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The Europeanization of MÜSİAD: Political opportunism, Economic Europeanization, Islamic Euroscepticism

Dilek Yankaya

Introduction

- 1 MÜSİAD (The Association of Independent Industrialists and Businessmen), an Islamically-oriented business association, is a group which must be studied within the context of both the business associations that constitute an essential element of civil society and the Islamic movements in Turkey. Yet, whereas most European studies on Turkish civil society organizations remain limited to the most vocal NGOs represented in Brussels, the literature on the Islamic movement has remained exclusively focused on the transformation of Islamist political parties within the EU membership process.
- 2 At first sight, MÜSİAD seems to have an inconsistent and shifting approach towards Turkey's EU membership. Yet, the literature on Turkish business associations informs us that MÜSİAD joined the pro-EU alliance after 2003 with a new discourse on the compatibility of EU membership as well as the Islamic-democratic character of Turkey (Atan 2004: 111-112) in order to convince the Turkish state to perceive religious rights as an extension of democracy and individual rights, while benefiting from EU resources and trade opportunities within the European market (Öniş & Türem 2001).
- 3 This article aims to deepen this literature through a systematic analysis of MÜSİAD's attitude towards EU integration. I study the evolution of MÜSİAD's approach to Turkey's EU membership and related issues in the period of 1994-2008 in close relation with changing economic relations, domestic political issues, and larger international phenomena. My objective is to measure MÜSİAD's Europeanization by studying when

and how Turkey's EU integration process produced changes in MÜSİAD's symbolic and material resources as well as political preferences and policy narratives.

- 4 From an actor-centered analysis, I argue that in MÜSİAD's case, Europeanization is made up of two interrelated aspects. First, this process produces two dynamics: economic Europeanization as a social learning process and political Europeanization as political opportunism and ongoing Euroscepticism. Secondly, there is an interesting shift from hard Euroscepticism based on a civilizational divergence argument towards a soft Euroscepticism expressed in national-interest and in a new Islamic rhetoric.
- 5 To elaborate my arguments, this article is organized in two sections. In the first section, the notion of Europeanization is operationalized as the analytical tool in relation to the rise of the civil society in Turkey and the change of the Islamic movement's attitude towards Turkey's integration into the EU. I discuss the change in attitude of the Islamic movement in favor of Turkey's further Europeanization as political opportunism. Here, political opportunism is related to political Europeanization in the sense that the EU integration process produces opportunity windows affecting the material and symbolic resources available to political actors such as political parties, parliaments, and interest groups. Then, I observe the economic Europeanization of MÜSİAD as a process of societal Europeanization at both the individual and organizational levels. By economic Europeanization, I mean the process of social learning about European business patterns and culture in the sense of formal and informal norms as well as macro-economic governance. MÜSİAD businessmen's ways and degree of integration into European business spaces and their evaluation of European business patterns provide a valuable indicator of the degree of their economic Europeanization. This section is based on the interviews realized with MÜSİAD members during my PhD dissertation fieldwork in February, August and September 2007¹.
- 6 The second section describes the political Europeanization trajectory of MÜSİAD, relying on a systematic analysis of published reports, public declarations and its leaders' press statements in the period 1994-2008 in order to discern the way Europe and EU-related issues are treated and the way these are utilized as a prism to interpret public issues. After dealing in the first part with the relation between political opportunism and political Europeanization, in this section I focus on Europeanization's impact on political rhetoric mobilized by the association concerning EU-related issues as well as other national political debates within the integration process. The notion of Euroscepticism is provided as an analytical tool to measure the quality and the direction of the rhetorical change.

I. From Political Opportunism to Economic Europeanization of MÜSİAD

- 7 The 1999 Helsinki Summit was 'the' turning point in Turkey-EU relations due to the clear commitment from both the EU and the Turkish government that resolved the anchor-credibility dilemma that had ambiguously marked Turkey's Europeanization history (Uğur 2003). The credible commitment not only let the pro-EU actors to become more vocal and active but also made the constituents against EU membership to find it increasingly difficult to equate their objections to reforms with the defense of an overarching national interest. Furthermore, the resolution of this dilemma led those

who were undecided or mildly Eurosceptical to support EU membership (Uğur & Yankaya 2008: 8-9).

EU integration and the rise of civil society

- 8 Europeanization stands for a process of something – individuals, processes, practices, or peoples- becoming European (Beichelt 2008: 31). In the academic literature, the concept of Europeanization is primarily operationalized as the institution-building and policy-making process of European integration. Then, it is seen as a top-down process, concentrating on the domestic impacts of European integration on governmental and non-governmental institutions, politics and policies in member and candidate countries. In this study, I adopt Radaelli's (2004) approach that significantly differs from these two approaches by picturing Europeanization as a dynamic and interactive process. Radaelli (2004: 4) uses a bottom-up model that starts and finishes at the domestic level and in which Europeanization is problematized as a process that produces change. This approach seeks to understand if, when, and how the EU contributes to a change in actors, problems, resources, styles and discourses at the domestic level by using time and temporal causal sequences.
- 9 Europeanization includes alterations in the domestic opportunity structures that lead to a redistribution of resources and constraints for domestic political actors (Börzel & Risse 2000: 4). The rationalist-institutionalist perspective suggests that the more the new opportunities and constraints Europeanization produces, the more likely a redistribution of resources will be, which may alter the domestic balance of power by empowering domestic actors to effectively initiate policy change by overriding domestic veto points (Börzel & Risse 2000: 10; Wilts 2002: 98).
- 10 The pre-accession democratic conditionality helps to open up what may previously be a very limited space for civil society organizations and their operations (Weber 2006: 91). In Turkey, civil society associations have been the principal actors in the influential pro-EU coalition that emerged in the post-Helsinki period (Öniş 2003: 29). Indeed, the opening in the political opportunity structure was accompanied by a furthering of dialogue between state officials, government, and civil society organizations in Turkey. Hence, I agree with Tocci (2005: 80-81) that these have been both subjects and objects in the reform process at the same time as being gradually empowered by it and by pushing for further EU integration. The literature demonstrates that the activation of civil society towards democratization of domestic polity has legitimized its existence through political Europeanization and played a major role for further integration through their agency in societal Europeanization.
- 11 Turkish business associations, despite the differences in their attitudes towards Turkey's European integration before 1999, proved to be among the most active pressure groups for Turkey's Europeanization. TÜSIAD (Turkish Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association) and the İKV (Economic Development Foundation) have been the pioneering business associations actively committed to the prospect of Turkey's membership since the 1990s. TOBB (Union of the Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Maritime Trade and Stock Exchanges of Turkey) and TİSK (Confederation of the Employers' Unions of Turkey), having passively followed the process until 1999, joined the pro-EU business alliance after the Helsinki Summit decision. These business associations not only serve as agents of lobbying for further political and policy

Europeanization but also as agents of societal Europeanization through their membership in European business networks such as BUSINESSEUROPE² and through their representational and lobbying activities in EU institutions via their offices in Brussels (see Visier & Polo 2005).

Europeanization and the political opportunism of Islamic groups

- 12 MÜSİAD is an Islamically-oriented organization (on this see Buğra 1998, 1999, 2002; Çınar 2005; Öniş 1997; Keyman & Koyuncu 2004; Kıvanç 1997). It emphasizes Islamic ethics in economy and the importance of religiosity in society and the individual's life³. With its institutional public identity and the religiously conservative social group of the small and medium size enterprises (SMEs) that it represents, MÜSİAD is situated at the intersection of spheres of business associations and Islamic movements.
- 13 The Islamic movement, in terms of its political and societal agents, became both the subject and object of Turkey's Europeanization. It is a fact that the 1990s created some socio-economic transformations that led the Islamic groups to support Turkey's European orientation. One of the determinant elements of this change was the military intervention of February 28th 1997 that aimed to exclude all Islamic groups from economic, social and political spheres, seeing them as part of a reactionary threat to the secular regime. Other than the Islamist Welfare Party's closure, MÜSİAD experienced this period as a stigma, due to its supposedly close relations with political Islam, both at the associational and individual levels, especially for the larger-sized enterprise members. These became the object of special investigations by the military and of heavy sanctions from the state, as they were accused of financing political Islam. Its membership dropped from 2900 to 2300 (Öniş 2001: 290).⁴
- 14 The EU membership conditionality⁵, with its emphasis on the establishment of civilian control over the military, promised to MÜSİAD and other Islamic groups a window of opportunity to enhance their economic and political position *vis-à-vis* the military by curtailing the latter's influence on political and public spheres. This brought a radical change in these groups' positions *vis-à-vis* the EU with the declaration of Turkey's official candidacy for full membership in 1999 Helsinki Summit.
- 15 The strong commitment of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) to harmonization reforms and EU membership from 2001-2004 was an unanticipated commitment since its leader, Mr Erdoğan, had labeled the EU as a 'Christian club' in 1992 when he was the mayor of Istanbul. The AKP distanced itself not only from other parties with an EU-skeptical approach, but also from its predecessors, who subscribed to the National Outlook Movement that had historically represented the major categorical Islamist opposition to Turkey's EU membership since the 1970s (Uğur & Yankaya 2008 : 592).
- 16 Europeanization empowers some actors while restricting the powers of others (Diez *et al.* 2005: 10). Some actors become winners in the Europeanization process because pressures generated by European integration are congruent with their existing strategies, notably by providing a source of legitimacy for the changes that they desire for non-EU reasons (Thatcher 2004: 284). Furthermore, Europeanization may enhance the ability of some actors to delegitimize the positions of others, notably their opponents, while legitimizing their own policy positions (Haverland 2000: 140). In such cases, EU requirements are not perceived as a conditionality pressure but rather as a

window of opportunity for those who are already seeking reform for their own interests.

- 17 In fact, the AKP's adoption of EU political criteria in the form of 'Ankara criteria' stemmed from its perception that the prospect of membership could be an opportunity to broaden the political, economic and cultural opportunity spaces that were shrunk during the February 28th process. In the context of competition between Islamic groups and the military over identity religious issues, the EU's pre-accession democratic conditionalities promised the strengthening and legitimizing Islamic groups' positions and demands at the expense of the latter.
- 18 Especially after 2000, Islamic groups became the winners in the process by increasingly adhering to the prospect of EU membership. MÜSİAD started to eagerly advocate the adoption of universal norms of democracy in the framework of legislative harmonization with the EU. The democratization reforms were re-interpreted not as an external interference in Turkey's domestic affairs but rather as a continuation of the democratization discussions about the necessary political, bureaucratic and economic progress that had been going on for twenty years (MÜSİAD 2001: 39) and given extra urgency by the political, social and psychological turmoil generated in 1997 (MÜSİAD 2002: 56-57). The credibility of the EU's encouraging statements at the 2000, 2001, and 2002 summits, the EU Commission Reports' emphasis on the establishment of civilian control over the military (EU Commission 2000: 14; 2001: 19; 2002: 16), the effects of liberalization measures on the functioning of civil society organizations (MÜSİAD 2003d: 86-87), the AKP governments' strong Europeanization commitment, and the explicitly pro-European public opinion all encouraged MÜSİAD to recognize the opportunities provided by Europeanization and to favor further Europeanization in turn.
- 19 Turkey's Europeanization process led MÜSİAD to become more politicized in the sense of being politically more expressive about important domestic political issues on which it had heretofore been silent. The change in MÜSİAD toward a pro-European approach exemplified a political opportunism which appears in one of its founders' words: 'MÜSİAD follows the government's discourse. It says neither 'no' nor 'yes' to Europeanization... If MÜSİAD had maintained its anti-EU position, it would be left outside of all related discussions' (Interview with a founder, Istanbul, 28.02.2007). Hence, behind the change in MÜSİAD attitude towards supporting the accession process are both pragmatic and opportunistic reasons. In this process of politicization, the association's close ties with the AKP were also operative in the sense that MÜSİAD's visibility in the public sphere had considerably increased through greater media coverage and the presence of MÜSİAD members in the parliament as well as in the AKP's local organizations and local chambers of commerce and industries after 2002. Along with the AKP, MÜSİAD became both the object and the subject of the European integration process and became involved in the Europeanization of politics in Turkey.
- 20 The new political structure offering an opportunity to local actors to legitimize their policy positions required these to be discussed within the Europeanization framework. Social actors re-evaluate and redefine their own identities, political positions and preferences within the new dynamics of a domestic political context provided by the EU integration process. This dimension calls for a more profound Europeanization than the one at the political level because it involves the creative usage of the interactive process of EU integration by the domestic social actors. The term 'usage' covers the

practices and political interactions that are adjusted and redefined by approaching the EU as a set of opportunities, be they institutional, ideological, political or organizational (Jacquot & Woll 2003: 3-4).

- 21 In the case of Islamic actors in Turkey, the Europeanization process resulted in the reformulation of religion-related political and social demands into democratization-based discourses of human rights, rule of law and multiculturalism (Duran 2006: 295-297) based on the cross-fertilization of Islamic and European ideas and practices (Yavuz 2006: 256) hoping to persuade both EU and secular Turkish public opinion about the legitimacy of the desire to increase religious freedoms. The creative usages concern the way the self-definitions of social identities evolve through the process of Europeanization. Thereby, Europeanization's effects do not remain limited to the discursive or political dimensions of the Islamic groups' social positioning, but rather, this process results in an alignment between their patterns of thought and action and European norms and practices.
- 22 At the end of the day, Islamic groups found themselves drawn into this interactive Europeanization process through learning to take the EU/Europe not only as a mere political opportunity provider but also as a normative reference point for the re-evaluation and re-definition of individual and collective identities. MÜSİAD, as a professional association of businessmen, provides a suggestive case to demonstrate that Europeanization engenders a process of questioning previously accepted patterns of doing business and economic self-evaluation as well as an effort to coordinate with the newly experienced European business norms and patterns. This process of social learning experienced by MÜSİAD in the European economic sphere will be dealt in the next part.

Economic Europeanization of MÜSİAD

- 23 Following Radaelli's bottom-up model perspective, in this article, the notion of Europeanization is conceived as an interactive process of reinterpreting policy preferences and policy framing styles at both the national and international levels by a social actor capitalizing on the material, political and symbolic sources provided by European integration. Hence the various dimensions of the process are not taken as mutually independent, but rather as various aspects that are expected to accompany each other, even if at different rates and in different sequences. It is the process through which Europe becomes a common reference point increasingly referred to in domestic debates, as well as the alignment of policies, political processes or social identities with those within Europe (Diez *et al.* 2005: 2).
- 24 MÜSİAD is the major Islamically-oriented businessmen association in Turkey. Founded in May 1990, it represents SMEs at the national level. The member-firms operate in each and every sector in the economy; in total, they produce 15% of the national revenue and employ more than 80,000 people. Moreover, they also operate in the international market, their major import and export areas cover Europe, Central Asia, the Middle East and North Africa. As an interest group, its strength stems from the breadth of its social base: the headquarters being in Istanbul, the association organizes more than 2,700 firms through its national structure of local branches all over Anatolia.
- 25 The fact that MÜSİAD is a businessmen's association primarily committed to its members' economic interests led it to recognize the necessity of Turkey's economic

compliance with the European economic system earlier than other Islamic organizations. Since the economic liberalization started in the 1980s when Turkey switched from import substitution industrialization to an export-oriented economy, the Turkish SME sector has had growing trade relations with foreign markets, including Europe. In line with this trend, a significant number of MÜSİAD members have developed trade relations with European countries. Germany, Greece, Holland, Italy and the Balkan countries are among the first countries that these entrepreneurs have been doing business with especially since the second half of the 1990s. Some of the main exports to Europe are construction and building supplies, household appliances and furnishings, plastic packaging materials, food products and, increasingly, mechanical goods. In return, high technology machinery and construction equipment that are not produced in Turkey are imported from Europe.

- 26 Trade constitutes the principal means for these businessmen to get into close contact with European businessmen, business spaces and European business culture. The major ways that they acquire familiarity is through their European business partners and their participation in international fairs organized in European countries. Every year, MÜSİAD opens stands for its members in international expos such as the International Furnishing Show and the Anuga food and beverage fair in Cologne, Technologica in Hanover, the Automotive Subcontractor fair in Paris and Frankfurt, and the Texbridge textile expo in Milan. The association also plays a key role in the economic socialization of its members into the European markets through the visits that it organizes to various EU countries, as well as through its representational offices in EU countries that help to create an international business network at its members' service. MÜSİAD businessmen enlarge their trade area by sub-contracts and distributorships with various European manufacturers in Turkey, especially in high technology machinery and the automobile industry.
- 27 Furthermore, family ties often connect Turkish businessmen to Europe, especially in countries with important Turkish immigrant communities such as Germany, Holland and Kosovo. This grants them access to trade opportunities and hence becomes a source of socialization within the European business community. For instance, a doctor/administrator of a hospital in Konya having parents in Holland established contracts with the social security institutions of EU countries. This partnership let Turkish immigrants receive health services in that hospital in Konya with the same opportunities granted by the social security scheme in their host countries. In the same framework, some Turkish businesses have also tried to attract foreign customers to Turkey for health tourism. Consequently, the attempt to attract European customers leads to the pioneering adoption of European business practices, providing European-style customer services and public relations.
- 28 Since 1999, with the prospect of EU membership, MÜSİAD businessmen have increasingly followed the trend of acquiring the CE mark [*Certificat de conformité européenne*] proving that the product complies with EU health and safety requirements. According to the Additional Protocol signed in 2004, all Turkish products to be exported to EU market should carry the CE mark. This regulation leads businessmen to adapt the quality of the raw material they use and their manufacturing systems to the EU's economic norms and business standards. As a result of the economic harmonization process, European business norms and quality standards have been thoroughly integrated into the way businessmen evaluate the functioning of the

Turkish domestic market. MÜSİAD members that produce for EU markets complain about the unfair business competition in Turkey that is created by the cheaper prices offered by enterprises that lack the CE mark and which have lower quality standards.

- 29 MÜSİAD businessmen observe European economic practices and business culture when they visit these countries and trade with European counterparts, learning in order to increase their competitiveness with regard to them. Beside the European market, which is the main demanded trade partner, the Balkans, the Middle East, and Central Asian countries are also highly invested in by MÜSİAD businessmen. Their multiple experiences let them compare and contrast the functioning of economic life in European countries with that in non-European ones.
- 30 My fieldwork demonstrates that European economic governance and business culture form the normative reference points for these businessmen's concepts and standards of entrepreneurial identity and economic practices. They consider the European economic culture to be superior to that of non-European ones as well as the economic culture and practices in Turkey. When doing business, they prefer European enterprises over the non-European ones because of clear economic functioning mechanisms in European countries and personal business ethics of European businessmen. Precise working hours for employees and employers, high levels of professionalization, precise work definitions, the clear division of labor, work discipline, the importance given to concrete knowledge and science, as well as clear checking mechanisms are the main elements that MÜSİAD businessmen value about the European business culture. The transparency of commercial and financial transactions is also appreciated as a model of European business ethics. The division between work and private life as practiced in Europe is another aspect of European business culture praised by my interviewees who, generally, work six days a week and complain of not being able to enjoy the high living standards that their careers should provide for them.
- 31 MÜSİAD functions as a spillover agent for the Europeanization of the Turkish SME sector at the organizational and technical levels as well. It advocates the espousal of EU-defined SME structures in Turkey in order to facilitate EU institutions' and international banks' lending practices for Turkish SME sector's development. Furthermore, the association provides information services to its members about new EU regulations, the status of the EU accession process, as well as EU funding projects. It also encourages them to be open to the European market and to integrate into the EU business world. For instance, in Konya, a central Anatolian province with the highest rate of MÜSİAD membership in Anatolia, sixteen member-firms obtained EU funding in 2006 with the help of a business consultancy firm that is itself a MÜSİAD member (interview with a member, Konya, 28.08.2007). The association itself also benefits from EU funding for NGOs: it has been conducting an EU-financed project involving hydraulic technicians since 2005.
- 32 MÜSİAD has been a member of the European Confederation of Associations of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (CEA-PME) since 2003 and it envisages opening an office in Brussels both to monitor the evolution of the negotiation process and to help its members to further their trade relations with European business circles. With respect to the association's professional orientation to Europe, the election of Ömer Bolat to the presidency in 2004 is quite revealing. Bolat belongs to the first generation of Turkish experts on European business and has graduate degrees from the University of

Amsterdam and the University of Kiel. He was the first academically accomplished president of the Association, and the first president with expertise on the EU's economic issues.

- 33 In the economic sphere, the Europeanization of MÜSİAD involves a high level of socialization and learning that leads the association to more eagerly advocate the economic integration of Turkey into the EU through the adoption of European economic norms and culture. Yet this economic Europeanization is not echoed by an equivalently strong and explicit promotion of political integration due to reservations about accession conditionalities involving issues of national interests and religion. The next section studies the association's ongoing yet transforming Euroscepticism about such issues.

II. From Hard Euroscepticism to Soft Islamic Euroscepticism

- 34 Studying political Europeanization of a civil society actor requires an actor-centered analysis to understand its changing roles in the public sphere and transforming attitudes vis-à-vis the major public debates. Therefore, this section focuses on MÜSİAD as a social agent in the national public sphere and analyses the evolution of MÜSİAD's approach and discourse with regard to the process of Turkey's integration with the EU at the associational level. Even though there are internal divisions about Turkey's membership prospect, as I will later discuss, in the national public sphere the association acts as a representative agency with one voice. Hence, publications, reports, and leaders' press statements provide us with a relevant and reliable set of information about the attitude of the social group that the association claims to represent towards major political and public debates in the country, including the EU-related issues.
- 35 I will study MÜSİAD's EU attitudes within sub-periods to be able to see the interaction between the micro-level Europeanization of the association and the macro-level Europeanization path of Turkey along with larger international phenomena between 1994 and 2008. The 1994-1999 period is marked by a hard Euroscepticism; then between 2000 and 2004, MÜSİAD adopted an increasingly pro-EU attitude accompanied by a national-interest based soft Euroscepticism; and from 2005 onwards an Islamic rhetoric imposes itself, in addition to the existing national-interest one, to express its Euroscepticism.

1994-1999: Islamist Hard Euroscepticism

- 36 Taggart (1998: 366) describes Euroscepticism as the expression of opposition, to the process of European integration, whether contingent or qualified opposition, or outright and unqualified opposition. Yet, since the degree of opposition and the issues stressed as reasons for the opposition are context- and actor-dependent, Taggart and Szczerbiak (2001) differentiate between different forms of Euroscepticism such as hard and soft Euroscepticism.
- 37 Hard Euroscepticism implies an outright rejection of the entire project of European political and economic integration and opposition to their country joining or remaining a member of the EU. Theoretically, it includes a principled objection to the

idea of any European economic or political integration. The principled objection comes from the belief that the EU is counter to deeply held values or, more likely, is the embodiment of negative values (Taggart & Szczerbiak 2001: 10). This kind of Euroscepticism is seen in parties who think that their countries should withdraw from membership (Taggart & Szczerbiak 2002: 7) or candidacy.

- 38 In that sense, MÜSİAD's 1994-1999 EU attitude is characterized by hard Euroscepticism. This categorical objection to European integration was expressed in relation to the civilizational divergences between Turkey and Europe in an antinomy between 'us and them'. The first mentioning of the EU by MÜSİAD was from the perspective of an international Muslim community, as one of the international power blocks that the Muslim world should take into consideration to establish a new world perspective for the 21st century (Yarar 1994: 1). Since Turkey was a Muslim country, not only was Turkey's membership not even mentioned as a future possibility but also Yarar, the then-president of the Association, recommended the extension of Turkey's trade relations towards Eastern Asia basing on cultural convergence rather than Europe. The EU was perceived as a part, with USA and Israel, of the triangle that harms Turkey on political, economic, and cultural terms (MÜSİAD 1996a: 7).
- 39 After the coming into effect of the Customs Union (CU) in 1996, MÜSİAD stiffened its anti-EU attitude and posted a clear objection to both the CU and EU membership while TÜSİAD eagerly embraced it as a step forward towards full membership. MÜSİAD, similar to the Welfare Party that was part of the governing coalition in 1996, expressed concerns about the CU's detrimental effects on Turkey's strategic interests. The main reason behind the divergence of attitudes of MÜSİAD and TÜSİAD regarding the CU was that the largest Turkish enterprises that the latter represented had already attained some capital maturity and international competitiveness whereas the SMEs that MÜSİAD represented lacked any such international competitive power.
- 40 Instead, the Association proposed a Cotton Union in the form an alternative economic cooperation on cotton production and industry first with Pakistan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan, and then a deeper integration with 'all other Turkic and Muslim countries from Balkans to East Asia upon eternal religious and national relations' (MÜSİAD 1996b: 4). Economically more preferable for MÜSİAD's SME members and culturally easier to legitimize through appeals to Muslim fraternity, this alternative was likewise supported by the Welfare Party. The project claimed that Turkey would not benefit from the economic and political opportunities of European integration because of its dependent economic and backward technological structures. The backwardness argument was coupled with a civilizational incompatibility discourse claiming that 'Turkey is in full contradiction with the EU member countries in historical, religious and cultural terms.' (MÜSİAD 1996b: 121).

2000-2004: National Interest Euroscepticism

- 41 The first impact of Europeanization on MÜSİAD's political stance came with the declaration of Turkey's official candidacy at the 1999 Helsinki Summit. MÜSİAD's categorical opposition to Turkey's EU membership gave way to a compartmentalized approach underscoring EU integration's impacts on public issues from a wider political perspective. Taggart and Szczerbiak conceptualize this conditional approach as soft Euroscepticism which is not a principled objection to the European integration but

where concerns on certain policy areas lead to a qualified opposition to the EU (Taggart & Szczerbiak 2002: 7). Soft Euroscepticism can be sub-divided into policy Euroscepticism and national-interest Euroscepticism and imply that if there were alterations to either policy area or a shift in national interest, European integration in its current form could be supported or even encouraged.

- 42 In Turkey, Euroscepticism is primarily expressed in nationalist/patriotic rhetoric with the aim of defending national interests while integrating with the EU. Euroscepticism in Turkey highlights as risky areas the issues of minority rights and the Aegean and Cyprus issues on which important accession conditionalities were imposed requiring certain concessions from Turkey (Çarkoğlu 2003: 181).
- 43 From 2000 onwards, MÜSİAD has refined its attitude vis-à-vis Turkey's European integration and related issues, moving towards a conditional support for EU integration depending on the opportunities created by Turkey's candidate status and those policy areas imposed as accession conditionalities but including certain risks for national interests. From a pro-EU approach, the association defended EU candidacy on the grounds that it strengthens Turkey's image in the international area, increases the possibility of an increase in foreign direct investments, and that the compliance with Copenhagen criteria conditionality would accelerate the restructuring of the Turkish economy and comprehensive social and political reforms concerning democratization, rule of law and human rights and liberties. However, from a national interest rhetoric, MÜSİAD judged the conditions imposed on issues of 'Cyprus and Aegean Sea, and the capital punishment of terrorist organization's leader Apo⁶, too risky and heavy' for national interests (MÜSİAD 2000: 42).
- 44 This national interest rhetoric stems from the social group the association represents. MÜSİAD members can be categorized into two non-mutually exclusive groups with regard to their attitudes towards Turkey's European integration. The first category is composed of Eurosceptics about EU's credibility to integrate Turkey as a full-fledged member. There are two reasons, both stemming from what may be called a nationalist reaction, behind this strong skepticism. The first one is related to a not well argued but rather taken for granted belief in European anti-Turkish behavior, perceived in the reaction against the acceptance of countries like Bulgaria and Romania into the EU while leaving Turkey outside. The second one is related to the circulation problems that the businessmen have on their professional trips into the EU countries. The visa problems, long waiting hours, and the 'uncivilized' treatment by the customs officers of EU countries are the concrete basis of Euroscepticism at the individual level.
- 45 The second category is made of pragmatists who favor the Europeanization process itself without putting much emphasis on the eventuality of membership. The main advantages of the Europeanization process are cited as increasing the autonomy of the economic sphere from state intervention and economic governance from political instabilities. Furthermore, democratization and the rule of law are cited among the major accomplishments of the accession process. However, the eventual membership is considered as a realistic option neither by Eurosceptics nor by pragmatists. Yet, both Eurosceptics and pragmatists confirm that the membership process should continue to proceed for mentioned economic and political reasons.
- 46 Between 2001 and 2004, MÜSİAD developed its most eager pro-EU attitudes in the public and economic spheres in the sense of distancing itself from national-interest Euroscepticism. We already mentioned that MÜSİAD integrated into the European SME

network of CEA-PME in 2003 and favored further Europeanization of the Turkish economy. The association became more expressive about the positive sides of European integration. Like the AKP, MÜSİAD further distanced itself from the Eurosceptic nationalist alliance by stating that democratization measures should be taken regardless of the arguments about 'Turkey's special conditions' that highlight problematic national interest issues such as Cyprus and minorities (MÜSİAD 2001: 39; MÜSİAD 2002: 57). This occurred to such an extent that Ali Bayramoğlu, who was president of the association at the time, suggested an alteration in the definition of national interests relating to the Cyprus issue and urged replacing conflict with cooperation in dealing with the European Council's attitude and the ECHR's decision⁷. His goal was to preclude getting bogged down in these issues and risking good relations with the EU (MÜSİAD 2003a).

- 47 MÜSİAD developed a new approach to making use of Turkey's European integration process within its foreign policy preferences. In a new formulation, integration within the EU was considered as the integral element of the national foreign policy orientation; the main element that will strengthen Turkey's position with respect to her economic relations with neighboring countries (MÜSİAD 2001: 39; MÜSİAD 2002: 57; Bayramoglu 2003: 1; MÜSİAD 2003c: 78). This ambitious pro-European attitude led it to criticize the AKP government for not sufficiently taking advantage of the parliamentary decision which forbade the passage of American troops through Turkish territory for the war in Iraq in order to strengthen the alliance with the EU in general (MÜSİAD 2003b) and particularly with the two key EU members, France and Germany, which opposed the invasion (Bayramoglu 2003: 1). The new multi-dimensional foreign policy formulation allowed the association to be political by both circumventing an overtly Eurosceptic attitude and legitimizing the EU conditionality from within a patriotic discourse.
- 48 However, MÜSİAD became somewhat bogged down by its overtly eager pro-EU attitude from the end of 2004 onwards. The Commission's 2004 decision to launch the accession negotiation was highly conditional and hence problematic for the sustainability of all domestic actors' pro-EU positions. It was worded in such a way as to leave open the possibility of a non-membership or of a special partnership instead of full membership⁸. Moreover, serious constraints and restrictions were mentioned, such as 'long transitional periods, derogations, specific arrangements or permanent safeguard clauses' concerning structural and agricultural funds and the free movement of persons. These issues are among the main reasons for Euroscepticism at the individual level for many MÜSİAD members.
- 49 After the launch of negotiations under such mixed signals, MÜSİAD lessened its eagerness in its pro-EU attitude and remobilized national interest Euroscepticism rhetoric (AB Haber 2005). In line with the individual members' Eurosceptic claims, the association declared the EU as having a 'Turkish problem' (MÜSİAD 2005). The EU policies were criticized for putting permanent safeguards on the free circulation of labor and the structural and agricultural funds (MÜSİAD 2005: 97), and about the visa problems for Turkish citizens and trucks in European borders despite the free circulation rights given in the legal framework of the Ankara Treaty and the Additional Protocol (MÜSİAD 2006; MÜSİAD 2007b).

2005-2008: New Islamic Euroscepticism

- 50 From 2005 on a new Islamic rhetoric was mobilized by MÜSİAD accompanying, but differing from, the national-interest rhetoric expressing skepticism about European integration's effects on Islam-related issues in Turkey, in Europe, and in the world. This can be considered as an unexpected attitude from MÜSİAD that has been giving low profile in religion related issues, especially since 1997. But, this novelty in MÜSİAD's EU attitude has to do with the new international context produced after the 9/11 attacks that divided the world between the West and Islam and the reconciliation efforts initiated by Spanish Prime Minister Mr. J. L. Zapatero⁹ and co-sponsored by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan to establish an Alliance of Civilizations (AoC) between the Western and the Arab and Muslim worlds.
- 51 Since the tragic events of 9/11, the EU had been making some efforts to play an active intermediary role between Western and Muslim countries¹⁰. Yet, the AoC as a worldwide initiative co-sponsored by one EU member and one EU candidate country was especially acclaimed by both Turkish and other political leaders supporting Turkey's membership. It was argued that Turkey's integration into the EU could function as a counterargument against the "Clash of Civilizations" thesis. Notwithstanding, the AoC discourse defined civilizations primarily in religious terms, highlighted the importance of Turkey's membership referring to her Islamic character, and as such excessively underscored the Islamic identity of Turkey as a leading country of the Islamic civilization (for a discussion on the issue see Kösebalaban 2006; Turan & Adak 2007). This last point created opportunities for Islamic organizations in Turkey to politicize religious demands within further Europeanization with respect to the democratization conditionalities in Turkey as well as in a larger perspective of interaction between the West and Islam: claiming a non-secular Islamic identity was no longer incompatible with pro-EU approaches.
- 52 MÜSİAD had already seized the opportunity created by 9/11 with regards to Turkey's freshly constructed position as a symbol country of dialogue between West and East. Ömer Bolat, the president at the time, interpreted the new dynamics that 'before the events of 9/11, our being Muslim was the primary obstacle to becoming an EU member, in the new context it turned into an advantage for our membership' (Bolat's 2004 speech in Bolat 2007: 23). MÜSİAD adjusted its political discourse to the developments and started to promote Turkey's 'EU membership ... as a new and original structure that would favor the dialogue between Islamic countries and Western ones and that would serve to promote world peace.' (MÜSİAD 2005: 95). With this new perspective, the civilizational divergence argument of the 90s that was the main reason for MÜSİAD's anti-EU attitude became one of the primary elements of its pro-EU approach.
- 53 Even though the AoC discourse strengthened MÜSİAD's pro-EU political attitude, it negatively impacted its eagerness about the adoption of universal secular norms of democracy and human rights. It revealed skepticism about the universality of European norms formulated in the EU *acquis* on the grounds that the EU and Turkey had very different cultural legacies: 'The supposedly supranational values are neither unquestionable nor untouchable. MÜSİAD would adopt a critical approach about the rationality and correctness of these values to see whether they take into consideration or not the sensibilities of people coming from different cultures, having different values and whether these values produce equal and just consequences for all peoples or

not.' (MÜSİAD 2005: 96). In fact, this meant that once Turkey was defined as a country of Islamic civilization, some values imposed as EU accession conditionality might not be considered 'correct and just' for Turkish Muslims and hence could be legitimately rejected on the basis of a civilizational divergence thesis. Likewise, MÜSİAD started to explain disagreements produced within the negotiation process between Turkey and the EU by 'the complex and profound historical, cultural and religious divergences between the two camps' (Bolat's 2006 speech in Bolat 2007: 182).

- 54 The new international context provided MÜSİAD with a legitimate background to challenge both the EU and the Turkish state regarding Islam-related issues within the Europeanization framework. On the one hand, the association mobilized Islamic rhetoric to criticize the EU on the basis of universality of human rights and liberties, of exercising increasingly assimilationist policies towards Muslim minorities since 9/11 (MÜSİAD 2005), and of not impartially defending human rights in Turkey by favoring non-Muslims and Alevites while ignoring conservative Muslims' needs and expectations about the freedoms of expression, conscience and religion (MÜSİAD 2005: 98). Furthermore, the Muslim minority policies of EU member states such as Germany and France were challenged for not respecting the EU's own discourse of pluralism (Bolat's 2006 speech in Bolat 2007: 194).
- 55 On the other hand, the Turkish secular republican polity was accused to be 'desiring an autocratic EU that turns a blind eye to the democratic and Islamic sensibilities of Turkish society' (Bolat's 2004 speech in Bolat 2007: 69). MÜSİAD interpreted constraints on religious freedoms as obstacles to Turkey's democracy. It adopted the Europeanization process as the new background to problematize some religiously significant issues such as the headscarf ban in universities and public institutions, the lack of facilities in favor of religious practices such as worship places and meal arrangements according to Ramadan rituals and to Friday prayer in workplaces (MÜSİAD 2005: 98); religious people's demands to give further religious education to their children (MÜSİAD 2006), and the fact that vocational school graduates, including religious ones, were not equally graded as conventional schools graduates in the university entrance exams (MÜSİAD 2007b).
- 56 I qualify these political challenges expressed in an Islamic rhetoric as Islamic Euroscepticism because it expresses a skepticism about the EU's impartiality towards Muslim-related issues and they are addressed both to the EU and to the Turkish state to express skepticism that Islam-related issues are not fairly dealt with, along any other social or cultural identity claims, within the Europeanization conditionality on democratization.
- 57 Furthermore, this Islamic rhetoric was not mobilized to refute Turkey's integration to EU. Hence, it does not indicate a change in MÜSİAD's political stance favoring Turkey's Europeanization. It thrives alongside a pro-EU attitude in the form of a progressive interest in EU related issues, its eager support for the legislative harmonization process, its continuing economic orientation toward European markets and the adoption of European business culture, as well as the Europeanization of representational strategies and activities as we mentioned earlier in the paper. Similar to AKP's political discourse, MÜSİAD urged that the EU conditionalities be internalized as 'Ankara criteria' for the sake of Turkish society with or without the prospect of eventual membership (MÜSİAD 2007a: 91; MÜSİAD 2008: 181). The EU, as a supra-national structure, is heavily integrated in the way the association rethinks the

international system: MÜSİAD takes the EU as 'the model *par excellence* to fight underdevelopment and inter-state conflicts' and recommends the Europeanization of relations between Afro-Eurasian states in order to create a common space of economic and political cooperation (Bolat's 2004 speech in Bolat 2007: 48-49).

- 58 The creation of an Islamic Euroscepticism indicates that the pragmatic and opportunistic political Europeanization of MÜSİAD is on its way to becoming a societal Europeanization. This societal Europeanization is an interactive process of collective identity and meaning construction along European formal or informal norms by domestic actors within the European integration framework. We have observed that the social learning aspect of societal Europeanization in the economic sphere had started as a result of socialization into European business spaces. European business norms and principals are internalized as constitutive beliefs about good economic governance and individual economic success.
- 59 Creative usages account for another aspect of societal Europeanization: they concern the intersubjective meanings that an actor attaches to the EU and this actor's re-evaluation of the European integration process in relation to its positions on certain national issues as well as larger international phenomena and his reinterpretations of the national and international developments in the Europeanization context. The EU and Europe become increasingly a reference point in the construction of social and political identity of the religious social group that MÜSİAD represents. Adopting European norms and principles such as human rights and democracy as the basis for religious freedom claims not only for religious Muslims in Turkey but for European Muslims as well demonstrates that this Islamic Euroscepticism is a product of creative usage of Europeanization inherent in the very process itself.
- 60 These creative usages are strongly embedded in national contexts and actors' perceptions of national and international phenomena. In our case, Muslims both in Turkey and Europe are redefined as a having a collective identity and common right to proclaim their cultural difference within the Europeanization process. Moreover, the MÜSİAD case teaches us that the trajectory along which social actors make creative use of European integration pursues a multiple-dependencies path. These dependencies concern the policy preferences, political goals, and resources of the social actor; the EU-related changes in domestic politics; international developments; the level political actors' socialization within European spaces; and the evolution of the EU integration process.
- 61 Social actors play an active and determinant role in the reception of Europeanization norms in domestic politics (Bomber & Peterson 2000; Carter & Pasquier 2006 cited in Baisnée & Pasquier 2007: 26). The actor adjusts its attitude towards EU integration and related issues according to the probable perceived impacts of these variables on its ability to achieve goals, to complete tasks, and to benefit from resources and to provide new ones. Knowing that all of the mentioned variables are interlinked, these dependencies are reinterpreted by the actors in this very process with the goal of maintaining their political relevance and empowering their positions in the national power structure as well as acquiring recognition at the European level. Hence, Islamic Euroscepticism gives a visibility and a political voice to Islamic groups and recognition to their religious claims within the Europeanization process itself.
- 62 The more these creative identity and meaning constructions resonate with ideas about the nation and political order, the more likely they are to be incorporated into these

identities in public opinion (Risse 2001: 202; Waever 1998, 2004). Since Islam is repeatedly referred to regarding Turkish EU membership prospects in the post-9/11 world, Islamic Euroscepticism is increasingly gaining ground not only among Europeanized Islamic groups but throughout the whole of Turkish society in the course of its Europeanization process.

Conclusion

- 63 In this paper, Europeanization is analyzed through the evolution of MÜSİAD's socialization in European contexts, its attitude vis-à-vis Turkey's EU membership prospects, and its policy claim-making concerning Turkey's domestic issues and foreign policy formulations. This process was examined in a temporal causal sequence in relation to the economic integration of SMEs into European markets, the evolution of Turkey's membership process, and larger international developments. I demonstrated that since 1999, Turkish process of European integration has progressively been integrated into MÜSİAD's policy preferences on domestic and foreign issues, its re-evaluation of business culture and economic strategies at both the macro and micro levels, and finally its patterns of redefining collective identities.
- 64 I studied MÜSİAD's Europeanization process in two interrelated but not fully converging spheres of economic and political Europeanization. Firstly, concerning economic Europeanization, increasing business contacts with European partners, participation in international business sector expositions and MÜSİAD-organized visits to European countries generate a process of social learning about the economic functioning and governance in EU countries, European business ethics, and culture. Growing trade activity within European markets leads to the appraisal and adoption of European business patterns, manufacturing mechanisms, and quality standards. These patterns and standards become intrinsic elements of the evaluation of their own and of others' business identities and practices. The international socialization process does not only lead to societal learning at the individual level but also to a professional Europeanization at the institutional level thanks to MÜSİAD's inclusion in European SME networks. In this process, MÜSİAD acts as a spillover agent of economic Europeanization within the SME sector for its members in particular and in Turkey in general. Furthermore, at the international level, it acts as a transmitter of European economic norms and standards to non-European markets through its members' trade relations and their participation in international platforms in the Eurasia region, especially among the Muslim countries.
- 65 Regarding the political aspect, MÜSİAD's political Europeanization was intended to pursue a more complex multiple-dependencies path. The EU's attitudes towards Turkey and issues stressed in the reform process led to changes in MÜSİAD's approach to Turkey's membership in the EU and related issues from hard to soft Euroscepticism. Its Islamic orientation proved to be significant concerning the political aspects of the association's attitude towards Turkey's EU integration. Even though, as a business association, it admitted the need to comply with EU economic legislation earlier than political agents of the Islamic movement, like the latter, MÜSİAD acted as a political opportunist to benefit from EU democratization pre-accession conditionalities in the form of liberalizing civil society and establishing civilian control over the military. Similarly, its Islamic orientation led it to politicize religiously significant issues in the

democratization process and to give Islamic responses to both the EU's and the Turkish state's promotion of secularism.

- 66 However, the special characteristic of MÜSİAD within this process lies in the fact that, as a voluntary business association, it is neither bound by electoral turn-over periods nor politically responsible for the governance of Turkey's institutional integration process with regard to EU authorities, as is the case with political parties. This relatively independent position from a political party's constraints provides an NGO, in an ongoing integration process, with a greater opportunity to be critical of the integration process and to make more creative use of Europeanization based on the demands and interests of its membership base and with the aim to enhance its position with respect to other NGOs. As such, on the one hand, MÜSİAD's economic Europeanization encouraged it to adopt eager pro-European policy preferences and a more European style of policy making in economic governance than the other Islamic groups. On the other hand, its Islamically-oriented institutional identity distinguished it from other business associations by compelling it to emphasize the cultural and religious aspects of the religiously conservative social group it represents with regard to the Europeanization debates. Moreover, it could more deliberately make creative use of Europeanization and more expressively mobilize an Islamic rhetoric to criticize the EU and the secular Turkish state regarding religious issues than the AKP, which was bound by electoral and political concerns.
- 67 I aim to contribute to the literatures on Turkish NGOs and Islamic movements by demonstrating the creative use of Europeanization by a religiously oriented business association and the novel ways it mobilized Islamic rhetoric to express its Euroscepticism. Unlike the categorical Islamist opposition to Europe based on the civilizational divergence thesis of the early 1990s, this new form of Islamic rhetoric does not resist Europeanization. On the contrary, it is a product of the internalization of this very process and it accompanies Europeanization, if not motivating it. This new Islamic rhetoric expresses a soft skepticism about the EU's approach to certain issues of religious significance in Turkey as well as addressing the Muslim migrants' conditions in European countries.
- 68 The coexistence of Islamic Euroscepticism with a pro-European attitude reveals that Europeanization became an integral element in the ways that Islamic social actors perceive, define, and criticize European integration, capitalizing on the material, political and symbolic resources provided by the very process itself. However, it is to be seen whether the impact of Europeanization is exclusively limited to Islamically and economically relevant issues or if it is a more comprehensive transformation in the sense of engendering a pro-active pluralism towards other groups' rights and liberties as well.
- 69 This analysis of a case of Turkish Europeanization from the perspective of an Islamically-oriented actor contributes to the literature on Euroscepticism by showing that Euroscepticism is not only national-interest and policy bounded. The religious and cultural otherness paradigm in which Turkey's accession process is problematized as well as the Islamic orientation of MÜSİAD proved to be determining factors in pioneering a novel and creative usage of the Europeanization process in building a third kind of Euroscepticism in an Islamic form. Furthermore, unlike national-interest and policy Euroscepticism that concerns domestic issues of EU member or candidate countries, Islamic Euroscepticism not only expresses criticism and claims about

religious issues in Turkey and the way they are dealt with within the membership process but also has a larger scope in dealing with Islam-related issues on a global scale. As herein demonstrated, Islamic rhetoric is mobilized to attract attention to the way the EU deals with Islam as a religion as well as to the problems of European Muslims.

- 70 Yet, this analysis of Islamic Euroscepticism points out two risks. First, Islamic Euroscepticism endangers a full-fledged support for Turkey's total compliance with universally accepted secular values and norms by demanding special arrangements in the name of Islamic cultural and religious particularities of Turkish society. Second, the Islamic rhetoric, by demarking the religious differences with bold lines, reproduces the clash of civilizations thesis that the symbolic meaning attributed to Turkey's European integration aimed to eliminate in the first place.

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ABSTRACTS

This article examines MÜSİAD's economic and political Europeanization from 1994 to 2008. Europeanization is demonstrated to be an interactive process generating changes in a domestic actor's policy preferences, styles, resources, and discourses. MÜSİAD's Europeanization is then shown to be part of a social learning process resulting from its members' exposure to European business practices and culture. Furthermore, Turkey's EU accession process led to a creative adoption of European norms and their reinterpretation with regard to the association's concerns about religious issues, giving birth to an Islamic rhetoric expressing criticism of the EU and challenging the Turkish secular regime's policies towards religiously conservative demands. However, this Islamic Euroscepticism not only jeopardizes MÜSİAD's support for Turkey's complete compliance with secular universal norms but also reproduces the clash of civilizations thesis that Turkey's accession project to the EU initially aimed to obliterate.

INDEX

Mots-clés: européanisation, euroscepticisme, mouvement islamique, opportunisme politique

Keywords: europeanization, euroscepticism, islamic movement, political opportunism, alliance of civilizations

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