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To cite this article: Münevver Cebeci (2016) De-Europeanisation or Counter-Conduct? Turkey's Democratisation and the EU, *South European Society and Politics*, 21:1, 119-132, DOI: [10.1080/13608746.2016.1153996](https://doi.org/10.1080/13608746.2016.1153996)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13608746.2016.1153996>



Published online: 23 Mar 2016.



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## De-Europeanisation or Counter-Conduct? Turkey's Democratisation and the EU

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### ABSTRACT

Many Turkish and European scholars have been (re)producing texts that praise the normative impact of the European Union (EU) which has helped the political transformation of Turkey. Nevertheless, the recent deterioration of democracy in the country indicates that the EU has been losing its transformative influence on Turkey. This might be regarded as de-Europeanisation. However, this article argues that the conceptual framework of de-Europeanisation can only partially explain the current situation in Turkey and the EU's impact, and that an analysis based on counter-conduct, as produced by EU governmentality, may provide insight into a subtler dynamic at work in the country.

### KEYWORDS

Turkey; European Union; democracy; governmentality; counter-conduct; de-Europeanisation

It is generally accepted that Turkey entered an unprecedented process of democratic reforms upon the European Union's (EU) declaration of the country as a candidate for full membership in December 1999. This reform process intensified after 2001 and lasted for almost six years. Nevertheless, especially since 2007, the reforms have stalled and the EU has lost influence over Turkey. The AKP (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi – Justice and Development Party) government's consolidation of its power and its loss of interest in the EU accession process have been the major domestic factors that have led to this result. On the other hand, the blocking of a considerable number of chapters by the EU and two of its member states (Cyprus and France), the rhetoric of 'privileged partnership', and some European leaders' open objections to Turkish membership have also contributed to the loss of interest in the EU accession process on the part of both the AKP government and the Turkish people. After the 2011 elections in particular, Turkey quickly slid into a new phase marked by majoritarianism accompanied by authoritarian practices.

This whole process of reforms and rollbacks in Turkey and the EU's role in them can be explained using various analytical/conceptual tools. De-Europeanisation, which constitutes the major conceptual framework of this volume, is significant in this regard and can be employed to understand the current state of affairs in Turkey and the EU's impact. However, this article argues that the de-Europeanisation approach can only explain part of the picture and there may also be a subtler dynamic at work in Turkey, which can appropriately be referred to as 'counter-conduct', produced by the EU's governmentality. To support this argument and provide empirical examples, 24 official EU documents (Strategy Papers and

Progress Reports on Turkey) and three official documents issued by Turkey (Progress Reports prepared by Turkey in 2012 and 2013, and Turkey's European Union Strategy of 2014) were examined. Numerous official statements by EU officials, by members of the AKP government and by the President of the Republic of Turkey, as well as newspapers and reports were also scrutinised.

Adopting Foucauldian ontology, this article aims to display how the EU's governmentality in the case of its political conditionality on Turkey produces counter-conduct – not necessarily as an after-effect or a result, but as part of the complex set of strategic power relations within which the two entities operate. Different analysts take different instances as counter-conduct. In the literature, anything from suicide (Foucault as interpreted by Davidson 2011, p. 38) to public protests (Death 2011) has been given as an example of counter-conduct. Furthermore, it is almost impossible to define an *ideal* case in this regard. What constitutes counter-conduct is mostly based on the subjective interpretation of the analyst who studies it. Accordingly, this article does not make a claim to be presenting ideal examples. The texts selected to reveal the EU's governmentality (the European Commission's Progress Reports on Turkey) here are representative of the EU's technocratic and selective approach. The texts selected as examples of overt counter-conduct are official documents produced by the Turkish Ministry of European Union Affairs and speeches by President Erdoğan and Foreign Minister Çavuşoğlu. These are the major authoritative texts produced by the highest official bodies in the country.

This article pursues its arguments first through an overview of the concepts that it employs. Second, it moves on to an assessment of the EU's governmentality over Turkey. Third, it provides an empirical analysis on Turkey's counter-conduct with a view to establishing its links with de-Europeanisation.

## De-Europeanisation, governmentality and counter-conduct

'De-Europeanisation' refers to 'a loss or weakening of the EU/Europe as a normative political context and a reference point in domestic affairs and debates in a target country' as defined by Aydın-Düzgüt and Kaliber (2016). In their view, this process is usually marked by 'scepticism or indifference towards Europe', which adds to the EU's loss of influence and which may also/even mean turning away from Europe. In this article, de-Europeanisation is seen as a process and a more overt consequence produced by domestic factors as well as by EU policies. The article investigates whether there is a deeper and subtler dynamic that also underlies de-Europeanisation. It claims that even when the AKP government seemed to be mostly complying with EU political conditionality a deeper dynamic of counter-conduct was at work. Before moving on with this argument, it is crucial to define governmentality and counter-conduct.

Foucault (2007, p. 108) defines 'governmentality' as the sum of 'institutions, procedures, analyses, and reflections, calculations and tactics that allow the exercise of' a specific and complex type of 'power which has the population as its target, political economy as its major form of knowledge, and apparatuses of security as its essential technical instrument'. Governmentality, 'as a strategic field of power relations' (Foucault 2005, p. 252), in this regard, is very much related to determining the conduct of others – i.e. it is the 'conduct of conducts' (Foucault 1994, p. 341).

The EU's 'governmentality', as employed in this article, refers to 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). 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.

Just as it is not possible to think about power without resistance, governmentality, as the conduct of conducts, inevitably brings about counter-conduct (Foucault 2007, pp. 193–216). Foucault underlines that resistance is not external to power – it operates within the same 'strategic field of power relations' (Foucault 2005, p. 252) – and it is not an after-effect (Davidson 2011, p. 27). The same holds true for counter-conduct: it is not outside of governmentality and never a mere consequence of it. In other words, there is 'an immediate and founding correlation between conduct and counter-conduct' (Foucault 2007, p. 196). Counter-conduct does not necessarily mean 'revolt' against a specific type of power because the latter is rather strong and overt whereas the former usually takes subtler forms (Foucault 2007, pp. 200–201). It refers to 'wanting to be conducted differently, by other leaders (*conducateurs*) and other shepherds, towards other objectives and forms of salvation, and through other procedures and methods' (Foucault 2007, pp. 194–195).

'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' (Waever 2000, p. 261) on them. The application of the Foucauldian notion of counter-conduct to the study of European foreign policy is not new. Malmvig (2014) employed this framework in the case of EU democracy promotion in the Arab world. She inquired into 'how Arab governments – enrolled into European reform programmes – [were] in fact resisting European reform technologies, not by being overtly against, but by openly embracing and working within the very logic and assumptions of liberal technologies' (Malmvig 2014, p. 294).

This article aims to apply the conceptual framework of counter-conduct to see how the AKP government has countered the EU's quest for political reform through overt and covert ways of resistance whilst pursuing the discourse and practices of accession to the EU. It bases its analysis on empirical examples that can be regarded as different forms of countering governmentality. It looks into both overt and covert forms employed by the AKP government, taking counter-conduct in its broadest sense. This broad approach is employed to establish the links between counter-conduct and de-Europeanisation. Although Foucault mainly underlines subtle forms of counter-conduct, there are analysts who interpret it as 'a concept that can refer to individual action or large-scale counter-movements that initiate massive social transformation ... while it draws upon and reassembles the very edifice of governing itself' (Dean 2015, p. 195).<sup>1</sup> Albeit from a completely different perspective from the analysis of 'large public expressions of dissent' (Death 2011, p. 425) as counter-conducts, this study also employs a broad approach to explain the increased tone of resistance from the AKP government as the latter has ceased to refrain from countering EU policies openly, especially in recent years.

The application of the analytical framework of counter-conduct to the case of governments as the subjects/objects of EU governmentality is not without problems. This is because Foucault's counter-conduct is mainly about individuals and populations (human collectivities). Analysts such as Death (2011), Cadman (2010) and Odysseos (2011) have

all enquired into the relationship between governments and the people(s). However, the models that they employ to evaluate empirical examples cannot be applied to explain the counter-conduct of target governments in the case of the EU's governmentality. The only study that comprehensively addresses counter-conduct in this regard is by Malmvig (2014), who looks into the case of Arab governments. Nevertheless, counter-conduct in the case of EU candidate countries shows crucial differences from the case of the EU's partners (such as Arab countries) because there is an element of 'invitation' in the latter; i.e. they invite the EU to invite them to a partnership (Malmvig 2014). This element of invitation gives them the ability to set some limitations on the degree to which the EU can intervene in their affairs (Malmvig 2014). However, the candidate countries are expected to fulfil EU political criteria (among others) to become full members, without negotiating their content. This is mainly because they are *demandeurs* of the EU. Thus, the EU's asymmetrical approach is all the more relevant in the case of candidate countries. Nevertheless, this does not mean that the candidate countries/societies do not counter the EU's conduct. The key here, as in the case of Arab countries (Malmvig 2014), is that the candidate countries operate within the same strategic platform of power relations, explicitly accepting the EU's conditionality on the surface whilst countering it through various – usually subtle – mechanisms.

All the empirical examples provided in this article can be read as instances of both counter-conduct and de-Europeanisation. The major point that distinguishes the two is that counter-conduct could be observed in Turkey from the initial years of relations with the European Community/EU (which are only taken up in this study starting from the 1990s) when analysts could not spot any Europeanisation in the country. Turkey's attempts at harmonisation with the EU in 2002–07 were regarded as Europeanisation.<sup>2</sup> De-Europeanisation, as understood in this volume, took place after this process. Elements of de-Europeanisation have been detected especially since the AKP's consolidation of power with the general election of 2007. On the other hand, de-Europeanisation can also be seen as the most extreme form or final stage of overt counter-conduct where reference to the EU (thus, the EU's influence) diminishes and a move away from Europe takes place. The de-Europeanisation approach does not focus on how such a move away from Europe takes place whilst the EU accession rhetoric is still pursued. Thus, analysing counter-conduct may complement it and provide a broader scope in terms of how the target government keeps on operating within the platform of strategic power relations of EU governmentality.

## The EU's governmentality and Turkey

EU governmentality, which targets third countries and their populations, is informed by neoliberalism as its major source of knowledge, and conditionality is the main apparatus through which the EU promotes democracy and stability (hence security) in target societies. Looking into the EU's governmentality in its foreign policy, in general, is important in understanding such governmentality in the case of Turkey and grasping the dynamics of the country's counter-conduct. The analysis provided here shows only some aspects of the EU's practice. Nevertheless, this does not mean that Turkey's counter-conduct is produced specifically against each of these particular aspects. It is governmentality itself and as a whole which inevitably and simultaneously produces counter-conduct – not within a cause-and-effect relationship but rather as a 'founding correlation' (Foucault 2007, p. 196).

The major apparatus of EU governmentality, conditionality, is used in the EU's various relations with third countries, from trade/association agreements to enlargement. EU conditionality is a disciplinary practice that aims to conduct the conduct of third countries and their peoples/populations. This mainly refers to an asymmetrical relationship where the EU sets the rules and expects the third countries to follow suit (Cebeci 2012). The EU conducts its foreign policy (and especially in its conditionality) through technologies of government that are pursued with the logic of its own 'preferred [model] of democratic governance' (Kurki 2013, p. 2).

### *The EU's technocratic approach*

Kalpagam (2001, p. 427) contends that governmentality (especially colonial governmentality) is about 'regulatory practices', 'modalities of enforcing "order"' and 'numbers, classifications, and measurement' (Kalpagam 2000, p. 420). Larner and Le Heron (2004, p. 213) also assert: 'Governmentality and actor-network approaches draw attention to the practical aspects of governing, arguing that political discourses only become governmental to the extent that they become technical.' This article interprets the EU's technocratic approach in its foreign policy as a significant manifestation of its governmentality. Kurki (2011) defines the technocratic tendency of the EU as a depoliticised approach that prioritises expert knowledge, economic and social aims, social harmony and mutual interests, and minimal democracy. In other words, the EU is concerned with the technical processes of democratisation, focusing more on aspects of governance that arise out of a neoliberal logic.

Such a technocratic approach is based on vague definitions, classifications, benchmarks, etc. and the EU hardly pays attention to particular political and societal needs of the target societies. The Strategy Papers and Progress Reports issued by the European Commission are the major documents that reflect the highly technocratic approach of the EU because they usually list what has happened in the candidate countries in general terms but do not provide an in-depth assessment. Kochenov gives the example of a series of Strategy Papers (1999, 2000 and 2001) which contain rather unclear statements made by the Commission as to 'whether it welcomes [a particular] development, wants to recommend it to other candidate countries, or just demonstrates that it is informed about it' (Kochenov 2004, p. 15).

This is also the case with the European Commission's Progress Reports on Turkey. For example, in the 2011 Progress Report, the European Commission welcomed the constitutional amendments of September 2010 that changed the composition of the High Council of Judges and Prosecutors (HSYK). This change was highly criticised by the opposition in the country, with the claim that these amendments about the HSYK would harm the impartiality of the judiciary. Regarding this issue, the 2011 Progress Report only stated that '[p]riority was given to the reform of judicial structures' and '[t]hese laws addressed a number of priorities of the Accession Partnership and criticisms of the previous system' (European Commission 2011, p. 7). The objection of the opposition was only given in a footnote, stating that '[o]n 15 February, the main opposition party CHP (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi – Republican People's Party) applied to the Constitutional Court for annulment of this law', without any explanation of the reasons for this application (European Commission 2011, p. 7). This Progress Report had a rather technical approach to the constitutional amendments and their implementation, and it did not provide any elaboration of the highly debated political nature of the changes in the composition of the HSYK. In a sense, this issue was depoliticised by the European Commission

through the technical rhetoric of procedural improvements and setbacks. Similarly, the 2012 Progress Report referred to the preparations for a new constitution for Turkey as ‘positive steps’, ‘albeit with some limitations on transparency’ (European Commission 2012, p. 8), without any reference to the political discussions around it.<sup>3</sup>

### *The EU’s selectivity in its conditionality*

EU governmentality is also marked by a selective approach in its conditionality. Western neoliberal governmentality is mainly practised in a flexible and context-bounded way, strategic selectivity and rational calculation being its characteristic features (Kurki 2013, p. 225).<sup>4</sup> The EU has almost always been selective in its agenda on Turkey’s democratisation, prioritising civil–military relations, Kurdish minority rights and the rights of non-Muslim (mainly Christian) communities (such as the right to property of non-Muslim communities as well as the status of the Greek Orthodox seminary in Halki/Heybeliada) – all issues that are popular with the European public. Despite its continued references to other areas of freedom, in practice, for years the EU paid little attention to wider human rights problems in the country. It has only recently put equal emphasis on judicial reforms. The EU’s prioritisation of the Kurdish issue over more general human right problems can be seen in the European Commission’s 2012 Progress Report: the investigation into the Union of Communities of Kurdistan (KCK) and related imprisonments were mentioned eight times whereas students kept in jail for protesting against the state or government were only mentioned twice, one of these mentions again being related to the Kurdish issue (European Commission 2012).

Another instance of a selective EU approach is that the chapters that the EU has been negotiating with Turkey so far are those which the EU and its member states have an interest in pursuing, such as free movement of capital, company law, trans-European networks, etc. Nevertheless, the opening of those chapters which directly relate to human rights, democracy and the rule of law are still blocked (the chapters of Judiciary and Fundamental Rights, and Justice, Freedom and Security).<sup>5</sup> This shows the rational calculations and strategic selectivity in the EU’s governmentality on Turkey, reflecting how the member states’ interests override the EU’s normative goals in such cases.

### *The EU’s instrumentality for target governments*

A significant characteristic of liberal governmentality is that it is empowering for the governed because it aims to create self-regulating subjects (e.g. individuals and civil society; Cadman 2010, p. 542). Such empowerment can also be observed in the EU’s governmentality. The EU’s attempts to reinforce civil society in the target countries constitute an example in this regard. However, more importantly, the EU inevitably empowers the target governments. First, the EU pursues its relations with other countries mainly through their governments (cf. Kappler 2012, p. 616; Malmvig 2014, pp. 12–13). This surely limits its ability to reach information in some cases or to express undesirable findings openly. In Turkey’s case, for years the EU had to work closely with the AKP government not only because of the nature of the accession process but also because the opposition was sceptical of the EU and was reluctant to cooperate until recent years (Çamlıbel 2013).

An important example that reveals how the EU has to work with the target governments and how this empowers the latter is the 2015 Progress Report on Turkey. Although the 2015

Progress Report was the most critical one so far issued in the 2000s, its critical content was overshadowed by the fact that the European Commission refrained from issuing it on the announced date of 14 October 2015, and postponed its announcement to a date after the parliamentary elections in Turkey (1 November 2015). Some argue that this happened mainly because of the EU member states' need for cooperation with Turkey to tackle the Syrian refugee crisis (e.g. see Altuntaş 2015).

Second, EU conditionality also provides an important instrumentality/leverage for the governments of third countries in their domestic politics, legitimising their acts in many cases. The EU accession process has strengthened the AKP government's hand in pursuing reforms that it would not have been able to adopt very easily if it had not used the EU rhetoric. The Europeanisation literature helps in understanding such instrumentality. For example, Börzel and Soyaltın (2012, p. 7) contend that 'selective and differential domestic changes are largely related to the extent to which EU conditionality helps domestic actors gain or hold political power'. This is also relevant for Turkey. In the period between 2002 and 2007, the AKP government seemed to be adhering to the EU's standards and going on with reforms (despite stalled negotiations after 2006 and the rhetoric of 'privileged partnership'), side-tracking any major opposition until very recently. This example clearly shows that it may be rather instrumental for governments to use the EU as a point of reference in legitimising their own conduct.

### Turkey's counter-conduct

'Counter-conduct' can be defined as the ensemble of all discourses and practices of the target countries/societies which 'resist', 'reverse' and 'counter' the EU's conduct without 'being overtly against' it, instead openly accepting it and operating within and stretching the confines of that liberal/neoliberal governmentality (Malmvig 2014, p. 294). The argument here is that the AKP government has countered the EU's conduct, first, through operating within the same field of power relations and using the EU discourse and reforms to consolidate its power; second, through selective implementation of reforms that benefit certain segments of the society whilst limiting the fundamental rights and freedoms of others<sup>6</sup>; and, third, by overtly countering the EU's conduct through employing rhetoric against the EU and attempting to create alternative conducts.

This article does not look into examples of counter-conduct before the year 2002. However, there is significant continuity in the discourses and practices of Turkey's counter-conduct against the EU. Before the 2000s, secular and military elites in the country resisted the idea of fulfilling EU conditionality, although they never abandoned the discourse of support for Turkey's membership in the EU. This can partly be explained in terms of the country's defensive Westernisation, which is based on the idea of being part of Europe in order to avoid possible invasion by European powers (in the case of the Ottoman Empire) or their attempts to divide the country (in the case of secular–military elites in the Republic of Turkey) (cf. Bilgin 2005; Cebeci 2014). The typical instances of counter-conduct in the 1990s were based on the claims of *national security* – that the EU had secret intentions and that European countries were actually plotting to divide Turkey. Even in the initial years of the reform process, such counter-conduct could be openly observed. A crucial example is that when Prime Minister Ecevit and Foreign Minister Cem were promising their counterparts that Turkey would give ethnic minorities rights to education and broadcasting

in their mother tongue at the Nice European Council in December 2000, the Turkish General Staff simultaneously issued a report entitled 'Evolution of Internal Security Operations for the Year 2000', which stated that education and broadcasting in Kurdish would lead to the disintegration of Turkey (Milliyet 2000).

### *Instrumentalisation of reforms for consolidation of domestic power*

In 2002–07, the AKP government undertook unprecedented political reforms to fulfil EU conditionality. These political reforms were significant for many reasons, but their importance for this study is that they have been the major tools for the AKP to consolidate its power domestically and act with enhanced legitimacy. They are regarded as instances of counter-conduct here in that they constitute tactical moves by which the AKP has pursued its own agenda. Among many other reforms, the following were especially significant because they were the major areas prioritised by the EU in its political conditionality regarding Turkey. Civil–military relations were reorganised and the military's role in politics was curbed; ethnic minorities gained rights of education and broadcasting in their mother tongue (albeit on a limited scale) and the state of emergency in southeast Turkey was completely lifted in 2002; and non-Muslim communities were given rights to acquire possessions more easily through amendments in the Law on Foundations. Enacting reforms in the major areas prioritised by the EU has been a crucial tactical exercise of subsequent AKP governments, especially in maintaining some degree of external legitimacy even when they have been criticised for pursuing authoritarian practices. The so-called democratic opening of 2009, which targeted the Kurdish minority in the country, and the peace process initiated with regard to the Kurdish issue in 2013 can, in part, be regarded as such tactical moves.

On the other hand, the EU leverage was also empowering for the AKP, especially in curbing the military's predominance in Turkish politics. The Turkish Armed Forces refrained from opposing political reforms especially because they did not want to hamper the EU harmonisation process (Cebeci 2014, p. 32). This surely helped the AKP consolidate its power and pursue its own political agenda without major restraints. The rhetoric of Europeanisation/democratisation was especially employed by the AKP government in this regard (cf. Sarigil 2010, p. 471).

Similarly, the constitutional amendments of 2010 significantly helped the AKP consolidate its power in the country through gaining control over the judiciary. The 2010 constitutional amendments were presented as crucial steps taken for EU accession and were especially supported by a group of liberals in the country who saw them as moves towards further democratisation. The EU also welcomed these constitutional amendments, maintaining its technocratic approach to the issue.

Right after the Gezi protests of May–June 2013, which were suppressed with disproportionate use of force by the police, in a tactical move to regain some legitimacy the AKP government announced a democracy package in September 2013. This package involved, among other issues, the granting of some property rights to non-Muslim minorities (such as the return of the Mor Gabriel Monastery to the Syriac Orthodox community) and the removal of the ban on the use of the Kurdish letters Q, X and W (this has not been enacted yet). Both issues related to the areas prioritised by the EU's conditionality with respect to Turkey.

The AKP government's instrumentalisation of reforms to consolidate its power was rather subtle. It has successfully capitalised on the EU's priorities in its conditionality with respect to Turkey. Even at the peak of the process of reform (in 2002–07) the AKP government and AKP municipalities were pursuing a parallel track of implementing their own conservative agenda, taking steps that would inhibit fundamental rights and freedoms in covert ways. The practical limits put on the production and consumption of alcoholic drinks (in the form of taxes or regulatory measures or by the control of municipalities), the ban on displaying alcohol and drinking on television as well as the ban on sponsoring sports teams or events for companies that produce alcoholic drinks (such as Efes Pilsen), and the attempts to ban or at least restrict abortion or Caesareans can all be regarded as such steps.

### *Selective application of political reforms*

Selective application is a commonly observed instance of counter-conduct in candidate or partner countries of the EU (see, e.g. Langbein and Wolczuk (2012) on Ukraine). Malmvig (2014, p. 305) contends on Arab countries:

Governments have, for instance, liberalised in one sector while simultaneously cracking down on another; or they have undertaken reforms at one point in time, only to roll back these very same reforms a few years later; or they are using reforms to maintain confusion and ambiguity about new red lines and new areas of freedom.

The AKP government, whilst following an ambitious agenda of political reforms based on EU conditionality during 2002–07, also pursued some policies that could be regarded as selective, pertaining to counter-conduct (Malmvig 2014 would name this 'simulation'). An example was its attempt in 2004 to pass a law criminalising adultery, which faced considerable public criticism in Turkey as well as in Europe (Smith 2004). This attempt had to be withdrawn in the end. Despite such subtle forms of counter-conduct, the reform process continued at a considerable pace until 2007. After that, the AKP government continued to adopt several political and judicial reforms, especially in the years 2010–13. These reforms also involved areas prioritised by the EU, as in the case of the 2010 constitutional amendments. A crucial aspect of those reforms, on the other hand, was that they involved significant improvements with regard to religious freedoms which would please the AKP's conservative constituency, such as giving women civil servants the right to wear headscarves at work.

After it consolidated its power with the parliamentary elections of 2007, the AKP government's interventions in people's daily lives (discursively, as well as in practice) increased. For example, it attempted to introduce stricter rules on Caesarean operations and abortion (see, e.g. Özyurt 2013). Besides these subtler forms of interventions, the AKP government has increasingly put limits on fundamental rights and freedoms (see, e.g. European Commission 2013). Freedoms of expression, peaceful assembly, and the press have been considerably limited. Especially during the Ergenekon and Sledgehammer (Balyoz) trials,<sup>7</sup> long detention periods were observed. The disproportionate use of force by the police to disperse peaceful protesters from Gezi Park on 31 May 2013, which caused the biggest popular uprising in the Turkish Republic's history, and bans on social media (especially Twitter and YouTube) during and after the protests are crucial indicators of a rollback in the country's democratisation process.

Some other rollbacks in Turkey's democracy took the form of laws introduced: to reshape HSYK in such a way as to increase the government's influence on it (in February 2014); to

increase the competences of the Turkish National Intelligence Agency (in April 2014); and to give Turkey's Telecommunications Directorate (a government-controlled body) further authority to block access to websites under certain conditions (in February 2014). The internal security bill of March 2015, which further empowered the police (with the aim of preventing events such as the Gezi uprising or the Kobane riots of October 2014), was another rollback. These rollbacks can all be read as instances of counter-conduct because they were all undertaken simultaneously with the rhetoric of 'political reforms' adopted for EU accession.

### *Overt forms of counter-conduct*

There have also been instances in which the AKP's counter-conduct has become rather overt. Through attempting either to develop its counter-narrative or to create alternative conducts, the AKP recently started openly opposing the EU's conduct whilst operating within the EU's discourses and technologies. Against the backdrop of the stalemate in relations with the EU since 2005, and given the Europeans' reluctant attitude towards Turkey's accession to the EU, the AKP government first declared its intention to make 'democratic' reforms on its own, calling them the 'Ankara criteria' (*Journal of Turkish Weekly* 2005) instead of the 'Copenhagen criteria'.

In an open challenge to the EU's conduct, the AKP government also published its own Progress Reports (countering the European Commission's Progress Reports on Turkey) in the years 2012 and 2013. These Progress Reports and 'Turkey's New European Union Strategy', issued in September 2014 (Republic of Turkey, Ministry for European Union Affairs 2014), can be regarded as attempts to create alternative conducts. The foreword of the 2012 Progress Report prepared by Turkey is significant, because in it the Minister for EU Affairs and Chief Negotiator of the time, Bağış, stated:

Our government undoubtedly has become the most reformist government in Europe. At a time when EU member states have been struggling with crises, Turkey is experiencing the most democratic, transparent and prosperous period of its history. The '2012 Progress Report prepared by Turkey' is a document that lists the reforms realised in Turkey from an objective perspective. This Report is doubtless the best response to those who claim that Turkey's progress on the EU path has virtually come to a halt. (Republic of Turkey, Ministry for EU Affairs 2012)

This statement not only refers to an attempt to counter the EU's conduct, but also signals an effort to develop a counter-narrative. Such moves to create a counter-narrative can also be found in the AKP's rhetoric of 'advanced democracy' (AK Parti 2012) and the Ankara criteria.

The AKP government has been especially vocal against the EU in some instances. The Gezi uprisings were significant in this regard. Upon the European Parliament's call for reconciliation and restraint regarding the protests, on 12 June 2013 Prime Minister Erdoğan said that he did not recognise the decisions made by the European Parliament (*Hürriyet Daily News* 2013). The country's Ministry for EU Affairs also declared, 'Some Parliaments should understand that there is a price for talking so freely and boldly about Turkey's domestic affairs. They should not be fooled by manipulations and slander and be part of dirty plans both national and international' (*Hürriyet Daily News* 2013). These reactions can also be interpreted as instances of de-Europeanisation, as they reflect the weakening of EU influence in the country. On the other hand, it should be noted that such rhetoric is not very different from that of some

military and secular elites who raised concerns over the EU's conduct and accused it of trying to divide Turkey in the 1990s.

The EU's response to the police raids and arrests of a number of journalists and media representatives in Turkey on 15 December 2014 – that they were 'incompatible with the freedom of the media' – also met harsh criticism from President Erdoğan (*Hürriyet Daily News* 2014). He stated that the EU should not interfere with the steps taken 'within the rule of law against elements that threaten our national security' (*Hürriyet Daily News* 2014), using a 'national security' discourse similar to the one used by the secular–military elites in the 1990s.

These incidents of counter-conduct (which can easily be proliferated) have happened whilst Turkey has maintained and reiterated its discourse of integration with the EU. In their statements about the 'Europe Day' of 9 May 2015, President Erdoğan and Foreign Minister Çavuşoğlu both repeated Turkey's goal of EU accession. In a speech made at the Economic Development Foundation, criticising the EU's inconsistent attitude towards Turkey, President Erdoğan declared: 'We have been determined to maintain the negotiation process even with its ups and downs in the last 10 years ... Our goal for a new Turkey is not independent of the EU' (Presidency of the Republic of Turkey 2015; also see Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2015).

## Conclusion

All the developments hampering democracy in Turkey which took place mainly after 2007 and intensified after 2011 can be effectively read through the lens of de-Europeanisation. This article has offered a different reading through the Foucauldian framework of counter-conduct. Counter-conduct is a deeper dynamic, which mainly operates in subtle ways. It may be pervasive and continuous but it never totally rejects the power relations within which it is located. Turkey's counter-conduct takes place within the same strategic field of power relations of EU governmentality. The recent instances of counter-conduct in Turkey, which involve overt resistance in some cases, show similarities to the authoritarian discourse and practices of the military and security elites in the country who opposed EU conditionality on the grounds of national security but who also simultaneously pursued the goal of full membership in the EU in the 1990s.

An analysis that looks into counter-conduct, as produced by EU governmentality, may complement de-Europeanisation research. It provides insight into how discourses and practices that might be regarded as moves away from Europe have been used simultaneously with the discourse and practices of EU accession. It further helps reveal continuity and change in the behaviour of target countries and offers new venues for research on the EU's governmentality in world politics. To conclude, it can be stated that the counter-conduct approach may offer an alternative reading of resistance to the EU's quest for political reform in third countries.

## Notes

1. See Death (2011), who regards the protests against the World Summit in South Africa as counter-conduct.
2. See the edited volume by Nas and Özer (2012).

3. Only after the Gezi protests and the corruption allegations of 2013 did the European Commission start reflecting more on political aspects of the developments regarding human rights and the rule of law in Turkey. See, e.g. European Commission (2013; 2014; 2015).
4. On the rationality of governmental practice, see Foucault (2004, p. 4).
5. These chapters have been blocked by the Republic of Cyprus, without opposition from other EU member states. The European Commission was the only actor in the EU which reiterated on several occasions that these chapters should be opened for furthering democratic reforms in Turkey (e.g. Füle 2013).
6. Malmvig (2014, pp. 305–307) refers to this as ‘simulating political reform’.
7. In these trials, some members of the Turkish Armed Forces (including a former head of General Staff), academics and journalists were accused of plotting a coup against the AKP government. Charges against them were recently dropped.

## Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

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