

# What Is To become Of Turkey In Europe? European Identity and Turkey's EU Accession

Angelos Giannakopoulos\*

## Abstract

*The essay deals exclusively with the question of how Turkey's potential accession to the EU might determine how a European identity evolved. Following this, two disparate views of perceiving and defining a European identity are compared and analysed: a 'maximalistic' and a 'dialogistic'. These represent opposing ways of understanding political community: the maximalistic definition represents an 'ethical cultural community' and the dialogistic a 'universal community of citizens'. European identity is then conceived as an open process and is brought into relation to the democratic process. Also investigated is which understanding of European identity is implied, by the draft for a European constitution. The thesis of the article is, that Turkey's future accession to the EU cannot be judged on the basis of a 'historical-cultural' argument but rather on the basis of whether or not a shared European political culture and its main elements have been realised.*

## Introduction

The question set as the title of this article is an allusion to an article by Friedrich Engels, published 150 years ago in the 'New York Daily Tribune' on April 21st, 1853. It is part of the long series of his and Karl Marx's contributions to the public debates then being conducted on the future of the Ottoman Empire, and its relations with other European powers, referred to throughout the nineteenth-century as the 'Eastern Question'. This question became prevalent in European discourses on Turkey during the Cold War and especially in the post-Cold War era, and it has an indisputable contemporary topicality. Nevertheless, since the introduction of the Maastricht Treaty, and now especially with a view to the EU's enlargement, cultural issues concerning the progressive European integration process have been increasingly brought into the discussion. Within this context, it must be assumed that through the inclusion of most of the former Eastern Bloc countries in the EU, the process of enlargement has been given a powerful impetus.

---

\* Dr. Angelos Giannakopoulos, Konstanz University, Faculty of History and Sociology, Department of Sociology, Germany. Co-ordinator of the international research project 'European Integration and Cultural Patterns of Thought and Perception. Cultural Aspects of the EU-Enlargement Process on the Basis of the Relations between the EU and Turkey', supported by the 'Volkswagen Foundation' in which researchers from the Universities of Tübingen, Oxford, Galatasaray, Athens and Cyprus participate.

However, the integration of both Eastern European as well as Mediterranean countries into a unified Europe will bring about the appearance of an unquestionably heterogeneous spectrum of members. In respect to this multiplicity of political or national cultures, which will be the inevitable consequence of the resultant constellation of European states, the question arises as to what might constitute a sufficient understanding of that community of values, anchored in institutional forms, which is to be European.

Such discussions took concrete shape in the context of the Copenhagen Summit of 2002 concerning the question of setting a date on which negotiations with the accession candidate, Turkey, should be opened. In this essay, the reflections on a European identity have proceeded from this fact, since the EU-accession option for a country was, for the first time, clearly linked to cultural questions, and it has been on this basis that the issue has been discussed among the general public in Germany.<sup>1</sup>

Within this debate, in Germany has been adopted the so-called 'historical-cultural' approach, which we will term 'maximalistic', a main tenet of this position is that Turkey is on the edge, the 'symbolic border' of 'European' because its institutional and normative concepts of order - Kemalism and Islam - cannot be reconciled with European concepts of order in the sense of the shared socio-cultural characteristics of national societies in the current EU. For within the universe of values (in particular in the sense of *unus contra versus*) already existing within the European Union, and despite the heterogeneity of European traditions, one can, according to the maximalistic argument, assume a relative congruity among the national societies' cultural concepts of order, the framework of which is provided by the Graeco-Roman tradition, by Christianity and by the experience of a shared history.

Since Turkey is characterised historically, politically and culturally as 'different', should Turkey become an EU member, the 'European project' could be

---

<sup>1</sup> The basis for the analysis in relation to this problem is the public debate which has developed in Germany since the Copenhagen Summit in December 2002. See to this debate especially: Hans-Ulrich Wehler, "Das Türkenproblem", *Die Zeit*, (12 September 2002), p. 9, Ottfried Höffe, "Das Übermorgenland", *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, (11 December 2002), p. 35, Jean-Daniel Tordjmann, "Das Vorgesternland", *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 12. December 2002, Mark Siemons, "Kultur als Kampfbegriff", *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, (7 December 2002), p. 31, Arnulf Baring, "Die Türkei kann sich auf Adenauer berufen", *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, (26 June 2003), p. 8, Friedbert Pflüger, "Das 29. Mitglied", *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, (1 September 2003), p. 6, Ruprecht Polenz, "Das faule Versprechen", *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, (15 September 2003), p. 15, Helmut Schmidt, "Sind die Türken Europäer? Nein, sie passen nicht dazu", *Die Zeit*, (12 December 2003), p. 1, Michael Thumann, "Sind die Türken Europäer? Ja, sie gehören in die EU", *Die Zeit*, (12 December 2003), p. 1, p. 35, Dietrich von Kyaw, "Grenzen der Erweiterung. Die Türkei ist ein Teil des 'Projekts Europa'", *Internationale Politik* (3, 2003), pp. 47-55, Heinrich August Winkler, "Grenzen der Erweiterung. Die Türkei ist kein Teil des 'Projekts Europa'", *Internationale Politik*, (2, 2003), pp. 59-67, Heinrich August Winkler, "Eehindernisse. Gegen einen EU-Beitritt der Türkei", *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, (23 November 2002), p. 13.

under threat. Because of its character and preconditions, it is not to be expected that in future, Turkey will be able to transform itself into a 'European country', since a mere technical, economically and institutionally oriented 'Europeanisation' is not sufficient. The precondition of genuine Europeanisation is a living democratic political culture, which does not exist in Turkey.<sup>2</sup> In the context of the future European Constitution, when reference was made to the Christian tradition of Europe in the preamble of the constitution, culture related debated strengthened in intensity.

In view of this, it has to be underlined that this article deals exclusively with the question of Turkey's EU-accession considered from the perspective of how a European identity is actually built. Therefore, the economic, social, strategic, and foreign security issues, related to the accession of Turkey to the EU, whilst a matter of great relevance, in so much as what this accession could mean for the EU's institutional framework, must be put aside within this context, although they are of the utmost importance, and are currently controversial topics both in the public sphere and within the scientific community.

In order to answer the question what Turkey's potential EU-accession would mean to the determination of a European identity, this article will proceed in the following manner:

The first section will treat the fundamental question of whether it is necessary to determine a European identity within the framework of European integration. On the basis of this consideration, we arrive at the first premise of this article, that in view of the goal to achieve a European political union, an inevitable transition from the model of institutional, economic-legal integration, to the model of interconnected and decentralised integration which is also determined culturally is required.

In a further step, the article treats the difficulty of arriving at a satisfactory definition of 'Europe' by introducing a fundamental differentiation between the terms 'Europe' and 'European Union'. From this follows the second premise, according to which alone, the European Union as an institutional entity can be called upon as a frame of reference for the determination of a European identity. On the basis of the 'historico-cultural' argument within the recent German public debate, as it has been briefly described above, there follows a critical analysis of the 'historical-cultural' argument and its understanding of the European identity. It is analysed on the basis of two fundamental theoretical assumptions taken from the

---

<sup>2</sup> Wehler, "Das Türkenproblem", *ibid.*, Winkler, "Ehehindernisse. Gegen einen EU - Beitritt der Türkei ", *ibid.*

sociology of culture: 1. Culture and identity cannot be understood in a substantial sense, but rather relationally and as processes and 2. These terms are not to be taken as analytical (explanans) but rather as categories to be analysed (explanantum).

Further, the 'historico-cultural' argument will be contrasted with a 'dialogistic' understanding of the European identity. In opposition to the 'historical-cultural' understanding of European identity, which conceives political community as an 'ethical cultural community', the 'dialogistic' understanding represents a political conceptualisation of European identity to the extent that it grasps political community as a 'universal community of citizens'. This forms the basis of the third premise, that European identity must be understood as a practice-oriented capacity for, and competence in, intercultural dialogue. Thus, the mutual acknowledgement of the 'Other' in his 'Otherness' is raised to the primary characteristic of a European identity.

The investigation then considers the matter of which of the two conceptualisations of European identity is implied within the draft for a European constitution. It then distils those elements of a genuinely European political culture, which can provide the framework for the institutionalisation of a European identity. As ambivalence is raised to the most significant historical and socio-political experience in Europe, we are able to contend that European identity is not exclusively seen as it is reflected in the products of European achievements (abstract and legal forms of civil solidarity, the establishment of ideological and political competition between the parties, the intellectual appropriation of partially mutually opposing traditions, such as Judaism, Christianity, antiquity etc.), but particularly within the painful learning process of their very production. Hence there follows the fourth and last premise of this essay, 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.

The aim of the last part of this essay is, on the basis of these premises, to analyse relations between the EU and Turkey in respect of the accession of Turkey to the EU and to find out what this might possibly mean for the determination of a European identity. This article draws the conclusion that Turkey's future accession to the EU should not come to pass on the basis of 'historical-cultural' arguments, but instead be founded on the realisation of a common European political culture. As to the question of whether Turkey can become part of the process of European integration, there is no definitive answer. The decision on the future accession of

Turkey is to be regarded as an open political process, and that, on the basis of the Copenhagen accession criteria, which are considered as accession criteria and not as criteria of exclusion. This to the character of past European integration as a whole, which does not suggest that there is a point at which the accession perspective of a country can be projected into the future and decided. The past case-related accession policies of the EU as a process, apply in this sense also to Turkey.

### **European Union and European Identity**

The fundamental question which emerges concerning the definition of a common European identity, reads: is the European Union dependent on a common identity or even on a collective consciousness? Within the context of a purely economic Union, it is surely not. Following Rainer Lepsius' observation, the criteria of economic action and rationality have been decisive for the EEC as a free trade area. The question of a common identity, as a thing in and of itself, does not arise within this framework. In other words: the maximisation of mutual benefits within different institutional forms, which European systemic integration has experienced in the last 50 years - the Coal and Steel Community, the European Community - had, admittedly, got along just as well without the assertion of a European cultural identity. The rationalisation criteria, and those for action, were exclusively of an economic nature.<sup>3</sup> Although this is also to a great extent the case within the framework of the current EU, since Maastricht we are confronted with a decisive addition: with the goal of a political union. This change signifies above all two things:

1. The successful realisation and combination of individual politics within the EU requires an increasing amalgamation of national politics, from which an increasing federalisation of the EU is to be expected. The degree of amalgamation may indeed differ within the various political arenas (an amalgamation of nearly 100% in economy, but much less in national defence and foreign policies). However, it remains a fact that amalgamation at the institutional level is disparate as a factor of the great variety of national cultures, a trend that has been strengthened by the Union's last enlargement. The formula used to describe this state of affairs, "unity in diversity", expresses on the one hand the tendency to an increasing institutional amalgamation, whereas on the other, it directs our attention to just these manifestations of socio-cultural heterogeneity. Thus, 'culture' appears

---

<sup>3</sup> Rainer M. Lepsius, *Institutionalisierung und Deinstitutionalisierung von Rationalitätskriterien*, Konstanz, Kulturwissenschaftliches Forschungskolleg/SFB 485: Norm und Symbol. Die kulturelle Dimension sozialer und politischer Integration, Diskussionsbeiträge, 2002, Nr. 25.

as that "decentral, regionalistic, unwieldy, often times chaotic counter-world to the internal market that is becoming increasingly homogeneous".<sup>4</sup>

2. Nevertheless, the European Union does not regard itself as an institutional reality owing its existence solely to economic, strategic and other such considerations, and would like to be more than a merely functional community, the existence of which is justified by 'necessities'.<sup>5</sup> 'The European Cultural Convention' of 1954 and the 'Document on European Identity' of 1973 - not to mention the skeleton conditions that amount to protection and common administration of the European 'cultural heritage' and, moreover, find their expression in relevant promotion measures – give expression to the fact that the specifically administrative regulations of the EU do not represent the *primum movens* of European systemic integration.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, in the Maastricht Treaty (1992), the question of a European identity, both in the preamble and in articles 2 and 6, plays a central role. It is obvious, that this document, and those documents mentioned above, that take a position on European identity, or indicate what it should be, intend to define a European identity in respect to the rest of the world, and provide a profile for the European Union as a whole within the world-political arena.

Hence, a latent intention of the EU-declarations and treaties should not be overlooked; the European Union would like to be more than a consumer and producer market. As Rainer Lepsius has put it: "The idea of European unity has taken on institutional form. In this manner, 'Europe' has become a point of reference in the process of the construction of identity and of self-description".<sup>7</sup> The initiatives undertaken by the EU since Maastricht, to develop a certain European symbolism, (a European flag and anthem, EU-passport, EU-driver's license, Europe Day, a common currency, etc.) aim among other things at the successive construction of an internal European identity. In order to not succumb to pure economism and institutionalism, European identity must be understood as a new (collective) dimension, capable of overcoming nationalism and racism in its member countries.<sup>8</sup> A further function of these symbols can be discerned, particularly in view of the goal of a political union, in the fact that the EU wishes

<sup>4</sup> Hans Kleinsteuber, "EG-Integration zwischen Wirtschaft und Kultur. Das Beispiel Medienpolitik", in Wolfgang Zapf, *Die Modernisierung moderner Gesellschaften. Verhandlungen des 25. Deutschen Soziologentages in Frankfurt am Main 1990*, Frankfurt/Main, Campus Verlag, 1990, pp. 337-348, p. 340.

<sup>5</sup> Axel T. Paul, "Wo Europa liegt", in Wolfgang Essbach, *Welche Modernität? Intellektuellendiskurse zwischen Deutschland und Frankreich im Spannungsfeld nationaler und europäischer Identitätsbilder*, Berlin, Verlag Arno Spitz, 2000, pp. 421-433.

<sup>6</sup> Martin List, *Baustelle Europa. Einführung in die Analyse europäischer Kooperation und Integration*, Opladen, Leske und Budrich, 1999.

<sup>7</sup> Rainer M Lepsius, "Die Europäische Union. Ökonomisch-politische Integration und kulturelle Pluralität", in Viehoff Reinhold and Segers Rien T., *Kultur, Identität, Europa*, Frankfurt/Main, Suhrkamp, 1999, pp. 201-223, p. 202.<sup>8</sup> Frank R Pfetsch, *Die Europäische Union. Eine Einführung*, Munich, W. Fink, 2002.

<sup>8</sup> Frank R Pfetsch, *Die Europäische Union. Eine Einführung*, Munich, W. Fink, 2002.

to achieve legitimacy through its citizens. Hence follows the first premise of this essay: this goal means an inevitable transition from the model of an institutional, economic-legal integration, to the model of an interconnected and decentralised integration, which is also to be determined culturally.

In this perspective, we must take into consideration the fact that the key ideas within European culture (Christianity, humanism, reason, science) also had their contrasting terms. Within the framework of his conceptualisation of the reciprocal effect between many 'dialogics' which have either associated with each other or stood in direct conflict with one another, Morin has developed the following pairs: "Religion/reason; faith/doubt; mythical/critical thinking; empiricism/rationalism; existence/idea; the specific/the universal one; statement of a problem/of a new argument; philosophy/natural science; classical education/scientific education; old/new; tradition/evolution; reaction/revolution; the individual/ the collectivity; immanence/transcendence; Hamlet/Prometheus; Don Quichotte/Sancho Panza; etc."<sup>9</sup>

Cultural fragmentation, divisions and polarities within the European continent are ubiquitous. If one refers, for example, to religious culture as the central institutionalised idea of order, then it becomes clear that the dominant patterns of confession and the structural divergence of religious culture, have over a long time, given rise to historically determined cultural differences and value patterns or to behaviour - and attitude-specific differences.<sup>10</sup> Thus, the long-lasting lines of culture and the socio-cultural (value) patterns resulting from that process are variable.<sup>11</sup> The very confessional heterogeneity of Europe created the conditions for those discourses of religious-cultural distinction, which led respectively to certain collective representations and symbolic conceptions and, in the long run, to demarcation behaviours.<sup>12</sup>

"Maximalistic efforts"<sup>13</sup> undertaken in order to determine the cultural identity of Europe inevitably lead to the realisation that "Europe defies simple definition attempts. The historical lines of development are too complicated and too contradictory; the results are too stratified and the political and cultural factors are too manifold, than that one could shorten all of this in simple, placatory formulas".<sup>14</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Edgar Morin, *Europa denken*, Frankfurt/Main, Campus Verlag, 1991, p. 126.

<sup>10</sup> Gert Pickel, "Religiosität und kirchliche Integration in Europa", in U. Nembach, H. Rusterholz, P. M. Zulehner, *Informationes Theologiae Europae – Internationales Ökumenisches Jahrbuch für Theologie*, Frankfurt/Main, Peter Lang, 1996, pp. 159-170.

<sup>11</sup> Paul M Zuhleiner and Hermann Denz, *Wie Europa lebt und glaubt. Europäische Wertstudie*, Düsseldorf, Patmos, 1993.

<sup>12</sup> Otto Kallscheuer, "Zusammenprall der Zivilisationen oder Polytheismus der Werte? Religiöse Identität und europäische Politik", in Otto Kallscheuer, *Das Europa der Religionen*, Frankfurt/Main, S. Fischer, 1996, pp. 17-38.

<sup>13</sup> Richard Münch, "Kopf und Herz. Europäische Identitätsbildung zwischen globaler Dynamik, nationaler und regionaler Gegenbewegung", in H.-N Wenzel, *Integration und Transformation in Europa*, Bamberg, Universitätsverlag, 1999.

<sup>14</sup> Werner Weidenfeld, "Europa - aber wo liegt es?", in Werner Weidenfeld, *Die Identität Europas*, Munich, Beck, 1985, p. 18.

Rainer Lepsius states a similar view in the following laconic fashion: "Europe is difficult to determine".<sup>15</sup> Giesen takes a similar stance when he terms 'Europe' as a construct of its intellectuals.<sup>16</sup> Eisenstadt states that "the constant constitution of more varied, frequently competing communities, of which each one takes the right up for itself to represent this broad (European) cultural framework the best, is the trademark of European historical experience".<sup>17</sup> Hence follows the second premise: in view of the obvious difficulty in grasping the contents of a European cultural identity, it is necessary to make a methodological-terminological differentiation between the terms 'Europe' and the 'European Union'. Europe may well have existed as an idea throughout the centuries of European history, however, there is no doubt that, as the topos of a common cultural identity, it hardly exists. The term 'European identity' in reference to a historically and culturally transfigured 'Europe', furthermore, curtails the real facts and fails to recognise the actual fragmentation of European identities, which are of both a national and regional nature.

### **The 'maximalistic' and the 'dialogistic' understanding of a European identity: a comparison**

Seen from the perspective of the sociology of culture, the element of the 'maximalistic', historical-cultural argument against the EU-accession of Turkey most deserving of emphasis, is its static and substantial understanding of European identity, and its basic conceptualisation of 'culture' and 'identity' as analytical categories (explanans). That means, European culture is unambiguously viewed as a unity existing in the present, (Istzustand) out of which, in view of the new challenges for a European future, a projection of what must come (Sollbestimmung) as an orientation guide is to be extrapolated. The option of permitting Turkey to join the EU in the future, has, to a certain extent, unleashed a 'cultural war' (Kulturkampf) embodied by the "debate on a cultural consensus, on the dominance of a concrete culture and thus of a concrete collective that represents this culture".<sup>18</sup>

Even more important: if we assume that culture is fundamentally 'artificial' and a construct, that it possesses the character of a draft for action which makes it an arena for plans and utopias and thus open to manipulation, and furthermore if we continue to assume that culture is an open and unpredictable temporality process,

<sup>15</sup> Lepsius, "Die Europäische Union", *ibid.*, p. 201.

<sup>16</sup> Bernhard Giesen, "Europa als Konstruktion der Intellektuellen", in Viehoff Reinhold and Segers Rien T., *Kultur, Identität, Europa*, Frankfurt/Main, Suhrkamp, 1999, pp. 130-147.

<sup>17</sup> Shmuel Eisenstadt, "Die Konstruktion nationaler Identitäten in vergleichender Perspektive", in Bernhard Giesen, *Nationale und kulturelle Identität. Studien zur Entwicklung kollektiven Bewusstseins in der Neuzeit*, Frankfurt/Main, Suhrkamp, 1996, pp. 21-39, p. 37.

<sup>18</sup> Hans-Georg Soeffner, "Die Perspektive der Kultursociologie", in Klaus E. Müller, *Phänomen Kultur. Perspektiven und Aufgaben der Kulturwissenschaften*, Bielefeld Transcript, 2003, pp. 171-194, p. 180.

then the maximalistic thesis is confronted with a paradox. In that it introduces its best arguments for the predetermination of a European culture and identity in the arena of public discourse, it directly acknowledges the fundamental openness of this question and takes its expectations for a definite and absolute certainty of European culture and identity *ad absurdum*. To employ Seyla Benhabib's image, culture is according to the maximalist argument, like a fortune-teller's crystal ball producing nebulous suggestions from which initiates are able to read the true nature of things.<sup>19</sup> Others stated that it is seen as an autonomous-self-sufficient mobile perpetuum, which can exist without the ongoing input-output process within its environment. This way of proceeding, all too familiar through our knowledge of the processes of consolidation undergone by nation-states, has now been employed in relation to the European integration process as well. Hence, it is obvious, that maximalistic perspective conceptualises political community as an 'ethical cultural community'.

In contrast to this maximalistic approach, it has been maintained that "the cultural identity of Europe is not to be sought in diversity alone, but and above all, in the confrontation of the maintained tensions between the contrasts".<sup>20</sup> Therefore, we should not seek a dialectic magical formula for a primordial synthesis of a European cultural identity, but rather seek for an access to the problem which could be summarised with the term 'dialogic'. Whilst according to a dialectic argument of identity, selfness and otherness are considered to be an indissoluble unit, for a dialogical way of understanding they are just the opposite: reflexive, transfunctional and plural principles that characterise Europe in a certain 'cultural-genetic' sense.<sup>21</sup> Hence, the 'dialogic' implies less reason, proof and conclusion, and instead exchange, contact, mutuality and friendly advance and, indeed, in the final analysis, a creative unrest full of vigour.<sup>22</sup> Thus, the dialogical relationship between the separate components of the European integration process implies that they vary, modify themselves and are always in motion. Whereas the model assertion of a dialectic relationship between these components represents a teleological concept, the dialogical model, in return, leaves the outcome of this always-lasting interaction process undecided. Thus, the current question concerning the feasibility of the formula 'unity in diversity' must be expanded to encompass the following crucial point: "The European genius is not only a matter of diversity and change but of (the interrelation between) these diversities (of) the fertilising meeting of the differences, the antagonisms, the competitions and the

---

<sup>19</sup> Seyla Benhabib, *Kulturelle Vielfalt und demokratische Gleichheit. Politische Partizipation im Zeitalter der Globalisierung. Horkheimer Vorlesungen*, Frankfurt/Main, Fischer, 1999.

<sup>20</sup> Thomas Buchheim, *Einigung oder Assimilation? – Zwei Bilder von europäischer Integration. Europa und Europabilder*, Heidelberg, Universitätsverlag 2000, pp. 18-19.

<sup>21</sup> Uwe Dethloff, *Interkulturalität und Europakompetenz. Die Herausforderung des Binnenmarktes und der Europäischen Union*, Tübingen, Stauffenburg-Verlag, 1993.

<sup>22</sup> Wolfgang Lipp, "Europa als Kulturprozess", in Wolfgang Lipp, *Drama Kultur*, Berlin, Duncker und Humblot, 1994, pp. 609-626.

complementary entities".<sup>23</sup>

European identity can be conceivable only as comparative identity.<sup>24</sup> In view of present conceptions of European identity, it is to be concluded that a common cultural identity must be regarded only as a conglomerate of identifications with partially varying value references. Consequently, some are of the opinion that a homogenisation of cultural identity is not necessary for the European Union. A mediation of the value references of particular national cultures is sufficient. Hence, a practice-oriented European cultural policy can only be understood as a 'translation policy'.<sup>25</sup>

Therefore, in contrast to the maximalistic attempts to define a European identity, from this perspective, it is not a matter of how cultural identity would result from rapprochement and assimilation, or from demarcation, but how the evaluation of the differences between the heterogeneous cultures to which we owe our own identity will evolve in future. This identity will have to be one that can always be reconstructed anew.<sup>26</sup> Thus, the crucial question for Europe's future will be, how much and what diversity will be allowed within the Union, which is to be its equivalent by means of symbolic marking of an identity.<sup>27</sup>

From this a third premise follows: European identity must be comprehended as a practice-oriented capacity for, and competency to, intercultural dialogue. To employ the words of Habermas and Derrida, European identity is "the mutual acknowledgement of the Other in his Otherness".<sup>28</sup> Not self-assertion and self-control, but respect, co-operation and dialogue make up the substance of this 'open' process. This process is not deterministic - it allows historical configuration and creativity to take their own course. Within systemic European integration, the institutions that maintain the resources of diversity, "no matter by what, whether by sorts of fruit, by cultural patterns or also by political approaches",<sup>29</sup> are to be created only under this condition. Therefore, the 'intercultural' dialogue is to be understood as a learning process that can cause modification and transformation of the conceptions about identity. Thus, the process of creating an identity within the

---

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 622.

<sup>24</sup> Waldemar Lilli, "Europäische Identität: Chancen und Risiken ihrer Verwirklichung aus einer sozialpsychologischen Grundlagenperspektive", in T. König T., E. Rieger, H. Schmitt, *Europa der Bürger? Voraussetzungen, Alternativen, Konsequenzen*, Frankfurt/Main, Campus, 1998, pp. 201-223.

<sup>25</sup> Lepsius, "Die Europäische Union", *ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> Siegfried Schmidt, "Kultur als Programm. Zur Diskussion gestellt", in Viehoff Reinhold and Segers Rien T., *Kultur, Identität, Europa*, Frankfurt/Main, Suhrkamp, 1999, pp. 120-130.

<sup>27</sup> Klaus Eder, "Integration durch Kultur? Das Paradox der Suche nach einer europäischen Identität", in Viehoff Reinhold and Segers Rien T., *Kultur, Identität, Europa*, Frankfurt/Main, Suhrkamp, 1999, pp. 147-180.

<sup>28</sup> Jürgen Habermas and Jacques Derrida, "Unsere Erneuerung. Nach dem Krieg: Die Wiedergeburt Europas", *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, (31 May 2003), pp. 33-34.

<sup>29</sup> Martin List, *Baustelle Europa. Einführung in die Analyse europäischer Kooperation und Integration*, Opladen, Leske und Budrich, 1999, p. 305.

European Union must be grasped as an 'intersubjective' and 'dialogic' process for the constitution of the 'collective's own self', and that on the basis of a practice-oriented capacity for, and competency in, intercultural dialogue. The creation of identity appears in this context as "problem-oriented communicating and acting create common horizons and experiences and, thus, a community. The responsibility taken together to find solutions to specific problems generates solidarity. The history of jointly mastered social problems, constitutes a democratic political tradition and a collective consciousness in the course of the time".<sup>30</sup> Identity cannot be planned, but arises - if at all - from the eventful and lengthy process of routine conflicts of everyday life and from the interplay of consent and dissent, whereby it furthers this process.<sup>31</sup> It clearly demonstrates that we cannot conceive a 'civility' without the integrating effect of controversy, "of the provisional solutions and the criticism that always accompany it".<sup>32</sup> In this way, the 'dialogic' argument understands 'political community' as a 'universal community of citizens'. To once again borrow an image from Seyla Benhabib, culture and identity is, according to this concept, like a kaleidoscope which, when turned, presents the viewer with changing, new and unexpected constellations of colours.<sup>33</sup>

### **European identity and the democratic process**

The question of 'what Turkey is' - which is currently often posed in relation to Turkey's accession to the EU - and beyond that in regard to the establishment of a European identity, unavoidably pushes the question of 'what constitutes Europe's political culture' onto centre stage. For the answer as to whether Turkey can become part of the process of European integration, does not depend only on the European identity of Turkey, but it depends primarily and immediately on how Europe defines itself. This is not because Europe is forced into self-definition, while Turkey is waiting at the gates, but rather because Europe must find an answer to the debate on exactly how it 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. This response cannot be derived from a mere extension of the experience of the nation-state. Indeed, it must overcome just this, (from the European perspective,) experience of nation-states and not simply adjust it to the interstate reality.

---

<sup>30</sup> Klaus Eder and Cathleen Kanter, "Transnationale Resonanzstrukturen in Europa. Eine Kritik der Rede vom Öffentlichkeitsdefizit", in Maurizio Bach, "Die Europäisierung nationaler Gesellschaften", Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie, Sonderheft 40, Wiesbaden, Westdeutscher Verlag, 2000, pp. 306-332, p. 310.

<sup>31</sup> Giesen, "Europa als Konstruktion der Intellektuellen", *ibid.*, Eder, "Integration durch Kultur? Das Paradox der Suche nach einer europäischen Identität", *ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> Giesen, *ibid.*, p. 144.

<sup>33</sup> Benhabib, Kulturelle Vielfalt und demokratische Gleichheit. Politische Partizipation im Zeitalter der Globalisierung, *ibid.*

It is this very perspective, which is implied, albeit rhetorically, in the preamble of the constitutional draft of the European Convent, where we can read that: "the peoples of Europe, however proud they may be of their national identity and history, are determined to overcome the old lines of division, and to co-operate increasingly to give shape to their common future" and further "that Europe united in multiplicity, opens a sphere in which humankind's hopes can be realised". What is immediately apparent is that in this text, the aspect of a 'Europe of citizens' finds expression. It clearly represents another approach to the process of European integration, which has a great deal in common with former Finnish Minister, President Paavo Lipponen's suggestion to replace the previous *top-down approach* in the EU with a *bottom-up philosophy*.<sup>34</sup> Furthermore, we cannot ignore the fact that the constitutional draft accentuates, more strongly than previous European treaties, the idea of a political community grounded in universal values. For example, the draft names fundamental rights before it lists the criteria for European citizenship. Although it takes into consideration the ethical, religious and cultural traditions of its member societies, the draft nonetheless explicitly avoids offering concrete ethical suggestions on a 'life worth-living'. The constants of a European system of cultural value and of a common identity, in the sense of an integrative *consensus omnium*, are to be found in the basic principles and universal values of the liberal-democratic and humanistic social order derived from it. If we summarise the model for a European political community, which is exemplified by the constitutional draft, we must conclude that a political community of citizens grounded in shared ethics has been rejected in favour of a citizens' society based on universal values.<sup>35</sup>

Nevertheless, the primary question which remains to be answered is: what are the normative elements of a European political culture, and what do they mean within this total constellation of the process of the creation of a European identity? Along these lines, it should be pointed out that the genuinely European historical experience is the experience of ambivalence. What was said above about the relational character of European identity can here be *historically* and societally concretised. The painful experiences of conflicts, tensions, competitive relationships, enmities, rivalries, breaks and discontinuities within the European continent, both in its internal-social and temporal dimensions, have until today given rise to all those abstract, legal forms of civil solidarity, to the establishment of ideological and political competition between parties and to the intellectual

---

<sup>34</sup> Heinrich Schneider, "Von Berlin über Nizza zur „Europäischen Föderation" – Ist der Föderalismus noch immer eine Leitidee für die europäische Einigung?", in Europäisches Zentrum für Föderalismus-Forschung, *Jahrbuch des Föderalismus: Föderalismus, Subsidiarität und Regionen in Europa*, Baden-Baden, Nomos Verlag, 2001, pp. 409-428, p. 427.

<sup>35</sup> Martin Nettesheim, "Die Unionsbürgerschaft im Verfassungsentwurf – Verfassung des Ideals einer politischen Gemeinschaft der Europäer?" *Integration*, (4, 2003), pp. 428-4

appropriation of partially mutually opposing traditions, such as Judaism, Christianity, antiquity etc, and even *Janus-faced* modernity. European identity, however, is not to be seen exclusively as reflected in the products of these achievements, but particularly within the painful learning process of their very production. This historical experience paves the way for a post-national European democracy, within the structures of which, no matter how constituted in detail, both the acknowledgement of national-cultural differences beyond a mere assimilation or coexistence, and the creation of more refined institutional forms of ‘solidarity among strangers’ are to be ensured.<sup>36</sup> Hence follows the fourth and last premise of this essay: a democratic community of European citizens cannot be constituted on the basis of a ‘fictitious’ historical identity, 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. For history is not a matter of fate, but rather a space of inscription of the creative agency.

### **European identity and Turkey’s EU-accession**

Against this backdrop, it is surely beyond question that Turkey should apply the principles of the political culture outlined above reflexively to itself. Turkey should strive for further implementation and deepening of the rule of law, of democracy and of human rights, and moreover for the alignment of civil-military relations with European practice.

Regarding the process of Turkey’s EU-accession, we can take it for granted that this kind of reflexivity would bring about enormous economical, political and social conflict if put into practice. Previous experience within other societies, especially regarding the integration process of Eastern European countries, has shown that the only path leading to the solution of social conflicts which is acceptable, in terms of the democratic principles of a society under the rule of law, is that of deliberation within the free public sphere of a civil society. Hence, should Turkey’s progress regarding the establishment of a democratic order based on the rule of law, additionally aided by a strong Turkish civil society, lead to a point that - pre-supposing the fulfilment of the Copenhagen criteria - an Islamic society, as Turkish society is, takes a majority decision for affiliation with the EU, then Turkey would offer the Union the possibility of an historically unique achievement. As a consequence, the Union would prove the immense attraction and integration power of the European identity, and would set a clear precedent for a genuinely European political culture.

---

<sup>36</sup> See Jürgen Habermas, "Warum braucht Europa eine Verfassung", Die Zeit, in [www.zeit.de/archiv/2001/27/public\\_files](http://www.zeit.de/archiv/2001/27/public_files)

However, the evaluation of Turkey's prospective EU accession shifts from the 'fictitious' historico-cultural aspects prevalent in parts of political and public discussion to the actual problematic issues of a common political culture. From the perspective, this would mean that the genuinely European tradition of transformation of solidarity among friends, through the medium of law, into the form of a solidarity among strangers,<sup>37</sup> should find application within the abstract structure of a democratic (here interstate) legal community for Turkey as well.

### **Conclusion**

In considering the question of whether Turkey can become an equal part of the process of European integration, the total character of the European integration process has to be taken into consideration. It has to be understood as an open process, that does not have a definite, final goal, and furthermore, that has enered institutional forms of European co-operation, which must be considered as sui generis. Therefore, the decision on Turkey's future accession, has to be regarded as an open political process on the basis of the Copenhagen accession criteria, which are to be considered as accession criteria and not as criteria of exclusion. The past, case-related, accession policies of the EU are to apply in this sense, also to Turkey. Besides, "'European identity' cannot be defined by a cultural pattern that is declared to be specifically 'European', but by resorting to values which did indeed evolve in Europe, and which in the meantime, are considered as universal values".<sup>38</sup> There is no obvious reason for the assumption that these values cannot be embraced and practised by Turkey. The status of Turkey as an accession-candidate, and its past close links to Europe, should primarily be understood as a sustaining function of the democratisation process in Turkey. For the current socio-political differences should not be declared to be indissoluble borders given by 'laws of nature'.

Thus, the question whether Turkey belongs politically to Europe, can only be answered according to the stipulated criteria of the European partners. The question however, whether Turkey belongs culturally to Europe, cannot be answered in Paris nor in Berlin, London or Amsterdam, but only in Turkey itself.

---

<sup>37</sup> Hauke Brunkhorst, *Solidarität unter Fremden*, Frankfurt/Main, Fischer, 1997.

<sup>38</sup> Heinz Kramer, *EU-kompatibel oder nicht? Zur Debatte um die Mitgliedschaft der Türkei in der Europäischen Union*, SWP-Studie, Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, 2003, p. 13.