


## OBITUARY

# In memory of E. Fuat Keyman: a leading political scientist with a remarkable imprint in Turkey

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We are still mourning the untimely passing of Professor Emin Fuat Keyman on October 18, 2024, after an honorable and determined struggle against cancer for eight months. He continued working and teaching until his obligatory hospital stay, just ten days before his death. His sudden loss caused grief within the national and international academic community, among his colleagues and students, and even in Turkish society at large. His funeral ceremony held on October 19, 2024 in İstanbul, widely attended by academics, students, journalists, and people he worked with at the İstanbul Policy Center (IPC), was a testimony to the depth and breadth of his impact.

It is incredibly difficult to write an obituary for Fuat Keyman, as one cannot grasp how he managed to accomplish so much in his nearly thirty-five-year-long professional life. Through his numerous books, articles, and public engagements, he made significant contributions to understanding the complexities of Turkish politics and Turkey's role in the global order. He provided both theoretical insights and policy-relevant analysis on Turkey–European Union (EU)–Germany relations, food policy, climate and energy policy, and migration. In addition to his academic work, he frequently contributed to various newspapers (*Radikal*, *Karar*, *Politikayol*, *Perspektif*) and television programs analyzing Turkish politics within a global context.

Fuat Keyman was born in 1956 in Ankara. He graduated from Middle East Technical University's (METU) Department of Political Science and Public Administration in 1981. He earned his MA from METU in 1983 and his PhD from Carleton University, Canada in International Relations and Comparative Politics in 1991 with a dissertation entitled “Mapping International Relations Theory: Beyond Universalism and Objectivism.” He pursued his postdoctoral studies at Wellesley College and Harvard University, Boston, USA, from 1992 to 1994.

He joined Bilkent University's Department of Political Science and Public Administration in 1994. As an undergraduate student at Bilkent at the time, I witnessed firsthand his lasting influence on the students. He left Ankara to work at Koç University, Department of International Relations in 2002. In 2010, he joined Sabancı University and became the director of IPC. Fuat Keyman was one of the most prolific political scientists in Turkey who published extensively in Turkish and English and bequeathed about thirty books, numerous articles, and various policy analyses.

His collaborative spirit was evident in his co-authored works with around thirty scholars, reflecting his high social intelligence and extraordinary ability to bring people together in an inclusive manner.

Keyman was a distinguished scholar whose research encompassed a broad range of subjects within Political Science and International Relations. His work covered globalization, Turkish foreign policy, Turkey-EU relations, conflict resolution, identity politics and citizenship, civil society development, democratization, and urban studies. The central theme throughout his academic work was the question of how to live together with differences in a democratic society and his lifelong ambition was to achieve pluralist, just, and democratic governance in Turkey (Keyman 1995a). His book *Globalization, State, Identity/Difference: Towards a Critical Social Theory of International Relations* (Keyman 1997a) exemplifies this concern, offering a critical perspective on international relations theory through the axes of globalization, state, identity, and difference.

Keyman had a brilliant grasp of the dynamics of international relations, particularly in the context of Turkey's role on the global stage in the post-Arab Spring Middle East and with respect to the EU. He wrote and edited numerous books on Turkey-EU relations, international relations, and Turkish foreign politics (Keyman and Aydın 2004, 2009; Keyman 2006b, Keyman, 2007a, Keyman, 2009, Keyman, 2010b, Keyman, 2012, Keyman, 2016a, Keyman, 2017a, Keyman, 2017b, Keyman, 2019; Keyman and Aydın-Düzgüt 2013; Keyman and Sazak 2015; Aras and Keyman 2017). Most of his works focused on explicating whether globalization and Europeanization processes resulted in the consolidation of democracy in Turkey (Keyman and Öniş 2004; Keyman 2009, 2010c; Aydın-Düzgüt and Keyman 2013; Keyman and Gümüşçü 2014; Müftüler-Baç and Keyman 2015). His objective was to foster pluralist democratic governance (Keyman 2006a; Baban and Keyman 2008; Baban et al. 2018; Fisher-Onar et al. 2018; Balta and Keyman 2022).

In the late 1990s, he argued that the state-centric Turkish modernity was at an impasse and that achieving a democratic society required a reevaluation of modernity and state-society relations in Turkey through a rights-based framework (Keyman 1995b, Keyman, 1997b, Keyman, 2001; İçduygu and Keyman 1998). His unrelenting search for democracy was reflected in works where he examined the challenges and developments in democratic governance. His books, *Türkiye ve Radikal Demokrasi* (Turkey and Radical Democracy; Keyman 1999) and *Global-Yerel Eksende Türkiye* (Turkey at the Global-Local Axis; Keyman and Sarıbay 2000) made major scholarly impacts in the early 2000s.

Fuat Keyman's publications from the early 2000s onwards focused on Turkey's political and economic transformation under the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) by taking into account the impact of globalization processes (Keyman and Koyuncu 2005; Keyman and Öniş 2007). His critique was based on the strong-state tradition, national developmentalism, the organic vision of society, and the republican model of citizenship. He argued that the impacts of globalization in Turkey paved the way for the expression of different identity/recognition claims and citizenship rights, giving rise to different societal visions what we called "alternative models of Turkish modernity" (Keyman and Koyuncu 2005; Keyman 2007c). He addressed the chronic question of modernity, secularism, and democracy, advocating for the public representation of collective identities, including by Kurds and Islamists

(Keyman 2007b, Keyman, 2010a). In that direction, his scholarship also focused on the question of citizenship in Turkey as an identity and democracy issue. He co-authored numerous books and articles on this topic (İçduygu and Keyman 1998; Keyman and İçduygu 2003, 2005, 2013, Keyman and Kancı 2011; Rumelili et al. 2011; Keyman 2013, Rumelili and Keyman 2013, 2016).

His aspiration to understand Turkey's transformation in the early 2000s directed him to focus on Anatolian cities. This interest started with a study he carried out with Ergun Özbudun as part of an international project directed by Peter Berger and Samuel Huntington (Özbudun and Keyman 2002). I am very proud of having had my first research experience as a research assistant in that project. Afterwards Keyman and I carried out a TÜBİTAK (Turkish Scientific and Research Council) study on cities between 2007 and 2009, whose findings were published in two books (Keyman and Koyuncu-Lorasdağı 2010, 2020). He later co-authored another book on cities (Genç et al. 2021) that reported on the findings of a study carried out in 2019. I had the opportunity to collaborate with Keyman once more in a TÜBİTAK research project entitled "Sustainable Urban Policies: The City-Regions in Turkey in Terms of Quality of Life" (2020–2023) that focused on nine city-regions, whose findings will be published in 2025.

Keyman was a passionate believer in the significance and power of civil society for democratic governance (Keyman 2006c, Keyman, 2016b, Keyman, 2018; Keyman and Kancı 2013). He made a lot of effort in civil society activities to foster transparency and pluralism in political life and democracy from the local to the national level. As the director of IPC, his aspiration for democratization in Turkey was institutionalized under the Checks and Balances Network (CBN), with an aim to enhance bottom-up democratization through the collaboration of 263 civil society organizations and 34,000 individuals across the country. He carried out numerous activities with civil society organizations during various crises in the country including the COVID-19 pandemic and the devastating 2023 earthquakes.

Another area of concern for him was the Kurdish issue as a question of expression of identity, which he believed was essential for consolidating democracy in Turkey (Keyman 2013; Keyman and Özkırımlı 2013; Keyman and Köse Badur 2019). He served on the "Council of Wise People" as part of the Peace Process Initiative of the government on the Kurdish issue in 2013. He led a TÜBİTAK research project titled "Making the Peace Process Sustainable: The Social Acceptance of the Peace Process in the Post-Conflict Period" (2017–2019) whose aim was to contribute to the peace process with a focus on the cities of Diyarbakır, Van, Mardin, Tunceli, and Bingöl. The findings of the research produced the co-authored book *Kürt Sorunu: Yerel Dinamikler ve Çatışma Çözümü* (Keyman and Köse Badur 2019).

Fuat Keyman always harbored "vigilant optimism" for the future in Turkey (Keyman 2023). Recently, he developed an interest in the spiritual works of Spinoza and Celaleddin-i Rumi. Borrowing from Türker Kılıç's concepts of "interconnectedness and life-companionship" (Kılıç 2021, 76, 79), he was planning to write a book on the post-Anthropocene age in Turkey, advocating for a life- and nature-centered approach. According to him, this vision may manifest itself in the Baksı Museum in Bayburt (Keyman 2023). Writing a book on Eskişehir was also among his unfinished publication plans. Due to his groundbreaking contributions to urban studies, particularly through his innovative academic work on Anatolian cities, his wax sculpture was placed in the Eskişehir Wax Museum in September 2024.

Fuat Keyman served in various academic and administrative positions. He acted as an editorial and research/scientific advisory board member for numerous academic journals and respected international and national organizations. He was a member of Turkish Science Academy. He was the vice rector responsible for institutional affairs and social responsibility at Sabancı University. As he was an engaged intellectual concerning contemporary political, economic, and social problems such as climate change, conflict resolution, mediation and living together, urbanization and local governance, democratization and institutional reform, his most prominent position at Sabancı University was being the director of IPC and an executive board member of the IPC–Sabancı University–Stiftung Mercator Initiative and SHURA (Multi-Actor Research on Energy Transformation, European Climate Foundation) since 2012. Thanks to his strong leadership, IPC became a hub for junior and senior researchers with a goal to provide analyses and policy recommendations for decision-makers, opinion leaders, and other stakeholders about political issues as well as a center of various activities such as the webinar series “Pandemic and Society”, “What Kind of a World? What Kind of Turkey?” (both initiated in April 2020), and “Turkey at the Crossroads” (since October 2021). Keyman was very proud of these activities, which he believed provided a fertile ground for people, especially students, to follow political issues in Turkey and the world, particularly during the pandemic closures.

Keyman was also a high council member of İnsani Gelişme Vakfı (Human Development Foundation; İNGEV) which works on human development with respect to the United Nations’ sustainable development goals. Keyman was a co-author in some of the publications of İNGEV (see Şeker et al. 2020).

With his never-ending energy, enthusiasm, and exceptional multitasking abilities, Keyman was an inspiration to all and a role model who achieved an admirable and rare balance in his personal, social, and academic life. The key to this balance was his beloved wife, Cara Murphy Keyman, whom he married in 1990. He was a devoted father to his children, Ariana Esma and William Nazif, and a loving brother to his sister, Ayşegül Öztürk. Despite his demanding, travel-intensive, and hectic professional life, he always made it a priority to spend time with his family and close friends.

One of his most distinguishing characteristics was his encouraging and path-opening attitude toward young people. As his assistant at the beginning of my academic career, and later as his colleague for twenty-seven years, I pay homage to his memory. I can never forget his unwavering support and mentorship which was a privilege and fortune of my academic life. Not only among his PhD students but also anyone he touched in the academic community, he left a lasting legacy through his punctuality, collegiality, academic integrity, respect to labor, and generous support for young scholars that will endure for generations. Beyond his academic contributions, Fuat Keyman was a kind and compassionate scholar who profoundly impacted many students and colleagues. He never hesitated to offer his generous support in times of need – whether it was a last-minute reference letter, an unfindable book of his, or a father/brother-like backing. It is an honor for me to express our (his students’ and colleagues’) profound gratitude for his contributions to the academic community and our lives. The indelible mark he left on this world will endure, and the void he left behind is difficult to fill. He will always be remembered for his big warm smile and tender-hearted personality.

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