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The Reflections of Europeanization in Attitudes

Attitude is one of the most important notions in all of behavioral studies and marketing. Attitude has that central role due to the fact that it is believed to strongly influence behavior (Churchill, 2005).

Researchers and practitioners share common interest in attitude. Although attitude is a widely used notion in all of social psychology, there isn’t a full agreement on the concept. However there seems to be substantial agreement on the following:

- Attitude represents a predisposition to respond to an object.
- Attitude is persistent over time but it can change. Alteration of an attitude that is strongly held requires substantial pressure.
- Attitude has a directional quality – favorable/unfavorable or positive/neutral/negative.

These lead to the definition of attitude as a learned predisposition to behave in a consistently favorable or unfavorable way with respect to an object (Schiffman

and Kanuk, 2004). Attitudes are our evaluations of objects, people, places, brands, products and organizations (Sheth and Mittal, 2004).

Psychologists have tried to construct models that capture the underlying dimensions of an attitude. Multi-attribute attitude models regard attitudes as a function of individual's perception and assessment of the key attributes or beliefs held toward a particular object. One of these models, known as the attitude-toward object Fishbein model, defines attitude as:

$$A_o = \sum_{i=1}^n B_i \times E_i$$

where A is the overall attitude, B_i is the belief that object I has that attribute and E_i is the evaluation of that attribute and n is the number of attributes.

This model will be used to assess individuals' attitude toward European Union. The model allows the researcher to study the attitude toward the object at hand, in this case the EU, from a multi-attribute perspective. The identification of those attributes is not easy but possible through a number of methods including self reports (Churchill, 1999). Another important contribution of this model is to provide insight into the formation of an attitude in terms of two dimensions – beliefs and evaluations. Overall attitude of individuals toward EU might differ due to their differing beliefs and/or differing evaluations of the same belief. There instead of getting an overall picture the model will enable the researchers to analyze attitude on various dimensions – like social, cultural, political and economic – plus get a detailed picture of each by tackling the attributes of that dimension.

The identification of the attributes is through two methods. First the extensive literature, expert opinions and the Eurobarometer survey data is used to identify the first set of attributes. Second, additional attributes identified through the in-depth interviews will be added to the list. Attributes identified through the Eurobarometer 2007 are as follows:

- human rights

- democracy
- peace
- respect for others
- equality
- tolerance for the disadvantaged groups
- individual freedom
- political participation
- national pride
- the rule of law
- environmental protection
- state interventionism
- free competition
- role of institutions including army
- religion

Additional attributes are added from literature and expert opinions:

- economic prosperity
- equal distribution of income
- economic growth
- better jobs
- better workplace
- economic opportunities

- more foreign investment
- workforce diversity
- social inclusion
- social cohesion
- gender
- cultural diversity
- intercultural dialogue

The pluralistic variety of the Europe Union is considered as one of the major characteristics of the integration and in the last decade it is mostly enhanced with the enlargement and the spill-over effects of the established policies in the candidate countries (Schendelen, 2003). Enlargement process has different effects on social groups. It is likely that those social groups that have been excluded from the benefits of transition will also be excluded from the benefits of integration (Tang, 2000). Inotai (2000) states that socio-economic transformation produces profound changes in the social structure of all candidate countries and he classifies the advantaged and the disadvantaged groups in the society. Accordingly, dynamic people with entrepreneurial mentality, flexibility, mobility, and cooperative behavior and all groups that consider membership in the EU as a better forum to articulate and implement their interests are able to involved in international cooperation and benefit from the transformation process (Inotai, 2000). Tang (2000) argues that there are different criteria affecting the capability of pursuing the benefits of the integration process. According to Tang (2000), vulnerable groups (socially excluded groups) could continue to be the losers of integration unless corrective measures are taken. Lejins (2000) mentions that the proper use of pre-accession funds and informing the public about its potential to increase living standards holds tremendous potential in gaining public support. Gabel and Palmer (1995) state that an individual's level of support is positively related to the personal potential to benefit from the EU integration. Ehin (2001) supports this statement and identifies micro-level economic expectations as one

of the possible determinants of public support for EU membership in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania.

The EU funds that target the empowerment of groups in the society play an important role in the transition process to achieve the public support in the candidate country which will lead to the Europeanization of the candidate country. Europeanization is the natural process of creating awareness and knowledge on the EU in the candidate countries with the main aim of attaining the European identity. Zerbinati (2004) takes the definition of Radeaelli (2003) for to clarify the scope of the Europeanization processes including construction, diffusion, and institutionalization of formal and informal rules, procedures, policy paradigms, styles, 'ways of doing things' and shared beliefs and norms which are first defined and consolidated in the making of EU public policy and politics and then incorporated in the logic of domestic discourse, identities, political structures, and public policies.

The EU funds of pre-accession tend to be the most influential tools in creating a favorable attitude towards the EU. In this respect, the candidate countries are the 'consumers' of Europeanization. According to Lippert, Umbach and Wessels (2001) Europeanization is about the resources in time, personnel and money directed by current and future members states towards the EU level.

The recent researches undertaken in Europeanization focus on analyzing the effects of EU funding in giving impetus to achieving European values and understanding. Most of the studies under this scope, center upon the aspects of European funding on public policy at the national level and survey the phenomenon of Europeanization in decision-making in the local administrations (Ladrech 1994; Majone 1997; Featherstone 1998; Cole and Drake 2000; Zerbinati 2004).

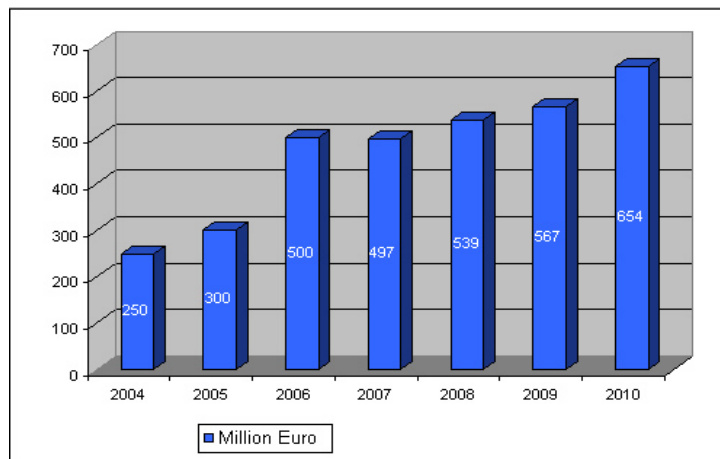
Europeanization in Turkey: The Funds Allocated

Turkey's candidate status enables her to enjoy a higher amount of EU financial support under the pre-accession fund umbrella. As a part of the harmonization process the EU is committed to support candidate countries for membership. The major objective of the EU financial support towards the candidate countries is to

create and maintain an area of peace, stability and prosperity within and beyond the Europe. The actual scene of funding derives from the priorities of reform in Turkey, cross-border cooperation and partnership with member states.

Turkey has been receiving pre-accession assistance from the EU since 2001, under the Turkish Financial Instrument. Funds are programmed on an annual basis under National Programs for each year.

Figure 1: EU Financial Assistance in Turkey



Source: EU Delegation in Turkey, 2007.

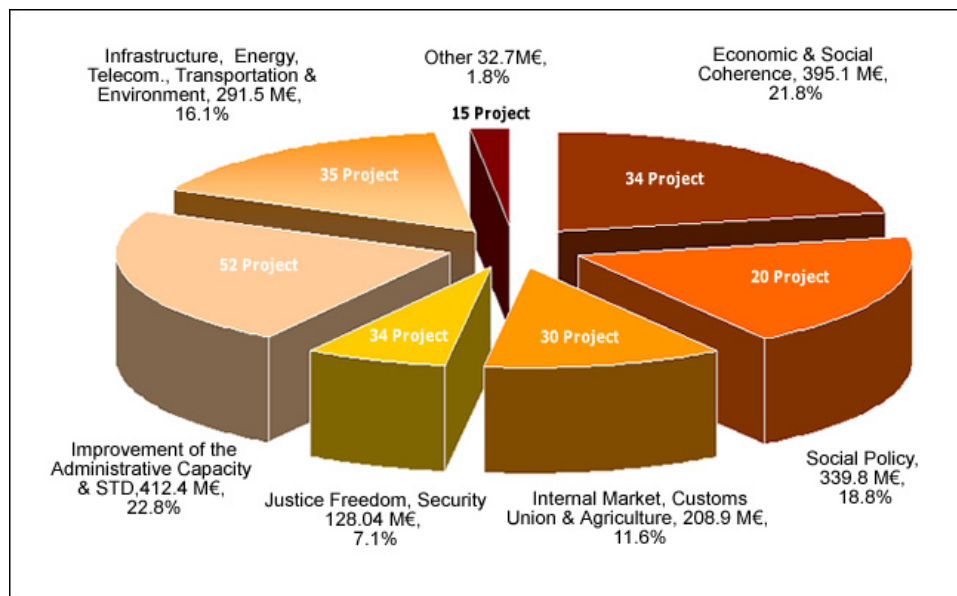
As from 2007, this pre-accession Financial Instrument for Turkey has been replaced by the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) which provides pre-accession assistance for both candidate and potential candidate countries. IPA introduces financial support in new areas, environment, transport, regional competitiveness, human resource development and rural development in order to support Turkey in its bid for membership, including the necessary economic, political and social reforms

The budgetary decision regarding the financial assistance to be allocated by the EU to the candidate country is taken in Brussels by the EU member states, by taking into consideration the factors including the size and population of the country, and reform requirements in certain areas, however, the decision of allocation of funds into national programmes is taken jointly by the European Commission and the Turkish government, based on the investment needs in the priority areas for accession. Generally EU funding finances 75% of the overall

cost of the project, but in some projects EU funding may reach 100%. (EU Delegation in Turkey website, 2007)

The beneficiaries of EU funding are not limited to the administrative capacity enhancement programs that target the ministries, governmental organizations, municipalities and provinces. Most of the time the majority of the funds aim at encouraging the participation of the civil society (social partners, NGOs), small and medium size enterprises and unemployed and vulnerable groups especially youth and women. Those projects tend to serve for social cohesion and inclusion.

Figure 2: EU Projects in Turkey



Source: EU Delegation in Turkey, 2007.

Methodology

This study is comprised of two interrelated phases. The first phase of the research is a qualitative-exploratory study. One and a half hour in-depth interviews will be utilized as the data collection and communication tool in this phase. The respondents will be chosen by systematic random sampling from the participants of the employment projects funded by the European Union in 2005 and 2006 in İstanbul and Amasya. Those cities are chosen by the judgment of the researchers. İstanbul is the largest city and have attracted a serious percentage of the total EU funds for Turkey. Amasya is chosen because it represents a

medium-sized Anatolian city with potential for growth and it is one of the first cities that Regional Development Agency is established in. Eighteen (18) respondents from each city will be interviewed and with their consent the interviews will be recorded by a video camera. Yesilirmak River Basin Development Union will provide the database of the EU funded projects in Amasya.

Those interviews will serve two very important purposes. First, the data from the interviews (together with a thorough literature survey) will form the basis of the second phase of our study -- the descriptive research. Second, parts of the recorded interviews and the stories of each EU funded project will be brought together as a documentary film. The documentary will focus on each project with its history, objectives, process and end result coupled with the interesting stories of the participants talking about themselves, the project, how it affected their lives and their attitude toward Turkey's membership and toward EU in general.

The questions for the in-depth interviews are as follows:

1. How would you describe yourself?
2. How would you describe your ideal self?
3. How would you describe your life in general?
4. How would you describe your ideal life in general?
5. What were your objectives in taking part in this EU funded..... project?
6. How would you describe the whole experience?
7. How would you evaluate the experience as a learning process?
8. How would you evaluate the experience as a social process?
9. What does "Europeanization" mean to you?
10. How do you evaluate EU in general?
11. How do you evaluate EU as a Turkish citizen?

12. How did Turkey benefit and will continue to benefit from the integration process?

13. How did Turkey suffer and will continue to suffer from the integration process?

14. What do you think about the role of EU in this project?

15. What are your future plans for yourself?

The second phase of the study will be a descriptive research. Based on the in-depth interviews and the literature, a questionnaire will be designed to assess the attitudes of the respondents toward EU and EU integration. The respondents will be the participants of EU funded employment projects and will be chosen by systematic random sampling. The list of all participants will be used as the sampling frame. The sample size will be 200 for İstanbul and Amasya – a total of 400.

The questionnaire will address all dimensions (cultural, economic, political and social) of overall attitude toward EU and all related attributes under each dimension. Each dimension and related attributes will be analyzed separately in detail to determine the varying effects of EU funding on each dimension.

Each attribute identified under the dimensions will be measured two times. First the evaluative component will be measured as follows:

A Union that respects human rights is:

Very good (+3) (+2) (+1) (0) (-1) (-2) (-3) Very bad

Then, the beliefs component will be measured as follows:

How likely is European Union to respect human rights?

Very likely (+3) (+2) (+1) (0) (-1) (-2) (-3) Very unlikely

Another example could be:

A union that brings workforce diversity is:

Very good (+3) (+2) (+1) (0) (-1) (-2) (-3) Very bad

How likely is European Union to bring workforce diversity?

Very likely (+3) (+2) (+1) (0) (-1) (-2) (-3) Very unlikely

For each attribute, a total score will be obtained by multiplying the evaluation score by the belief score, following the formula from the model.

The questionnaires will be filled out face to face with the respondents. In order to guarantee the participation of the targeted interviewees, the cooperation of the project managers will be required.

The data will be analyzed using the SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) program. The validity and reliability of the questionnaire as a measuring instrument will be tested. Further analysis will be done starting with frequencies and cross-tabulations and proceed with hypothesis testing using examination of differences, investigation of association and multivariate analysis techniques of multiple regression and factor analysis.

Conclusion

This study contributes to the literature of Europeanization by bringing a new model to the measurement of attitudes toward the EU. The studies undertaken on the analysis of Europeanization have so far focused only on the awareness of the parties involved in decision-making however this study aims at reflecting the actual attitudes of citizens who have benefited from the EU funding through employment programs.

This paper just brings in the methodology used in the survey to the attention of the European scholars working on Europeanization. The findings of the study will be finalized at the end of 2007.

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