

An Identity Crisis? The Challenge of Turkey to the European Union

By

Jozsef Frank Pocsi

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Supervisor: Professor Emel Akçali

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To my mother, sister and grandfather for all of their love and support

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ABSTRACT

The EU at present follows two basic formulas of identity formation, a *civic* identity, stressing values and norms on the one hand, and a *historical approach* or a *family of nations* on the other. Possible Turkish accession to the Union, globalization and the influx of immigration and integration has aggravated the EU's concerns, and issues of "identity" have emerged consistently as the major cause of discordance and disharmony. Treating EU identity as the dependent variable, this paper identifies four independent variables that accommodate the aforementioned concerns of EU identity vis-à-vis Turkish accession: (a) Turkey's economic sector (b) political practices (c) geo-political orientation, and (d) Islamic religion and oriental culture. Thus, this paper argues that "culture" forms the fundamental cause of EU's perception of Turkish incompatibility and views of Turkey as the 'other'. The constant expansion of the EU to 27 member states has created tremendous challenges in infusing within the Union a sense of "we-ness". The possibility of Turkish inclusion, the first Muslim majority state, would further complicate EU identity formation.

INTRODUCTION

The boundaries of Europe, and for that matter, the European Union (hereby EU), was never set in stone. The struggle for European inclusion and exclusion is centuries old. Over the last half century, inclusion and exclusion within the EU has also become a matter of heated political debate that has consumed the whole continent. The rapid eastward expansion of the EU in 2004 and again in 2007 has redefined the EU (and indeed European) identity, and raised the possibility of further expansion. Expansion has always been conditional on the famous Copenhagen Criteria, set in 1993 at the Copenhagen European Council. At its core, the benchmarks for accession are a stable state with a functioning rule of law, free and fair elections, multi-party system, and free market economy.¹ However, whether meeting these criteria is enough for accession has been a long-standing question.²

Much of the heated debate of EU's inclusion criteria finds its most prominent expression around the question of Turkey's possible accession to the EU. Turkish membership often created political spectacles among politician, public, media and scholars alike, and the terms of debate has inevitably revolved around the cultural political and economic roots of EU's member states vis-à-vis Turkey. In December 2004, almost two decades after Turkey applied for EU membership, the EU started the procedures of Turkish accession.³ Turkey adopted rigorous reforms in the successive months to finally ensure its elusive accession. EU Commission's *Regular Report on Turkey* recognized Turkey's fulfillment of the Copenhagen conditions and recommended the European Council to hasten accession negotiations.⁴ Seven years have gone by since the report, and yet Turkey's accession to the EU does not seem likely in the near future.

¹Grabbe, Heather. "European Union Conditionality and the Acquis Communautaire." Pg. 257

²Diez, Thomas "Constructing the Self and Changing Others: Reconsidering 'Normative Power Europe'" Pg. 632

³ Schneider, Christina J. "Enlargement process and distributional conflicts: The politics of discriminatory membership in the European Union." Pg. 85

⁴ Sozen, Ahmet. "A Paradigm Shift in Turkish Foreign Policy: Transition and Challenges." Pg. 114

Politicians and Eurocrats have often invoked the question of “identity”, and have repeatedly hinted that Turkish accession might pose a challenge to the idea of Europe as an “ever closer union”.⁵ Fears of Turkey’s accession permanently altering a common European identity are also not uncommon.⁶ Former French President D’Estaing’s remarks back in 2002 is an excellent example of such opposition. He noted that Turkey’s “capital is not in Europe, and 95 percent of its population is outside of Europe. It has a different culture, a different approach, and a different way of life. It is not a European country.”⁷ The accession problem offers a difficult dilemma. On the one hand, Turkey’s pending accession would continue to challenge the legitimacy of EU’s accession policy, on the other, it would inevitably culminate into a question of “identity”, with Turkish identity seen as opposed to that of EU’s.⁸ This is so, because EU’s self-identification and its stress on “Europeanness has been closely linked to geography, politics and culture”.⁹ One scholar noted this apparent confusion, “Indeed as long as the EU remains defined in the way it is now, it cannot avoid confronting the question of what it means to be European”.¹⁰

This also narrows the scope of the debate largely to that of a unique European political culture, because at the heart of the problem lies not only, a question of what constitutes Turkish identity, but also what constitutes a European identity. EU’s characterization of Turkey as the “other” based on history, politics and culture, poses a direct challenge to its own identity as an open, cosmopolitan community, which cherishes its motto of “unity in diversity”, and risks being perceived as an exclusive community, closed off from the world by clinging on to its

⁵ Baran, Zeyno. “Turkey and the Wider Black Sea Region.” Pg. 93

⁶ Dahlman, Carl. “Turkey’s Accession to the European Union: The Geopolitics of Enlargement.” Pg. 560

⁷ Tekin, Ali. “Future of Turkey-EU relations: a civilizational discourse.” Pg. 293.

⁸ Gonzalez Julia. “What Underlies European Policies? Institutional Objectives in the Construction of a European Identity.” Pg. 99

⁹ Guney, Aylin. “The future of Turkey in the European Union.” Pg. 309

¹⁰ Diez, Thomas. “Constructing the Self and Changing Others: Reconsidering ‘Normative Power Europe.’” Pg. 418.

supposed culturally homogeneous superiority.¹¹ Quite expectedly, Europe's opinion has been divided between those who argue that EU's already huge number of member states poses a challenge to construct a common identity, and those who stress Turkish accession would strengthen EU's cherishment of multiculturalism.¹² The arguments against Turkish accession goes even further. Some argue that since many individual member states (and its population) are strongly against Turkish accession, including Turkey into the Union might prompt states like France and Germany to adopt nationalistic policies that would further weaken EU cohesion. The EU at present follows two basic formulas of identity formation, a *civic* identity, stressing values and norms on the one hand, and a *historical approach* or a *family of nations* on the other. Turkey poses a challenge on both counts, which too often indicates a perception of a civilizational gap.¹³ Seeking a solution to this debacle has become a political imperative of the highest order, since the Turkish accession would eventually imply "exactly how it [EU] intends to contribute to the world-wide cultural debate which has been taking place in the twenty-first century, in fact ever since it was started by Huntington."¹⁴

Thus, while fears of the jitters of globalization and the influx of immigration and integration has aggravated EU's concerns, at its core, "identity" has emerged consistently as the major cause of discordance and disharmony. The nature, style and duration of the debate on Turkish accession demonstrate beyond doubt that many EU member states perceive Turkish accession to pose a challenge to European identity. However, what exactly creates this perception of challenge has been far from clear. More often than not, a laundry list of historical conflicts has been cited to be the major cause of obstruction. Leading EU politicians, academics and media outlets have variously portrayed several negative aspects of Turkish accession, without

¹¹ Giannakopoulos, Angelos "What Is To become Of Turkey In Europe? European Identity and Turkey's EU Accession."Pg. 61

¹² Tekin, Ali. "Future of Turkey-EU relations: a civilizational discourse." Pg. 291

¹³ Dahlman, Carl. "Turkey's Accession to the European Union: The Geopolitics of Enlargement." Pg. 554.

¹⁴ Giannakopoulos, Angelos "What Is To become Of Turkey In Europe? European Identity and Turkey's EU Accession."Pg. 61

much analytical rigor. Moreover, most academic work has failed to view Turkey's accession in light of both as a challenge to EU identity and EU's perception of Turkish identity. Yet, the question of identity remains central to EU's Turkish accession criteria, and a significant analysis of identity discourses has been lacking.

This paper follows Emanuel Adler in stressing the fact that, "Knowledge and interpretation are not only compatible with good social science, but are in fact indispensable for understanding and explaining the social construction of international reality."¹⁵ Identity is understood to be the "hermeneutical process of self-clarification, that is, a process of reflection and deliberation in which members reach an understanding of who they are and who they want to be."¹⁶ Building on such a premise, the following paper aims to fill this major lacuna by assessing EU identity and its perception of Turkish identity.

Treating EU identity as the dependent variable, this paper identifies four independent variables that accommodate the aforementioned concerns of EU identity vis-à-vis Turkish accession: (a) Turkey's economic sector (b) political practices (c) geo-political orientation, and (d) Islamic religion and oriental culture. Using the literature of the constructivist theory of International Relations, this paper seeks to disentangle EU's threat perceptions of Turkish identity through an "interpretive understanding of social interaction". By analyzing the discourses (speech acts) of three major heads of states (Angela Merkel of Germany, Nicholas Sarkozy of France, and David Cameron of Great Britain), the paper tries to capture the ontological basis of European identity in relations to potential Turkish accession.¹⁷ Since identity cannot be quantified with quantitative social science methodologies, the analysis of discourses as the paper's methodological basis is justified. It would allow for the understanding of "how textual [and speeches] and social processes are intrinsically connected and to describe in specific

¹⁵ Adler, Emanuel. "Seizing the Middle Ground: Constructivism in World Politics." Pg. 348

¹⁶ Erksen, Erik and Fossum, John. "Europe in Search of Legitimacy: Strategies of Legitimation Assessed." Pg. 443

¹⁷ Constructivists have generally adopted this research methodology from Max Weber. See for example, Adler, Pg. 166

contexts, the implications of this connection for the way we think and act in the contemporary world.”¹⁸

Following a Weberian research model, and using constructivism as a meta-discourse, the research reveals that concerns of Turkish economics, geography and politics are symptoms, rather than the cause of EU’s threat perceptions. Ultimately, this paper seeks to explain how the inter-subjective meaning of EU’s so-called “common identity” among its member states has been largely created by its insistence of fundamental dichotomy with the Turkish culture (and its Islamic history). Thus, this paper argues that “culture” forms the fundamental cause of EU’s perception of Turkish incompatibility. The constant expansion of the EU to 27 member states has created tremendous challenges in infusing within the Union a sense of “we-ness”. The possibility of Turkish inclusion, the first Muslim majority state, would further complicate EU identity formation.

The paper concludes with the prediction of the most-likely future scenarios of the EU-Turkish relations within the context of its accession criteria. The paper notes that EU’s inclusion of Turkey in the future would depend not on the Copenhagen Criteria (most of which Turkey already fulfills) but on the deconstruction of the rhetoric of “identity” within the EU from an ideational to a cosmopolitan conception. This research contributes to the literature of EU identity, both from within and from the outside, by analyzing the case of Turkey as EU’s new “other”. It also expands on the current understandings of how Turkey poses a challenge to EU collective identity.

Chapter 1 provides a literature review of identity in international relations, justifying its development within the constructivist camp to be the most appropriate for the purpose of EU-Turkey accession issue. More specifically, this chapter would deal with the EU’s efforts of constructing an overarching identity under the banner of “unity in diversity”, through the

¹⁸ Jones, Allen and Clark, Julian. “Europeanisation and Discourse Building: The European Commission, European Narratives and European Neighbourhood Policy.” Pg. 547

practice of defining identity as either civic or historical approaches. Chapter 2 shifts the focus to Turkey and assesses the dependent variable (EU's identity) vis-à-vis Turkey through the three identified independent variables, Turkish politics, geography and culture. Dismissing claims of politics or geography as being the cause of hindrance to Turkey's mission of EU accession, the chapter narrows down the causal relation to Turkey's cultural perceptions in Europe. To further capture this causal mechanism. Chapter 3 analyses discourses on Turkish identity by Merkel, Sarkozy and Cameron through a constructivist lens and demonstrate how culture poses to be biggest hindrance. The chapter concludes by noting how the EU has put itself in a *dammned if you do, dammed if you don't dilemma* in respect to Turkish accession. On the one hand, its inclusion risks EU's identity devolution, on the other the EU risks making its Copenhagen Criteria a bare declaration, without legitimacy. The concluding chapter summarizes the findings, projects most likely future scenarios, and suggests further research in this field by applying the framework of societal security.

CHAPTER 1—UNITY IN DIVERSITY

1.1 Identity and Constructivism

Identity has never really been at the center of the focus for international relations. Traditional IR theories of classical realism, neorealism, and its variants, offensive and defensive realism focus mainly on concepts of hard power, state interests, systemic constraints, balance of power and balance of threats. Material objectives form the core of these theories where states inhabit an “anarchic” system and try to maximize their advantage. These theories largely ignore the role of identity by refusing to acknowledge any substantial ground for ontological or epistemological debates.¹⁹ The scope of identity has been largely curved out by the advent of the constructivists into the field of IR. By attempting to capture how “material, subjective and intersubjective worlds interact in the social construction of reality”, constructivists stress on identity formation and patterns of identity diffusion becomes crucial for their theoretical import to this field.²⁰

Since “anarchy is what you make of it”, how states form identities become a moot question for the constructivists.²¹ Thus, this camp argues for the importance of the processes of interactions among human beings, languages, and cognitive structures that eventually shape the material world.²² However, such processes of interaction, and its eventual manifestation in cognitive experiences are learned, hence constructed. These are not fixed a-priori entities and therefore can be reconstructed and de-constructed over time and space. In short, constructivists focus on intersubjective beliefs.²³ Identity is thus treated as a “constructed concept”, which

¹⁹ Adler, Emanuel. “Seizing the Middle Ground: Constructivism in World Politics.” Pg. 321

²⁰ Addler, Emanuel Pg. 330 and Jackson.” “Introduction to International Relations.” Pg. 164

²¹ Paraphrasing Wendt. “Anarchy is What make of it”

²² Adler, Emanuel. “Seizing the Middle Ground: Constructivism in World Politics.” Pg. 322 Jackson
“Introduction to International Relations.” Pg. 165

²³ Jackson Pg. 176

forms the cement that creates other concepts of “we” vis-à-vis the “others”.²⁴ Both self-identification and “othering” is in turn, dependent on “*norms* of behavior embedded in the international society”²⁵ (emphasis added). It is these so called norms that shape “national policies by ‘teaching’ states what their interests should be.”²⁶

However, for Constructivists, norms are operationalized in the real world by fostering a sense of “we-feeling” among the group members of a nation or state, which ensures solidarity, unity and trust. This in turn creates the national and/or state identity over time.²⁷ However, these are not static perceptions, and state identity alters over time, depending on the ideological outlook of both the observers and the state in question.²⁸ Thus, the process of self-identification, which in turn is related to state formation (ensuring its solidarity and stability), is thus inextricably linked with the process of “othering”. As Alexander Wendt notes, the “daily life of international politics is an ongoing process of states taking identities in relations to Others, casting them into corresponding countries identities, and playing out the result.”²⁹

Nevertheless, since identity is seldom created without also constructing an “other”, what states stand for is often judged by what they do not.³⁰ Thus, “the process whereby a state [or a group of states] defines its interests precisely and goes about satisfying them depends partially on its notion of self in relation to others”.³¹ In a collective of groups (of states, for example, the EU) this implies that identity becomes the marker through which the similarity among some actors is highlighted and differences with others magnified.³² Some authors have argued that since both

²⁴Adler,Emanuel. Pg. 324, Waever, Ole et al., Identity, Migration and the New Security Agenda in Europe. Pg. 17 and Lebow, Richard, “Identity and International Relations.” Pg. 474

²⁵ Jackson, “Introduction to International Relations.” Pg. 169

²⁶ Ibid. Pg. 196

²⁷ Erkisen, Erik and Fossum, John. “Europe in Search of Legitimacy: Strategies of Legitimation Assessed.” Pg. 448

²⁸ See footnote 14, Yerke, Yusuf. “Identity in International Relations: Turkey’s proactive Middle Eastern policy since 2002.” Pg. 4

²⁹ Alexander Wendt cited in Zehfuss Maja, “Constructivism and Identity: A Dangerous Liaison.” Pg. 319

³⁰ Lebow, Richard. Pg. 473

³¹ Zehfuss Maja, “Constructivism and Identity: A Dangerous Liaison.” Pg. 322

³² Yerke, Yusuf. “Identity in International Relations: Turkey’s proactive Middle Eastern policy since 2002.” Pg. 3

the “us” and the “others” are essentially constructions of discourses through the interaction of norms, it is also conceivable, and indeed viable, that the notion of “others” can be altered and broadened, and that in fact, the relationship between them is quite plastic.³³ Such views are easily ignored by other scholars since social group cohesion is always maintained by the demarcation of a boundary.³⁴ Constructivists offer a different assessment. They claim that repeated social interaction can help transform perceptions of identity. As Wendt noted, “Identities maybe hard to change, but they are not carved in stone.”³⁵ The following section assesses EU identity (within the context of European identity in general) and seeks to understand the sources of its identity formation in historical context.

1.2 EU's identity over the years

The EU's beginning was humble, and it was based on practical economic principles between western states badly devastated by war. It was economics, politics, and the question of Germany in a looming era of a pending Cold War tension that the countries came together to create vehicles of growth, which started with the European Coal and Steel Community. When baby steps towards political integration failed, Robert Schuman famously called for alternative routes of reconciliation and agreement: economic integration and creation of the European Defense Force. The Spaak Report of 1957 soon led to the Treaty of Rome, which established the European Economic Community and the EURATOM, and the Common Market. Crude national calculations and an overall attempt to prevent farther devastation were the chief guiding principles. EU's founding fathers did not intend to create an EU identity of any sort that would have fostered a sense of extra-national unity among the European countries.³⁶

However, some authors note that founding leaders like Schuman, Adenauer and De Gasperi were all Christian Democrats, who also tried to build an interdependent supranational

³³ Lebow, Richard. “Identity and International Relations.” Pg. 473

³⁴ Zehfuss, Maja. “Constructivism and Identity: A Dangerous Liaison.” Pg. 322

³⁵ Ibid Pg. 319

³⁶ Guibernau, Montserrat. “The birth of a united Europe: on why the EU has generated a ‘non-emotional’ identity.” Pg. 306

organization based on Catholic ideals of social justice.³⁷ Yet, EU always lacked a sense of identity, contends other authors, who describe it as a “non-emotional” entity, precisely because the nation-states within EU originally “sought to preserve their own nations and identities associated with them.”³⁸ This view of the EU as purely an inter-governmental entity continued during the following decades and saw increasing integration of the continent. However, since the fall of Communism and the Maastricht Treaty, two additional dimensions became crucial to EU’s relevance in historically changing times, first, a need for a political unity by defining its borders, and secondly increasing EU’s political legitimacy in the Continent.³⁹

Thus, the EU’s so-called legitimacy came to be seen as conditional on strengthening democratic principles and practices, strengthening a common education and cultural heritage and encouraging social and economic cohesion.⁴⁰ Since “the point of departure of most discussions on European identity is the idea that a political community needs a common set of values and references to ensure its coherence, to guide its actions and to endow these with legitimacy and meaning”, this change necessitated the creation of a common EU identity over time.⁴¹

This intergovernmentalist approach, however, has not meant more harmony among the states. Rather, some scholars point out that this new reconceptualization broke the original scope of the EU, which stressed that “nations should be prepared to renounce its own self-interest in order to succeed as a community of nations”.⁴² Thus, the new rhetoric of cooperation has come at the cost of a renewed focus by member states on national interests. The formation of EU identity is thus not a result of more cooperation among the member states, rather, as this paper later demonstrates, an attempt at building a cohesive identity that would safeguard member state interests vis-à-vis external threats.

³⁷Ibid. Pg. 309

³⁸ Ibid. Pg. 313

³⁹www.euroactiv.com

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹Giannakopoulos, Angelos. “What Is To become Of Turkey In Europe? European Identity and Turkey’s EU Accession.” Pg.63

⁴²Guibernau, Montserrat. Pg. 310.

EU identity essentially is often defined by “what it is not”, demarcating countries that pose significant challenges (in this case Turkey) as the incompatible “other” vis-à-vis “progressive European integration process”.⁴³ This particular understanding of the EU also holds that “even today it is fair to speak about Europe as an elite construction, a top-down project designed and carried out by selected intellectuals and political leaders”.⁴⁴

The EU was made possible by states coming together to share their common interests, which often meant giving up on parts of state sovereignty. However, for the EU to sustain itself, three fundamental principles always needs fulfillment. First, the cost of lost sovereignty must be outweighed by gains of being in the Union. Second, national interests among member states must always converge enough so that the advantages of the Union are maintained. Third, large powerful states always regained the authority to apply strict limits to processes of integration and or membership inclusion.⁴⁵ This requires the EU to maintain a common identity that would consciously be fostered over time, lacking which, a fissure between “complex processes [of] a European identity that is distinct from (and at times surely conflicting with) national identities” might emerge.⁴⁶ Thus, it seems conceivable why “the EU needs an ‘affective glue’ (Petersson, 2001, p. 21), a sense of ‘cultural affinity’ (Ham, 2000) in order to keep the integrated parts (the peoples and member states of the enlarged unions) together, and to sustain legitimacy for the EU institutions.”⁴⁷

In short, it becomes clear that while over the first decades since it came into existence, the EU lacked any sense of common identity, since the Treaty of Maastricht, a new political imperative to create a shared EU identity became prominent. At present, the EU’s cohesive rhetoric depends largely on a “shared identity” in a way that it serves “a diverse range of societal

⁴³ Giannakopoulos, Angelos. “What Is To become Of Turkey In Europe?European Identity and Turkey’s EU Accession.” Pg. 59

⁴⁴, Giannakopoulos, Angelos. “What Is To become Of Turkey In Europe?European Identity and Turkey’s EU Accession.” Pg. 303

⁴⁵Gordon, Phillip. “Europe’s Uncommon Foreign Policy.” Pg. 80

⁴⁶(Joas and Wiegandt, 2005) in Challand, Benoit. “From Hammer and Sickle to Star and Crescent: the Question of Religion for European Identity and a Political Europe.” Pg. 66

⁴⁷Hellström, Anders. “Beyond Space: Border Making in European Integration, the Case of Ireland.”

interests.⁴⁸ However, since the EU's "common historical identity...hardly exists" and geographic boundaries have always been fuzzy, the brunt of this identity revolves around the aspirations of its member states' "shared consciousness of belonging to an economic and political space defined by capitalism, social welfare, liberal democracy, respect for human rights, freedom and rule of law."⁴⁹ Hence, the whole exercise of "Europeanization" becomes an exercise of acquiring legitimacy and meaning.⁵⁰ This in turn, finds expression through the "intersubjective and dialogic process for the constitution of the 'collective's own self'".⁵¹ The following section would discuss how EU identity is formed under the banner of "unity in diversity" by focusing on two main paths: the normative approach and the civic approach.

1.3 EU as a Family of Nations

Constructivists hold that any form of institutions (especially the EU) is formed based on collective identities.⁵² At the center of this identity has been EU's motto of "unity in diversity". However, with the adoption of EU's Constitutional and Lisbon Treaties and further prospects of enlargement, and especially the prospects of Turkish accession, questions about what exactly connotes this phrase has reemerged.⁵³ Article 151 of TEC declares, "In accordance with the principle of 'unity in diversity', the Union shall promote the diversity of its cultures, while "bringing the common cultural heritage to the fore".⁵⁴ However, needless to say, such overarching declarations are vague and can be interpreted according to the interests of the parties involved. Thus, while having 27 member states require adoption of toleration to diversity, and as such can be seen as "Europe's only real cultural value", critics claim that the unity behind

⁴⁸ Erksen, Erik and Fossum, John. "Europe in Search of Legitimacy: Strategies of Legitimation Assessed." Quotes Miller 1995. Pg. 437

⁴⁹ Giannakopoulos, Angelos. "What Is To become Of Turkey In Europe? European Identity and Turkey's EU Accession." Pg. 312. And Giannakopoulos, Angelos. "What Is To become Of Turkey In Europe? European Identity and Turkey's EU Accession." Pg. 66

⁵⁰ Jones, Allen and Clark, Julian. "Europeanisation and Discourse Building: The European Commission, European Narratives and European Neighbourhood Policy." Pg. 545

⁵¹ Giannakopoulos, Angelos. "What Is To become Of Turkey In Europe? European Identity and Turkey's EU Accession." Pg. 69

⁵² Adler, Emanuel. Pg. 322

⁵³ www.euroactiv.com

⁵⁴ Article 151, TEC

the diversity breaks down when one compares either historical or geographic cleavages among the nation states.⁵⁵

Unity among a group is formed through the development of collective “actions which fulfill a commitment about what ‘we’ have been, who we are now, and who or what we wish to be in the future.”⁵⁶ This fulfillment of commitment and the sharing of “we-ness” have proved quite problematic for Europe. Despite having a strong shared history of Christian heritage, it has remained problematic to define Europe through a purely historical and cultural lens.⁵⁷ This has largely been the case because of the insistence of the Communitarians for a European “thick identity” and the necessity to define its borders with specifics. They argue that Europe emerged from the Judeo-Christian European traditions, and common linkages developed through revolutions in art, architecture, science, philosophy and as such forms a “family of nations”.

Religious factors are thus seen to be interacting with the EU integration process quite intimately, since religious factors are assumed to represent the cultural fabric of European identity.⁵⁸ Culturally different societies like Turkey are seen as the “outsider”.⁵⁹ At the same time, the cleavages that divide the EU member states historically are “forgotten” through identity politics, “by recreating some direct links to a distant past, to an Enlightened Europe, to a Christian Europe, or even to a Greco-Roman Europe, in order to give Europe its own centre of gravity and to project historical continuities.”⁶⁰

Thus, a constructed identity is adopted through repetition and remembrance of a selective recollection of historical facts. As one author rightly notes, “All in all, the construction of

⁵⁵ Bayka, Sanem. “Unity in Diversity? The Challenge of Diversity for the European Political Identity, Legitimacy and Democratic Governance: Turkey’s EU Membership as the Ultimate Test Case.” Pg. 57 And Guibernau, Montserrat. Pg. 312

⁵⁶ Brent J. Steele, ‘Ideals that were really never in our possession’: Torture, Honor and US Identity.”Pg. 245

⁵⁷ Jacobs, Dirk “European identity: construct, fact and fiction.” Pg 13. Erksen, Erik and Fossum, Pg. 450

⁵⁸ (Ventura, 2001, pp. 121–22) in Pastorelli, Sabrina. “The European Union and New Religious Movements.” Pg. 194

⁵⁹ www.euroactiv.com, www.euroactiv.com

⁶⁰ Howard-Hassmann, Rhoda. “Identity, Empathy and International Relations.” Pg. 33 and Challand, Beniot. Pg. 75 and Doe, Norman. “Towards a ‘Common Law’ on Religion in the European Union. “

European identity is not so much a question of overcoming nationalisms as of integrating them through their transformation.”⁶¹ However, this practice of a common heritage in history and religion has been reinforced, and at the same time been called into question, by the possibility of Turkish accession into the EU. Critics point out that the EU often adopts a “Euro-nationalism” of sorts that creates incentives to adopt exclusionary policies and too often ignores the plurality of religious, cultural and historical values that it has to deal with.⁶² Many argue that a “democratic community of European citizens cannot be constituted on the basis of a ‘fictitious’ historical identity, but rather only through shared ‘future projections’ of people with different cultures, who are conscious of their task to determine the course of history together.”⁶³

1.4 EU's civic identity

Alternative to its shared historical approach of forming a common identity, the EU has also cherished its civic identity since its inception that has boasted a Union based on a common political culture, universal principles of democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. This civic identity of Europe seeks to separate the political realm with those of cultural identities and religious beliefs, arguing that the latter should be relegated and confined to the private lives of citizens.⁶⁴ In place of using religious arguments of shared past, this approach cultivates a “soft power” (normative power) image of Europe, insisting on its rigorous norms of highest democratic order. Thus, the civic model of identity seeks to foster unity in diversity through the cherishing of similar political practices, and limiting the realm of community to politics.⁶⁵

The Copenhagen criteria set the political, economic and administrative standards of what the EU stands for.⁶⁶ These ideals, principles and norms become embedded with EU's identity by

⁶¹ Gonzalez, Julia. Pg. 140

⁶² www.euroactiv.com also Diez, Thomas. “Expanding Europe: The Ethics of EU-Turkey Relations.” Pg. 419.

⁶³ Giannakopoulos, Angelos. Pg. 62

⁶⁴ www.euroactiv.com

⁶⁵ www.euroactiv.com

⁶⁶ Diez Thomas. “Constructing the Self and Changing Others: Reconsidering ‘Normative Power Europe’”

articulation and repetition by Eurocrats.⁶⁷ The EU also proudly boasts the so-called European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, which are also seen as representative of core EU values. For example, the Preamble of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights declares:

The peoples of Europe, in creating an ever closer union among them, are resolved to share a peaceful future based on common values. Conscious of its spiritual and moral heritage, the Union is founded on the indivisible, universal values of human dignity, freedom, equality and solidarity; it is based on the principles of democracy and the rule of law. It places the individual at the heart of its activities, by establishing the citizenship of the Union and by creating an area of freedom, security and justice.”⁶⁸

These declarations of fundamental rights sets the benchmark for all EU states, based on a common political culture, which “guarantees the coexistence of different ways of life...”⁶⁹ EU’s long political battle to abolish the death penalty, and in particular, even impinging on state sovereignty to ensure compliance, serves as an excellent case in point.⁷⁰ Much of this strength of the EU also derives from the fact it was built upon a concept of “pooling of sovereignty” among member states.⁷¹ Therefore, its “imposition” of normative values on member states or exclusion of others due to the failure of meeting these criteria “is not in itself a contradiction, but rather a confirmation, of the EU as a normative power.”⁷² Thus, the EU’s appeal as a normative power can be identified as a discursive construction in assessing statements and speeches of Eurocrats in the Council, Commission and Parliament.⁷³ Because human rights came to be seen as synonymous to social and indeed national identity of democratic nations, the issue of human rights has often formed a large part of this discursive construction.⁷⁴

However, as the paper noted in the Introduction, the normative power of Europe also

⁶⁷ Jones, Alun and Clark, Julian. “Europeanisation and Discourse Building.” Pg. 553

⁶⁸ Gonzalez Julia. Pg. 174.

⁶⁹(these are constitutional patriots) Ibid. pg.137

⁷⁰ Diez, Thomas. “Constructing the Self and Changing Others: Reconsidering ‘Normative Power Europe.’” Pg. 618-19.

⁷¹ See Footnote 20, in Ibid.

⁷² Ibid. 626

⁷³ Ibid. Pg. 620

⁷⁴ Adler, Emanuel. “Seizing the Middle Ground: Constructivism in World Politics.” Pg. 340

thrives by articulating, reinforcing and reifying the self/other divide, in this case Turkish identity vis-à-vis the EU.⁷⁵ Moreover, critics point out that human rights and democracy are not universal a-priori concepts, but rather are socially constructed and its constitutive elements vary across space and time, according to respective society's ideological dispositions. Cultural predispositions ingrain within each individual, group and nation the concepts of human rights, freedom, democracy, etc., and hence the eradication of religion and culture to the realm of private lives is not only impossible, but also self-defeating.⁷⁶

This paper presented evidence that while EU refuses to represent any single model of “democracy”, and furthermore insists on “unity in diversity” as one of the strengths of its union, nonetheless, the formation of European political identity has been a complex process that has called into question EU's internal legitimacy and external policy.⁷⁷ The self-identification of the EU, by consciously constructing the image of the “other” in order to compensate its own lack of internal cohesion, has posed a challenge to its own rhetoric of “identity”. In the following pages this paper would seek to show that at the core of this issue lies EU's “assumption that there has always been a different way of life between East and West, between the full and half European....between real Europeans, and those caught in a nether world between the European and Asian.”⁷⁸

⁷⁵ Diez, Thomas. “Constructing the Self and Changing Others: Reconsidering ‘Normative Power Europe.’” *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, Pg. 634

⁷⁶ www.Euroactiv.com

⁷⁷ Grabbe, Heather. “European Union Conditionality and the *Acquis Communautaire*.” Pg. 250 and Challand, Benoit. “From Hammer and Sickle to Star and Crescent: the Question of Religion for European Identity and a Political Europe.” Pg. 67

⁷⁸ Guibernau, Montserrat. “The birth of a united Europe: on why the EU has generated a ‘non-emotional’ identity.” Pg. 302

CHAPTER 2—EU’S PERCEPTION OF TURKEY

This Chapter provides a brief background of Turkish history concerning democracy, politics and human rights issues, and then assesses the four identified independent variables of Turkish state as possible causes of EU’s opposition: geography, politics, economics and culture. By seeking to unravel what exactly constitutes a challenge to Turkish accession, the paper dismisses the first three variables as symptoms, rather than causes of EU contention. Chapter 3 picks up the last variable, culture, and conducts an analysis of discourse to capture the ontological basis of EU threat perceptions.

2.1 Turkish identity through history

Since the days of Ottoman Empire’s alliance with the European System in 1856, Turkey has always tried to be closely associated with Europe politically. Turkey’s modernization has shared with Europe many historical roots, despite perceptions to the contrary.⁷⁹ Since its modernization policy of 1923, Turkey has consistently taken steps to maintain a close alliance with Europe and emulate European practices.⁸⁰ Western legal systems were set up and religious institutions were pushed back from their previously enjoyed influence.⁸¹ Ruling elites openly adopted western style modernity.⁸² Over the course of most of the 20th century, Turkey also maintained its western oriented policies. It joined the organization of Economic Cooperation and Development in 1948, the Council of Europe in 1949, kept its alliance with the West during the Cold War, especially with NATO, since joining in 1952.⁸³ By 1959, Turkey also applied for its membership in the European Economic Community, a principle reason behind which “was to fulfill one of the requirements of westernization project.”⁸⁴ Soon afterwards, in 1963, this

⁷⁹ Dahlman, Carl. “Turkey’s Accession to the European Union: The Geopolitics of Enlargement.” Pg. 554

⁸⁰ Phillips, David. “Turkey’s Dreams of Accession.” Pg. 88

⁸¹ Cakmak, Cenap. “Human Rights, The European Union and Turkey.” Pg. 63

⁸² Keyman, E.F. and Kanci, Tuba. “A tale of ambiguity: citizenship, nationalism and democracy in Turkey.” Pg. 320

⁸³ Dahlman, Carl. “Turkey’s Accession to the European Union: The Geopolitics of Enlargement.” Pg. 554

⁸⁴ Cakmak, Cenap. “Human Rights, The European Union and Turkey.” Alternatives Pg. 63

process culminated into the Turkish associate membership of the European Community by signing the so-called “Ankara Agreements”.⁸⁵ Walter Hallstein, the EEC Commission President famously remarked that from that moment in history, “Turkey is part of Europe.” No reactions of Turkish non-Europeanness were noticeable to that declaration.⁸⁶ In fact, Turkish Accession was an explicit goal from the very beginning, as was the noted in Article 28 of the Association:

As soon as the operation of the Agreement has advanced far enough to justify envisaging full acceptance by Turkey of the obligations arising out of the Treaty establishing the Community, the Contracting Parties shall examine the possibility of the accession of Turkey to the Community.⁸⁷

In 1987, Turkey applied for full membership, which was rejected overwhelmingly by the member states of the EC. The underdeveloped economy seemed to be the main cause of concern.⁸⁸ However, over the next three decades, the Turkish economy has grown tremendously and Turkey’s application was obstructed over a flurry of new concerns. Fears of immigration, cultural dissociation, undemocratic domestic political practices, human rights records, problems of Cyprus, and Kurdish minority disputes has clearly demonstrated that from 1980 onwards, “some community members were clearly averse to accepting a very large and poor Muslim country” into the Community.⁸⁹ This opposition has not stemmed, rather, as one author noted:

the European debate on ‘(re)locating’ Turkey with respect to Europe—geographically, economically, politically, and civilisationally—has not been finalized. The opposition to the Turkish entry has been quite noteworthy since the 1999 Helsinki Summit, especially for its fast evolving trajectory.⁹⁰

This apparent stalemate of Turkey’s accession agenda, some scholars insist, would have to be understood in the historical context of EU-Turkish relations. Although Turkish political alignment with Brussels and Washington is often cited as its compatibility with European political culture, this analysis misses a fundamental point. There always remained and will remain

⁸⁵ Ucer, Elif. “Turkey’s accession to the European Union.” Pg. 198

⁸⁶ Tekin, Ali. “Future of Turkey-EU relations: a civilizational discourse.” Pg. 287

⁸⁷ Verney, Susanna. “National identity and political change on Turkey’s road to EU membership.” Pg. 213,

⁸⁸ Ucer, Elif. “Turkey’s accession to the European Union.” Pg. 198

⁸⁹ Dahlman, Carl. “Turkey’s Accession to the European Union: The Geopolitics of Enlargement.” Pg. 556

⁹⁰ Tekin, Ali. “Future of Turkey-EU relations: a civilizational discourse.” Pg. 288

a perception of Turkey as an “outsider”, and despite all the political connections, Turkish integration is overwhelmingly perceived by most European citizens to be incompatible. At its core, then, Turkish accession seems to be a matter of perception of identity.⁹¹ This perception insists that a state cannot be part of a chiefly European alliance if it lacks “constitutive aspects of Western identity”, and since “Turkey is not Christian, does not share Europe’s Greco Roman cultural and historical heritage, and is not geographically located on the European continent”, it cannot ever be a part of Europe.⁹² Thus, a numbing conviction that efforts at constructing a common European identity will fail if EU’s agenda is based on multiculturalism, rather than “on what has united the peoples of Europe for two millennia” is hard to ignore.⁹³ The following section tries to analyze four most commonly cited reasons for Turkey’s accession opposition by the EU. The analysis proceeds to show that Turkish cultural identity underlies each of these factors: economics, politics, geography and culture.

2.2 Analyzing the Independent Variable

It has already been noted in the previous section how Turkey has historically tried to be a part of the European state within the context of political, social, economic, cultural issues. This has not been prompted by Turkey’s external threat concerns (and hence does not necessarily fit into a neorealist balance of power/balance of threat framework of analysis), but rather has been a conscious and consistent political choice.⁹⁴ Yet EU’s perceptions of Turkey has been uncompromising in its insistence of a fundamental disconnect between them.

2.2.1 Economics

Economic implications of Turkish accession to the EU have long prompted many EU member states to be wary of Turkey’s membership. For example, Turkey was outright rejected

⁹¹ Kramer, Heinz. “Turkey and the EU: The Eu’s Perspective. Pg. 24

⁹² Oguzlu, Tarik & Kibaroglu, Mustafa. “Is the Westernization Process Losing Pace in Turkey: Who’s to Blame?” Pg. 580-581

⁹³ Grigoriadis, Ioannis. “ Turkey’s EU Membership Debate and the Copenhagen Summit.” Grigoriadis, Ioannis. “ Turkey’s EU Membership Debate and the Copenhagen Summit.”Pg. 3

⁹⁴ Ucer, Elif. “Turkey’s accession to the European Union.” Pg. 198

from EC full membership in 1987 because of its poor economy. Although Turkey was initially seen as a poor country in the late 20th century, by 1996 it was already admitted into EU's Customs Union. Ever since then Turkey has shown great vitality of growth and has better weathered storms of globalization than many other EU member states. With the turn of the last century, Turkey has been a thriving economy with a rapidly rising GDP. Turkey's economy is the 16th largest in the world, sixth largest in Europe. Its economy is projected to become the ninth largest in the world and second largest in Europe by year 2050.⁹⁵ Even the EU commission recognized Turkey's accomplishments at lowering inflation and attracting businesses even during times of regional economic shocks.⁹⁶ David Cameron noted the country's impressive record:

I ask myself this: which European country grew at 11% at the start of this year? Which European country will be the second fastest growing economy in the world by 2017? Which country in Europe has more young people than any of the 27 countries of the European Union? Which country in Europe is our number one manufacturer of televisions and second only to China in the world in construction and in contracting?⁹⁷

It another speech he further expanded on his views:

The case for Turkish membership of the European Union, in my view, is clearer than ever for increased economic prosperity, for a bigger market for our goods and services, for more energy security and for real benefits for the EU's long-term stability.⁹⁸

Yet, as the next chapter illustrates, not only does Cameron's congratulatory tone changes beyond having Turkey as purely an economic partner, its economy also comes to be seen as a threat in respect to free labor market. Other EU politicians have gone further and repeatedly used the rhetoric of a disjuncture of Turkish economy vis-à-vis EU member states in order to justify challenges of Turkish inclusion. Turkish population, right behind Germany (but having a higher birth rate), and predicted to reach 100 million in three more decades, is unwisely quoted

⁹⁵ Grice, Andrew. "Turkey must be welcome in EU, insists Cameron."

⁹⁶ European Commission, 2004a

⁹⁷ Tabiki Türkiye.cameron "<http://www.number10.gov.uk/news/speeches-and-transcripts/2010/07/pms-speech-in-turkey-53869>

⁹⁸ Joint Press conference with British prime minister) <http://www.number10.gov.uk/news/speeches-and-transcripts/2011/02/pms-speech-at-munich-security-conference-60293>

as posing a huge challenge by placing “significant burdens on an EU already reeling from the demands posed by admitting much smaller countries from Central and Eastern Europe.”⁹⁹ In fact, some observe that Turkey’s very acceptance to the Custom’s Union in 1996 was a strategy to delay its full membership. On the one hand, the EU keeps good relations with Turkey’s pro-European parties; on the other, they try to curb the influence of Islamist parties within the country.¹⁰⁰

Another major contention about Turkish economy has been the fears of immigration influx into the EU member states. Despite excellent economic reasons for allowing Turkish immigration into the heartland, politicians use speeches to instill fears of immigration. Thus even though ““Turkey with its young, dynamic and qualified labor force has the ability to solve problems of the European Union”, Angela Merkel, the Chancellor of Germany expressed her concern: “we are firmly convinced that Turkey’s membership would overtax the EU economically and socially and endanger the process of European integration.” ¹⁰¹This paper argues that the fear of economic inclusion of Turkey through its fear of the influx of labor immigrants swamping European markets, destabilizing factors on EU economy and other concerns have more to do with more basic ideational typification through popular discourse than actual economic rationale.

2.2.2 Turkish Political practices

Turkey boasts itself to be a democratic political system, which implies that it espouses the rule of law, protects human rights, encourages religious tolerance, and inhabits a market economy.¹⁰²

Turkey has gone through pains to adopt the Copenhagen criteria and revolutionized its political system in order to bring about substantial changes. However, critics argue that its

⁹⁹Larrabee S. F., & Lesser, I. O. (2003). *Turkish Foreign Policy in an Age of Uncertainty*. Pg. 31

¹⁰⁰ Dahlman, Carl. “Turkey’s Accession to the European Union: The Geopolitics of Enlargement.” Pg. 556

¹⁰¹ Turkey’s secretariat general for the European Union Affairs, and merkel, Bridging the Bosphorus Peter Goodspeed

¹⁰² Acklai, Emel. “EU, Political Islam and Polarization of Turkish Society.” Pg 40.

implementation of actual policies that is up to the standards of EU practices within its member states, has been limited.¹⁰³ Turkey skeptics especially point out that the ruling AKP party, contrary to its promises, has not been a force of democratic change to the country. European conservative leaders wary of EU's foreign interactions with Middle Eastern states also point out that over recent years Turkey has established closer ties with its Muslim neighboring countries.¹⁰⁴ Religious rhetoric used by many Islamic politicians has prompted Turkey being labeled as a "Muslim democracy".¹⁰⁵ Especially alarming to these critics has been the Prime Minister Erdogan's erratic efforts of removing the ban on headscarves, closer ties with Iran, and vituperation of Israeli politics.¹⁰⁶

Thus contrary to the Turkish government's claim of a "European" identity, an overtly Muslim nation poses irreconcilable challenge for its EU accession.¹⁰⁷ This view, however, is severely distorted. Many scholars have accounted the steady and commendable progress that the AKP has made since its accession to power on 2002. This has included a reduction in the influence of the military in governing affairs, the reforms measures in order to further strengthen its Copenhagen criteria, the liberalization of Kurdish language and broadcasting laws, and further liberalization of the economy.¹⁰⁸ Noteworthy reforms of the Prison system, the implementation of the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT) clause, and amendments to a flurry of other laws brought it further in line with international standards.¹⁰⁹

Yet, Turkey's failure to repeal Article 301 of penal code and lag in key areas of concern

¹⁰³ Dahlman, Carl. "Turkey's Accession to the European Union: The Geopolitics of Enlargement." Pg. 557

¹⁰⁴ Sozen, Ahmet. Sozen Ahmet. "A Paradigm Shift in Turkish Foreign Policy: Transition and Challenges." Pg. 112

¹⁰⁵ Larrabee S. F., & Lesser, I. O. (2003). *Turkish Foreign Policy in an Age of Uncertainty*. Pg. 10

¹⁰⁶ Ben Knight. "Turkey moves towards European standards."

¹⁰⁷ Verney, Susanna. "National identity and political change on Turkey's road to EU membership." Pg. 221

¹⁰⁸ Secor, Anna. "Turkey's Democracy: A Model for the Troubled Middle East. Pg. 158, and Phillips, David. Pg. 94

¹⁰⁹ Ucer, Elif. "Turkey's accession to the European Union." Pg. 201-202.

have strained EU-Turkey relations and called into question Turkey's democratic criteria.¹¹⁰ Since constructivists regard "state behavior" as a function of an actor's own identities, Turkey skeptics argue that in essence Turkey is a Muslim nation with a very different culture, which leads to this perceived difference.¹¹¹

One of the biggest EU opposition to Turkish accession has been its violation of human rights issues since the 1980s, which involved clashes between the state and PKK terrorists (Kurdish terrorist organization), which killed more than 37,000 people in total.¹¹² This was seen in the backdrop of the already infamous Armenian genocide of the early 20th Century, both of which Turkey denies as human rights violation and justifies its actions as "measures to defend the Turkish nation-state against threats to its integrity and stability."¹¹³ But as Emanuel Adler points out, "it would be very difficult for a European state to consistently abuse human rights and still be deemed to belong to contemporary Europe".¹¹⁴ However, in recent years, "Discourses of freedom and tolerance regarding minority issues have come to signify democratic possibilities, as well as European political and cultural identity in Turkey."¹¹⁵

Turkey has also adopted measures to prevent any repetition of such gross human rights violation. The parliament passed two major constitutional amendments and eight legislative packages.¹¹⁶ It abolished the death sentence, adopted new laws for minority protection, and handling of illegal immigration. Put together, "these mark a radical break with the long history of statism".¹¹⁷ Yet EU's acknowledgement of such policies have been minimum, and many argue that behind EU's repetitive concerns of a static view of Turkey's past wrongdoing lies a "deep-

¹¹⁰ Onis, Ziya & Yilmaz, Suhan. "Between Europeanization and Euro-Asianism: Foreign Policy." Pg. 16

¹¹¹ Roe, Paul. "The Intrastate Security Dilemma: Ethnic Conflict as 'Tragedy?'" Pg. 185

¹¹² (Ugur, 1999, p. 216). Cakmak, Cenap. Pg. 71-72

¹¹³ Ibid. Pg. 72

¹¹⁴ Adler, Emanuel. "Seizing the Middle Ground: Constructivism in World Politics." Pg. 345

¹¹⁵ Mills, Amy. "Narratives in the City Landscape." Pg. 449

¹¹⁶ Dostal, Petr, Akcali, Emel & Antonsich. "Turkey's Bid for European Union Membership: Between 'Thick' and 'Thin' Conceptions of Europe." Pg. 200

¹¹⁷ Guney, Aylin. "The future of Turkey in the European Union." Pg. 305

seated xenophobia of both Turkish labor migrants and the Kurdish asylum seekers now moving through European capitals.¹¹⁸

Again, the Turkish invasion of Cyprus back in 1974 is often cited as another cause of hindrance.¹¹⁹ Since then, the relations between the two countries never normalized, and Turkey's recent bans of flights and shifts in Greek controlled parts of Cyprus, its military presence there, and its aggressive and uncompromising attitude towards the island has aggravated EU members.¹²⁰ Yet it often goes unrecognized that AKP's policy towards Cyprus has changed extensively over previous policies and Ankara has lend "its full support to the comprehensive plan of the UN Secretary General for the reunification of the island."¹²¹ Yet, the EU's complete disinterest in recognizing such developments have prompted cries of "unfair treatment" within the Turkish state.¹²²

Finally, Turkey's military is seen as an anomaly to its state system, when compared to other EU states. Turkish military protects the Constitution of the country and is separate from the ruling government. It has dissolved three governments in 1960, 1971 and 1980, and ousted two state leaders in 1997 and 2007.¹²³ Although power was restored peacefully in each case to civilian government, such a record stands at odds with the European practice of having military under the government in power.¹²⁴ Many critics also argue that Turkey's military plays too significant of a role in its national politics, through its participation in the National Security Council, which stands in direct contradiction to the common EU member state practices.

Thus, some observers bluntly declare that Turkey cannot meet the EU's "Copenhagencriteria" without a substantial change in the role of the military."¹²⁵ The AKP, and

¹¹⁸ Dahlman, Carl. "Turkey's Accession to the European Union: The Geopolitics of Enlargement." Pg. 565

¹¹⁹ Sozen Ahmet. "A Paradigm Shift in Turkish Foreign Policy: Transition and Challenges." Pg. 116

¹²⁰ The telegraph, angela merkel

¹²¹ Acklai, Emel. "EU, Political Islam and Polarization of Turkish Society." Pg. 45

¹²² Onis, Ziya & Yilmaz, Suhanaz. "Between Europeanization and Euro-Asianism: Foreign Policy." Pg. 14

¹²³ Secor, Anna. "Turkey's Democracy: A Model for the Troubled Middle East?" Pg. 157

¹²⁴ Phillips, David. "Turkey's Dreams of Accession." "Turkey's Dreams of Accession." Pg. 88

¹²⁵ Larrabee S. F., & Lesser, I. O. Pg. 12

in specific, Erdogan has curtailed much of Turkey's military influence over civilian matters.¹²⁶ However, this has coincided with another dilemma. One study notes, "As Copenhagen Criteria reforms weakened the power of the military in internal Turkish affairs, Erdoğan has advanced an Islamist agenda which has altered Turkish society."¹²⁷ Thus, it seems that underlying all the major political contentions, the theme of culture and religion has been perceived to be the biggest threat. However, how does geography affect identity, and whether it affects political factors in return is important to analyze.

2.2.3 Geography

Barth famously noted that a group's identity is not defined at its center but in its borders.¹²⁸ Geography thus undoubtedly forms a very important aspect of identity. Turkey's geographic location has been a matter of debate for EU accession over decades and its importance as a discursive tool for politicians can hardly be exaggerated.¹²⁹ The debate is long-lasting because Europe's borders has always been fuzzy, and as noted in the Introduction, the EU's eastward expansion raised possibility that it is indeed conceivable to broaden the definition of what European space is constitutive of. Furthermore, Cyprus is a European Union member state that pushes the boundaries of Europe to the borders of Middle East. This is so, because "regions are socially constructed and are susceptible to redefinition".¹³⁰ Yet underneath the debate of borders lies the unmistakable mark of identity, "a naturalization of what it means to be and act as European in Europe."¹³¹ The EU's unease of Turkish accession stem from its identification of the later as part of the Middle East, and by extension, a region fraught with

¹²⁶ Phillips, David. "Turkey's Dreams of Accession." Pg. 86

¹²⁷Cappeza, David. "Turkey's Military Is a Catalyst for Reform."

¹²⁸ Challand, Benoit. "From Hammer and Sickle to Star and Crescent: the Question of Religion for European Identity and a Political Europe." Pg. 70

¹²⁹ Evered, Kyle. "Regionalism In The Middle East And The Case Of Turkey." Pg. 466

¹³⁰ Adler, Emanuel. "Seizing the Middle Ground: Constructivism in World Politics." European Pg. 345

¹³¹Hellström, Anders "Beyond Space: Border Making in European Integration, the Case of Ireland." Pg. 132.

Islamic fundamentalism, civil war and non-democratic principles.¹³²

Thus, the creation of borders in order to succeed in a political construction of a shared social identity is deemed indispensable for a successful union.¹³³ This border issue is thus reified by the imposition of cultural overtures of identity construction within the geographical space.¹³⁴ Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger's (later Pope Benedict XVI) remarks on Turkey provide an excellent illustration of how culture and geography are often bundled together in popular discourse in order to create an identity: "Turkey has always represented a different continent, in permanent contrast to Europe. Making the two continents identical would be a mistake. It would mean a loss of richness, the disappearance of the culture."¹³⁵ Thus, it seems that boundaries do indeed seem to matter, the essence of the issue is not so much the physical boundary, but a group's boundaries of identity, based on shared culture.

2.2.4 EU's lens of Culture

Culture and more specifically religion have formed the most important identity marker for EU's characterization of Turkey.¹³⁶ Islam and Christianity have historically been opposed to each other, since the Muslim invasion of Spain to the Crusades, to the so-called clash of civilizations.¹³⁷ Fundamental perceptions of incompatibility exists as has been demonstrated by the fact that "the closer Turkey gets to meet the political conditions, the more the unstated cultural conditions of already belonging to a European civilization tend to gain prominence in the debate"¹³⁸. Many polls, for example, the 2006 Euro barometer showed that almost two-thirds of surveyed respondents identified cultural differences between Turkey and the EU as the primary cause of contention. Citing culture, many Eurocrats have vehemently opposed the idea

¹³² Tekin, Ali. "Future of Turkey-EU relations: a civilizational discourse." Pg. 294

¹³³ Author citing (Kocka, 2007). Challand, Benoit. Pg. 71

¹³⁴ Kramer, Heinz. "Turkey and the EU: The EU's Perspective." Pg. 29

¹³⁵ Tekin, Ali. "Future of Turkey-EU relations: a civilizational discourse." Citing Pope Benedict XVI

¹³⁶ Challand, Benoit. "From Hammer and Sickle to Star and Crescent: the Question of Religion for European Identity and a Political Europe." Pg. 66

¹³⁷ Tekin, Ali. "Future of Turkey-EU relations: a civilizational discourse." Pg. 297

¹³⁸ (Casanova, 2006, p. 236). Beniot, Challand. Pg. 71

of Turkish accession to the European Union. For example, Giscard D'Estaing noted about the country: 'it has a different culture, a different approach, a different way of life'.¹³⁹ Much of this cultural dissociation is formed due to the perceptions of Islamic treatment of minors and women (especially with the practice of *burkhas*, headscarf, etc).¹⁴⁰

Within Europe itself "the notion of an increasingly religious Muslim nation joining a club of secular countries with Christian roots has ignited fierce debates about European identity at a time when many EU member states are struggling to integrate growing Muslim minorities".¹⁴¹ Hence, Turkey is consciously viewed as the "other" situated in a highly metaphorically constructed "border", whereby the norms of Turkey's Islamic heritage and non-secular political practices "cannot be reconciled with European concepts of order".¹⁴²

¹³⁹ Keyman, E.F. and Kanci, Tuba. "A tale of ambiguity: citizenship, nationalism and democracy in Turkey." Pg. 304

¹⁴⁰ Verney, Susanna. "National identity and political change on Turkey's road to EU membership." Pg. 217

¹⁴¹ Birnbaum, Ben "Turkey cites 'prejudice' in Delay of bid to join EU; Erdogan's adviser sees rules 'changing'."

¹⁴² Giannakopoulos, Angelos. "What Is To become Of Turkey In Europe? European Identity and Turkey's EU Accession." "Pg. 60

CHAPTER 3— ANALYSIS OF DISCOURSES

The previous chapter has argued that despite of the fact that Turkey's political system, economics, geography and culture being cited as most common hindrances to Turkish accession to the EU, closer look reveals that presuppositions of cultural fissures between the two entities lies at the heart of this perception, which finds its expression through the articulation of EU politicians. Thus the paper speculated that even while raising a concern about Turkey's economy or political practices as being incompatible with that of the EU, politicians often were articulating their fear of Turkish culture and hence qualifying their fear by signifying it as the "other". In this chapter, this paper looks at speeches and statements made by David Cameron of Britain, Angela Merkel of Germany and Nicholas Sarkozy of France in order to verify this finding. The core of each of their argument seems to be identical to that of Huntington's: Turkey is so "irremediably different" from Europe that its inclusion in the Union would spell "the end of the EU." This chapter will demonstrate how three prominent heads of state and government are conceiving of Turkey in their rhetoric. Deconstructing their discourses allows for an interpretive methodology to capture the ontological basis of European identity vis-à-vis Turkey.

Identity, as noted earlier, forms the basis of this social discursive process. Rhoda Howard notes, "identity politics assumes that your thinking emerges in a predictable, linear fashion from your identity."¹⁴³ Thus, collective meanings organize actions of actors, through whom interests of fellow statesmen are verbalized. Institutional constraints, such as states, for which actors speak on behalf through political practices (discourses), provide a vessel through which their interests, the interests of their states and fellow political leaders are articulated.¹⁴⁴ Uncovering how the identities are discursively constructed vis-à-vis the interests of another state should be investigated. This entails not only examining relations with other states, but interactions within

¹⁴³Howard-Hassmann, Rhoda. "Identity, Empathy and International Relations." Pg. 5

¹⁴⁴ Citing Wendt Zehfuss, Maja. "Constructivism and Identity: A Dangerous Liaison." Pg 321,

the state.¹⁴⁵ Thus, the decision maker's worldview should be appreciated because they have a vested interest in maintain their states identity because it is too *their* identity. Furthermore, the collective meanings these actors participate in (the state conception of identity) is based on relatively stable conceptions of the other. Therefore, identity is important in defining some states are friends and some are enemies, through an a-priori conception of history.

For example, Sarkozy has made countless claims of opposition to Turkish accession, claiming that the Islamic county's entry into Europe "deal a fatal blow to the very notion of European cultural identity".¹⁴⁶ Thus he suggested that in order to protect EU, "Europe must give itself borders", noting, "Not all countries have a vocation to become members of Europe."¹⁴⁷ Thus, the geographic constraints are exemplified, while at the same time the later exclamation suggests undertones of cultural identity. Elsewhere Sarkozy noted, "Turkey is not in Europe, It is in Asia Minor...I think Turkey will create destabilization in Europe."¹⁴⁸ Similarly, economic constraints have been ushered in as well. Merkel, for example, bluntly admitted her viewpoint, "we are firmly convinced that Turkey's membership would overtax the EU economically and socially and endanger the process of European integration."¹⁴⁹ Thus Sarkozy tries to bracket the extent of EU-Turkey relations: "I remain convinced Turkey and the EU must maintain the closest possible relationship, without going to integration which would benefit in reality neither Turkey nor the European Union."¹⁵⁰

Migrants of Turkish origin also raise fears among EU member states. The chief concern again is that their distinct cultural and religious practices would not allow them to integrate into the European way of life. France, Germany and Britain, especially, are highly wary of immigration influx from the East. To these countries, Turkish membership might mean that "The issue of

¹⁴⁵ Jackson. "Introduction to International Relations." 172

¹⁴⁶ Thornhill, John. "Danger in dashing Turkey's European dream."

¹⁴⁷ Sarkozy stands between turkey, eu

¹⁴⁸ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rBoBTdh9oa4>sarkozy

¹⁴⁹ Goodspeed, Pete. "Bridging the Bosphorus: "Turkey has always represented a different continent"

¹⁵⁰ Sarkozy on a chilly turkey visit

immigration is a cause of concern for many member states as it is associated with the fear that enlargement will bring ‘outsiders’ claiming resources that naturally belong to the ‘insiders’ as well as threatening the norms, values and basic structure of their community’.¹⁵¹ The republican oriented politicians are especially opposed to Turkish membership hurting the future prospects of the European integration project.¹⁵² Thus, it seems quite apparent that “Fears about an influx of foreigners has an important role to play in shaping public attitudes towards enlargement in general towards Turkey in particular, for the following reasons relating to fear of an alien culture, that is, xenophobia, and its loss of resources to foreigners.”¹⁵³

Language issues also exemplify the extent to which this debate reaches the core of European society. German Foreign minister Guido Westerwelle noted, “No one should be able to rip us away from our culture. Our children must learn German but, first, they must learn Turkish.” While such comments were made in context of immigration problems, no one doubts a resurgence of this debate if Turkey is admitted into the EU. Sarkozy was also uncompromising in his views, “Of course we must all respect differences, but we do not want...a society where communities coexist side by side. If you come to France, you accept to melt into a single community, which is the national community, and if you do not want to accept that, you cannot be welcomed in France.”¹⁵⁴

Sharp cultural differences between the EU and Turkey over the role of men and women in the society are also seen as a significant hindrance.¹⁵⁵ This forms a more basic contention, Islam in general is viewed as incompatible to the values espoused by the EU.¹⁵⁶ The events of September 11 also vividly changed the perceptions of Islam as a tolerant, peace loving religion to

¹⁵¹ Ucer, Elif. “Turkey’s accession to the European Union.” Pg. 205

¹⁵² Diez, Thomas. “Expanding Europe: The Ethics of EU-Turkey Relations.” Pg. 417-418

¹⁵³ Muftuler-Bac, Meltem. “Turkey in the EU’s Enlargement Process: Obstacles and Challenges” Pg. 90

¹⁵⁴ Presse-France Agence. “Sarkozy declares Multiculture a failure.”

¹⁵⁵ Challand, Benoit. “From Hammer and Sickle to Star and Crescent: the Question of Religion for European Identity and a Political Europe.” Pg. 292-293.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid. Pg. 293

a more distorted one.¹⁵⁷ All of these different fears are inextricably linked together in our constructed identity. Challand notes Casanova's observation that "the religious argument against Turkey actually overlaps with different dimensions of the Turkish 'otherness' and that the Muslim identity of Turkey refers back to the presence of Muslim migrants in the heart of Europe."¹⁵⁸ Catarina Kinnvall notes, "Linking of Islam with terrorist practices is a good example of how different groups become homogenized in religious and racist terms" which is grounded "in an ideological commitment to unchanging difference."¹⁵⁹

As German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt noted, the problem of Turkey in Europe boils down to cultural and religious differences. "For Schmidt, Turkey's Muslim population meant that the country was more a part of Asia and Africa than of Europe."¹⁶⁰ This over-accentuation of religion is seen as "hyperactivism" by some observers, and is seen in relation to the construction of Turkey as the new "other" since the fall of communism and the disintegration of the threat of Soviet Union. Thus the concept of the "other" and the "problem of religion" goes hand in hand and makes the "overlap between European identity and religion possible"¹⁶¹ Thus delegating Turkey to the role of the other allows for the EU's own identity. As Angela Merkel lectured in one speech, "We don't have too much Islam, we have too little Christianity. We have too few discussions about the Christian view of mankind", "about the values that guide us (and) about our Judeo-Christian tradition."¹⁶²

Thus, statements by Cameron, Merkel, Sarkozy, and other Eurocrats clearly prove that

¹⁵⁷ Tekin, Ali. "Future of Turkey-EU relations: a civilizational discourse." Pg. 298.

¹⁵⁸(Casanova, 2006, p. 242). Challand, Benoit. "From Hammer and Sickle to Star and Crescent: the Question of Religion for European Identity and a Political Europe." Pg. 71

¹⁵⁹Catarina Kinnvall. "Globalization and Religious Nationalism: Self, Identity and the Search for Ontological Security." Pg. 761

¹⁶⁰(Dunér and Devereil, 2001) Dahlman, Carl. "Turkey's Accession to the European Union: The Geopolitics of Enlargement." Pg. 560

¹⁶¹ Challand, Benoit. "From Hammer and Sickle to Star and Crescent: the Question of Religion for European Identity and a Political Europe." Pg. 66

¹⁶²<http://blogs.reuters.com/faithworld/2010/11/15/merkel-germany-doesnt-have-too-much-islam-but-too-little-christianity/merkel>

the issue of Islam and the cultural practice of Turkey has remained at the center of EU's threat perceptions of Turkey. There is clearly a widespread unease to integrate a so-called 'alien' culture of the east into the continent. Previous perceptions of failed experiments with multiculturalism in Britain, France and Germany have acted as a catalyst to polarize the EU community against Turkey.

At the very least, such "clash of civilizations" arguments are marked by ambiguities of Othering. As Richard Ned Lebow notes in his study of identity formation, "Kant, Hegel and Schmitt have somewhat different views of what constitutes a nation, but they all consider hostility to others a key component of national identity formation a solidarity."¹⁶³ Thus, an argument can be made that the EU represents Turkey as different (and inferior) in order to represent European values as much more unified and positive than they actually are.¹⁶⁴ Thus, "the mutual acknowledgement of the 'Other' in his 'Otherness' is raised to the primary characteristic of a European identity."¹⁶⁵ Thus, Turkey's position 'in-between' allows the EU now on the one hand to wield its influence over Turkey, on the other hand to construct its difference. However, Turkey's ongoing constitutional reforms, which started after the Helsinki decision, also bring obligations flowing from the normative argument for the EU: its identity as a normative power would be undermined if it decided to pursue semi-detachment forever, and therefore was seen as not keeping its promises.¹⁶⁶

However, since Constructivists argue that all social interactions and perceptions are learned, they are also acculturated and can vary over time. This opens up the possibility of altering perceptions of national identity of Turkey by the EU. So Turkey may not be perceived as the other for cultural/religious reasons, and pending fulfilling the Copenhagen criteria, it could

¹⁶³ Lebow, Richard. "Identity and International Relations." Pg. 486

¹⁶⁴ Diez, Thomas. "Expanding Europe: The Ethics of EU-Turkey Relations." Pg. 418

¹⁶⁵ Giannakopoulos, Angelos. "What Is To become Of Turkey In Europe? European Identity and Turkey's EU Accession." Pg. 62

¹⁶⁶ Diez T, "Constructing the Self and Changing Others: Reconsidering 'Normative Power Europe'" Pg. 633

or could not become a member state. This still does not mean, however, that Europe will be able to construct a historical identity- it just means that Turkey won't be perceived as culturally incompatible. Europe still may have to have a civic identity, which may lack legitimacy because of the lack of a unifying other to create a strong European identity. One based on values and norms/the constitution, will still allow for EU states to retain their nationalism, and thus allow for Europe to have diverse interests- thus not agreeing on implementing foreign policy. Identity may be reconstructed so that Turkey would be conceived of being European. If social identities are constructed and learned then "It is possible to learn how to act in order to 'be' a European living in Europe."¹⁶⁷ This offers the possibility of creating a democratic community of European citizens that is not based on a fictitious democratic community, "but only on the common 'future projections' of people with different cultures, who are conscious of their task to determine the course of history together."¹⁶⁸

This paper offers four predictions of the most-likely future scenarios of the EU-Turkish relations within the context of its accession criteria. These are based on if Turkey meets the criteria necessary to become a member, but is denied.

Scenario 1) If Turkey joins the European Union then the historical approach and construction of identity on the basis of shared a shared common past and Christianity will be challenged. In this case, the European Union does not appear to be able to be based on a common history because Turkey is not viewed as religiously and culturally European. A more cohesive federalist Europe will have a difficult time to be realized if a member is viewed as 'alien'. This appears to lead Europe toward constructing a civic identity.

Scenario 2) If Turkey accedes to the union, the historical approach to constructing a European identity will be challenged and the construction of a civic identity seems more likely. However,

¹⁶⁷Hellström, Anders. "Beyond Space: Border Making in European Integration, the Case of Ireland." Pg. 132

¹⁶⁸Giannakopoulos, Angelos. "What Is To become Of Turkey In Europe? European Identity and Turkey's EU Accession." Pg. 71

this approach is not without problems. Although identity can be constructed on the basis of shared values and norms (more of an (EU)ropean identity) this approach is more likely to allow states to retain sovereignty, leading to a more intergovernmentalist Europe who use the EU to promote their own interests. Additionally, an argument can be made that these values and norms that form the basis of a civic identity come from Europe's 'western' history, and are derived from Christianity, not Islam.¹⁶⁹ Furthermore, this approach may allow for too much diversity; a lack of cohesion necessary to keep the EU afloat, and thus a rise in nationalism.

If Turkey does not join:

Scenario 1) If Turkey does not join then Europe can potentially be realized as a Christian nation with a shared past and culture. It can possibly become a more cohesive and efficient body, functioning as a 'United States of Europe' because member states may have more common interests based on a deeper historical identity rather than diverse and competing national identities, ie. the civic approach. This identity construction, however, would be developed through othering Turkey, reinforcing the class of civilization theory of conflicting cultures.

Scenario 2) If Turkey fulfills the Copenhagen criteria and still is not allowed to join the Union, then the EU contradicts itself as a normative power. The EU civic approach, as based on values of freedom, human rights and democracy, may construct its identity on a shared history and religion, but would lose legitimacy as a champion of norms and values.

¹⁶⁹ www.euroactiv.com

CONCLUSION

The constant expansion of the EU to 27 member states has created tremendous challenges in infusing within the Union a sense of “we-ness”. The possibility of Turkish inclusion, the first Muslim majority state, would further complicate EU identity formation, as this research has demonstrated. Furthermore, this research reveals that concerns of Turkish economics, geography and politics are symptoms, rather than the cause of EU’s threat perceptions. Because the boundaries of Europe, and for that matter, the European Union (hereby EU), were never set in stone, Turkish application to the European Union did not seem illogical. Since 1923, Turkey has been western oriented, and treated as a western state throughout the cold war. It appears that when Europe started to question its identity, it also started to question the ‘Europeanness’ of Turkey. Without the communist other, the hammer and sickle seems to have been replaced with the star and crescent.¹⁷⁰ Although the question of whether or not Turkey should be included in the European Union is still raised, some would argue that Europe made a commitment to Turkey and must honor. For example, a high profile diplomat Javier Solana delivered the news to Turkey when they were granted candidacy status:

It was 19th of December 1999, the European countries were meeting in Helsinki...it was past midnight, we were discussing for a long time if we can offer the candidacy to Turkey. The agreement was yes under certain conditions. And I took a plane it was 1 in the morning to go to Ankara. It met with the president and the prime minister and I explained very clearly what were the conditions. By 6 in the morning I was back in Helsinki...I explained everything, everybody said yes. And from then on I feel committed to that yes. And I think the European Union is an institution, that European rule by law, by keeping promises and by keeping their signatures. And I signed and I will keep my word.¹⁷¹

Europe did indeed make a commitment to Turkey, and to dishonor that commitment would challenge the very fabric of the European Union. Turkish foreign minister Davutoglu said:

If the aim (of the EU) is to eradicate all forms of intolerance and discrimination which is based on religious grounds or otherwise, to promote a democratic and equitable international order, to

¹⁷⁰ Challand, Benoit. “From Hammer and Sickle to Star and Crescent: the Question of Religion for European Identity and a Political Europe.”

¹⁷¹ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0FveOUe2WpUAt> CEU, Javier Solana talks about our rapidly expanding world

achieve steady economic development in a sustainable way, entry of Turkey into the EU as a full member can make an important difference.¹⁷²

These optimistic views of Turkey in Europe have shown, however, to pose a challenge to the very fabric of European identity construction efforts. Although some view Turkish inclusion as a positive for Europe's future, both of the EU's formulas for identity formation, a *civic* identity, stressing values and norms on the one hand, and a *historical approach* or a *family of nations* on the other, would likely be challenged by inclusion. Turkey joining the EU would make it tremendously difficult for the EU to construct an identity based on a past history, culture and Christian religion. Europe's construction efforts would seem likely to shift to a civic identity based on values, norms and political culture. This also has implications, however. Arguments can be made that this sort of identity, these norms and values, are derived from Europe's history and religion in the first place. Secondly, if Turkey met the accession criteria and was denied membership, this would severely undermine Europe as a normative power, and would reinforce the clash of civilization theory.¹⁷³ However, the exclusion of Turkey would probably provide for a more cohesive European identity construction based on common history and culture, one based on the new 'other', which has implications for how Europe will contribute to the civilizational debate of the future.

Chapter 1 provided a literature review of identity in international relations, to justify the development of identity as a concept though its development within the constructivist camp. It showed that constructivism and its conception of identity was the most appropriate for the purpose of EU-Turkey accession issue. Additionally, this chapter provided a background on the EU's efforts of constructing an overarching identity under the banner of "unity in diversity", through the practice of defining identity as either civic (based on values and norms) or historical (based on a shared history and religion) approaches. Chapter 2 moved onto to Turkey to assesses the dependent variable (EU's identity) vis-à-vis issues surrounding the Turkish economy, political

¹⁷²Anadolu agency, "Davutoglu urges EU to focus on added value of Turkey's Membership.

¹⁷³ www.euroactiv.com

situation, geography and culture. These independent variables were reviewed, dismissed and found that Turkey's culture and identity appears to be a challenge for EU's efforts to form a European identity. To further capture this causal mechanism, Chapter 3 analyzed discourses dealing with Turkish identity by examining discourses by Merkel, Sarkozy and Cameron through a constructivist lens. The deconstruction of their rhetoric pointed to Turkey's culture and religion as being the biggest hindrance to EU identity formation. The chapter concludes by noting how the EU has put itself in a *damned if you do, damned if you don't dilemma* in respect to Turkish accession. On the one hand, its inclusion risks EU's identity devolution, on the other the EU risks making its Copenhagen Criteria a bare declaration, without legitimacy. An interesting point for further research has appeared throughout this debate. An examination of national identities in European states, and efforts to construct a European identity can be examined through a Copenhagen School's lens of societal security. This research would develop on a European 'we' feeling threatened by the external other. An examination of these two distinct societies, Turkish and European (as discourse from this research has shown), would treat identity as a security issue, and would necessitate deconstructing discourse to see how the ability for a society to persist in its essential character is threatened by the 'other'.

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