

ership of the Muslim community. The final chapter provides insight into how the Muslims of Bulgaria cultivated new notions of identity and community. It demonstrates that while “Bulgaria’s Muslims were elaborating ideas of national community and identity locally, they increasingly turned their attention outside as they began to imagine their place in a larger, globalizing world” (p. 218) and exchanged ideas Muslims elsewhere, especially those in Bosnia and Crimea. After a summary of the main findings, the book closes by suggesting further research avenues to explore the lives of Muslims in general and reformists in particular after the declaration of independence in Bulgaria and Türkiye.

Overall, *Between Empire and Nation* provides a coherent understanding of the events, the

people, intellectual ideas, and initiatives that defined the reform movement among Bulgaria’s Muslims. It proves to be a significant contribution to a vital but neglected chapter in the history of Muslims in Bulgaria. In this regard, the work is not only essential for students studying Ottoman Balkans but also for scholars studying the formation of the Bulgarian nation-state. Just as significantly, the study promises to be useful for those scholars working on reform movements in the Muslim world. Bulgaria’s Muslims, like other Muslims in different parts of the world, grappled with the challenges of modernity and Islam in their writings. They also took an active role in transforming their major institutions, culture, and society as a minority group during the formative years of the Bulgarian nation-state.

EU, Turkey, and Counter-Terrorism: Fighting the PKK and ISIS

By Ethem İlbiz and Christian Kaunert
Edward Elgar, 2021, 240 pages, \$120, ISBN: 9781800379565

Reviewed by Büşra Öztürk, University of Vienna

EU, Turkey, and Counter-Terrorism: Fighting the PKK and ISIS, Ethem İlbiz and Christian Kaunert conceptualize the impact of the European Union (EU) on counter-terrorism measures of candidate states. The book primarily analyzes and empirically investigates the EU’s influence on Türkiye’s counter-terrorism policy. This book consists of six introductory chapters, in which the EU’s impact on Turkish counter-terrorism policy is projected. It is essential to note that this work is an elevated, meticulous book with



a substantial number of sources and references. The authors comprise a range of scientific research methodologies, including findings from semi-structured interviews with senior officials, former politicians in Türkiye, and EU officials in Brussels. Through examining one of the most important policy areas of European integration, this book is a critical reading for academics and students of European politics and policy, international relations, terrorism and security, and regional studies.

Although security has always been the Achilles heel for the creation of a borderless and united Europe, it occupied the entire EU security agenda immediately after the attacks of September 11, 2001.¹ It particularly took priority in an agenda previously dominated by “soft security” issues such as immigration, organized crime, drugs, and human trafficking. Because seeking a remedy for terrorism within the EU was not enough to eliminate terrorism, the EU incorporated counter-terrorism measures with neighboring states. Liberal democratic norms such as democracy, human rights, ethnic minority rights, and the rule of law evolved into principal instruments. The EU promoted them to prevent the negative consequences of internal security problems of states. This played an essential aspect in the EU’s external dimension of counter-terrorism policy. However, Keohane argues that the EU has never clearly defined a counter-terrorism policy to be implemented in third countries.²

Because of its efforts to fight against ethnic, separatist, and jihadist terrorism, Türkiye has a special status regarding its candidacy to the EU. This book examines the concept of formal rule adoption by taking Türkiye as a case study. It argues that the EU has distributed its norms to Türkiye while transforming its democracy and is effective in influencing the changes in Türkiye’s counter-terrorism policies. The argument goes on to conduct an analysis based on the domestic legislative changes for improving the civil rights of terror suspects and sympathizers, the ratification of international human and ethnic minority rights conventions, and institution-building initiatives to monitor and protect human rights in Türkiye. Further, it circumscribes the impact of the EU on Turkish counter-terrorism policy by building four periodical categories, which are discussed in

detail in each chapter of the book. The first period was primarily defined by the attacks of the PKK in 1984, and the 1999 Helsinki European Council marks the end. During this time, Türkiye was incorporated as a candidate country. The unilateral ceasefire of the PKK in 1999 marked down the beginning of the second period, which ended with the 2004 Brussels European Council when the EU launched accession negotiations with Türkiye. The Türkiye-EU accession negotiations and the PKK attacks in 2004 determined the third period. During this time, ISIS attacks were also reinforced in Türkiye and the EU. In June 2015, the governing party, the Justice and Development Party (AK Party), lost its majority in Parliament, which was the ending incident of this period. The fourth period started with the June elections in 2015 and ended in 2020 with Türkiye’s cross-border operation in Northern Syria against PKK-affiliated armed groups and ISIS.

The authors explain the use of two norm diffusion mechanisms to conceptualize the impact of the EU: the “conditionality” and the “socialization” mechanisms. The conditionality mechanism is a top-down process where the EU determines political conditions in Türkiye and transforms its democracy alongside its counter-terrorism policies. If Türkiye fulfills them, it is awarded membership, while if it fails, the membership is withheld. The EU’s influence is the primary determinant of rule adoption during this process, which results in some shortcomings in the explanation of rule adoption in the absence of the explicit EU membership outlook, which has high political adoption costs. Thus, as an alternative mechanism, socialization was approached. Checkel³ defines the socialization mechanism as a process of adopting and internalizing the norms of a particular community detached from the

material incentives provided and sanctions enforced. During social interactions between Türkiye and the EU, Turkish political actors adopt EU-promoted norms for their convenience in serving as tools for solving existing ethnic separatist terrorism problems rather than adopting them for the membership incentive. In opposition to the conditionality mechanism, this norm diffusion is a bottom-up process where political actors are primary determinants of rule adoption rather than the EU.

Further, Ilbiz and Kaunert determined four internal and EU-level factors to analyze the efficiency of both norm diffusion patterns. They finally claim that Turkish political actors did not fulfill their duties, as they were required to, despite the high number of adopted norms. Politicians were reluctant and selective in adopting some ethnic minority conventions and human rights norms. The authors argue that this unwillingness was based on the issue of the PKK making demands for autonomy in Türkiye. This skepticism among Turkish politicians resulted in conditionality and socialization mechanism limitations. If a candidate state believes the implementation of EU-promoted norms could create an existential threat to the country's territorial integrity, it is more likely not to implement them. Yet, as argued by Walker,⁴ the domestic opponents consider rule adoption as a weakening factor in the struggle against counter-terrorism while further criticizing the government for betrayal. Thus, it can be concluded that the conditionality and socialization mechanisms do not ensure that third countries will fulfill the EU requirements. Despite the absence of a clear membership prospect and high adoption costs, reform continuity succeeded in transforming counter-terrorism policies for a while in Türkiye.

Regarding the norm diffusion motives in *causa* counter-terrorism, this book emphasizes that the norm diffusion role is based on the self-interest of the EU rather than the well-being of others. In other words, when terrorism evolved into a severe threat to the EU, the EU's political actors prioritized the counter-terrorism policies of neighboring countries. However, as the threat of terrorism diminished, their interest in third-country counter-terrorism strategies dropped.

To sum up, the book provides a critical theoretical and historical framework to understand the EU's norm diffusion role in the counter-terror domain, with the subject only limited to Türkiye and its policies toward the PKK and ISIS. It could be extended to further terrorist organizations in Türkiye, which are also on the EU's designated terrorist organization lists. Even though this book skips certain minor aspects and links between varying political processes, this analysis should be appreciated for its precision. This book has earned profound attention from political scientists and experts, mainly academics and students studying EU-Türkiye relations, terrorism, and counter-terrorism studies. Despite limitations, it delivers impartial analysis and generally contains complete research with a wide range of sources.

Broadly, the EU-Türkiye related literature mostly concentrates on the EU's expansion, its conditionality on Türkiye's democratization, and the strategic dimension of the relationship. Ilbiz and Kaunert, however, adopt a holistic approach to how the paradigm shifts in Turkish counter-terrorism policies that occurred during these periods to point out their basis in different domestic and EU-level factors and conclude with a remarkable articulation in contrast to the argument within the literature regarding the EU diffusing its

norms for “altruistic” reasons. They argue that the EU is a rational actor only concerned with self-interest.

Endnotes

1. Douglas Pratt, “Islamophobia as Reactive Co-Radicalization,” *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, Vol. 26, No. 2 (2015), pp. 205-218. Pratt states that there has been a public backlash to Islamist terrorism after 9/11 resulting in legal

and social consequences for all Muslims, irrespective of their views or affiliations.

2. Daniel Keohane, “The Absent Friend: EU Foreign Policy and Counter-Terrorism,” *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Vol. 46, No. (2008), pp. 125-146.

3. Jeffrey T. Checkel, “International Institutions and Socialization in Europe: Introduction and Framework,” *International Organization*, Vol. 59, No. 4 (2005), pp. 801-826.

4. Joshua W. Walker, “International dimensions of the ‘Kurdish Question’ in Turkey,” in Fevzi Bilgin and Ali Sarhan (eds.), *Understanding Türkiye’s Kurdish Question*, (2013), pp. 223-237.

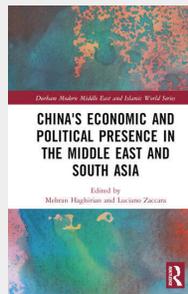
China’s Economic and Political Presence in the Middle East and South Asia

By Mehran Haghirian and Luciano Zaccara
Routledge, 2023, 240 pages, \$160, ISBN: 9781032216041

Reviewed by Mustafa Altıntaş, Qatar University

China, boasting the second-biggest economy in the world, pursued an enormous project called the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in 2013. This project aims to revive the ancient Silk Road in line with China’s economic targets. The book *China’s Economic and Political Presence in the Middle East and South Asia*, edited by Mehran Haghirian and Luciano Zaccara, investigates the relationship between China and Middle Eastern, North African, and Southern Asia countries within the framework of the BRI. The book presents a holistic perspective to understand China’s presence in different regions. While highlighting China’s non-interference policy in each chapter, the book underlines possible risks and opportunities for the countries in question. The book consists of 10 chapters (excluding the introduction) focusing on different areas.

The first chapter introduces Middle East and North Africa (MENA) countries’ relations



with China under three main topics, namely economics, politics-security, and historical, ethnic, and cultural, by referring to the influence of external actors Russia and the U.S. This chapter analyzes the relations using the data from Chinese foreign direct investment (FDI) in MENA regions. With A

Global FDI’s data, the chapter indicates Chinese expansion worldwide. Significantly, after the launch of the BRI project (in the period between 2015 and 2018), Chinese investment increased by 137 percent in the MENA region (p. 15). The data also shows that Chinese involvement with MENA countries is not only related to the energy sector but also extends to the transport and real estate sectors.

Chapter 2 analysis China-Iran relations by employing role theory. It first defines the middle and great powers and goes on to examine China-Iran role conceptions. The Iran Revolution and Chinese expansion after the 1980s