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The Europeanization of Sub-National Entities in Turkey: Towards the Multi Level Polity?

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Abstract

Territorial governance in Turkey has seemed to shift towards a more regionalized model in the course of the accession process with the European Union. Within this context, the behaviour and mobilization of sub-national entities (SNEs) in the political process has become a significant issue in Turkey. Studies illustrate that the Europeanization process not only affects on intra-state relations but also promotes the sub-national mobilization and territorial representation in members (and applicant) states. In the broader context of the role of regions in the European governance structure, this paper analyzes the situation for Turkish SNEs. Based on the original findings from semi-structured interviews with civil servants and on the cross-sectional survey on 85 SNEs in Turkey, the research utilizes the subnational mobilization literature and incorporates with the concept of Europeanization to examine the changing dynamics of intergovernmental relations in Turkey and explore the awareness and the attitude of SNEs in Turkey towards the issue of sub-national mobilization. The paper finds that Turkish SNEs, mostly from rich and developed regions and cities, have become engage with the EU institutions through setting up a regional office and participating inter-regional networks in Brussels, which is a sign for the trend toward multi-level polity. Yet, the ongoing developments remain to be seen.

Key Words: Subnational mobilization, territorial representation, Turkish subnational entities

1. Introduction

Mobilization of sub-national entities (SNEs)¹ across the European Union (EU) arena and their representation in Brussels has become a vibrant discussion in academe since the early 1990s. Together with two interrelated structural effects of globalization and decentralization, developments throughout the integration process have advanced the changing nature, and growing importance of SNEs' activities in Europe over the last three decades (see Keating and Jones, 1995). Among others², the Maastricht Treaty of 1992, for many scholars, could be evaluated as the turning point for SNEs' involvement since it was a solid recognition of the multi-layered structure of the EU governance (Hooghe, 1996; Hooghe and Marks, 2001). All these developments have not only underpinned the power shift towards Brussels making many SNEs reorient their activity towards the EU level but also fortified channels for SNEs to directly interact with EU institutions and represent their territorial interests to the broader audience in Brussels. Although sub-national mobilization and territorial representations could be seen under different guises (see Hooghe, 1995), establishing the regional offices (ROs) in Brussels and joining the inter-regional networks (IRNs) are the mostly used channels for SNEs.

Nowadays, many SNEs are operating in Brussels to influence EU policy, lobbying, creating networks, gathering information, and securing the EU funds (Marks et al 1996). The ever growing engagement of SNEs to the EU institutions and their presence in Brussels has continued with the enlargement process as territorial representation and mobilization of SNEs are not limited to the EU members (see Moore, 2008a). Although the political influence of SNEs in European policy-making process has been contested, some scholars acknowledge that their presence in Brussels as a key of territorial representation indicating subnational mobilization in Europe and reinforcing the third-level politics in the multi-layered system of European governance (Hooghe, 1995). Yet, there is a variation in the level of mobilization among regions and cities in member (candidate) states and substantial divergence among SNEs' activities in the EU based on their motivations. To analyze what causes this uneven pattern of mobilization between and within the member states, multitude factors mainly constraining or enabling SNEs to pursue their activities on the EU level have been listed. Scholars by and large pinpointed the national context as the key source of variation and highlighted the importance of the national context as the main explanatory variable which underpins the mobilization towards the European arena (see Jeffrey, 1997; 2000; Moore, 2008a/b). Scholars have methodologically focused on cross-country case selections by giving a particular emphasis on the differences in the national context, i.e. party politics, constitutional differences, the devolution of competences to the

¹ The concept of subnational level in this paper refers to the intermediate level of government, where we understand 'intermediate' as referring to those subnational levels located directly below national level but above the local level. For a discussion on the use of the term 'region', 'subnational level', or 'third', 'meso' and 'intermediate level', see, inter alia, (Sharpe, 1993), (Jeffrey, 1997), (Bulmann, 1997), (Keating, 2008), (Marks et al, 2008). SNEs on the other hand are seen as an umbrella definition under which many diverse authorities including politicians, bureaucrats, employees of national states, sub-national self governments, trade unions, regional development agencies and municipalities. As a unit of analysis, this paper considers the situation for regional development agencies and municipalities.

² Other relevant developments include: the completion of the internal market; the revise treaties of Single European Act, the Maastricht treaty; the subsequent reforms of structural funds and Cohesion policies; the launch of the principles of partnership, additionality and subsidiarity; the creation of the Committee of Regions (the CoR); right to attend the Ministry of Council meetings for some privileged regions (Article 213).

lower level, and in the region specific dimensions, i.e. associational culture, regional distinctiveness, the level of legitimacy, the entrepreneurial capacity of regions, size and financial sources of SNEs (inter alia Marks et al 1996, Jeffrey,1997; 2000; Bulmann; 1997; Tatham, 2008; 2010).

To a great extent theoretical and empirical discussion is also centred in the context of the EU's regional policies and its related financial incentives, better known as the structural funds (Hooghe and Marks, 2001) for explaining the mobilization of SNEs. Many scholars have so far chosen their empiric case selection from the EU-15 countries (Keating and Jones, 1995; Jeffrey, 1997; 2000; Moore, 2008a; Tatham, 2008; 2010), and later from CEECs (Kungla and Kettunen, 2005; Sapala, 2008; Moore, 2008b; Tatar, 2009). Yet, there is no work done for current candidates since sub-national mobilization in the European context is relatively new for these countries. Seeing this lacuna in the literature, this paper analyzes the situation for Turkish SNEs by asking some empirical questions such as how has the EU accession process affected intra-state relations in Turkey? Whether do the changing dynamics of intergovernmental relations in Turkey lead subnational mobilization across the European arena? What are the constraints for the mobilization of Turkish SNEs to the European arena?

The overall aim here is to provide answers to these questions listed above by using original data from elite-interviews in Ankara and a cross-sectional survey analysis on 85 SNEs in Turkey (section 2). The paper proceeds as follows. After the brief explanation on methodology, the section 3 considers the impact of Europeanization on intergovernmental relation and on domestic process of societal interest formation, aggregation and representation. The section 3.1 explains the connection between national decisions on regional policies/regionalization and the EU requirements. The section 3.2 subsequently puts the SNEs in Turkish context and analyzes the scope of Turkish SNEs representations in Brussels by giving an example from the participation of IRNs and ROs in Brussels. The constraints on subnational mobilization for Turkish SNEs are also considered in this section. The last section concludes and makes comments for the future studies (section 4).

2. Methodology

Apart from the relevant literature review based on secondary sources and document analysis, this paper incorporates semi-structured interviews in Ankara and utilizes the survey findings which have been implemented over 107 Turkish SNEs (RDAs, Metropolitan Municipalities and City Municipalities). The selection of interviewees was composed of officials in the State Planning Organization (SPO), the Ministry of Interior, and General Secretary for EU (GSEU), the Union of Turkish Municipalities (UTM), the EU Delegation in Ankara, the Economic Policy and Research Foundation (TEPAV, *Turkish Acronym*), EU Team Player for Regional Policy (Prof. Murat Ali Dulupçu) and Development Bank. Although the SPO, the GSEU and the EU delegation in Ankara were targeted because they are the key institutions and responsible for Turkey's adaptation to the EU's regional policy, other interviewees as representative of several public and non-governmental bodies were chosen due to their interests in regional development, policies and governance. Interviews were semi-structured and asked to every interviewee, yet they were completely free in the way they answered the questions.

As for the survey, it was conducted as a part of PhD research at the University of Sheffield and aimed to analyze the mood of Turkish municipalities and RDAs on the issue of sub-national mobilization across the European arena. From the descriptive standpoint, it was designed to be implemented over 65 city municipalities (CMs), 16 metropolitan city municipalities (MCMs) and 26 regional development agencies (RDAs) in Turkey. After designing the survey, it was piloted with six people in order to test the survey and make any necessary amendments. It has subsequently been distributed to the most relevant person in selected organizations by checking the organizations' formal administrative structure and getting help from the human resources unit and/or operator. By finding the relevant persons in targeted institutions, the survey was explained to each participant on the phone. In so doing, it is aimed to get the highest response rate and to provide the reliability of the survey result. 51 out of 65 city municipalities (% 78,4); 14 out of 16 metropolitan municipalities (% 87,5) and 20 out of 26 RDAs (%76,9) equalling to 85 SNEs (%79,4) took part in the survey conducted in February and March, 2011. Although the questionnaire consisted of 16 questions divided to 3 thematic groups, I will only use findings relevant to this paper.

3. The Europeanization of Turkish Politics: What has changed at the sub-national level?

Even though Turkey's relation with the EU dates back to as early as the beginning of 1960s, for many scholars working on the EU-Turkey relations, the Helsinki summit of 1999 is considered as a reference point to explain the change(s) in Turkish domestic arena. It is indeed not only a time symbolizing Turkey's institutional ties with the EU but also a time when sweeping political reforms have been adapted in Turkey in order for a compliance with the EU demands. This entire process in which Turkey has gone through since 1999 is often named as Europeanization (Kubicek, 2005; Muftuler-Baç, 2005:17, Diez et al. 2005; Ulusoy, 2009; Ertugal, 2011). Europeanization is understood here in the broader sense referring to the domestic adaptation of policies, politics and polities to the multi-level system of EU governance. Even though the analytical separation between the three dimensions of domestic adaption is worth emphasizing, in reality, European policies, process, and institutions tend to affect not only one but two or all three dimensions at the same time (Börzel, 2005: 49).

The adaption to EU's regional policy is one of those areas where Europeanization does not just affect domestic system of intergovernmental relations (Jeffrey, 1997; 2000; Bulmann, 1997; Börzel, 2002; Bursens, 2007; Page and Goldsmith, 2010) and promote particularly unitary states to shift towards more compound polities by promoting multi-level governance (Bache 2008; Bache et al 2011). It also has consequences for domestic process of societal interest formation, aggregation and representation, and also impact on how SNEs strive to channel their interests into the European policy-making process (Marks and McAdam, 1996; Eising, 2009). For the former case, the EU norms and conditionality played a significant role in the very emergence of regions as functional units of territorial self-governance within applicant states, in some instances acting as a catalyst of domestic reform process (Brusis, 2002: 553). As for the latter, beyond the conditionality, the pressure to establish effective institutional frameworks and strategic objectives that facilitate engagement in the EU has shaped SNEs' behaviour both during the accession process and since their respective nation states have become members of the EU (Moore, 2008b: 213). This part of the paper first explains the change in intra-state arrangements as an example of

the formal case, which might also be considered as the formal sphere of the conditionality. Afterwards, it shows the level of Turkish SNEs' involvement to the EU activities in Brussels through the participation of inter-regional networks (IRNs) and the creation of regional offices (ROs) in Brussels.

3.1. Change in intergovernmental relations in Turkey

Given the Europeanization is mostly used as an explanatory research agenda for the EU members, in many instances the impact of Europeanization has reached well beyond its boundaries to cover candidates and to some extent non-member states (see Schimmelpfening and Sedelmeier, 2005). Within the context of the pre-accession period, conditionality was therefore understood as a particular form of Europeanization 'abroad', that is, in applicant countries (Pitschel and Bauer, 2009:335). In taking the power asymmetry between the EU and applicant state into account, one can argue that the EU has played a key role in reconfiguring regional governance in Turkey, as in the case of CEECs. Conditions regarding the EU's regional policy, which is under the Chapter 22 of the Acquis, chiefly contain an active participation of the local level in the regional policy process; the empowerment of the sub-national level; reducing disparities in regions lagging behind, mechanisms for interministerial communication, capacity for multiyear programming, capacity for monitoring and implementing policy, the adoption of the EU's NUTS territorial units for statistical classification and structural funds implementation³. In order to attain these conditions, member states and candidate countries alike are required to shift from hierarchical forms of governance structure to a more network-oriented one in which vertical (involving the establishment of a regional tier) and horizontal (the involvement of economic and social actors) elements of multi level governance could be utilized (Benz and Eberlein, 1999).

The EU's regional policy has operated both formally, distributing structural and cohesion funds to reduce regional and social disparities, and informally, in which the Commission has actively promoted decentralization and the empowerment of sub-national actors (Hooghe and Marks, 2001). The management of structural funds or pre-accession aids, as a main incentive for change in regional policy in member (and candidate) states, have some principles included an 'integrated approach' (using social, regional and agricultural mechanisms in a coherent way), 'concentration' (on target zones), 'additionality' (EU funding was to supplement as opposed to replace national development aid), 'programming' (pluriannual programmes instead of one-off projects) and 'partnership' (Bauer and Börzel, 2010: 255). Among others, the partnership principle provides the Commission with a powerful tool to open up bilateral relations between the national governments and their regions at the domestic level, which makes the management of structural policy as a process of multi-level cooperative policy making (Hooghe, 1996; Bache, 1998). Bauer and Börzel (2010: 255) argue that it promised nothing less than the transformation of vertical relationships via functional policy making. However, in the lights of EU's requirements, most specifically for the management of structural funds, Brusis (2002:553) point out that the EU conditionality played a significant role in the very

³ The EU's demand regarding regional policy could be labelled under the headings of legislative framework; territorial organization; programming capacity; institutional administrative capacity; financial management and control (see progress reports for Turkey since 2001).

emergence of regions as a functional unit of territorial governance within applicant states, in some instances acting as a catalyst of domestic reform process.

It is indeed a case for Turkey as state bureaucrats have mainly agreed that the EU was the main catalyst behind the establishment of RDAs in Turkey⁴. They also emphasized that it would not be possible for the consolidation of reform, if there was not support from below and within Turkey. Yet, in highlighting the lack of support from below, progress reports since 2001 have entailed Turkey strengthening its structures for managing regional development, both at central level (either through the State Planning Organization (SPO) or a specific department given responsibility for regional policy) and at the regional level (setting up regional development authorities) (CEC, 2004). In the negotiation framework, the EU overtly required that “Turkey must bring its institutions, management capacity and administrative and judicial systems up to Union standards, both at national and regional level, with a view to implementing the *acquis* effectively” (CEC, 2005b). The aforementioned demands from the EU led Turkish governments to adopt a set of regulations/pieces of legislation in order to create harmonization with the EU’s regional policy.

A number of important regulations/legislations adopted in Turkey since 2001. The adaptation of a provisional nomenclature of territorial units (NUTS) for the implementation of structural funds in 2002 has followed with the creation of two pilot RDAs, Izmir and Çukurova, in 2006. After a series of legal challenges and the change in the Presidency, who constitutes a veto point, the rest of RDAs (16 in 2008 and 8 in 2009) corresponding to each NUTS 2 level were established in Turkey. With these new institutional arrangements, 26 RDAs vested by administrative and institutional capacity has become able to formulate and implement regional development plans as well as to allocate national funds⁵. Without regionalizing politically, Turkey has thus regionalized administratively as dividing countries into 26 statistical units in which RDAs⁶ started to operate.

All these development suggest that the EU has played a critical role in changing the dynamics of centre-region relations in Turkey. Yet, there seems to be three caveats which undermine the Commission’s tool for transforming intra state politics leading to multi-level polity. These caveats are also on the way for creating strong regional tier in Turkey. First of all, the EU regional policies are seen as a guideline for the implementation process and ‘it does not require transposition into national legislation’ (CEC, 2004: 2005a) and it depends on government’s decision. Moore (2008b: 217) argues that the Commission was reluctant to prescribe institutional frameworks for regional reform, acknowledging the diversity of regional governance structures across existing member states. It might be the reason why the EU avoided commenting on the shape of the decentralization and on the number of regions to be set up or where geographical boundaries should be drawn (Brusis, 2003: 6). This clearly justifies the importance of national context. It also explains the reason behind the divergence in regional set up across the EU as the ambiguity of the *acquis* on regional

⁴ Interviews with civil servants in SPO and GSEU as well as in EU Delegation in Ankara, in April 2011

⁵ RDAs in Turkey have not accredited yet to allocate EU’s financial incentives.

⁶ According to law no. 5549, RDAs consist of a decision-making body is composed of representatives of local administrations in each province (provincial assemblies and municipalities) and chambers of commerce and/or industry and is headed by provincial governors. In metropolitan regions, such as Istanbul, Izmir and Ankara, the decision body also includes representatives from non-governmental organizations and/or the private sector. Development councils consist of 100 representatives from public and private sectors and civil society institutions.

policy has led most candidate states not to prioritize regional policy in their preparations for accession negotiations causing different practices in the principles of partnership, programming, subsidiarity and additionality. This ambivalence of Chapter 22 also carries two potential problems for an effective regional tier in member (and candidate) states.

To begin with, the degree and substance of change in regional arrangements may largely depend on the state and political elites' behaviour and their willingness to share the responsibility with the region. Equally important, it may reinforce the gatekeeping role of national governments on the implementation of structural funds and regional policies, which may impede on SNEs' direct relations with the EU institutions or their ability to influence policy outcomes (Bache 1998). Intra-state channels, as intergovernmentalist argue, might become an important arena for SNEs to represent their interests. Yet, as Bache noted (1998), the gatekeeping role became more and more difficult and not as effective as government controlling the channels to the EU arena. Governments, especially those in centralized states like UK, therefore try to extend the gatekeeping to the implementation stage rather than seeking to gatekeep the channels of communication as it is increasingly difficult if not impossible to do (ibid). As it is seen below, central government in Turkey is still seen as the old style of gatekeeper concerning with those SNEs' access or direct relations with the EU institutions.

The second caveat, especially for the partnership principle, the 1993 and 1999 revisions of European structural and cohesion policy extended the partnership to the social partners, thus undermining the privileged role of regional and local authorities (Bauer and Börzel, 2010: 256). This is indeed one of the biggest problems in Turkey because in any country, especially those large and diverse, public policy is the aggregate of many different interests, values and identities. It is therefore difficult to bring economic, social, political and state actors together in any given region since each of them has their own agenda⁷. Given the foundation of these regional institutions are a recent phenomenon in Turkey, it is extremely difficult for them to become an interlocutor for their regions. As bureaucrats in SPO pointed out, apart from Istanbul, Izmir and Ankara, other RDAs consist of 3 to 6 cities so it is not easy for them to bring stakeholders together from different cities as this overlapping agenda undermines region's ability in order for a creation of common regional interests or goals⁸. Similarly, a civil servant of one RDA rightly commented that if you cannot bring stakeholders together in order to envisage goals for any given region, then there is not any strategy to follow by implying the foreign activities of RDAs such as creation of ROs in Brussels and interacting with IRNs⁹. Today, the main priority of all Turkish RDAs is to understand the potential and the capabilities of actors and institutions in their region and raise the awareness of collaboration for regional development as a part of horizontal mobilization.

In analyzing the evolution of partnership principle in the EU's regional policy, Bache (2010:65-6) on the other hand argues that during the CEECs' enlargement process, the Commission went back to its earlier partnership requirements which underline the cooperation between tiers of government instead of worrying about horizontal relations among economic, political and social partners for the CEECs. For Bache, the legacy of democratic centralism and the corresponding absence of local and regional self-government

⁷ Interviews in SPO, TEPAV and with the EU team player, in March-April, 2011

⁸ Interviews in SPO, in April, 2011

⁹ Unofficial interview in Karacadağ Development Agency in Diyarbakir, in March 2011

have provided important institutional barriers for those states. The Commission also tried to reduce political resistance in those states and to keep the enlargement process on schedule. It might be the reason that with the introduction of IPA fund system, instead of promoting regionalization of fund management, the EU made the allocation of financial incentives more centralized. The EU was worried about transparency in managing the structural funds through regional partners owing to the lack of their institutional and administrative capacity. As a consequent, the Commission after 2000 abandoned its previous emphasis on decentralization and instead encouraged the centralized administration of EU assistance by the CEECs in order to ensure the efficient utilization of allocated funds (Baun and Marek, 2008:7; Bauer and Börzel, 2010: 256). Even if the certain level of regionalization was promoted in the CEECs from the beginning, the Commission has also paradoxically promoted centralization during the accession stages and for the first couple of years after the accession (Ertugal, 2005). As a direct result of this turn in fund management, Turkish RDAs are not able to allocate EU's development aids which reduce the interaction between the Commission and Turkish RDAs. In fact, as Hooghe (1996) argued, thanks to this direct relation provided by the partnership principle between the Commission and SNEs, many of those SNEs started to have presence in Brussels through ROs or IRNs.

Last but not least, there is a permanent derogation on Chapter 22 for Turkey, which requires the membership first¹⁰. On the top of that Turkey has received much less incentives to those accession states within the fifth enlargement round. For instance, Bulgaria received in total around 300 million Euros per annum from the 2000-2003 period. The equivalent total for Turkey would be around 3 billion Euro per annum but in fact Turkey received 250 million Euro in 2004 and 300 million Euro in 2005 (Ertugal, 2011). One expert argued that the Commission is not willing to allocate massive resources to Turkey, given its size and population. It is for this reason that the EU takes things slower than other accession states undermining the ongoing decentralization in Turkey¹¹. As argued, the primary goal of SNEs from new member states for their subnational activities is to secure the EU funds. Similarly, it could be argued that the expectation for Turkish SNEs is also heavily dependent on seeking EU funds. According to survey findings¹², for Turkish SNEs, with the 61% of response rate Central Finance and Contracts Unit (CFCU) is chosen as the most popular institutions for sources of information regarding the EU-related issues. In taking the role of CFCU¹³ into account, one may argue that seeking the funds options are the main driver for many SNEs to contact with the CFCU. Consequently, instead of mobilizing across the EU arena, Turkish SNEs could only use national channels to seek fund options.

¹⁰ Interviews in SPO, GSEU, and the EU Delegation in Ankara, in April 2011

¹¹ Interview with Gulhan Bilen (expert) in Development Bank, in April 2011

¹² For the question of where do you generally receive information regarding the EU-related issues, Turkish SNEs mostly picked up the national institutions (CFCU, %61.1; General Secretariat for EU affairs, 54,1% SPO, 51,7%; Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 15,2%). It is also striking that more than one-third of SNEs (38,8 %) get necessary information from the EU either using internet sources or directly contacting with the EU institutions.

¹³ The CFCU has been established by the Memorandum of Understanding which is signed between EU Commission and Turkish Government on 14th February 2002 which was subsequently ratified by the Grand National Assembly on the 29th January 2003. CFCU is taking the responsibility for the overall budgeting, tendering, contracting, payments, accounting and financial reporting aspects of all procurement in the context of the EU funded programmes in Turkey. As a central unit CFCU is operating as an independent body but is attached to the EU Secretariat General and the National Aid Coordinator.

Although the above arguments suggest that the impact of the EU's regional policy has remained limited and the EU has given mixed signal for its regional policy, one can still argue, from the top-down perspective, that Europeanization is considered as an independent variable affecting and challenging well-established structures within the domestic systems of governance and plays an important role in the administrative reform within candidates. Yet, in the lights of above caveats and from the bottom perspective, the picture is rather complicated. Although state bureaucrats accept that the impact of EU-accession process is the biggest stimulus, national context in Turkey determine the degree and scope of change regarding the intra-state arrangements. As they argue, without any pressure from the EU, Turkey has allocated national resources to each RDA in order to make them more effective¹⁴. Upon the Constitutional Court decision in 2008, RDAs were recognized as a permanent nationwide regional tier of institutions in order to formulate regional programmes, through participation with stake holders but subject to approval by the SPO. National funds for regional development are allocated to every region regularly on an annual basis for the first time, which are spent according to a grant scheme (implemented through call for proposals) administered by RDAs (Ertugal, 2011). Monitoring of the grant scheme will be conducted jointly by SPO and RDAs. Table 1 below compares the allocation and management of EU funds (2004-2006/2007-2011) with the national funds after 2008.

	EU funds (12 NUTS regions)		National funds (26 NUTS regions)
	2004-06	2007-13 OP for regional competitiveness	Post 2008
Strategic coordinator	–	SPO	–
Managing authority	SPO	–	SPO
Operating structure	–	Ministry of Industry and Trade	–
Contracting authority	CFCU	Ministry of Industry and Trade	RDAs
Project selection criteria	SPO	Ministry of Trade and Industry and + SMC	RDAs
Deciding of individual project applications	SPO + CFCU	Ministry of Industry and Trade	RDAs
Monitoring	SPO + PIUs (regional)	SMC (sectoral)	SPO + RDAs (regional)

Table 1: the comparison of the allocation of EU funds and National Funds (Taken by Ertugal, 2011)

¹⁴Interviews in SPO, in April 2011

In considering these changes in intergovernmental relations in Turkey with regard to the participation of RDAs in both the EU-funds and national funds, Ertugal (2011) underlines four fundamental points, which are worth emphasising. The timing of domestic change was determined by domestic party politics, not EU conditionality; the substance of domestic change reflects EU practices and preferences; the motivation for the substance and the extent of domestic change does not originate from the conditions, rewards or sanctions of EU membership; the role played by the EU has been indirect through the passive provision of policy or institutional templates that domestic actors choose to emulate. All in all, there seems to be an impact of Europeanization on intra-state relations in Turkey but the degree and scope of change depended on national context. As Ertugal (2011) rightly observed, there is a differentiated pattern of Europeanization in Turkey where the EU plays an indirect role and domestic party politics a casual role in institutional change in regional policy. The EU is a passive provider of institutional templates, which domestic actors in power choose to emulate.

3.2. Mobilizing Across the EU Arena

The previous section clearly showed that the EU conditionality was an important motivation in the very emergence of regional tier in Turkey, though domestic party politics were significantly affected the degree and outcome of this process. Yet, as Moore (2008b) discussed already, there is no specific reference in any part of EU conditionality regarding SNEs' direct engagement with the EU institutions. Progress reports only mentioned that Turkey should increase the regional capacity in terms of human and financial resources through the creation of regional arrangements and ensure effective involvement of all relevant stakeholders (regional and local as well as social, economic partners) (CEC, 2003). However, as discussed above, the changing structure of partnership principle centralized the fund allocation, which undermined the direct relations of SNEs with the Commission. All these make it clear that the national context and to a certain extent bottom up dynamics coming from the region itself is important in order to mobilize across the European arena and engage with the EU institutions. As it is argued in the subnational mobilization literature, there must be some bottom up dynamics coming from the region itself.

As in the case of many other unitary states in the EU, the centralized national tradition of Turkey inherited from the Ottoman Empire and the early Turkish Republic affected immensely on local units not to have necessary competencies and political power in Turkish state (Ertugal, 2005; Dulupçu, 2005; Keyman and Koyuncu; 2005). More importantly, starting from the Ottoman era up to date, periphery was seen under the tutelage of the centre impeding the creation of independent cities like those in some part of the Europe (Göymen, 1999: 68). With the exception of the authority for the development for the South Eastern Anatolian region (GAP), there were no implementing structures outside Ankara. Territorial administrative units (provinces and districts) have very limited powers: their functions have been until present essentially executive, and based on the principle of deconcentration (Ertugal, 2005: 25; Okçu et.al, 2006). Due to the lack of experience, administrative and institutional insufficiency together with the reluctance of the centre as gatekeeper, local units in Turkey have faced difficulties in playing a large a role in regional policy or acting as autonomous entities.

Civil servants in SPO are well aware that being sole responsible for the entire Turkish regional policy and development is not possible due to the geographical size of Turkey¹⁵. They commonly acknowledged that since the beginning of 2000, not only the EU but also other international organizations (like IMF, OECD) and to some extent bottom up demands coming from the mostly industrialized and westernized cities such as Izmir and Istanbul have required from the centre to devolve some competences to the lower level¹⁶. Long before 2000, it is also stated in the first five year development programme (1963-1967) that there is a need for regional units like RDAs in between centre and local in order for developing regional plans (SPO, 2007). Although some regional plans were developed by SPO on an ad hoc basis, these plans and regional arrangements were never realized because of unstable economic and political environment in Turkey as well as insufficient experts and available data in regions. For civil servants especially in SPO, the real problem was to find proper institutions to give this responsibility and to make sure that these institutions are able to control regional plans without politicization and direct national funds without corruption¹⁷. This highlights the ownership problem within the subnational level, i.e., who is going to control this process; to what extent these institutions become independent from the centre, so forth. Although this picture has dramatically changed after the creation of RDAs and with the local reform process as a compliance to the EU's regional policy, it is early to predict that the change in Turkish traditional governance lead a full-fledged regionalization that the outcomes of this radical restructuring within Turkish administrative system which give spaces to SNEs to aggregate their interests on the European arena.

Finding an ownership like RDAs on regional level cannot immediately solve existing problems such as the insufficiency of economic sources and human sources at the local level; the low level of social capital at the regions (Dulupçu, 2005); the lack or partial experience of local governance (Köker, 1995; Çelenk, 1999); mistrust among actors involved in the governance process (Keyman and Koyuncu, 2005; Ertugal, 2005). More importantly, institutionalization process takes time. Apart from two RDAs which were set up in 2006, the foundation of these regional institutions is a recent phenomenon in Turkey as the rest of RDAs have only started to operate after 2008. It is for time being difficult for RDAs to gather regional wherewithal together in order to conduct political and cultural, even in some cases, economic aspirations on the EU level because a possible conflict between actors and institutions or even cities, which undermines the regional identity and cooperation.

A lack sense of regional identity in fact underlines another chronological problem in Turkish national contexts. Interviewees with civil servants in Ankara revealed the sensitivity towards the concept of region, regionalism and regionalization¹⁸. Aktar (2005) sarcastically considers that the concept of the region is ill-fated in Turkey as the word "*bölge*" derives from the root "*böl*" which means "divide", which echoes division and secession. Accordingly, state bureaucrats act as a gatekeeper in order to control SNEs' access to the EU arena. As one expert stated in SPO,

'as long as they coordinate with the centre, RDAs can go wherever they want, even to the space. As long as we know what they are aiming to and what they want from this activity, we (SPO) support them. However, as a unitary state, we need to have

¹⁵ Interviews in SPO in April 2011

¹⁶ Interviews in SPO in April 2011

¹⁷ Interviews in SPO in April 2011

¹⁸ Interviews in SPO , GSEU and Ministry of Interior, in April 2011

one voice outside and we have foreign ministry which is responsible for foreign activities. Apart from diplomatic issues, RDAs can do whatever they want'¹⁹.

This is a typical reflex for any centralized state and a good example for the old style of gatekeeping as the centre is preferred to be seen as an united and integrated country to the outside world. It is explicitly stated in Article 123 of the Constitution that national, provincial, urban, and rural administrations should function in unity and coherence in accordance with the rule of unitary state in order to maintain integrity in public administration in terms of organizations and duties (cited in Okçu et al, 2006). More importantly, the Article 3335 regulates a provision for whole non-state actors who wish to operate abroad. According to this law, any networking with foreign domestic institutions and establishment of an office in foreign countries is subject to the permission of the council of ministers in Turkey. In a nutshell, the legacy of statism, the fear of separatism, some legal issues on the national level, ownership, lack of associational culture (or social capital) at the regional level portray Turkish national context for SNEs. All these factors to a certain degree impact on Turkish SNEs not to have sufficient competences and political and economic power for their engagement with the EU institutions and territorial representation outside the country.

Although the above discussion showed that national context in Turkey does not provide enough spaces and necessary competences for the activities of SNEs, there are some SNEs which have already established some form of mobilization and territorial representation through the participation of the IRNs and/or the creation of ROs in Brussels. According to survey findings, while 62,4% SNEs are not involved in any IRNs, 32,9% SNEs on the other hand are engaged with at least one IRNs (see table 2).

	CMs	MCMs	RDAs	Total
I don't know	3.9%	14.3%	.0%	4.7%
No	80.4%	57.1%	20.0%	62.4%
Yes	15.7%	28.6%	80.0%	32.9%
<i>N</i>	51	14	20	85

Table 2: Conducting relation with any inter-regional organization in the EU

The striking point is that with 80% participation rate new born RDAs brought dynamism to Turkish SNEs' engagement to the IRNs, mainly with the European Association of Regional Development Agencies (EURADA). In its official web site²⁰, EURADA's mission and activities are listed as running conferences and seminars; having an extensive publications programme; keeping its members up to date with EU policy developments; providing briefing on critical issues such as state aid rules; alerting members to funding and contract opportunities and helps with forming and running partnerships. It also lobbies and briefs the European Commission on behalf of members and maintains a highly effective communications network there. Through round tables and reflection groups, individual EURADA members can play a direct role in the development of policy at the Commission, and form their own links with officials. EURADA brings together and disseminates good

¹⁹ Interview with Burcu Diraor in SPO, in April 2011

²⁰ See http://www.eurada.org/site/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=60&Itemid=71&lang=en

practice in economic development for the benefit of its members. The EURADA has become a starting point for those RDAs in Turkey to involve the wider European politics. Turkish RDAs' participation to the EURADA deserves particular emphasis because of two reasons.

Firstly, it shows the horizontal effect of Europeanization. The EU could be seen as a platform for policy transfer or learning best practices when no explicit EU guideline exist (Bomberg and Peterson, 2000). As one bureaucrat pointed, many RDAs joined the EURADA as soon as they started to operate in order learn new practices and regional plans elsewhere to emulate or transfer them to their own regions²¹. Similarly, one of the EU team player in Turkey stated, 'the EU does not need to do anything for our SNEs because whenever we need to learn something or draw lesson from the best practices, we all look for the EU arena'²². Second, the EURADA case is also a good example for the justification of the learning process among SNEs in Turkey. For instance, a civil servant of one RDA mentioned that 'after seeing some RDAs' relation with the EURADA, we started to engage with it and then become a member of it'²³. One expert in SPO also commented that after one RDA that I am responsible of joined the EURADA meeting in Brussels, we (experts in SPO) all has become aware of their facilities and been supportive for other RDAs to do same thing²⁴.

On the other hand, the level of participation from city municipals and metropolitan municipalities are 15,7 % and 28,6%, respectively. Eurocities is seen as popular IRNs for Turkish municipals. Eurocities is the network of major European cities²⁵. They bring together the local governments of more than 140 large cities in over 30 European countries. It seeks to influence and work with the EU institutions to respond to common issues that impact the day-to-day lives of Europeans. According to survey result, two city municipals, three metropolitan municipals are involved with the Eurocities' activities. Some cities have also become a member of the Assemble of European Regions (AER) which is the largest independent network of regions in the wider Europe. Bringing together 270 regions from 34 countries and 16 interregional organizations, AER is the political voice of its members and a forum for interregional co-operation. It has four broad missions²⁶: to promote the principle of subsidiarity and regional democracy; to increase the regions' political influence within the European institutions; to support the regions in the process of European enlargement and globalization; to facilitate interregional cooperation across wider Europe and beyond. According to its constitution, Turkey does not have regional assemblies. Turkish participation is therefore limited to the city level²⁷. After Kahramanmaraş joined to the AER in 2006, the participation of six cities, Denizli, Edirne, Istanbul, Kırşehir, Kocaeli, Samsun have continued. During the Michele Sabban's, the president of AER, last visit to Istanbul in April 2011, the AER proposed to open a satellite office in Istanbul²⁸. Given the first relation with the AER started in 2006, one can argue that the participation of Turkish cities has grown and the relations are getting expansive.

²¹ Interviews in SPO, in April 2011

²² Interview with Prof. Murat Ali Dulupçu, the EU team player for regional policy, in Isparta, in March 2011

²³ Unofficial interview in Karacadağ Development Agency, in April 2011

²⁴ Interview with Burcu Diraor in SPO, in April 2011

²⁵ For detail see the official website of Eurocities, <http://www.eurocities.eu/main.php>

²⁶ For detail see the official web site of the AER, www.aer.eu

²⁷ City level here refers to NUTS III level, which does not only cover municipalities but also encompasses special provincial administrations.

²⁸ AER press release, 5th April, 2011, see www.aer.eu.

It is also worth noting that the Union of Turkish Municipalities (UTM) became a member of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) in 2010. The UTM has also concluded with a number of bilateral agreements with partner associations in the EU²⁹. The CEMR membership is particularly important as one foreign affairs expert in UTM expressed, this participation symbolizes that Turkish municipalities have become part of the EU³⁰. Interviews in UTM also show that they are not too optimistic about Turkish SNEs' individual presence in Brussels. As one expert from the foreign relations department stated,

'You must be too powerful and know how to lobby in Brussels. Turkish municipalities, except for some big metropolitan municipals, such as Istanbul, Ankara, Izmir, do not need to be there as they are too small to conduct any activities. Union of Turkish Municipalities already applied to the ministry of interior affairs for opening up an office in Brussels. After the next election in 2011, we will be there to represent all Turkish municipalities'³¹.

Similar statement also made in SPO as they also prefer the united or group of RDAs in Brussels as it is much more effective than being alone there³². These statements underline one of the biggest problem for Turkish SNEs, in particular city municipals, as their size and economic resources are not sufficient for having a presence in Brussels. It was also difficult for them to pay membership fees for the participation of IRNs. The survey results shows that only one-fourth of Turkish SNEs (24, 7%) have allocated financial resources to represent their cities or regions outside Turkey (Table 3).

	City Municipals	Metropolitan Municipals	RDAs	Total
I don't know	9.8%	7.1%	.0%	7.1%
No	70.6%	50.0%	75.0%	68.2%
Yes	19.6%	42.9%	25.0%	24.7%
<i>N</i>	51	14	20	85

Table 3: Resources allocated for representation

Many cities or regions seeking an active involvement in sub-national mobilization are located in relatively rich regions and are more interested in inter-regional networks compared to other regions or cities in Turkey. Hence, one might argue that only actors with valuable resources can participate as evident from the strategies of bigger and financially more capable municipalities in Turkey where European affairs are part of everyday work. Although Istanbul, Izmir, Bursa, Kocaeli, Eskisehir and Yalova are representing the most developed cities in Turkey in terms of 'socio-economic development'³³, financial and human resources, the participation of Şanlıurfa, Kahramanmaraş and to some extent Gaziantep can be seen as an example of entrepreneurial capacity of the mayor. Interview in the UTM

²⁹ Interview in UTM in Ankara, in April 2011

³⁰ Interview in UTM in Ankara, in April 2011

³¹ Interview with Bahar Ozden in UTM, in April, 2011

³² Interview in SPO, in April 2011

³³ SPO (2003) conducted a research to examine the development ranking of cities and statistical regional units (NUTS2) in order to collect regional data, analyze socio-economic differences and determine the framework for regional plans. According to this study, cities are ranked as first, second, third, fourth and fifth. While the first refers to the most developed regions or cities, the fifth considered as the less developed.

showed that a visionary mayor can be a good interlocutor for their city and mobilize their interests to the European arena or other international arena regardless of their size, financial and human sources³⁴.

As for the setting up office in Brussels, the Turkish case has hitherto showed the low level of mobilization comparing to Poland and Romania cases before the accession³⁵. Two regional offices have so far been set up by the municipalities of Istanbul and of Yalova in 2008, respectively. The municipality of Yalova has closed its Brussels office after only one year because of legal (article 3335) and economic problems³⁶. With a population of 13 million, Istanbul is one of the biggest metropolises in Europe and bigger than 17 EU member states in terms of population but it has just opened up the office in 2008, though staffed by only one person. Survey result reveals that opening up a regional office in Brussels is also on the agenda of two municipal cities, two metropolitan cities and two RDAs. While nearly half of Turkish SNEs do not consider opening an office in Brussels, almost one-third of respondents have no idea about ROs in Brussels (see Table 4).

	City Municipals	Metropolitan Municipals	RDAs	Total
I don't know	9.8%	21.4%	15.0%	12.9%
Never heard	41.2%	14.3%	10.0%	29.4%
No, don't want to open	45.1%	42.9%	65.0%	49.4%
Yes, consider to open later	3.9%	14.3%	10.0%	7.1%
Yes, already have one	.0%	7.1%	.0%	1.2%
N	51	14	20	85

Table 4: Considering to set up an office in Brussels

As the above illustrative evidence shows, there is a trend in Turkish SNEs' transnational activities and engagement to the EU institutions. The centre is also supportive of SNEs' activities outside. Even Secretariat General for EU affairs under the Prime Ministry recently started two big projects targeting at both municipalities and provinces in 2010. Those projects called as 'Provinces Preparing for the European Union Programme' and 'Municipalities Preparing for the European Union Programme'³⁷. Yet, the main considerations for the Centre are to make sure about their activities that should not involve any separatist or political facilities. It is also required from SNEs to have coordination with centre about their activities. Apart from setting up ROs or participation to IRNs, Turkish SNEs' horizontal mobilization across the EU in terms of twining project, sister city

³⁴ Interview in UTM in Ankara, in April 2011

³⁵ Before their respective state has become a member of the EU, 11 Polish SNEs and 6 Romanian SNEs opened ROs in Brussels. the regional offices contact directory, http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/conferences/od2008/doc/pdf/catalogue_en.pdf

³⁶ Phone interview with Hasan Soygüzel, Expert for Local Administrations, the director of Agenda 21, the Municipality of Yalova, and with Gül Gönül Bozoglu, the Director of EU and Foreign Affairs, the University of Yalova Üniversitesi, (phone interview, in April, 2010)

³⁷ See the official web site of Republic of Turkey, Prime Ministry, Secretariat General for EU affairs

agreements, reciprocal visit, attending conferences or fairs in the EU are prominent (Table 5).

Activities	CMs	MCMs	RDAs	Total
Participation to conferences	8 (%15.7)	5 (% 35.7)	8 (%40)	21 (%24.7)
Participation to fairs	10 (%19.6)	8 (%57.1)	16 (%80)	34 (%40)
Partnerships with equivalent organization	25 (%49)	9 (%64.3)	9 (%45)	43 (% 50.6)
Sister cities agreement	28 (%54.9)	13 (%92.9)	3 (%15)	44 (%51.8)
Reciprocal visits	23 (%45.1)	13 (%92.9)	10 (%50)	46 (% 51.8)
Any of them	11 (%21.6)	0	1 (%5)	12 (%14.1)

Table 5: Turkish SNEs' horizontal activities across the EU arena

As it is seen from the table 5, Turkish SNEs' horizontal activities across the European arena vary. Even if RDAs in Turkey have just set up, the majority of them have already involved in many different activities. Because of having more economic and human resources, nearly all Turkish metropolitan municipals have sister cities in the EU members or established reciprocal visits with their European counterparts. Even if their size, economic and human sources are relatively smaller than those of RDAs and MCMs, city municipals also have many international activities in the EU. Especially for the sister city and partnership agreement, one bureaucrats in the ministry of interior affairs expressed that; 'the application from different municipalities to the ministry of interior affairs regarding sister city or partnership agreements have grown steadily in last decade. These agreements used to be subject to the decision of lines of ministers but after the rising demand, it is enough to get permission from our ministry only'³⁸. It shows the rising trends toward the foreign activities, as there is only % 14.1 SNEs in Turkey have not involved any horizontal activities across the EU arena.

The overall motivation behind Turkish SNEs' foreign activities either through horizontal mobilization or other channels has similarities with other SNEs in the EU. As mentioned in subnational mobilization literature, these activities include seeking fund, lobbying, networking, attracting the direct investment. According to interview findings, Turkish SNEs' engagement with the EU is also important for supporting Turkey's EU bid and reducing the prejudice against Turkey³⁹. Yet, there is no systematic information to bring to bear on Turkish case, largely because the phenomenon is so recent and dynamic. There is also a limitation for the available data which makes it hard for researcher to analyze Turkish SNEs' motivations and attitudes toward the mobilization. One also consider some limitations for Turkish SNEs to further their interests on the European arena because it is not a member state or the Europeanization process is rather complicated due to some reasons such as the

³⁸ Interview with Murat Zorluoglu, in Ministry of Interior Affairs, in April 2011

³⁹ Interviews in SPO, GSEU, and UTM, in April 2011

permanent derogation on regional policy which is the 22nd Chapter of the *acquis*; the centralized characteristic of structural funds (which is Instrument for Pre-Accession for Turkey); strained relations with the EU especially after 2008. All in all, although it is for now difficult for researcher to gauge Turkish SNEs' motivations and attitudes toward the mobilization and find out problems which cause a variation, it is possible to claim that Turkish SNEs are on the way towards multi-level polity.

4. Conclusion

This paper argues that there is a link between the EU's active (formal sphere of conditionality) and passive (indirect effects) leverage and their impact on Turkish domestic reform process, which could be captured by the concept of Europeanization. It is seen that the adaptation of EU's regional policy has consequences for intergovernmental relations and played an important role in the administrative reform in Turkey. Although the EU-accession process was seen as an important motivation in the very emergence of regional tier, domestic party politics were significantly affected the degree and outcome of this process. As for the mobilization of SNEs, Turkey represents a hard case for assessing the degree and scope of mobilization across the European arena as the subnational tier throughout its history has been remained weak up until the recent development during the EU accession process. There is also no specific reference in any part of EU conditionality regarding SNEs' direct engagement with the EU institutions. On the top of that Turkey's EU membership is not on the immediate horizon. These two factors may reduce Turkish SNEs engagement with the EU institutions. Rather than the EU's leverage, national context and to a great extent particular structural characteristics of a region can make Turkish SNEs more active to mobilize towards the EU arena, which is generally accepted within subnational mobilization literature.

The legacy of statism together with the fear of separatism makes state-elites in Turkey become more cautious about SNEs' mobilization across the European arena. Yet, illustrative example show that there some SNEs have already established relations with the EU institutions through using different channels, which could be seen as the trend towards multi-level polity. One can argue that RDAs could bring dynamism for Turkish presence in Brussels in order for gaining fund, networking, lobbying on the European arena. As those institutions have more experts and financial sources than some other city municipals and metropolitan areas. Yet, they are now on the way for institutionalization and learning process. Today, the main priority of all Turkish RDAs is to understand the potential and the capabilities of actors and institutions in their region and collaborate with them so as to envisage regional plans or goals. With regard to the situation for municipalities, there are some metropolitan municipalities and to lesser extent city municipals started to mobilize across the European arena. This has so far been restricted with the richer and stronger municipalities, though visionary mayors have also established relations with some inter-regional networks.

More importantly, horizontal networks such as sister city agreements, reciprocal visit or partnership agreement are prominent among Turkish SNEs. These kinds of horizontal and vertical mobilization across the EU arena not only teach Turkish SNEs how to lobby to the EU institutions but also accelerate other Turkish SNEs' engagement with the EU institutions as

many SNEs are still in the learning process. By having a presence in Brussels or being an active member of IRNs, Turkish SNEs will be able to exchange information and know-how with other regions that have already gone through this process. In so far as the negotiations proceed, one can assume that mobilization across the European arena will correspondingly increase in the long run which may also to reinvigorate Turkey's EU candidacy.

All in all, it is too early to predict that the outcomes of this radical restructuring within Turkish administrative system leads a full-fledged regionalization giving spaces to SNEs to aggregate their interests on the European arena. It can be argued that the issue of sub-national mobilization is still new phenomena for Turkish case. There is a need for further studies to delve deeper into this subject in order to analyze the behaviour and attitudes of Turkish SNEs' on the issue of mobilization and their foreign activities in order to find out what Turkish SNEs want from these engagement; what causes variation in their level of mobilization or which factors are prominent for the effective mobilization.

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