De-Europeanisation as Counter-conduct: The Case of non-Muslim Religious Minorities in Turkey

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Abstract: Democratic conditionality has been one of the main drivers of accession Europeanisation and a foreign policy instrument of the European Union's democracy promotion in third countries through its enlargement policy. In an era of rising autocratisation, however, the normative influence of the EU is increasingly questioned as to whether it continues to be a driver of democratisation. Focusing on one of Turkey's Christian communities, Armenians, this paper aims at analysing the impact of EU candidacy period between 1999-2022 on the minority policies of Turkey. It employs the concepts of counter-conduct and governmentality to analyse the dynamics through which the Turkish government seeks to uproot and reverse the Europeanisation in minority rights, and how this counter-conduct works in the case of Armenian community.

Keywords: Turkey, minority rights, Europeanisation, de-Europeanisation, counter-conduct, governmentality.

Introduction

Minority rights fall under the scope of Copenhagen political criteria which form the democratic conditionality for EU membership and require the candidate countries to have stable institutions guaranteeing democracy, rule of law, human rights, and respect for and protection of minorities. Conditionality is the primary driver of Europeanisation for accession countries under the EU's broader agenda of democracy promotion as part of its enlargement policy. Accordingly, Turkey's Europeanisation has been widely studied within the context of democratisation. However, the significant democratic backsliding of Turkey gives credence to two questions. First, whether the EU's normative influence continues to be relevant in an era of global autocratisation (Lührmann and Lindberg, 2019). Second, if the concept of Europeanisation (and its derivatives such as de-Europeanisation) can be operationalised to formulate sufficient explanations to such cases as Turkey's where interdependence and sectoral cooperation with the EU have deepened despite the increasingly divergent normative preferences (Turhan and Reiners, 2021).

The literature on Turkey's Europeanisation offers various events between 2005 and 2011 as a turning point for the deterioration of EU-Turkey relations, ranging from the impasse in the Cyprus issue (Yilmaz, 2017) and the Justice and Development Party's

(*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*, AKP) consolidation of power[2] (Cebeci, 2016) to the Arab Spring (Bashirov and Yilmaz, 2020). This study contends that, while all the events attributed in the literature to the deterioration of the EU-Turkey relations did have an impact, the decisive, path setting one was the Arab Spring, specifically, the eruption of Libyan and Syrian civil wars in 2011 and the ensuing humanitarian and refugee crises since they opened up space for Turkey's assertive foreign policy and highlighted its role as a power broker in the European neighbourhood area. In a way, while the preceding events had a gradual, quantitative impact, 2011 witnessed a qualitative change in the relations by turning the tables in terms of the power asymmetry and diminishing EU's conditionality. In a similar vein, the instability and power vacuum that emerged in Turkey's immediate vicinity led the AKP government to embrace a more assertive understanding of sovereignty that is firmly against sharing its competences in sovereignty-sensitive areas such as minority policies. In that regard, the post-2011 period can be contextualised as a new era of 'civilisational politics' (Bashirov and Yilmaz, 2020) during which a competition of sovereignty logics between the Union (as governmentality) and its candidate country (as imperial) has begun to dominate the EU-Turkey relations.

While drawing an explicable picture of the past two decades of EU-Turkey relations, the above top-down perspective which is centred around intergovernmental relations may remain insufficient in analysing the impact of this period on the Armenians of Turkey who as a non-Muslim minority comprising less than 0.1% of the overall population have a little-to-no influence over official policies (Özdoğan and Kılıçdağı, 2012) and are confined to a semi-political area of civil society. Furthermore, Alpan and Öztürk's (2022, p. 6) observation that the Europeanisation process in the Balkans "may have vested too much attention on elites rather than paying attention to bottom-up and grassroots movements" also applies to Turkey. Accordingly, instead of simply extracting conditionality from the equation and stretching the concept of Europeanisation as in the case of de-Europeanisation, the paper refers to the concepts of counter-conduct and governmentality to reveal successive Turkish governments' pursuit to reverse the impact of Europeanisation in minority rights, and the Armenian community's response to these efforts.

Although studies on Turkey's non-Muslim minorities have been flourishing in recent years (Parla and Özgül, 2016; Bardakçi et al., 2017; Bariş, 2017; Kılınç, 2019; Galip, 2020; Korkmaz, 2021), the literature still lacks holistic approaches that challenge 'the taken-for-grantedness' of the EU's transformative power by trying to 'unfold the domestic' (Alpan and Diez, 2014, p. 2) with a specific focus on bottom-up and grass-roots movements (Alpan and Öztürk, 2022, p. 6), while at the same time don't miss the forest for the tree. Focusing on minority policies with an empirically grounded study on one of Turkey's Christian communities, Armenians[3], this paper aims at filling this gap and contributing to the literature on Turkey's Europeanisation from two points. First,

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[2] 2008 Ergenekon and 2010 Sledgehammer trials targeting the military bureaucracy, 2010 Constitutional Referendum and 2011 parliamentary elections.

[3] Other non-Muslim religious minorities in Turkey include Roman Catholics, Jews, Assyrian Orthodox Christians (also known as Syriacs or Süryanis), Ezidis, Jehovah's Witnesses, members of Protestant denominations, Chaldean Christians, and Greek Orthodox Christians. For details, see International Religious Freedom Report for Turkey (Human Rights and Labor Bureau of Democracy, 2015).

by employing the concepts of governmentality and counter-conduct, it offers a remedy for the conceptual shortcomings of accession Europeanisation which is based on a top-down conditionality mechanism assuming a power asymmetry. Second, through process-tracing of a selected set of developments related to the Armenian community's self-administration[4], it documents the emergence of a lay (secular) public sphere (from now on, 'LPS') within the Armenian community of Turkey.

The empirical evidence this paper is based on was collected through a review of the relevant literature; a comprehensive document analysis[5]; semi-structured qualitative interviews; and process-tracing. While the think tanks or relatively more established civil society organisations (CSOs) may maintain an online archive laying down their activities and opinions, the less established and more informal activist initiatives and grass-roots movements necessitate interviews to gain such information. As such, interviewees comprise mostly the second group. They either occupy communal positions allowing for a close observation of the EU-related reforms and their impact on the respective community or are formal or informal representatives. Fourteen interviews, conducted between 2018 and 2022, were included in the study. The questions addressed focused on Turkey's EU candidacy process, with specific attention to intra-communal opinion differences. Data from the interviews was crosschecked with data from document analysis and process tracing.

The paper first summarises Turkey's EU candidacy period from accession Europeanisation to de-Europeanisation, then proceeds with the analysis of pre-2011 Europeanisation of Armenian community and the 2011-2022 period of Turkish counter-conduct in minority policies aimed at non-Muslim communities[6]. It concludes with a discussion of the findings.

EU candidacy period in Turkey

From accession Europeanisation to de-Europeanisation (1999-2010)

Radaelli (2006, p. 59) defines Europeanisation as a process which consists of "a) construction b) diffusion and c) institutionalisation of formal and informal rules, procedures, policy paradigms, styles and 'ways of doing things.' It also consists of shared beliefs and norms that are first defined and consolidated in the EU policy process and then incorporated in the logic of domestic (national and subnational) discourse,

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[4] These developments over which the EU's governmentality and the Turkish government's sovereignty-sensitive counter-conduct competed during the second half of Turkey's EU candidacy period (post-2011) include legislative reforms to the Law on Foundations, intra-communal election processes (Patriarch and foundation board elections), the rising role of Agos newspaper, formation, and activities of grass-roots movements such as Nor Zartonk and Thought Platform, and the Camp Armen resistance.

[5] Official documents issued by the EU and Turkey, reports produced by the CSOs and think tanks in Turkey, press releases and public announcements from the Armenian institutions and community representatives during the EU accession period, archives of Armenian newspapers.

[6] The second period of counter-conduct transpires through two specific events: The Patriarch elections and the suspension/revision of the election regulations for minority foundations. The second one is still an ongoing process, with the last development being the issuance on 21 June 2022 of the new regulations (https://cdn.vgm.gov.tr/duyuru/duyuru_4561_200622/cemaat-vakiflari-secim-yonetmeligi.pdf) which satisfied no one. The Armenian community had protested the draft version on 13 April 2022 with a public statement titled "No to the Usurpation of our Will!" to no avail. For the text signed by 250 prominent members of the Armenian community, see https://www.agos.com.tr/en/article/26969/more-than-250-signatures-from-the-armenian-community.

political structures, and public policies." This definition is broad enough to apply to both member states and accession countries.

From a top-down Europeanisation perspective, the conditions for accession Europeanisation to occur in a candidate country can be formulated in three stages where each one constitutes a prerequisite for the next one: EU's ability to attract new members, misfit between the EU and domestic levels (necessary conditions), and domestic willingness and capacity (sufficient condition). Aside from the above broader definition, Europeanisation can also be understood as "a process of power generation" (Radaelli and Exadaktylos, 2010, p. 209), which is related to the first stage and places the process within sovereignty relations. Interpreting 'power generation' as EU's ongoing ability to attract new countries aspiring for membership for perceived benefits such as accession to markets and national prosperity and consequently complying with the membership conditionality helps us understand the divergence between the EU and Turkey as of 2011 (the beginning of de-Europeanisation). This turn was caused by a combination of two interrelated developments. First, the negative effects of the 2009 European debt crisis have begun to penetrate the 'psyche' of the EU, leading to political and social cohesion issues within the Union. Second, the Turkish government has developed a sovereignty-sensitive approach and begun to push for an alternative normative framework to the one that formerly dominated its relations with the EU. It is no coincidence that the discursive appeals by the AKP to neo-Ottomanism have been accompanied right from the beginning by some critical revelations about the political and social cohesion issues within the EU. As Alpan and Diez (2014, p. 6) underline, "the financial crisis has once again made us aware of the different Europes that are advocated within different social and political circles. Articulating Europe is therefore always also part of a broader hegemonic struggle both within domestic constituencies."

The second condition concerns what the Europeanisation literature interchangeably defines as a misfit, misalignment, or mismatch. From a rational choice institutionalist perspective, there must be a misfit between the European and domestic levels to such an extent that compliance with the adaptational pressure from the EU would lead to a redistribution of resources and differential empowerment at the domestic level (Börzel and Risse, 2003, p. 64). In Turkey's case, this had been the immediate effect of de-securitisation in the country's politics, which lasted from 1999 (the beginning of official candidacy) to 2004, thus enabling a favourable atmosphere for EU-related reforms[7].

Third condition is agency-related: The domestic institutions or actors must be willing to respond to the adaptational pressures and have the capacity to avoid the constraints and exploit new opportunities created by the redistribution of resources and differential empowerment due to the changed domestic opportunity structure (Radaelli, 2003, p. 42). In Turkey's case, the AKP government could legitimise the EU reforms while at the same time avoid the opposition emanating from multiple veto points within the bureaucracy, military, and ultranationalist circles. With the help of political liberalisation due to de-securitisation in the previous stage, it formed a strong-enough reform coalition with pro-democracy actors, mainly liberals, social democrats,

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[7] After its leader, Abdullah Öcalan, was arrested in 1999, the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) declared ceasefire, significantly decreasing the adaptational costs and allowing for de-securitisation. The PKK terminated the ceasefire in June 2004 citing an unresponsive government to their peace calls.

and minorities (Kılınç, 2019, p. 27) to avoid the constraints. As explained by Börzel and Soyaltin (2012, p. 12), the EU's adaptational pressure aligned with the "domestic incentives, political preferences, or survival strategies of ruling elites, so that the latter can use EU policies and institutions to push their own political agenda, please their constituencies, and regain or consolidate their power."

The above formulation, which places the democratic consolidation issue at the heart of Turkey's Europeanisation, neatly corresponds to the second group of 'market-making' Europeanisation mechanisms (negative integration) defined by Radaelli (2003, p. 42), in the form of creating "integrated markets by removing barriers to trade, investment, freedom of establishment, and free circulation of people." In our case, the market that is being made can be construed as a more liberal political arena and a level playing field in politics through de-securitisation. Top-down conditionality plays out as the EU imposes a 'level playing field' in politics, consequently changing the domestic opportunity structure (Radaelli, 2006, p. 70). When the political arena becomes more liberal due to de-securitisation, existing domestic balance of power is challenged without the EU imposing a prescription of "how the new equilibria must look" (Knill and Lehmkuhl, 2002, p. 26); the outcome depends on the capacity of domestic actors to exploit the changed distribution of resources or the balance of power. Turkey's Europeanisation during the period of 1999-2004 mainly transpired within this framework.

Although the credibility of membership prospect gradually weakened since 2005 for Turkey, when the country rejected reforming its Cyprus policy and the EU responded by suspending the opening or closing of any further negotiation chapters, Europeanisation in Turkey continued selectively after 2005. Persistence of partial compliance (selective Europeanisation) in the following period of 2005-2010 notwithstanding the weakening membership prospect is explained by its perceived political benefits to the government (Saatçioglu, 2011, p. 23) and analysed through a push-and-pull model (Yilmaz, 2014; Beylunioğlu, 2017) where the EU conditionality and the domestic willingness constitute the 'push' and 'pull' factors, respectively.

There has been a qualitative change in the EU-Turkey relations as of 2011 due to a set of interrelated reasons ranging from the AKP's consolidation of power after the 2010 Constitutional Referendum and 2011 elections in Turkey to the Arab Spring and the ensuing instability and power vacuum in Turkey's immediate vicinity which opened up space for the country's assertive foreign policy, heightened its sovereignty-sensitivity in domestic matters, and highlighted its role as a power broker vis-a-vis the EU's security concerns. This change was institutionalised with the 2016 Refugee Deal and the diminished EU conditionality allowed Turkey to pursue a more assertive understanding of sovereignty that is firmly against sharing its competences in areas such as minority policies where the EU's democratic conditionality has previously led to Europeanisation. This turn in the EU-Turkey relations is described also as the rise of transactionalism by Bashirov and Yilmaz (2020, p. 1), who argue that the refugee deal signalled a new era of 'civilisational politics' which "was in stark contrast to the early 2000s, when Turkey pursued the EU accession process based on the norms and principles set by the EU institutions."

The post-2011 period is marked as de-Europeanisation in the literature. Aydın-Düzgit and Kaliber (2016, pp. 5-6) define de-Europeanisation broadly as a process that

goes beyond merely denoting a lack of Europeanisation, and that necessarily entails a turning away from the EU as a reference point for the target country. Causes are two-fold for this backtrack: the loss or weakening of the EU influence, on the one hand, and a growing scepticism and indifference in the target country towards the EU which in turn lead to backsliding in areas where the EU-induced reforms have incurred, on the other. The underlying logic of de-Europeanisation in this description is mainly a change in the power asymmetry between the EU and the candidate country, which formerly enabled the fundamental mechanism for accession Europeanisation: conditionality. The state policies aimed at the management and accommodation of non-Muslim minorities, an area intertwined with the democratic consolidation of the country[8], have undergone a de-Europeanisation process after 2011. The zenith of this turn can be pinpointed to a specific event: the suspension of the election regulations for non-Muslim community foundations in 2013. This event also marks the beginning of Turkish government's counter-conduct against the Europeanisation that has taken place in minority rights.

De-Europeanisation as counter-conduct (from 2011 onward)

The 2013 Gezi protests and the June 2015 parliamentary elections in Turkey which saw the AKP lose its majority to form a government and the entrance of the People's Democratic Party (HDP) into the parliament with a record number of representatives from non-Muslim communities, were attributed by the AKP government to the Europeanisation that took place as liberalisation through de-securitisation in the politics of the country. As a response, the New Turkey Project (NTP) was envisaged by the AKP "to overcome the detrimental effects of state-phobia among liberal sections of the society" (Coşkun, Doğan and Demir, 2017, p. 93) due to the penetration of EU's governmentality logic. Realizing that political liberalisation as a result of the EU-related reforms (Özbudun, 2015) would not allow it to freely implement its NTP, the AKP government got antagonistic against the EU influence. This in turn led it to appeal to re-securitisation and build a new security regime (Taş, 2020), a step that would be further facilitated due to the failed coup attempt of 15 July 2016.

The literature on Turkey's de-democratisation during its EU-bid has favoured a top-down perspective with an "overemphasis on the EU's top-down impact on accession countries at the expense of the domestic level" (Alpan and Diez, 2014, p. 2) and taken the underlying logic of shift from accession Europeanisation to de-Europeanisation as mainly a change in the power asymmetry which previously enabled the fundamental mechanism of accession Europeanisation, i.e., conditionality. However, in the case of non-Muslim minorities, Europeanisation process involves horizontal mechanisms as well as vertical ones: networking, cooperation, lobbying, learning, and "diffusion of ideas and discourses about the notion of good policy and best practice" (Radaelli, 2003, p. 41), all of which can be construed as a transfer of governmentality logic or the 'EU-ropean ways of doing things.' Thus, the de-Europeanisation process would inevitably involve not only a change in the power asymmetry and the diminishing of

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[8] Interviewee 11: "Even if Turkey is democratic, the Armenian community might still be suffering but the opposite is not true; it is not possible for Armenian community to be in good shape if Turkey is in bad shape in terms of fundamental rights and freedoms."

conditionality, but a counter-conduct aimed at uprooting and reversing the progress on the ground. In a way, while the vertical mechanisms of Europeanisation operate mostly in an intergovernmental space, the horizontal ones operate in the civic space which plays an important role for the non-Muslim minorities' public participation and existence. Accordingly, a framework that relies solely on a top-down Europeanisation framework might fail to consider the fact that CSOs may still constitute an important ground for the non-Muslim minorities to defend the progress that occurred during of EU candidacy period, and channel their democratic demands (Interviewees 4 and 5). Therefore, we also need to look at another fundamental mechanism of Europeanisation: socialisation, or more precisely, what Schimmelfennig (2012, p. 8) describes as 'transnational socialisation.'

In the absence of a credible membership prospect and domestic willingness to comply with conditionality, the socialisation mechanism might continue to function through other instruments and strategies of the EU's democracy promotion, a major one being the support for and strengthening of civil society (Lerch, 2021). Having first been focused on the democratic functioning of national institutions and the rule of law, during the 2000s, the Union's democracy promotion under its external policy was reoriented with a focus on strengthening democracy 'from below' by supporting the civil society and infusing a "right kind of democratic culture" (Kurki, 2011, p. 349).

There is a growing body of literature that critically studies the EU's democracy promotion from below, centred around the concept of (neo/liberal) 'governmentality' (see, among others, Merlingen, 2007; Joseph, 2010, 2012; Kurki, 2011; Derous and de Roeck, 2019). The term 'governmentality' was originally coined by Roland Barthes in 1957 to describe the technocratisation of the French state and the resulting de-politicisation of its governing practices (McKinlay and Taylor, 2014, pp. 2-3). The term governmentality was then borrowed by Foucault in his lecture at the Collège de France in February 1978 to analyse the emergence of a new mode of governance in parallel with the formation of European welfare states from the 16th century onwards where he defines it as "the ensemble formed by institutions, procedures, analyses and reflections, calculations, and tactics that allow the exercise of this very specific, albeit very complex, power that has the population as its target, political economy as its major form of knowledge, and apparatuses of security as its essential technical instrument" (2009, p. 108).

Civil society occupies a central role in Foucault's conceptualisation of governmentality. He (2008, p. 295) argues that for governmentality to have a "global character over the whole space of sovereignty" without being split into two domains as economy and state, it "must be given a reference, a domain or field of reference." For him, this domain of reference is civil society in which governmentality as the new form of governance is increasingly exercised. The relationship between civil society and state differs in the liberal and neoliberal forms of governmentality. While the liberal form opposes civil society to state, the neoliberal form in Foucault's conceptualisation (2008, p. 330) stipulates them as co-constitutive of governmentality. Muehlenhoff's (2019a, p. 32) typology also comes by this significant distinction: while civil society is positioned as a third sphere and a check on the state in the liberal form, it is envisaged as part of the political decision-making, a partner to the state, and an integrated party to the governing process in the neoliberal form.

Based on Foucault, Cebeci (2016, p. 121) defines the EU's 'governmentality' as "the sum of all discourses, procedures, practices – technologies – employed by the EU to 'conduct the conduct' of third countries and their peoples (population) in such a way as to create specific subjects that regulate themselves through a neoliberal logic (political economy)" and concurs that the "model of democracy that the EU tries to impose on third countries, its technocratic approach that depoliticises target societies, and the professionalised civil society that it aims to promote on neoliberal lines all refer to such governmentality." According to Cebeci (2016, p. 121), "[j]ust as it is not possible to think about power without resistance, governmentality, as the conduct of conducts, inevitably brings about counter-conduct. […] 'Counter-conduct' in the case of the EU's governmentality refers to those techniques employed by third countries to counter and resist the EU's imposition of its 'silent disciplining power' on them."

The impact of the EU candidacy period on Turkey's minority policies
Europeanisation of Turkey's Armenian community

The representatives of Armenian community were among the first civil society actors that actively participated in the public debates on the EU process. On 23 November 2001 (pre-AKP period when Democratic Left Party, DSP, was in power), prominent Armenian intellectual and journalist Hrant Dink wrote an article for the Armenian newspaper *Agos* (2001), raising the issue of community properties which had been confiscated after the 1974 ruling of Court of Appeals based on the 1936 Declaration. In his article, Dink was not criticising solely the official policies toward the non-Muslim minorities. He was first and foremost criticising his own community and calling for action. This was an attempt to take initiative in the upcoming democratisation process due to the EU candidacy and a first step to form an LPS within his community that would challenge the *status quo* which he blamed for the lack of progress for the community's long-standing issues such as the restitution of community properties.

Seventeen years later, Ohannes Kılıçdağı (2018), another prominent Armenian intellectual and writer for *Agos*, reads between the lines of a letter written to the Turkish government by the Armenian Catholic Archbishop of Istanbul Levon Zekiyan (2018), and combines the tone of this letter with the images from President Erdoğan's inauguration ceremony. On that occasion, the leaders of religious communities have been included in the state protocol in a similar manner to the Ottoman period, which leads him to consider that, in relation to the management of non-Muslim religious minorities, there might indeed be a neo-Ottomanist aspiration embedded in the envisaged New Turkey of Erdoğan under the new system of omnipotent presidentialism. Kılıçdağı ironically states that, assuming it would even be possible, a return to the *millet* system[9] as a complementary element to the presidential system, at least requires an Armenian *millet* to be present in the country. Lamenting on the fact that the current situation makes going back to the conditions of 1860s look like

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[9] The Ottoman Empire employed the millet system for managing its diversities. According to the millet system, there were two broad categories of millets with a hierarchy between them: Muslims as the millet-i hakime ("those who govern") and non-Muslims as millet-i mahkume ("those who are governed"). The state recognised the highest-order religious leader (patriarch, chief rabbi) of each non-Muslim community (millet-i mahkume) as the head of their respective millets with power to govern over them and granted these communities protection and autonomy in religious and cultural affairs, provided they paid their jizya (poll tax) and did not rebel against the state.

not that bad of a choice and regression, he goes on by saying that "equal citizenship was never established. Throughout the history of the Republic, the *millet* system was implemented implicitly or ostensibly, but the collective rights brought by it were never recognised. As a result, Jews and Christians, including Armenians, could enjoy neither the rights of equal citizenship nor the rights brought by the *millet* system fully and in a consistent manner."

What happened between these two articles is the story of, first, the emergence of an LPS within the Armenian community that would challenge the internal *status quo*, consequently democratising it from inside, and then, the Turkish government's efforts to reverse this progress which will be analysed in this paper through the concept of counter-conduct.

Following the country's official EU candidacy, the 1999-2004 period reforms marked a clear case of Europeanisation in Turkey, with immediate impact which included an easing of the anti-terror laws and the expansion of freedom of expression and association. This was reflected in the domestic politics as de-securitisation and liberalisation and enabled non-Muslim communities to organise and voice their democratic demands on the public arena more freely without any fear of retaliation. The 2005-2011 period is defined as selective Europeanisation, due to the Turkish government's continuing reform initiatives[10] despite the stalemate in the EU-Turkey relations and the weakening of EU conditionality. During these two periods the non-Muslim minorities have begun to actively participate in the public conversation with their newly founded CSOs and the Turkish CSOs have begun to address these communities' issues more openly.

Civil society for non-Muslim minorities has historically been a semi-political domain as an extension of the educational, social, cultural and religious rights guaranteed by the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne. Their political participation has been restricted throughout the Republican period, their public participation was mediated through and limited by the civil society domain or 'the third sector.' They were debarred from holding official positions, only a few MPs till the EU accession period made their way into the parliament and up until the HDP's entrance into the parliament in 2015, a non-Muslim MP meant to showcase how inclusive and democratic Turkey was. Their existence in politics was conditioned on "their contribution to the image of the Republic of Turkey," and the minimum criterion was "not having a dissident identity that would bring up the historical events in which the non-Muslim minorities have been victimised." (Bali, 2009, p. 60)

While due to the re-securitisation in the Kurdish issue, civil society active in the area of Kurdish rights has shrunk significantly and the European norms and values have ceased to be a common reference point for respective CSOs (Kaliber, 2016), the same is not applicable in the case of non-Muslim religious minorities. To begin with, it is a relatively less securitised case than the Kurdish issue, allowing for a wider space for Europeanisation to hold its ground. While the developments related to the solution of Kurdish issue have been more abrupt and fluctuant, Europeanisation in the case of non-Muslim minorities' rights has followed a relatively steadier course,

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[10] The Kurdish and Alevi openings, both in 2009 and both failed; restitution of the confiscated properties of communities and reform of the law on foundations, both in 2008, both partially successful and continuing.

albeit a downward one. Interviewees, too, confirm this observation and underline "the state's differential treatment to Kurds and non-Muslim minorities" (Interviewee 1) as a reason for this difference. The fact that "the Christian minorities have always been somehow 'confined' to an 'apolitical' civil society domain as a way of limiting their full participation in the 'Turkish' public life and politics has ironically led them to have more robust civic platforms" (Interviewees 4, 5). Also, while for the Kurdish minority the expansion of civic space and proliferation of CSOs were novel phenomena specific to the EU accession period, the non-Muslim communities had "historical links with the outside world and Europe" (Interviewee 8). One important factor that contributes to this differential treatment is the Turkish state's narrow interpretation of the Treaty of Lausanne as can be seen in a 15 November 2000 statement of the Turkish Foreign Ministry in response to the Morillon report (European Parliament, 2000):

> Another section in the Morillon report which is totally cut off from reality relates to the so called "Kurdish problem". The fact which has to be clarified and recognised in the first place is that there is no such problem in Turkey. There are no minorities in Turkey except those described in the 1923 Lausanne Treaty and in our constitution all Turkish citizens, including minorities, have the same rights, freedoms and responsibilities. (Turkish MFA, 2000)

All these factors combined provide relatively favourable conditions for the continuation of Europeanisation in the case of non-Muslim minorities in the absence of credible membership prospect through mechanisms other than top-down conditionality.

Börzel and Risse (2003, pp. 67-68) argue that Europeanisation through socialisation "may result in the internalisation of new norms and the development of new identities provided that (one of) two mediating factors are present." The first mediating factor is the presence of "'[c]hange agents' or norm entrepreneurs" who "mobilise at the domestic level," and the second one is a "political culture and other informal institutions conducive to consensus-building and cost-sharing." Beginning with the second half of the 1990s and accelerating throughout the EU candidacy period, there have been favourable developments in Turkey with regards to both factors. A well organised, very active and productive civil society sphere, a third sector which is increasingly independent from the state's influence and its official ideology and discourses has emerged in the form of a network of think tanks, foundations, research programs within the academia, rights-based independent media outlets, newspapers challenging the restrictions on freedom of expression, civic platforms and initiatives challenging the restrictions on freedom of association. This network of civil society actively supported Turkey's EU accession, organised several events ranging from conferences to field research, and published significantly, changing the political culture and empowering informal institutions conducive to consensus-building and cost-sharing. They have been the 'change agents' and 'norm entrepreneurs' who 'mobilised at the domestic level' and formed a pro-EU, reformist network of 'third sector' elements and a newly emergent LPS within the non-Muslim religious minorities. Prominent actors of this network were the Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation (TESEV, established in 1994) especially with its Democratisation Program; Istanbul Bilgi University (IBU, a private university established in 1996) with its various study

programs, research centres and publishing house (IBU Press was initiated in 2000); Anadolu Kültür (not-for-profit cultural institution founded in 2002), whose founder Osman Kavala had been unlawfully detained since 1 November 2017 and was sentenced to aggravated life imprisonment on 25 April 2022 after a highly controversial judicial process; and more importantly, a lay public sphere within the Armenian community that emerged around the Agos newspaper, whose writer and editor Hrant Dink was assassinated on 19 January 2007 by an ultranationalist with suspected links to the ultranationalist circles within the Turkish security forces.

While this mainly qualitative change cannot be documented through exact quantitative indicators, certain facts and qualitative arguments can contribute to building an informative picture. During the EU candidacy period, free dialogue on Turkey's troubled past with regards to its non-Muslim communities was possible, thus leading to a profound change in the public discourse. Dozens of highly controversial, yet acclaimed events (conferences, panels) were organised, publications (monographs, conference proceedings, expert reports) were produced, several projects were conducted, each one addressing a different aspect of the issues of Turkey's non-Muslim minorities and all of which have either been possible due to the liberalisation of Turkish politics during the EU candidacy period or funded by several EU or European institutions. During this period, several impactful CSOs, civic platforms, think tanks, media outlets, academic institutions, publishing houses which focus on the rights of non-Muslim minorities and operate nation-wide were established.

Although the government has easily backtracked from most of them either due to the pressure from ultranationalists or because of its lack of willingness or sincerity, several official steps in reforming the overall structure of management and accommodation of non-Muslim minorities were taken. With the reform of Foundations Law in 2008, a Foundations Council was established as the highest decision-making body of the Directorate-General of Foundations (VGM) in which the community foundations are represented by one member who is elected by non-Muslim community foundations *(Table 1)*.

Table 1. Management and accommodation of non-Muslim minorities in Turkey:
The Armenian community

	Presidency
Patriarch	Ministry of Culture and Tourism
	Directorate-General of Foundations
	Foundations Council Community foundations are represented by one representative of the Foundations Council, the highest decision-making body of the Directorate General of Foundations
	Representative of Community Foundations Established in 2008 with the reform of Foundations Law, elected by non-Muslim religious foundations
Spiritual Council	Union of Armenian Foundations (ERVAB) (formerly known as "Cooperation and Consultation Platform for [Armenian Community] Foundations" or VADİP, *Vakıflar Arası Dayanışma ve İşbirliği Platformu*)
Foundations providing public services for the Armenian community (education, health, charity, cemetery, religious). Boards elected in accordance with the 2008 Law on Foundations but paralysed due to the government's annulment of election the provisions in 2013 with the unkept promise of reform.	

Source: Author's own compilation

An organised LPS within the Armenian community has emerged around *Agos*[11] (founded in 1996 under the editorship of Hrant Dink), having a democratising effect on the Armenian community as a whole. The journalists and intellectuals who worked and wrote for *Agos* went on to become prominent intellectuals in the broader Turkish intelligentsia and public life with a strong clout over the liberal, progressive circles[12]. During the 17th anniversary of *Agos*' foundation, Arus Yumul explains the overall impact of the newspaper by saying that "thanks to *Agos*, the broader society came to know Armenians as fellow human beings, not as enemies. The newspaper also had a huge impact on the Armenian community. While the community had largely adopted to an introverted silence until 19 January [Hrant Dink's murder], afterwards it took up where he left. In this land, the Armenian history is also the history of Turks and Muslims. Thanks to Hrant, these two sections of the society have changed and transformed. It is because of Hrant that things, that had been previously seen as impossible, took place"[13].

The Armenian community of Turkey established their own civic platforms. In terms of its function for the whole community, the most important one, Union of Armenian Foundations (*Ermeni Vakıflar Birliği* or ERVAB) was founded in 2009[14] with the expectation that it would meet the need for a civilian initiative (Kuyumciyan, 2014) to represent the community as a whole. The second important civic initiative is The Thought Platform (*Düşünce Platformu* or DP, founded in 2012), which organises meetings within the Armenian community to discuss their long-standing communal issues and serves as a communal forum. One important campaign organised by the DP was the "We demand our right to elect our Patriarch" (Hürriyet Daily News, 2016) after the Armenian community was denied the right to replace the acting Patriarch Aram Ateşyan, who was appointed by the state when Mesrob II Mutafyan had to withdraw due to illness. Other civic initiatives include *Nor Zartonk* (2004) and Armenian Culture and Solidarity Association (EKDD, 2010). The Hrant Dink Foundation (HDV), which was set up in 2007 after Dink's murder, also carries out an important role by embracing Dink's legacy and carrying on his struggle[15].

Nor Zartonk played a particularly important role in consolidating this LPS with its young membership profile who have been very proactive in forming alliances

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[11] Many Armenian interviewees point out also the contribution of Aras Publishing House (founded in 1993, three years before Agos) as a forerunner for the formation of this LPS.

[12] See, for example, Professor Hovhanness I. Pilikian's account based on his visit to Istanbul: "To further expand the metaphor from classical Greek mythology, one could note that there are also new gods being born, the 'New Olympians' of the Istanbul Armenian community. The Zeus among them seems to be Hrant Dink, a sharp intellectual with well-deserved links and position among the Turkish intelligentsia, who had the absolutely right and forward-looking concept to act within the Turkish intellectual context by founding and editing Agos, the first Armenian newspaper in Turkish." (The Armenian Titans of Istanbul and their new Olympian Gods, November 17, 2005)

[13] Arus Yumul during a meeting for the 17th anniversary of *Agos*' foundation. See, *Agos* (2013).

[14] Originally named "Cooperation and Consultation Platform for [Armenian Community] Foundations," or VADİP. The Rum (Greek) community, too, established its own, Association for the Support of Greek Community Foundations in Turkey (Rum Vakıfları Derneği, RUMVADER) in 2011.

[15] For the HDV's full mission statement, see HDV (2007).

within the larger Turkish society[16]; conducting a constitutive, community-wide survey[17] in 2007 to establish the current situation of Turkey's Armenians; staging a 175-day long resistance to save *Camp Armen*, a former Armenian orphanage in Tuzla district of İstanbul from demolition in 2015[18]; and lastly, setting up the Nor Radyo, a progressive radio station airing in multiple languages spoken by Anatolian people. Their activism was well beyond the traditional limits of their community, and has widened, consolidated and been complementary to the forum-like characteristic of the said LPS.

The influence of this LPS and the circulation of *Agos* have gradually increased as explained by Korkmaz (2021, p. 201):

> *The newspaper's circulation was only 1500 when it was first published in April 1996. It increased steadily in the following years. In 2001, it was around 3000, and since 2005 its circulation has reached to more than 5000 copies and, in some weeks, even to 7500 copies. At extraordinary times, for example, after Hrant Dink's assassination, the circulation for several weeks even reached 50,000 copies. Moreover, in 2011, [...] the newspaper had 500 subscribers abroad, and it was distributed in Istanbul in around 130-140 places. These figures imply that Agos has become not only the most widely read newspaper of the Armenian community, but also has many non-Armenian readers from the wider society as its circulation was up to 50,000 on particular dates.*

This LPS both arose from and extended into several committees of the Armenian community under the Patriarchate dealing with the cultural and societal issues, such as the Education Commission, the former member (Garo Paylan) of which went on to become an MP for the HDP – an event which marks its role in mediating the Armenian community's political participation through a strengthened parliamentarism due to the liberalising impact of EU candidacy on Turkey's politics.

Two examples, both of which pertain to the self-administration of non-Muslim communities, would suffice to understand the importance of this LPS: First one relates to its bridging role between the generations within the community. Referring to the Turkish state's obstruction of board elections to community foundations since 2013, Moris Levi, the representative of non-Muslim community foundations in the VGM at the time, points out in 2019 that they "are facing the risk of losing a whole generation" unless they "ensure that young, enthusiastic, visionary new board members who move with the times are in charge," with the possible outcome being an irreversible damage to the non-Muslim religious minorities' "centuries-old cultural heritage" (Yildirim, 2019). A lawyer for the Armenian foundations, Sebu Aslangil, too, points at the same risk saying that, since new members cannot be recruited, "new ideas or new dynamism are not allowed, and these are very important for community life" (Yildirim, 2019).

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[16] They are a member of the People's Democratic Congress (HDK) out of which the HDP emerged. The HDK "prioritises as its primary field of action the social domain, as opposed to the political domain of electoral politics, and aims to mobilise people for civic engagement beyond casting a vote. Emphasizing the principle of direct democracy—as opposed to representative democracy—the HDK advocates 'the development of mechanisms that would ensure people's self-management, defying the hegemony of civilian and military bureaucracy' (the HDK program)." Excerpt from the *Jadaliyya* interview with one of the founders of HDK. See, Briy (2019).

[17] For the results of the survey titled "Being a Minority in Turkey," see, *Nor Zartonk* (2007).

[18] For *Nor Zartonk*'s press statement (May 15, 2015) regarding the demolition of Camp Armen, see, *Nor Zartonk* (2015).

The second example relates to the intra-communal communication that is vital to the internal democracy and mobilisation. It was only after the publication of *Agos* that alternative views to the dominant one known as traditionalist, conservative and reluctant in opposing the official minority policies have found a platform. For example, up until *Agos* and *Nor Zartonk*, the foundation boards announced their upcoming elections with little-to-no details, curtailing a wider participation to an open and more democratic election process (Dönmez, 2008, p. 572). One important democratic intervention of the LPS was during the board elections to the Surp Yerrortutyun Armenian (*Üç Horan*) Church Foundation in Istanbul's Beyoğlu district between 2009 and 2012 (Interviewee 11) which were repeated three times due to the irregularities of the acting board (Ziflioğlu, 2011). *Üç Horan* has the largest amount of revenue among the Armenian foundations with one of the lowest memberships which attests to the imbalance among the foundations. While the Armenian community demands, in general, a reform of the Foundations Law so as to define the constituency on a province basis rather than the present district basis and allow for merging the foundation budgets to eliminate the revenue-membership/representation imbalance (Özdoğan and Kılıçdağı, 2012, p. 82), the current *status quo* within the community that is represented at the foundation boards and ERVAB might not be as enthusiastic about such a reform. The *Üç Horan* board elections thus became a front for the political struggle between these two rival positions. Members from the LPS formed an opposition and presented a Yellow List (*Sarı Liste*) of candidates for the board. While failing in the election process due to the irregularities, their grass-roots activism and democratic pressure led to resignations from the board and put the issues of antidemocratic election procedures and internal *status quo* on the community's agenda. All in all, the emergence of this LPS within the Armenian community served as a bridge between the generations, a place of apprenticeship for internal administration and a space for communal activism in the absence of formal channels of communication and debate to reform their self-administrative structures.

Last but not least, the ethno-nationalist conceptions of nation and citizenship (Öztürk and Haynes, 2021) have effectively been challenged and alternative views have been mainstreamed and legitimised. This effect can be substantiated by two examples from opposite sides of the political spectrum. The original party program of the İYİ Parti (İYİP, founded in 2017), a split from the ultranationalist Nationalist Movement Party (MHP), included a section on minority policies which offered a solution based on the principle of 'equal citizenship,' freedom and democracy[19]. It was then hastily updated by removing these emphases and leaving only the point about the continuation of 'war on terror'[20], due to a slandering campaign by the statist, ultranationalist Aydınlık group who are an unofficial, small partner to the governing anti-EU coalition after 2016[21]. The other obvious example is the HDP. The HDP has risen to prominence with its firm emphasis on protection of and respect for country's religious, ethnic and linguistic diversities. It nominated and eventually sent a record number of non-Muslim community members to the Turkish parliament. The AKP government's crackdown on

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[19] For the original İYİP program which has since been wiped off the party's official website, see (in Turkish), İYİ Party program from October (2017).

[20] For the updated, current İYİP program, see (in Turkish) İYİ Party program from November (2017).

[21] For an example of the said slandering campaign, see (in Turkish) an article in the newspaper Aydınlık (2017), associating the 'equal citizenship' concept with the views of PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan.

civil society and efforts to paralyse what is left of parliamentarism along with directly targeting the HDP and its activists after the transition to a Turkish style presidential system, are deliberate acts of counter-conduct to uproot and reverse the democratising effect of the EU accession process in the form of Europeanisation.

Turkish government's counter-conduct

The post-2011 period, on the other hand, is a case of de-Europeanisation in line with the country's authoritarian turn and democratic backsliding. Yet, the AKP government maintained a reformist agenda, at least rhetorically, towards the country's non-Muslim minorities. In hindsight, it appears as though the successive AKP governments had been insistent on an overhaul of official policies towards the non-Muslim minorities albeit increasingly diverging from the EU norms and espousing an alternative normative framework, which has been attributed to the ongoing Islamisation of the AKP government and sometimes referred to as neo-Ottomanism in the literature. While no matter which political current came to power in Turkey, non-Muslims were seen in every period as the *other* beyond all political schisms, what changed during the AKP period, when official nationalism shifted from Kemalist nationalism to religious nationalism, was a heightened emphasis on "tolerance towards non-Muslims" by referencing the Ottoman *millet* system (KAGED, 2018, p. 15).

The AKP first lost the majority to form a government in June 2015 parliamentary elections and was then faced with a failed coup attempt in 2016. It managed to pull through by forming an alliance with the ultranationalist MHP and the Kemalist former military elite, consolidating its authoritarian power under a new security regime. After this breaking point, even the rhetoric of reforms in the minority rights area has been laid aside, be it Europeanisation in relation to the EU membership prospect or a neo-Ottoman reorganisation of minority policies. Its new ultranationalist allies condemned both the EU-related minority reforms and the neo-Ottomanist aspirations of the AKP government. Based on a staunch Turkish nationalism, they rejected any demotion of the centrality of Turkishness in the official conceptualisation of citizenship or in government policies.

To sum up, a periodisation in terms of minority rights would be as follows: 1999-2004 as Europeanisation where reforms in line with the Copenhagen political criteria were induced due to the high credibility of membership prospect and led to an immediate liberalisation and de-securitisation, consequently changing the domestic opportunity structure in favour of pro-democracy actors; 2005-2010 as selective Europeanisation where reforms were induced mainly due to neo-Ottomanist aspirations, not the EU conditionality; 2011-2015 as de-Europeanisation where only the rhetoric of reform remained accompanied by a subtle counter-conduct; and 2016 to date as de-democratisation accompanied by an overt counter-conduct in which even the reformist rhetoric was abandoned and the government engaged in a deliberate effort to uproot and reverse the impact of Europeanisation in the area that took place during the previous periods due to the impact of EU candidacy.

The Turkish government's counter-conduct aimed at condemning the non-Muslim minorities to a paralysed *status quo* by *de facto* preventing the foundation elections since 2013. This intentional move has contributed to the deepening of intra-

communal tensions, especially by instrumentalizing the restitution of confiscated community properties to establish a transactional, privileged relationship with a specific section of the communities which has traditionally been more vulnerable to co-optation and willing to comply with state demands (Interviewees 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 10, 11). Especially for the Armenian community, the results are the weakening of democratisation within the community, disrupting LPS' influence on and access not only to the Armenian community but also to the general Turkish public, and an imposition of an anachronistic model of governance, which was discursively advocated by the government as the tolerant *millet* system but in practice, stipulated a modernised version of restrictive imperial centre-periphery relations (Galtung, 1971).

Table 2. Drivers of Turkey's Europeanisation and de-Europeanisation in the area of minority rights

Period	Drivers	Outcome
Before candidacy	Economic, sector-specific relations with Europe	Minority related reforms as showcases for Turkey's Europeanness, alleged inclusivity and tolerance
1999-2004	High conditionality and willingness, reluctant consensus on EU reforms between elite fac-tions due to the systemic crisis	Immediate de-securitisation, liberalisation, abrupt reforms = Europeanisation
2005-2010	Weakened conditionality and willingness, rising costs due to the pressure of the old elite reorganizing through an openly anti-EU campaign which specifically antagonises the minority reforms	Selective Europeanisation with the aim of forging electoral alliances with Kurds, liber-als to consolidate its power against the pressing old elite
2011-2015	Low conditionality and willingness due to the qualitative change in EU-Turkey relations, domestic power consolidation, Arab Spring incentivizing assertiveness and heightening sovereignty-sensitivity, increasing appeals to Islamic references including neo-Ottomanism	De-Europeanisation and beginning of counter-conduct and authoritarianisation
2016-to date	Diminished conditionality due to the deepening and institutionalisation of the qualitative change in EU-Turkey relations with the Refugee Deal, emergence of a new elite consensus, this time anti-EU reforms	Counter-conduct, re-securitisation, democratic backsliding

Source: Author's own compilation

For these purposes, it persistently denied the non-Muslim communities' calls for permission to hold elections and did not renew the annulled election provisions; sided with the *status quo* within the communities on all possible occasions; continued its top-down, antidemocratic, and behind-the-curtains relationship with a privileged, state-friendly section within the communities especially via the restitution process of confiscated properties which, due to the exorbitant sums, had been detrimental for

the paralysed foundation administrations and monopolised this section's rule over the whole community; played into the intra-communal tensions, continuously generating a dichotomy of benevolent members vs unruly, impertinent members (Interviewees 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11); and relentlessly attacked the HDP to weaken it as a coalition of pro-democracy forces that defies its denialist minority policies and mainstreams alternative views to its NTP. Furthermore, since 2018, the AKP government blocks the meetings of EU–Turkey Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) in an effort to have a monopoly over all possible links and interactions with the EU (Interviewee 8).

In the case of Turkish 'third sector' (IBU, TESEV and *Anadolu Kültür*), through indirect (via the market forces, i.e. changing their ownership structure as in the case of IBU) and direct interventions (by criminalising their activities and arresting their members as in the case of *Anadolu Kültür* and Osman Kavala) and intimidations (as in the case of TESEV), the Turkish government has managed either to isolate them from the broader Turkish society (as in the case of *Anadolu Kültür*) or force them to retreat to a safer, more apolitical position to avoid falling victim to the state's wrath. TESEV conveniently abandoned its Democratisation Program in 2015 when the AKP government began to impose a renewed security regime to the country (Interviewee 13). As the most prominent pro-democracy think tank, it instead focused on migration, gender and urbanisation related research, all of which are relatively less tense issue areas compared to the minority issues and de-securitisation. IBU's ownership structure has changed several times along with its administration (Arslan and Odman, 2011) and it lost its centrality for the country's liberals in search of a platform for 'venue-shopping' (Guiraudon, 2000) (Interviewee 14). However, in the meantime, CSOs, civic platforms and independent media outlets and newspapers established directly by the non-Muslim minorities could hold their ground. While the change of track for the former group (Turkish civil society which has historically been weak and vulnerable to official state ideology and intervention) succinctly showcases the possibility of retrenchment, the latter one (CSOs belonging to non-Muslim minorities which have historically been well structured and independent of the official state ideology, albeit being constrained and strictly overseen by the Turkish state) signals the possibility of the opposite.

To sum up, the above summarised acts of the consecutive AKP governments in their quest for reversing the Europeanisation in the area of minority rights constitute a counter-conduct against the EU's governmentality. In line with the working logic of counter-conduct, they exploited the opportunities associated to the EU accession period by weaponizing the EU's 'conduct of conducts' against the political rivals and opponents, for example, by annulling the provisions of election regulation for the boards of community foundations with the promise of reform; denying the replacement of the Armenian Patriarch through an election in the name of rule of law; and lastly, under the guise of facilitating the establishment of civic platforms that represent the communities as a whole (ERVAB and RUMVADER), by forging a pro-*status quo* coalition through the return process of confiscated community properties with the conservative upper echelons of these communities who hold critical posts within these platforms and foundations.

It is important to note that the imposed system of *millet* remains more than anachronistic for accommodating the non-Muslim religious minorities. It effectively paralyses the self-administration of communities, and this is an intended outcome of

the government's so-called neo-Ottoman minority policy. The government's policies for (non)accommodating its non-Muslim minorities are specifically designed and implemented as a counter-conduct against the impact of EU's logic of governmentality or Europeanisation. They are not neo-Ottoman in that regard. Appeals to Ottomanism are nothing more than a cover, an attempt to provide a discursive legitimacy. They are just a continuation of the century-old denialist and banisher Republican policies against non-Muslim religious minorities.

Conclusions

This research began with two questions in mind: As a normative power, how did the EU's democracy promotion, either through its democratic conditionality or support for civil society, fare in the case of Turkey's non-Muslim religious minorities in an era of global autocratisation, and if the concept of Europeanisation and its derivatives such as de-Europeanisation can be operationalised to formulate sufficient explanations to such cases as Turkey's where interdependence and sectoral cooperation with the EU have deepened despite the increasingly divergent normative preferences? By focusing on civil society and grass-roots movements from a bottom-up perspective, it set out to overcome the conceptual shortcomings of accession Europeanisation which is based on a top-down conditionality mechanism assuming a power asymmetry. It showed that the Turkish government's minority policies go beyond de-Europeanisation and amount to an intentional, continuous counter-conduct to overpower the EU effect that had previously occurred, albeit without being officially declared. Employing the concept of counter-conduct removed the problem from the narrow limits of accession Europeanisation and associated with the entirety of EU-Turkey relations.

As for the concept of governmentality, despite the critical studies on the EU's governmentality pointing at its role of de-politicisation (Muehlenhoff, 2019b), the overall picture given above shows that governmentality is what the civil society – another actor of 'pull' – makes out of it, or as commonly noted in the Europeanisation literature, domestic factors constitute significant intervening variables for the effect to occur and endure (Alpan and Diez, 2014). Accordingly, there are two possible outcomes of the transfer of EU's governmentality logic to the domestic setting: if the civil society is externally accessible and internally autonomous *vis-a-vis* the state to resist being co-opted, and the EU's democracy promotion either through membership conditionality or via other instruments of its external policy ensures a de-securitisation, the outcome is not de-politicisation and reform is possible. The empirical data show that while the Turkish third sector retreated to safer issue areas, exemplifying the second possible outcome, the non-Muslim CSOs and grass-root movements could hold their ground. One weakness of EU's logic of governmentality lies in its unfamiliarity with such cases as the non-Muslim minorities of Turkey who have specific issues and needs that may not necessarily be met by the 'EU-ropean ways of doing things' and institutional frameworks offered by the EU either due to their historical roots that defy any Eurocentric approach or since the communities in question possess more sophisticated 'ways of doing things' and institutional frameworks than those offered by the EU. This unfamiliarity is evidenced by a review of the progress reports on Turkey and the debates on Turkey in the European Parliament sessions which include only minimal and superficial references to the authentic issues discussed in this paper.

On the whole, this study attempted to fill the gap in the literature by bringing in push-and-pull factors other than those emanate from the intergovernmental level, specifically, the intra-communal struggles within the Armenian community for democratising their self-administration which eventually led to the emergence of what may be its most original contribution to the literature: a lay public sphere. A possible avenue for further research it points at is the ambiguous and sometimes paradoxical effect of Europeanisation on minorities (for a comparative perspective, see Bačlija and Haček, 2012; Anghel, 2015; Tatar, 2015, all of which focus on Roma people).

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Appendix 1. List of interviewees

Interviewee 1. Lawyer, activist; October 2018, İstanbul

Interviewee 2. Lawyer, writer, publisher; October 2018, İstanbul

Interviewee 3. Activist; May 2021, İzmir

Interviewee 4. Podcast producer, April 2022, Zoom

Interviewee 5. Podcast producer, April 2022, Zoom

Interviewee 6. Contributor to the Nor Radyo, October 2018, İstanbul; May 2021, İzmir

Interviewee 7. Ohannes Kılıçdağı, writer for Agos; April 2022, Zoom

Interviewee 8. Hişyar Özsoy, HDP deputy, member of HDP Foreign Relations Committee; February 2022, Zoom

Interviewee 9. Murat Mıhçı, member of HDP and Human Rights Association (İHD); March 2022, Istanbul

Interviewee 10. Activist, Nor Zartonk; May 2022, Zoom

Interviewee 11. Activist, EKDD; May 2022, Zoom

Interviewee 12. Burcu Ballıktaş Bingöllü, Hafıza Merkezi Program Director; May 2022, İstanbul

Interviewee 13. Former TESEV employee, August 2020, İstanbul

Interviewee 14. Activist, IBU alumni and graduate student; August 2020, İstanbul