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In Search of Epistemic Justice in the EU's Periphery: A Research Synthesis of EU– Turkey Studies

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Abstract

As relations between the European Union (EU) and Turkey have progressed, so has the body of literature on the relationship – to the extent that we can now identify 'EU-Turkey studies' as a boutique sub-discipline of EU studies. This article provides a systematic mapping of the evolution of EU-Turkey studies from 1996 to 2020 in order to explore the degree of epistemic diversity featured in the discipline as an indicator of epistemic (in)justice. Utilising the research synthesis technique, we analyse a novel dataset involving 300 articles published in 26 SSCI journals to scrutinise the extent of epistemic diversity in the discipline. Our mapping reveals two central features of EU-Turkey studies. First, the transformation of the discipline has largely been contingent on critical milestones in EU-Turkey relations. Lately, increasing conflictual dynamics in bilateral relations resulted in diminishing scholarly commitment to studying EU-Turkey relations. Second, epistemic diversity has remained fairly limited given the lack of geographic diversity in authorship, the accumulation of the publications in specific journals, and the segregated co-authorship clusters that limit the amalgamation of different ideas and values. At the same time, knowledge production in EU-Turkey studies has been mainly Eurocentric, due to the almost exclusive use of grand and up-and-coming theories/concepts of European integration, while the proliferation of issue areas since the launch of the discipline has not culminated in a strong focus on non-traditional, avant-garde research topics as such. To ensure epistemic justice in the discipline, EU-Turkey studies should place stronger emphasis on unconventional issue areas and on the explanatory power of mainstream and unorthodox (IR) theories that have the potential to explore the relationship within the context of the multilateral system in which EU-Turkey relations increasingly operate.

Keywords

Epistemic justice; EU-Turkey relations; Epistemic diversity; Centre-periphery; Research synthesis; EU studies

INTRODUCTION

As the European Union's (EU) capabilities expanded from the economy to a wide array of policy areas, EU studies has transformed 'from boutique to boom field' (Keeler 2005: 563) since the early 1990s. The discipline covers a wide range of political, administrative, social, and regulatory issues and is being taught within the framework of various programs in universities in Europe and beyond. The editorial introduction of this special issue highlights that EU studies is largely shaped on the periphery by political realities and the neighbourhood's relations with the EU, rather than being treated as an autonomous scientific discipline. As such, the 'scholarly contingency' in EU studies which ensures that 'scholarship does not proceed with free agency but is bound by various conditions' (Rosamond 2007: 232) is particularly foregrounded in peripheral analyses of the EU. At the same time, the peripheral, scholarly view of the EU has been co-constitutive of the analyses of the centre scholarship by engendering self/other dynamics and comprised learning processes (Bilgin 2021).

Turkey can be treated both as a central and as a peripheral state – an 'in-between state', so to speak, located at the semi-periphery (Wallerstein 1976: 465). This is because of two distinct features of its relationship with the West, and specifically with the EU. First, Turkey possesses a 'liminal' identity, driven by its unique location between the East and the West, enabling the country to rely on different components of its identity in the West and in the East in quest of numerous goals (Rumelili and Suleymanoglu-Kurum 2017). At the same time, Turkey's dual identity propels the stigmatisation of its Western and Eastern identities and the ambiguities over its 'Europeanness'. Second, the EU–Turkey relationship evolved from two separate, yet interrelated, tracks featured along the centre–periphery axis: association/partnership and membership. Turkey signed the Association Agreement with the then European Economic Community (EEC) in 1963 in pursuit of deepening economic relations with the Community through the establishment of a customs union. As Turkish policymakers realised that the Association Agreement positioned Turkey primarily as a peripheral state, they applied for full membership in 1987. The EEC did not approve Turkey's full membership at the time but did not dispute its centrality either, as it granted Turkey official candidate status in 1999 and started its accession negotiations in 2005. This led to the framing and provisional positioning of EU–Turkey relations closer to the centre along the centre–periphery axis. At the same time, Turkey's gradually weakening membership prospects since the late 2010s, coupled with both sides' steadily diverging normative and (geo-)strategic preferences (Reiners and Turhan 2021a), recently reinvigorated Turkey's peripheral status.

The puzzling co-existence of both longevity and complexity in the EU–Turkey relationship propelled a rich body of literature on the topic and its dissemination through a wide array of established journals to the extent that we can enunciate the strong presence of 'EU–Turkey studies'. EU–Turkey studies operates both as a sub-discipline of EU studies and as a medium through which the EU/Europe is studied in Turkey. EU–Turkey relations – until very recently – progressed within the context of accession discussions based on the 35 negotiating chapters of the EU *acquis*, which encompass a wide range of issues, from environment to education, agricultural development to competition policy, so the discipline should be strongly interdisciplinary. However, teaching about the EU in Turkey is mostly stuck within the narrow confines of high politics, with introductory courses on the political system of the EU or elective courses related to foreign and security policy, wider neighbourhood, or migration. This trend is also echoed in the central focus of Jean Monnet Actions carried out at Turkish universities and co-financed by the European Commission with a view to enhancing epistemic diversity in the teaching about the EU in the periphery. Yet only around 20 per cent of all Jean Monnet modules in Turkey have dealt with unconventional issue areas such as gender policy, identity, social policy, and good governance (Tokgöz 2021).

In order to unpack this special issue's central question of how 'Europe' is taught in the periphery, it is essential to engage in a critical assessment of knowledge sources, due to the growing trend toward research-informed teaching in higher education pedagogy (Evans et al. 2021: 525). For the very basic reason that research and teaching are inextricable in higher education, we focus on research as our unit of analysis in this article to understand how the EU/Europe is taught in Turkey. As the peripheral view on EU studies is largely influenced by ebbs and flows in the respective countries' relations with the EU, we provide a systematic and comprehensive mapping of the evolution of EU-Turkey studies from 1996 to 2020. In doing so, we also respond to the invitation by Bilgin (2021) to study the periphery as the "constitutive outside". We apply research synthesis technique to a novel dataset, presenting information on 300 peer-reviewed articles published in 26 SSCI-indexed journals. Following the overall concerns of this special issue and Turkey's fluctuating position along the centre-periphery axis, we are specifically interested in scrutinising the extent of epistemic justice featured in EU-Turkey studies which concerns the epistemic hierarchisation of knowledge sources in the centre-periphery relationship (Fricker 2007; Medina 2013).

In doing so, we explore the shifts and continuities in the degree of epistemic diversity intrinsic to the discipline. We argue that epistemic diversity and epistemic justice are co-constitutive and can best be measured by indicators such as the geographic diversity of the knowledge sources and authorship, conceptual/theoretical approaches, issue areas, participation of women in the discipline, and collaborative spirit in the field. Such a theoretical take on EU-Turkey studies, fused with a systematic, empirical inquiry of the discipline helps us understand whether studying the EU in the periphery allows for the development of authentic, local perspectives in the periphery, and whether the scholarly inquiry of EU-Turkey relations features a centre-periphery divide. Whereas centre relates in this study – in line with the introductory article of this special issue (Alpan and Diez 2022) – to the EU- and Anglo-American knowledge systems and geo-epistemologies (e.g., (co-)authorship, journals, institutions, theoretical approaches and so forth), periphery circumscribes all knowledge systems and geo-epistemologies outside the EU- and Anglo-American epistemic structures.

The article proceeds as follows. The next section contextualises epistemic justice and diversity in the framework of the centre-periphery divide. We then present the research design and the data collection. The ensuing section maps the state of authorship, collaborative efforts, journals, and the patchwork of theoretical/conceptual approaches and central issue areas in EU-Turkey studies, taking into account the distinct eras of the discipline. In the final section we synthesise the key findings and propose a way forward to promote epistemic justice and diversity in EU-Turkey studies.

EPISTEMIC JUSTICE AND DIVERSITY IN THE CENTRE-PERIPHERY HIERARCHY

Teaching and learning about the EU along the centre-periphery axis requires adequate attention to epistemic diversity. Kotzee (2017: 329) defines epistemic diversity as the 'diversity in educationists' beliefs and belief systems, research methods and methods of inquiry, research questions and cultures'. Yet, integrating diversity into the classrooms appears to be a major challenge due to the lack of diversity in knowledge sources.

Lack of epistemic diversity is captured with the term 'epistemic injustice'. Scholars of epistemic (in)justice underline the persistent need for the plurality of the ways of knowing (Mantz 2019) which led many European universities to focus on non-Western, post-Western and non-European or global perspectives (Çapan 2017). Miranda Fricker (2007) defines two kinds of epistemic injustice. The first is the testimonial injustice that occurs when some knowers are given lower credibility due to prejudice against them. Credibility assessment, at least in Western societies, tends to favour powerful groups or those

privileged in society, such as male, middle-class, and white people over young or old women (white or of colour) (see McConkey 2004; Fricker 1998), or secular women over conservative women in Muslim societies (Cin and Süleymanoğlu-Kürüm 2021). Testimonial injustice is highly relevant to the division of labour in knowledge production patterns in centre–periphery hierarchy similar to the North–South binary (Marginson and Xu 2021: 7) and the West/non-West divide (Xu 2021) as it spatializes episteme and creates hierarchies between different geo-epistemologies (Wemheuer-Vogelaar et al. 2020: 19).

Eurocentrism (defined as a civilisational context that includes Europe and North America) manifests itself in epistemic hierarchisation whereby Anglo-American geo-epistemology is treated as the ‘centre’. The UK and the US host the top ten publishers and headquarters of major scientific databases, and supply the majority of journal editors and peer reviewers (Marginson and Xu 2021: 7). This leads to the prioritization of knowledge produced in this geo-epistemological context (Wemheuer-Vogelaar et al. 2020: 19). From the perspective of testimonial injustice, this would mean that knowers in the periphery and non-Anglo-American geo-epistemologies are regarded as incompetent and their scientific inquiry is assessed against the centre by an inner community of scientists who claim that they make an exclusive contribution to legitimate knowledge (Walker and Boni 2021: 6). This argument is originally put forward by postcolonial scholars and framed as ‘epistemic violence’ due to the imposition of a particular, namely Western-centric knowledge. This creates knowledge hierarchies and marginalizes the agency of non-Western regions in knowledge production (Spivak 1994).

In fact, in their earlier analysis, Fricker (1998: 170) notes that there is likely to ‘be some social pressure on the norm of credibility to imitate the structures of social power’. Therefore, we can confidently argue that testimonial injustice emerges when scholars in the periphery rely exclusively on the issues, concepts, theories, and methodologies that are widely believed to be valid in the centre to gain credibility and recognition as knowers. As such, testimonial injustice creates ‘epistemic frontiers’, which cause peripheral scholars to be treated as though they are incompetent to assess or theorise (Mignolo and Tlostanova 2006), and marginalizes these geo-epistemologies.

The second form of epistemic injustice that Fricker (2007) draws attention to is hermeneutical injustice, which arises when a group – through being denied equal participation in the generation of social meaning – is deprived of the ability to understand and give meaning to its experiences and express them to others convincingly. In hermeneutical injustice, the ‘speakers’ knowledge claim falls into a blank gap in the available conceptual resources’ and blocks their capacity to understand and interpret their experiences (Fricker 2007: 3). As Xu (2021: 6) notes, ‘some concepts only exist in specific contexts, thus become unthinkable, unimaginable, incommensurable and incomprehensible to others even with an open mindset and humbleness to learn’. Hence, certain communities are prevented from exercising a distinctive voice and participating in meaning-making and meaning-sharing practices (Medina 2017: 42; Fricker 2013). Peripheral scholars are rather encouraged by their ‘central peers’ to apply the theoretical and conceptual frameworks or issues widely debated by the Western scholarship as a top-down process through a ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach. This is a way for them to imposing their own way of thinking on others through modern education (Saurin 2006). Yet, these concepts and variables may not be entirely applicable or helpful to explicate domestic processes in the periphery, and result in the epistemic silencing of scholars and people in non-Western contexts.

Although knowledge production has become more multipolar with the diversification of countries of origin from 2000 to 2018, Eurocentric inquiry, primarily Anglo-American thinking, prevailed and the agency of the scholars on the periphery has been widely suppressed (Marginson and Xu 2021: 7-11). The centre imposes its research agenda on the periphery, leading them to focus on ‘problems affecting mostly rich countries’ (Vessuri et al. 2014: 649) or becoming blind to the needs and interests of the periphery (Olechnicka

et al. 2019: 102-3) and thus perpetuating geo-epistemological biases (Wembheuer-Vogelaar et al. 2020: 19). Such biases result in the suppression of subaltern knowledges, conceptualized as epistemic violence (Spivak, 1994) and “epistemicide” (Santos et al. 2007).

Epistemic injustice can best be altered by epistemic diversity, which allows for the contestation of substantive, methodological, and political distortions of the mainstream, and makes room for the application of non-Eurocentric knowledge to a non-Western context (Medina 2013: 12). Such efforts to create an epistemically diverse approach to understand the world by pooling different experiences into the debate is captured by the concept of ‘worlding’, a form of resistance to epistemic violence, implying that ‘we are all engaged in imagining and creating worlds’ (Wæver and Tickner 2009: 9). This has been the main objective of the scholarship on decolonizing knowledge that challenges the ‘West and the rest’ dichotomy (Jones 2006). Within the body of this literature, Saurin (2006: 32) determines four criteria to assess the coloniality of knowledge in a discipline: i) the proportion of publications taking non-Western states as the historical reference or the objective of inquiry; ii) the proportion of work published in Western journals or publishing houses, iii) the number of theoretical approaches that are Western in origin or deviation, iv) the proportion of authors from non-Western countries who have published in the specialised journals. In addition to the aforementioned criteria, Mahr (2021: 38) pays attention to the importance of the context in which scientific knowledge is produced. In some contexts, knowers’ social positions matter, which requires integrating viewpoints of knowers of different genders, social, racial, and ethnic backgrounds into science. In other settings, it may be necessary to emphasise and foster different styles of reasoning.

As Grosfougel (2013: 88) notes, encouraging a knowledge production process where ‘many defines for the many’ would help finding different responses and solutions to similar problems. Given Turkey’s position of being both a central and a peripheral state, as a result of its dual and liminal identity and the evolution of EU–Turkey relations on two distinct paths of association/partnership and full membership, EU–Turkey studies as a sub-discipline of EU studies should incorporate significant epistemic diversity. For instance, trying to understand and explain such a multifaceted relationship only with the theoretical/conceptual insights from Western/European knowledge systems or based on an asymmetric distribution of authorship in favour of one side would contribute to epistemic injustice not only in the sub-discipline itself but also in the broader EU studies.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND DATA

Taking into consideration its orderly coverage of around 3,400 influential journals across 58 social science disciplines (Clarivate 2021), accompanied by its easy accessibility (Bunea and Baumgartner 2014), we benefitted from the Web of Science’s (WOS) Social Science Citation Index (SSCI) to engender a plausibly far-reaching, illustrative sample of EU–Turkey studies. We are aware of the inherent dilemmas of studying only articles published in SSCI journals as SSCI indexing system – an arrangement largely compiled by the journals of the three largest publishing houses (Informa, Sage, and Wiley) (Demeter 2019) – itself operates as a way of centering academic studies and creating centre-periphery relations. Yet, such inherent dynamics of global knowledge production as reinforced by the SSCI indexing system can only be unpacked by analysing and revealing such epistemic injustices within this indexing system itself.

We adhered to a criterion sampling technique that allows for the establishment of clear-cut, pre-determined criteria with a view to generating a comprehensive yet attentive sample of peer-reviewed articles with a central focus on EU–Turkey relations (Suri 2011). We first retrieved all 297 SSCI journals (as of December 2020) in the fields of ‘Political Science’, ‘Area Studies’, and ‘International Relations’ from WOS, in view of EU studies’

partial and somewhat complementary operationalisation within these disciplines (see, e.g., Cini 2006; Keeler 2005), which is also true for EU–Turkey studies. This way we reduced the probability of misguidedly omitting any major journal with a high number of publications on EU–Turkey relations. With a view to inspect whether we have left out any important journal in other subjects such as sociology, education, history, and so forth with a meaningful number of articles on EU–Turkey relations we made a double-check. Our inquiry demonstrated that there are exceptionally few articles on EU–Turkey relations published in journals other than those included in our dataset. We then delved into the ‘aim’ and ‘scope/overview’ segment of each journal, as described in the corresponding journal homepage, and excluded any journal that did not feature any reference to ‘Turkey’ and/or ‘EU/Europe’ in the respective segment. We systematically reviewed each issue of the remaining journals by looking in the abstract and title of each article for a combination of the following keywords ‘EU/Europe/European’ AND ‘Turkey/Turkish’. In a final step, we removed all articles that did not primarily focus on EU–Turkey relations. While we do not argue to cover the whole universe of EU–Turkey Studies, this labour-intensive practice resulted in an across-the-board, thorough sample of the literature on EU–Turkey relations, covering 26 SSCI journals (with impact factors ranging from 7.339 to 0.250) and 300 articles published from 1 January 1996 (after the entry into force of the EU–Turkey Customs Union on 31 December 1995) to 31 December 2020 (see Appendix).

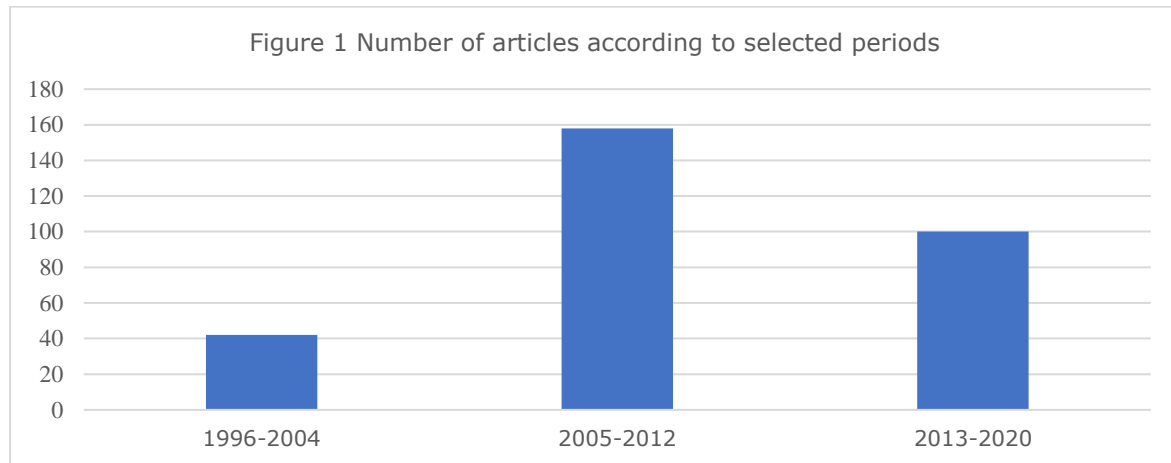
With a view to providing a systematic assessment of the extent, evolvement, and limits of epistemic diversity in EU–Turkey studies, the study utilised the research synthesis technique. Research syntheses concern systematic, integrative reviews of the literature in a given discipline, research field, or issue area to create generalisations about the field. They mostly keep track of the theoretical approaches and research designs utilised, provide a critical assessment of the research carried out in the field, and pinpoint avenues for a future research agenda (Cooper and Hedges 2009: 6). They aim to generate new knowledge and awareness about the discipline or topic of interest based on a sampling, evaluation, and data combination of the existing literature (Suri 2011). Mindful of our research question and objective of the synthesis (Wilson 2009), we coded the 300 articles included in our representative sample of EU–Turkey studies for the following dimensions: a) name of the author(s); b) country of institution to which author(s) are affiliated¹; c) gender of author(s); d) publication year; e) theoretical/conceptual approach; f) main issue area; and g) single- vs. co-authorship. The coding process also benefitted from a periodisation as it reveals the way EU–Turkey relations have been studied in different periods, featuring distinct milestones, and maps the shifts and continuities in EU–Turkey studies. Accordingly, we systematically reviewed the sampling in three periods: 1996–2004 (positive turn in bilateral relations from the initiation of the EU–Turkey Customs Union to the EU decision to open the accession negotiations with Turkey); 2005–2012 (from the opening of accession negotiations to the gradual slow-down of Turkish accession process amid ‘selective’ Europeanization (Alpan 2021) in Turkey); 2013–2020 (formulation of EU–Turkey relations increasingly outside the accession context and growing trend toward conflictual relations between the EU and Turkey). (See similar periodisations in Reiners and Turhan 2021a.)

EU–TURKEY STUDIES AND ITS THREE ERAS: SHIFTS AND CONTINUITIES IN EPISTEMIC DIVERSITY

Our sample includes a moderately large number of articles on EU–Turkey relations which have been disseminated through a wide array of journals, including those ‘devoted mainly or exclusively to EC/EU studies’ (see for details Keeler 2005: 553). This denotes that EU–Turkey studies secured its position as a distinct, discernible, and prolific ‘boutique’ sub-discipline of EU studies over the years. At the same time, as shown in Figure 1, which provides data for the number of articles published in selected periods, key turning points in EU–Turkey relations and Turkey’s fluctuating positioning along the centre–periphery

axis have largely accounted for the phases of growth and change in the status of the discipline.

Of the 300 articles included in our sample, 42 were published in the period from 1996 to 2004. The empirical drivers of the take-off era of EU–Turkey studies were the entry into force of the EU–Turkey Customs Union on 31 December 1995, the confirmation of Turkey’s candidacy status by the EU in 1999, and the December 2004 European Council decision to open the accession negotiations with Turkey. These significant steps in EU–Turkey relations and the strengthening of Turkey’s EU membership prospects reinforced Turkey’s anchorage to the EU through an exhaustive reform process (Müftüler-Baç 2005). Accordingly, Turkish state actors’ willingness to present themselves as central European actors in the liminal spaces generated by the EU accession process (Rumelili 2012) promoted the emergence of scholarly interest in studying EU–Turkey affairs. The dawn of the field and gradual upsurge in scholarly output are even more visibly manifested in data related to the rate at which articles were published. Whereas from 1996 to 1999 only 1.3 articles were published on average per year, following the approval of Turkey’s candidate status by the EU the scholarly community published, from 2000 to 2004, on average 7.4 articles per year with a key focus on the bilateral relationship.



The period from 2005 to 2012 marked the golden age or the boom era of EU–Turkey studies, with the number of articles published in this epoch rising to 158, from 42 in the previous era. This exhibited a remarkable 276 per cent increase compared to the scholarly output accomplished during the take-off era. As a consequence of the accession negotiations with Turkey kicking off in October 2005, Turkey’s full membership in the EU appeared to be feasible – if only for a short period of time – despite the ‘ambivalences that characterized the opening of negotiations’ (Lippert 2021: 285) such as the special arrangements incorporated into the negotiation framework with Turkey. This stimulated an intensified scholarly interest in analysing EU–Turkey relations from the angle of EU widening.

Articles published in the golden age of EU–Turkey studies inspected a wide array of elements, salient events, and trends related to Turkey’s EU accession process, inter alia, the central features of EU conditionality and enlargement policy vis-à-vis Turkey (e.g. MacMillan 2009; Saatçioğlu 2009) and Europeanization processes in diverse policy areas in Turkey (e.g., Müftüler-Baç and Gürsoy 2010; Buhari-Gülmez 2012; Süleymanoğlu-Kürüm 2019). In this vein, the overlapping of the boom era in EU–Turkey studies with the prospect of Turkey moving closer to Europe along the centre–periphery axis, foregrounds the contingent nature of the discipline in the sense that scholarship on EU–Turkey relations has been driven by the realities and milestones of EU–Turkey relations. At the same time, throughout this period, the enduring ambiguities over Turkey’s ‘Europeanness’ incorporated the case of EU–Turkey relations ‘in the literature on European identity and normative debates about the future direction of the European polity’ (Aydın-Düzgüt and

Rumelili 2021: 73) which further enriched the field with differing starting points and theoretical approaches.

It is possible to argue that technological diversification and greater accessibility and connectivity of scholars worldwide (Marginson and Xu 2021) also facilitated the expansion of scholarly output in EU–Turkey relations, which holds the potential to reduce testimonial injustice by increasing the visibility of diverse knowledge sources. Such disciplinary expansion can also lessen hermeneutical injustice, as connectivity paves the way for greater collaborative spirit, allowing for the scholars in the centre and periphery being exposed to each other's authentic ideas and concepts. This can lead to the diminishing of the conceptual 'blank gaps' in the discipline (Fricker, 2007: 3). Yet, as we show in the succeeding sections of our analysis, in the case of EU–Turkey studies, the expansion of scholarly output did not necessarily culminate in a proportional proliferation of the epistemic diversity in the discipline.

The scholarly contingency of EU–Turkey studies played out in a similar fashion throughout the stagnation era which has continued from 2013 to 2020, when EU-Turkey relations became contested and conflictual, and marked by debates on 'shift of axis' underlining Turkey's retrenchment from the EU (Süleymanoğlu-Kürüm 2019). As shown in Figure 1, this period featured an approximately 37 per cent decline (from 158 to 100) in the number of articles in comparison to the boom era. The discipline suffered from a precipitous downturn, particularly from 2017 onwards, with the number of articles published per year closing to that of the take-off era. Whereas in 2016, 21 articles with a central focus on EU–Turkey relations were published, this number abruptly dropped to 11 in 2017, 8 in 2018, 10 in 2019 and 7 in 2020. This finding contradicts Marginson and Xu's (2021: 9) recent analysis, which illustrates the overall growth of science with scholarship from diverse countries of origin from 2000 to 2018. Given this fact, we contend that there is a geometric decline in EU–Turkey studies.

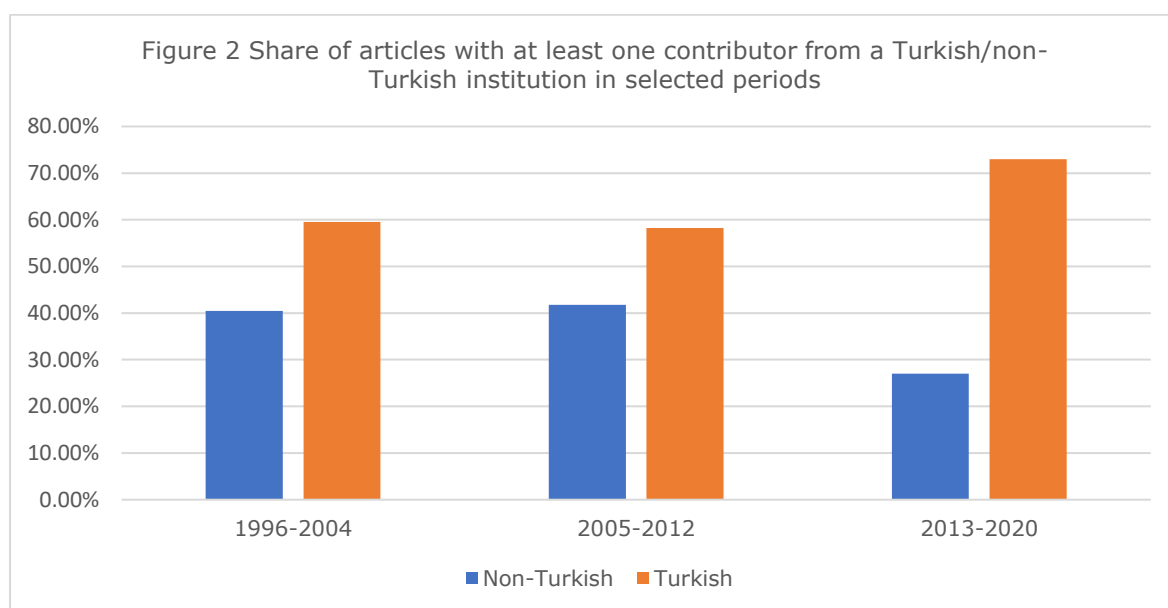
The declining academic devotion to the study of EU–Turkey relations has specifically taken place in conjunction with the onset of a period of palpably departing paths for the EU and Turkey in various contexts. Turkey's progressive 'de-Europeanization' throughout the last decade, a process that involves 'the loss or weakening of the EU/Europe as a normative/political context and as a reference point in domestic settings' (Aydın-Düzgüt and Kaliber 2016: 5), the EU's increasing interest in 'thinking out of the accession box' (Turhan 2017) and growing geopolitical rivalries and competing positions in the EU's southern neighbourhood (i Lecha et al. 2021) engender Turkey's retrenchment from the EU (Süleymanoğlu-Kürüm 2019). Our data illustrate that as Turkey's prospects of full membership started to wane, Turkey's perceived status as a peripheral country foregrounded, and conflictual relations with the EU surfaced, the crisis in bilateral relations somewhat curtailed the scholarly interest in EU–Turkey studies for the time being.

The State of Authorship, Collaborative Efforts, and Journals in EU–Turkey Studies

In terms of investigating the extent of epistemic diversity in the distinct eras of EU–Turkey studies, it becomes crucial to analyse the authorship characteristics. In this, the geographic distribution of the authorship community in EU–Turkey studies functions as a particularly central variable. Of the 300 articles included in our sample 190 (63.3 per cent) were written by at least one scholar affiliated to a Turkish institution, whilst the authors of the remaining 110 articles (36.7 per cent) had institutional affiliations with non-Turkish (mostly European) universities². Our data indicate that EU–Turkey relations are studied predominantly in Turkey and serve as a rather secondary topic of interest in Europe and beyond. On the one hand, the interest of scholars affiliated with Turkish institutions in EU–Turkey relations can be interpreted as an element that reduces epistemic injustice as it bears the potential to integrate the local perspective into the disciplinary debates. This

finding runs contrary to Xu and Marginson's (2021) assessment that scholars in the periphery (i.e. Africa and the Middle East) contribute to marginalization of local voices. On the other hand, the low proportion of authors from European establishments engenders an asymmetric authorship configuration in this (sub-)discipline studying the 'bilateral' relations between two 'key partners' (European Commission 2021: 2). This bears the potential of weakening the extent of epistemic diversity featured in EU–Turkey studies as it pushes the inquiry of the EU's relations with a non-member state largely to the scholarly community of the non-member state or the periphery.

As Figure 2 shows, during the stagnation era in EU–Turkey studies (2013–2020) the geographic diversity and expansion of the scholarly community have drastically reduced, with the proportion of authors affiliated with non-Turkish institutions having decreased from 41.7 per cent during the boom era of the discipline (2005–2012) to a remarkably low 27.0 per cent. Thus, as EU–Turkey relations have become increasingly contested and conflictual, the peripheral nature of the discipline of EU–Turkey studies have consolidated, and the geographic diffusion of the authorship community has slowed down.



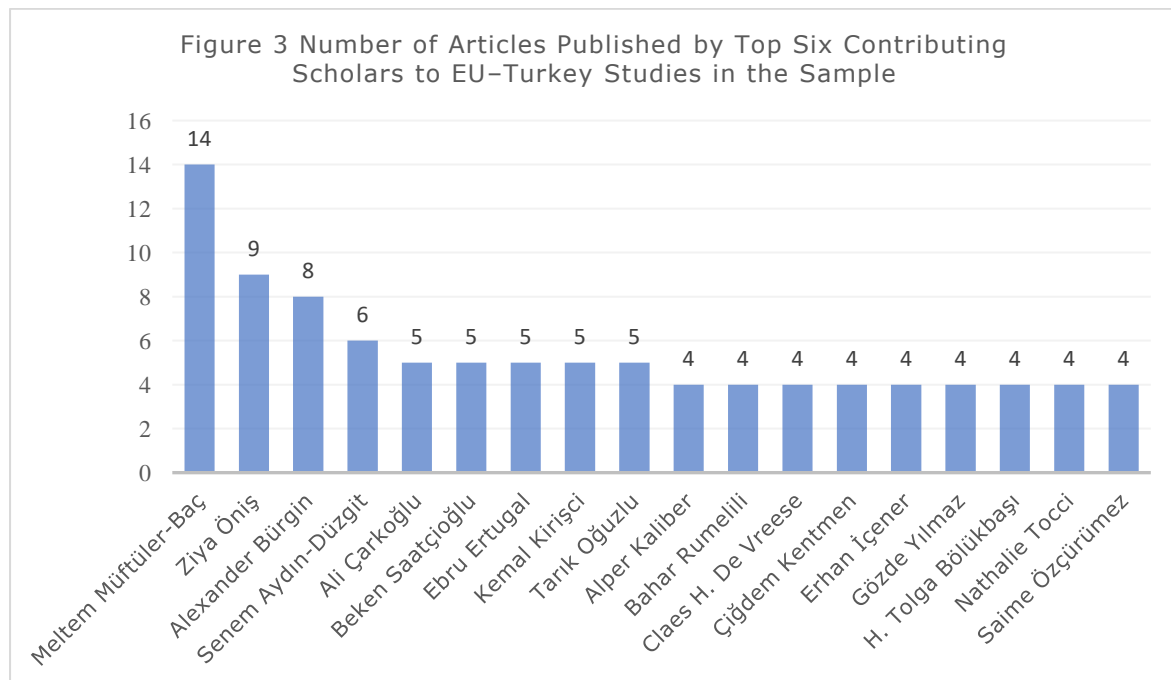
The limited degree of geographic expansion of the scholarly community in EU–Turkey studies is seemingly evident in Table 1, which shows the territorial distribution of the (first) authors' academic affiliation³ across countries. Sixty per cent of the (first) authors who have produced articles on EU–Turkey relations are affiliated with Turkish institutions, followed by British (10.7 per cent), US (7.7 per cent), German (5.7 per cent), Dutch (4 per cent) and Greek (2 per cent) establishments. First authors of the remaining 10 per cent of the articles are affiliated with universities in other countries. Our data pinpoint two important findings pertaining to the state of epistemic diversity in the discipline. First, knowledge production and dissemination in EU–Turkey studies are largely dominated by a very limited number of countries, led by Turkey. Second, within Western countries, scholarly interest in studying EU–Turkey relations is relatively strong in the US and the UK, compared to continental Europe. On the one hand, this denotes the strategic relevance of the EU–Turkey relationship to the transatlantic alliance and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) (see on this Pierini and Siccardi 2021) and the analogies between the UK and Turkey as the EU's two 'eternal awkward partner[s]' (Ciancara and Szymański 2020: 258). At the same time, the supremacy of the UK and US among Western countries in knowledge production on EU–Turkey relations bolsters the line of argument that Anglo-American institutions largely form, codify, and circulate scientific knowledge which is Eurocentric in its essence (Marginson and Xu 2021). Hence, the growing reliance on 'open

networks' (Xu 2021: 2) did not diversify agency of EU–Turkey studies, and epistemic 'universality' prevailed over 'epistemic diversity' (Marginson 2014).

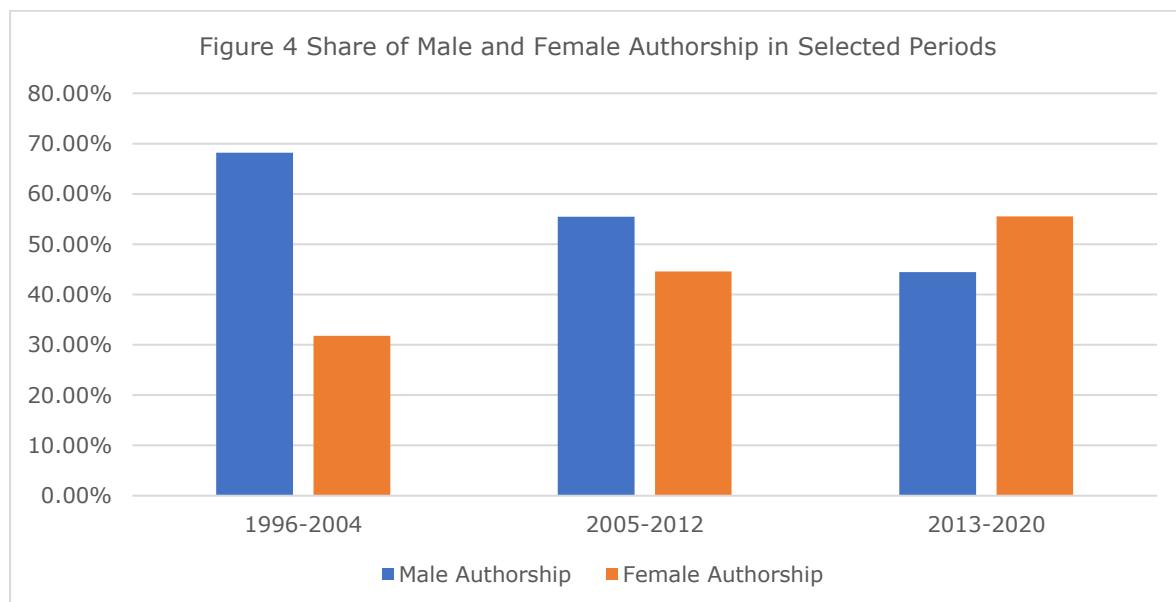
Table 1 Geographic Distribution of the Institutional Affiliation of the First Authors Across Countries

Country	Number of Articles Produced	Share in the Representative Sample of EU–Turkey Relations
Turkey	180	60.0%
United Kingdom	32	10.7%
United States	23	7.7%
Germany	17	5.7%
Netherlands	12	4.0%
Greece	6	2.0%
Others	30	10.0%

Figure 3 illustrates that – in line with our previous findings – in our representative sample of the literature on EU–Turkey relations three of the 18 top contributors to the discipline are European scholars (with one of them being affiliated with a Turkish university) while the remaining 15 are Turkish. At the same time, the figure also hints that the gender gap in publishing appears to be narrower in EU–Turkey studies as opposed to EU studies and its sub-disciplines (Bunea and Baumgartner 2014), psychology (Odic and Wojcik 2019), economics (Ghosh and Liu 2020), political science and its sub-disciplines (Mathews and Andersen 2001; Østby et al. 2013). In our sample there is an equal gender distribution among the top six contributing scholars to EU–Turkey studies, with nine female and nine male scholars. Overall, female scholars contributed to 53 per cent of the articles (161 articles) in our dataset, while 62 per cent of all articles (184 articles) included at least one male author.



Notwithstanding the persistence of a small, overall gender gap in favour of male scholars in publications on EU–Turkey relations over the period 1996 to 2020, Figure 4, which demonstrates the evolution of the share of male and female authorship⁴ in selected periods, points to a discernible trend in EU–Turkey studies toward altering gender gap patterns in publishing in favour of female scholars. We notice that the share of female authorship in our representative sample has progressively risen from 31.8 per cent during the take-off era of the discipline (1996–2004) to 44.6 per cent throughout the golden age of EU–Turkey studies, and to 55.6 per cent in the period 2013–2020, despite the shrinking of the discipline in terms of publication numbers throughout the last period. The closing of the gender gap in publications in favour of female scholars holds the potential to reinforce the extent of epistemic diversity and justice featured in the discipline because of two developments that are likely to occur following the disruption of gender-oriented publication patterns. First, this fosters female scholars’ visibility and consequently their acknowledgement as epistemic authorities in the field. Second, oftentimes gender diversity is congruous with epistemic diversity as ‘social identity influences the research problems, assumptions, and prejudices of individuals’ (O’Connor and Bruner 2019: 114). These findings tip the scales in favour of testimonial justice in the discipline, as women’s contribution to knowledge production appears to be massive and women are recognised as credible knowers in EU–Turkey studies.



The presence and extent of co-authorship serves as another central driver of epistemic diversity in any research field as collaborative processes accommodate multiple perspectives on the topic under scrutiny while also tearing down single-disciplinary knowledge production patterns in many cases (Miller et al. 2008). Our data pins down two important trends as regards collaborative research efforts in EU–Turkey studies. First, as Figure 5 demonstrates, the practice of co-authorship has yet to become the modus operandi in the discipline. Of the 300 articles included in our sample and published between 1996 and 2020, 71 per cent are single-authored, and 29 per cent are co-authored work. Although we can detect a somewhat gradual increase in the proportion of collaborative work over the years and notably from 2017 onwards, the evolvement of co-authorship practices in the discipline does not exhibit a consistent, linear developmental path, having been marked by continual ups and downs. Second, the existing collaboration clusters are driven by a clear centre–periphery divide and segregated networks that obstruct collaboration with out-group members. Of the 87 co-authored articles 73.6 per cent are products of in-group collaborations, with 39 articles having emerged by co-authorship between primarily Turkish scholars and 25 articles through collaboration between

central/European academics. Centre–periphery cooperation in publishing took place in only 26.4 per cent (23 articles) of co-authored work.

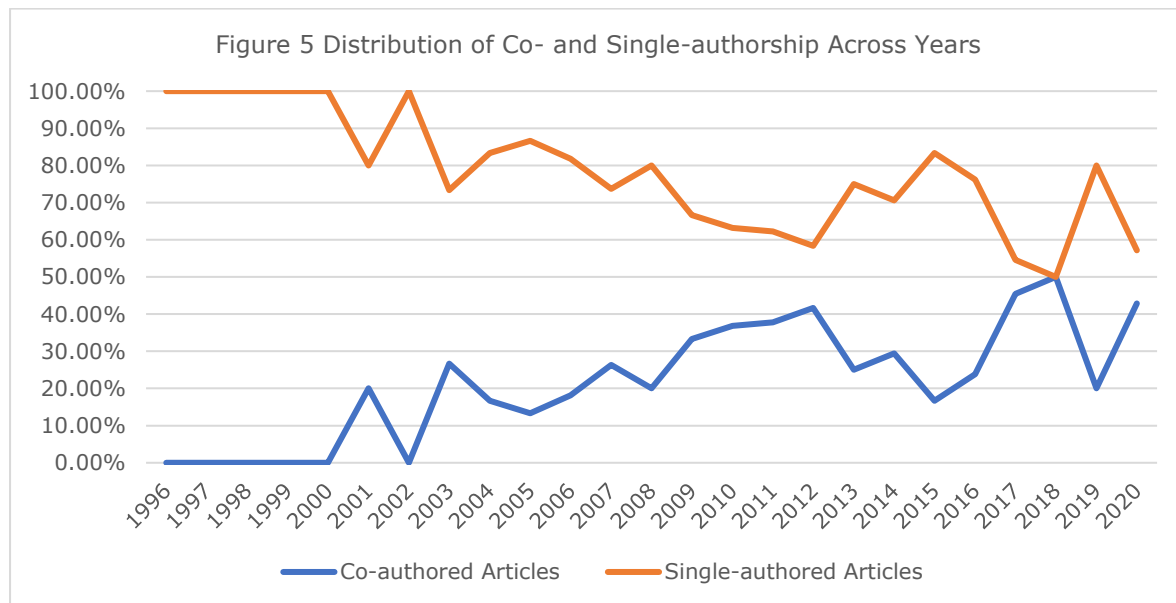
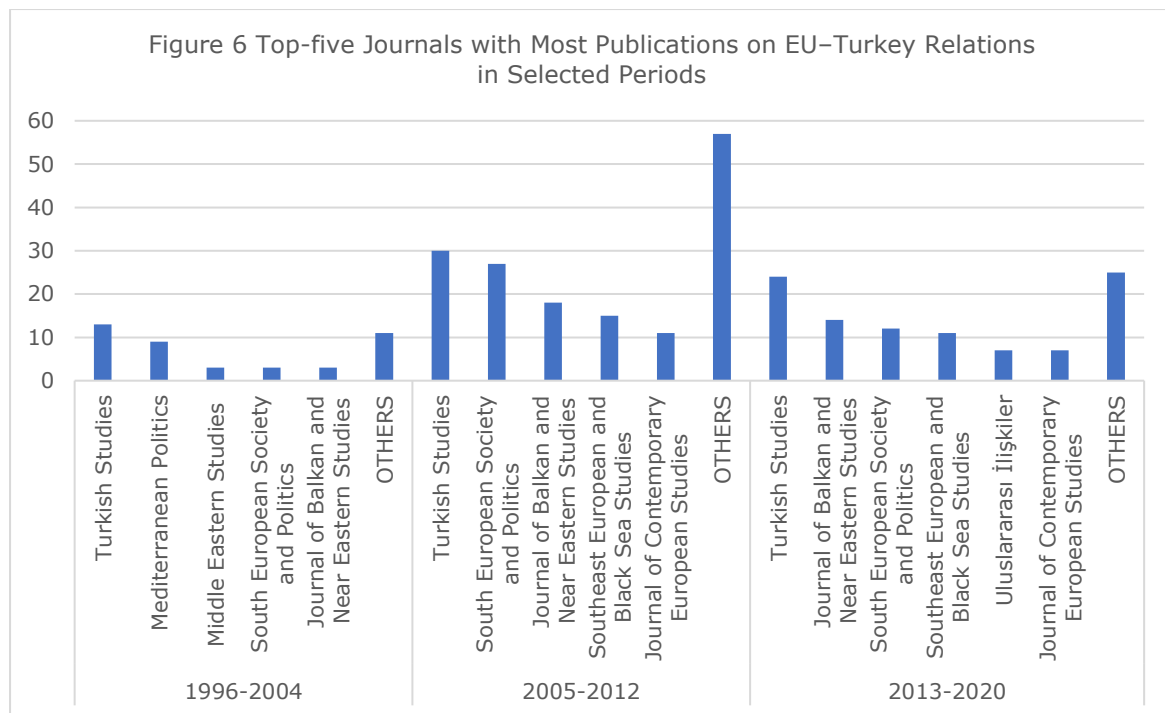


Figure 6 provides data about the five SSCI journals with most publications on EU–Turkey relations in selected periods, and exhibits the resilient, peripheral dynamics featured in the discipline. In all three eras of EU–Turkey studies, journals that predominantly operate within the domain of ‘area studies’ and possess a strong focus on the EU’s relationship with its wider neighbourhood dominated the scholarly output on EU–Turkey relations. Their regional foci included, inter alia, the Middle East and North Africa region (Middle Eastern Studies), the Balkans and the greater Middle East (Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies), Turkey (Turkish Studies, Uluslararası İlişkiler), Southern Europe (South European Society and Politics), and the Black Sea region (Southeast European and Black Sea Studies). Thus, specialist, flagship journals principally dedicated to studying the EU and European politics (see Keeler 2005 for a categorisation) such as Journal of European Public Policy, European Union Politics, Journal of European Integration, West European Politics, and Comparative European Politics have featured a limited number of articles on the EU–Turkey relationship compared to journals with a specific regional foci. Within the list of specialist journals, only Journal of Common Market Studies (JCMS) and Journal of Contemporary European Studies (JCES) functioned as important outlets for EU–Turkey studies throughout the boom era of the discipline (2005–2012), having published eight and 11 articles, respectively.

The golden age of studying EU–Turkey relations (2005–2012) also culminated in an overall diversification and expansion of the scholarly outlets, with 36.1 per cent of the articles published in this era from 2005 to 2012 having appeared in journals other than the top five outlets. The rise of conflictual relations between the EU and Turkey during 2013 to 2020 has not only engendered an overarching decline in scholarly interest in the discipline. As Figure 6 demonstrates, the estrangement between both sides also brought about an outlet-oriented contraction and concentration on a smaller number journals with a specific regional foci (with the exception of JCES). The five SSCI journals with most publications on EU–Turkey relations in the stagnation era (2013–2020) constituted 75 per cent of all articles (100) published in this period. This concentration of articles in a limited number of journals in EU–Turkey studies goes against the fair and asymmetric distribution of the outcomes of scholarly knowledge and research on EU–Turkey relations along the centre–periphery axis and produces epistemic injustices (see on this also Dübgen 2020).

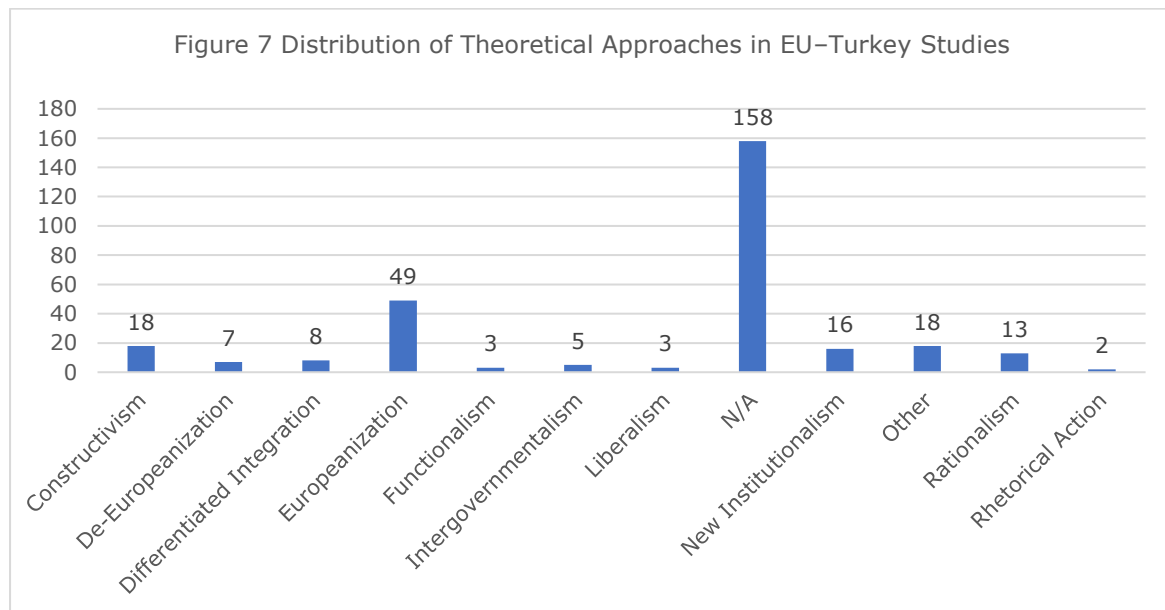


The Patchwork of Theoretical/Conceptual Approaches and Central Issue Areas in EU–Turkey Studies

The theoretical/conceptual foci of the articles on EU–Turkey relations provides us with important empirical evidence pertaining to the positioning of EU–Turkey studies within EU studies and the degree of epistemic diversity in the discipline. We coded all articles included in the sample for the theoretical/conceptual perspective they utilise, based on the explicit declaration of their authors. If the author(s) did not overtly assert any theoretical/conceptual approach we coded the respective article as 'atheoretical'. If an article compares or synthesizes two or more theoretical/conceptual angles, we then coded the article for the approach that is employed more eminently. For example, if a study emphasizes the limits of (de-)Europeanization for EU–Turkey relations while at the same time highlighting the strengths of another theoretical approach such as new institutionalism, we then coded the article for the latter.

Figure 7 offers data about the overall distribution of the theoretical/conceptual approaches the sampled articles employ, and displays two central traits of the theoretical bases of EU–Turkey studies. First, more than half (158) of the 300 sampled articles offer reflective, atheoretical explanations for the important developments in EU–Turkey relations. Second, the theoretical/conceptual designs of the remaining 142 articles rely almost exclusively on grand theories of European integration or established/up-and-coming conceptual approaches to studying the European integration. In our representative sample (de-)Europeanization has emerged as the leading conceptual lens through which EU–Turkey relations have been explored in almost 40 per cent (56 articles) of the 142 articles featuring explicit theoretical orientations. The popularity of Europeanization in EU–Turkey studies could be largely attributed to its conceptual flexibility and its power to carry out analyses on the extent of the EU's normative influence on domestic processes in multiple domains – polity, policy, and politics – including a wide array of issue areas, such as economy, foreign and security policy, judiciary, and migration (Reiners and Turhan 2021b: 401-404). Yet, the concept explains these domestic processes with a Eurocentric⁵ approach which may trigger hermeneutical injustice.

Referring to discursive and relational constructions of identity representations between the EU and Turkey as the main explanatory factor for the exposition of the major shifts and continuities in EU–Turkey relations (Aydın-Düzgüt and Rumelili 2021), different variants of constructivism operate as the second most operationalised theoretical perspective in the discipline. It should be underlined that, reminiscent of EU studies (Rosamond 2007), the articles featuring constructivist accounts of EU–Turkey relations mainly rely on discursive takes on constructivism rather than the IR-variant constructivism. Europeanization and discursive constructivism are followed by another theoretical perspective with a Eurocentric take. Various types of new institutionalism – such as rational choice-, historical- and sociological institutionalism – that underscore the central role played by institutional norms in enabling or constraining opportunities for action of political actors (March and Olsen 2009) appear in 16 articles. Having been utilised in 13 articles, IR variant of rationalism emerges as a popular, mainstream theoretical toolkit alongside EU integration centered approaches.



The dominance of traditional and up-and-coming theoretical and conceptual approaches to European integration in EU–Turkey relations has two significant implications for EU–Turkey studies. On the one hand, it promotes the ‘central’ constituents in EU–Turkey studies, pushing the discipline closer to EU studies even at times of stagnation prevailing both in bilateral relations and in the scholarly interest in those relations. At the same time, the theoretical ‘centrality’ and Eurocentricism in the discipline undermines the prospects for deepened epistemic diversity in EU–Turkey studies as a result of three key developments.

First, the nearly undivided attention devoted to European integration theories and conceptual perspectives impedes authentic processes of ‘homegrown theorising’ which would engender concepts, ideas, and theories based on local, regional, or domestic first-hand experiences and realities (Kuru 2018). Second, the academic community’s almost exclusive focus on traditional, mainstream theories prevents a meticulous inclusion of the realities of the underprivileged and oppositional communities in the study of EU–Turkey relations and Turkey’s EU accession process, resulting in their epistemic marginalisation and in hermeneutical injustice. Third, as Table 2 demonstrates, while there is a growing trend toward a departure from atheoretical work in EU–Turkey studies over the years, the discipline is still marked by a strong reliance on theoretical or conceptual approaches that are mostly preoccupied with the extent, drivers, and consequences of Turkey’s partial integration with or detachment from EU norms. Indeed, the rise of conflictual dynamics in EU–Turkey relations has prompted the application of novel conceptual approaches such as

(external) differentiated integration or de-Europeanization. These concepts, however, do not conspicuously take into consideration the greater global and regional contexts in which EU–Turkey relations progressively evolve amid Turkey’s waning accession prospects. With a view to augmenting its epistemic diversity in accordance with the emerging layers of bilateral relations, EU–Turkey studies should increasingly draw on the explanatory power of mainstream and unorthodox (IR) theories that are alert to the shifts in the global political order and their implications for the multilateral system. This would make the field epistemically more just.

Table 2 Number of Theoretical/Conceptual Approaches Employed in EU–Turkey Studies in Selected Periods

Theoretical/Conceptual Approach	1996–2004	2005–2012	2013–2020
Constructivism	2	9	7
De-Europeanization	0	0	7
Differentiated integration	0	3	5
Europeanization	0	28	21
Functionalism	0	1	2
Intergovernmentalism	2	1	2
Liberalism	0	2	1
Atheoretical	37	91	30
New institutionalism	0	9	7
Other	1	7	10
Rationalism	0	5	8
Rhetorical action	0	2	0

The distribution and expansion of the issue areas, which relate to the main research topics the respective articles essentially study with regard to the EU–Turkey relationship, follow a pattern akin to the state of theoretical/conceptual considerations in the discipline. As Table 3 shows, in the take-off era (1996–2004), scholarship was predominantly interested in a relatively narrow array of issue areas and, to a large extent, in studying EU–Turkey relations through the thematic lenses of ‘democracy/human rights’ and ‘foreign/security policy’. The golden age of the discipline (2005–2012) coincided with the paradoxical co-existence of somewhat active yet open-ended accession negotiations on the one hand, and intensifying ambiguities over Turkey’s ‘Europeanness’ (Aydın-Düzgit and Rumelili 2021) and the credibility of the EU’s membership incentive (Turhan 2016) on the other. Such developments gave rise to the proliferation of issue areas in the discipline, with greater emphasis on research topics such as ‘populism/Euroscepticism’, ‘identity’, and ‘elite preferences/public opinion’. In the stagnation era of EU–Turkey studies and of the bilateral relationship (2013–2020), the exploration of ‘alternative modes of partnership’ between the EU and Turkey, through the analytical spectacles of differentiated integration, started to come into fashion. On the one hand, our data indicate that the ebbs and flows in EU–Turkey relations that propel Turkey’s fluctuating position along the centre–periphery axis promote a thematic proliferation and consequently an epistemic diversity in the discipline. At the same time, the absence or exceedingly limited presence of non-traditional, avant-garde research topics such as gender policy/equality (three articles),

higher education (two articles), employment policy (one article), or environmental policy (four articles) mirrors the epistemic injustices persevering at the theoretical level of analysis in EU–Turkey studies. While it can be argued that such finding is reinforced by our dataset derived from journals of political science, International Relations, and area studies, rather than journals that operate in the domains of sociology, education, and history, we believe that limited visibility of such avant-garde research topics in mainstream journals is a strong indicator of epistemic injustice because they should cover every aspect of European politics, policy, and polity.

Table 3 Central Issue Areas in EU–Turkey Studies in Selected Periods

Issue Area	1996–2004	2005–2012	2013–2020
Alternative modes of partnership	0	1	5
Civil society	0	6	7
Civil-military relations	0	7	0
Corruption	0	2	2
Democracy/human rights	12	12	12
Economy	4	8	3
Elite preferences/public opinion	5	32	14
Energy/environmental policy	0	3	6
EU enlargement policy	5	11	8
Foreign/security policy	9	27	11
Gender policy/equality	0	1	2
Identity	4	14	5
Migration	1	8	10
Other	0	17	10
Overall domestic transformation	0	3	4
Populism/euroskepticism	2	6	1

CONCLUSION

The multi-layered, decades-long, and intricate relations between the EU and Turkey brought about a rich and growing body of literature on the relationship such that we can contentedly express the presence of 'EU–Turkey studies' as a boutique sub-discipline of EU studies. We systematically mapped the evolution of EU–Turkey studies over 25 years in terms of numerous, mutually reinforcing key indicators of epistemic diversity to disclose the extent of epistemic justice in the discipline.

Our analysis uncovers two key characteristics of EU–Turkey studies. First, the transformation of the discipline has been contingent on the ebbs and flows and critical developments in EU–Turkey relations. The different eras of the discipline – the initial take-off era (1996–2004), the boom era (2005–2012), and the stagnation era (2013–2020) – all feature distinctive trends and traits regarding scholarly output, interest of European/non-Turkish academics in publishing on EU–Turkey relations, and

theoretical/conceptual/thematic foci of the articles. Our data demonstrate a recent trend of significant relevance to the future of the scholarly community: the period 2013–2020, which featured increasing conflictual dynamics in bilateral relations, resulted in diminishing scholarly commitment to studying EU–Turkey relations. As Turkey has moved closer to the periphery along the centre–periphery axis set by the European integration process, EU–Turkey studies has started to suffer from an output-related stasis, especially from 2017 onwards.

Second, EU–Turkey studies accommodates a fairly limited degree of epistemic diversity compared with the multilayered universe of EU–Turkey relations. Our data demonstrate that most of the authorship is based in Turkish institutions, with the contribution of non-Turkish scholars having shrunk drastically throughout the stagnation era of the discipline. While this can be interpreted as an opportunity to recognise and utilise local perspectives and experiences in EU–Turkey studies, limited scholarly interest in EU–Turkey relations in Europe pushes the discipline to the periphery and away from EU studies. It also causes an unbalanced authorship configuration in this (sub-)discipline studying ‘bilateral’ relations, which weakens epistemic diversity.

Collaborative spirit is another important indicator of epistemic diversity. Yet, our research synthesis indicates that co-authorship is yet to become a *modus operandi* in the discipline. Most of the work remains single authored. Co-authorships demonstrate a clear centre–periphery divide, with co-authorship between primarily Turkish scholars and Western/European academics having taken place in only around 26 per cent of all co-authored articles. Segregated networks that impede cooperation with out-group members clearly prevents the scholarly community from adding different perspectives, ideas, and values to the melting pot.

The central, common characteristics of the top-producing outlets in EU–Turkey studies in our sample also unveil the resilient, peripheral traits of the discipline. In all three eras of EU–Turkey studies, articles on EU–Turkey relations have been predominantly published in journals with a specific regional foci and retaining a focus on EU-periphery relations and on the wider neighbourhood. That EU–Turkey relations could not find a prominent place in specialist, flagship journals principally dedicated to studying the EU and European politics obstructs a symmetric distribution of knowledge production on EU–Turkey relations along the centre–periphery axis, thereby generating epistemic injustices.

Conceptual/theoretical toolkits and issue areas, explored as the units of analysis in the sampled articles, function as the key drivers that push the discipline closer to EU studies while at the same time placing limits on the progression of epistemic diversity. Theoretical/conceptual explorations of EU–Turkey relations mostly draw on grand theories or established/up-and-coming conceptual approaches such as (de-)Europeanization and the reflectivist variant of constructivism. Conceptualizing EU–Turkey relations predominantly through Eurocentric lenses impedes homegrown theorising and decreases the epistemic diversity of the discipline, resulting in epistemic marginalisation of the communities who are potentially influenced by EU–Turkey relations but whose voices are not heard. Whilst the discipline has become more diverse in its exploration of issue areas since its launch, we notice the absent or limited focus on non-traditional, avant-garde research topics such as gender policy/equality, higher education, employment, and environmental policy, to name a few.

Our findings indicate a puzzling state in EU–Turkey studies. Both the peripheral and central dynamics featured in the discipline mostly restrict the proliferation of epistemic diversity. Likewise, notwithstanding Turkey’s waning accession prospects, the scholarly community is inclined to study EU–Turkey relations still through the analytical or thematic lens of (dis)integration. Additionally, the profound gender balance in the discipline and the growing visibility of women’s authorship, even in the stagnation era of EU–Turkey studies, have yet to promote the inclusion of non-mainstream topics in the research agenda.

To embrace epistemic justice, EU–Turkey studies should place greater emphasis on the explanatory power of mainstream and unorthodox (IR) theories that bear the potential to scrutinise the relationship within the multilateral system and the global political order in which EU–Turkey relations progressively take place, as well as on unconventional, avant-garde research topics (see e.g., Aybars et al. 2019; Süleymanoğlu-Kürüm and Cin 2021). For instance, in recent years, debates on the European Green Deal and Turkey’s engagement with it became viral in policy-oriented research. Capturing this policy-debate in the academic literature would pave the way for incorporating ecological issues into the discipline and increase epistemic justice as such.

Given that research and teaching are mingled together in the global knowledge society it is of utmost importance to promote epistemic diversity and justice in EU–Turkey studies with a view to disseminating an across-the-board knowledge of EU–Turkey relations to higher education students, who will make up the next generation of professionals, decision-makers, and scholars. The enduring impasse in Turkey’s EU accession negotiations does not undermine the scholarly relevance of EU–Turkey relations, driven as it is by a dense network of interdependencies. EU–Turkey studies is here to stay and the promotion of epistemic diversity would bring the discipline closer to the realities in which EU–Turkey relations are evolving.

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ENDNOTES

¹ Following existing research syntheses and bibliometric analyses (e.g., Bunea and Baumgartner 2014; Maliniak et al. 2013) we did not code the nationality of the authors but their institutional affiliations. Another motivation for the coding of the institutional affiliation has been the fact that epistemic (in)justice and decolonizing knowledge studies habitually refer to geographical location and the institutional context as key drivers of knowledge production processes and characteristics (e.g., Kulpa et al. 2016).

² It is important to note that, following the literature on bibliometric methodology, we have taken Western institutional affiliation as an illustration of Eurocentric taught, but not as its only indicator. We have also looked at the theoretical approaches adopted by the author(s) as revealed in the next section. Yet, the bulk of research on epistemic diversity and plurality as well as decolonizing knowledge also analyzes the citation patterns of the authors in a given discipline, which is not covered in this manuscript and can be subject of future research.

³ Following Bunea and Baumgartner (2014), we address here only the first author's affiliated institution for simplicity and feasibility reasons.

⁴ Female authorship represents an article written by at least one female scholar, while male authorship refers to an article authored by at least one male academic.

⁵ Our coding does not specifically include the labelling of theories as Eurocentric or not. At the same time, the dominance of the grand, conventional theories of European integration in the theoretical/conceptual debates in EU–Turkey studies assuredly pinpoints the Eurocentric features in the discipline. Theories of European integration are habitually shaped by Eurocentric generalizations as these theories have been developed to understand EU-style institutionalization and have been driven by “a concern to explain deviations from the ‘standard’ European case” (Söderbaum 2013: 2).

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