Turkey as the European Other

A Constructivist Account of Turkey's Accession Process to the EU

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Abstract

Turkey's accession process to the EU has been characterized by conflicting interests and problematic negotiations between the parties. No earlier applications for membership in the EU have implied such lengthy preparations. This paper makes an attempt to describe this process in constructivist terms. In its emphasis on the importance of norms, values and rules, and how political identities are endogenously defined, this approach provides an understanding that much contrasts with the standard rationalist framework for studying international relations or European integration.

The material for this paper has been gathered from a variety of sources. Since the constructivist approach focuses on delineating the relevant actors and describing their relations by examining what norms, values and rules are exhibited, different newspaper articles have been used to illustrate the process at issue. The empirical material also comprises official EU documents and protocols, various statements of officials, and literature on European and Turkish history and identity.

The upshot of this paper is that constructivism is able provide a plausible description of the events examined, and that it therefore presents a complementary view on European integration in general, and European enlargement in particular.

Key words: Turkey, EU, constructivism, European enlargement, identity

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1   Introduction

Ever since the dawn of the EU, Turkey has shown obvious interest in joining the community.[1] Still, the country is not by Europe generally considered an appropriate member of the EU, for different alleged reasons. Usually, those opposing the admission of Turkey refer to the fact that Turkey does not yet fulfil the criteria formally stated, i.e. the Copenhagen criteria for accession. While admitting that Turkey still has not completely met these criteria, others claim that there is a deeper aversion towards Turkey that is the real reason why they have not yet become a member; the intuition is that the closer Turkey is to fulfilling these criteria, the more other issues concerning Turkey's possible admission are emphasized.[2] Implicit in the discussion is often the fact that Turkey is, though officially secular, a Muslim country, and that the current EU members are built upon a Christian foundation. The debate is therefore often about how different Turkey is from the current members, and that these differences are not easily reconciled.

My aim in this paper is to try to understand and describe this situation. How is the situation best described now, and what are the important events that have led to it? Which are the relevant actors affecting the course of events? Which are the arguments that have been used? How does a constructivist understanding of the accession process of Turkey look like?

The approach I intend to use is to try to describe this in constructivist terms. Constructivism is a theory that has gained much attention lately, first and foremost in international relations (IR) theory, but increasingly also in explaining European integration. European enlargement is though, to my mind, partly a departure from these two fields. It cannot easily be subsumed under IR, and the established theories of European integration theory are to a high degree unable to describe this phenomenon in a satisfying way. Constructivism has been used in this context,[3] but it must be conceded that the current litterature on the subject is scarce. The corresponding investigations on the part of Turkey are hitherto practically inexistent.

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[1] For example, Turkey's Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan claimed, after learning that his party had won the Turkish election, that: 'Our most urgent issue is the EU, and I will send my colleagues to Europe...We have no time to lose' (The Economist, March 19 2005, p. 6).
[2] See e.g. Casanova (2006), p. 236.
[3] See e.g. O'Brennan (2001) and Risse (2004).

1.1 Disposition and Methodology

In trying to delineate the process of Turkey's accession process to the EU, an important part is to describe the different political actors involved, and what norms, values and rules the process is characterized by. It is one of the cornerstones of constructivism that not only material factors matter in describing political events, but also ideational ones. In this way it is highly relevant to examine which norms, values and rules the different political actors are endorsing concerning Turkey's bid for membership.

The method I have employed during this research is an analysis of the different ideas and arguments commonly used in the debate. Following others in the constructivist discipline,[4] I believe a profitable approach is to let the different statements made by leaders and high officials function as the empirical material of this survey. By studying their statements, the major strands of ideas are categorized and further analyzed with respect to what norms, values and rules they represent. Naturally, by using this method one always runs the risk of interpreting the material in a biased way. This is, however, a risk that is impossible to rid oneself of completely, but reasonably it is reduced by the fact that the study of ideas and arguments is not utterly dependent on what selection method one uses, since the material does not have to be perfectly representative because of the qualitative nature of the survey; it is *which* ideas and arguments are employed that I will investigate, not primarily *how often* they are employed.

The bulk of the empirical material in this paper is articles from different newspapers and other news media, ranging from those issued on a daily basis to those issued weekly or monthly. Naturally, their respective editions on the Internet are also included. Since what is analyzed are mainly the arguments provided by different statements, the different discussions and analyses already provided by the media are not of any immediate interest to this essay. Rather, only specific quotations are the subjects of this investigation.

This paper is divided into three parts. First (chapter 2), the ideas behind constructivism will be presented, and briefly discussed concerning the applicability to the case at hand. Second (chapter 3), the history of Turkey's strife to become a member, including a short presentation of the EU stance etc., will be examined. The concluding part (chapters 4 and 5) will be an attempt at analyzing the event in terms of constructivism, and to evaluate whether the official arguments provide a coherent explanation to the process in question. An argument drawing on the idea that shifts in identity should be incorporated in such an explanation is there presented.

Certain necessary simplifications have been done. The constructivist approach arguably implies a more complex idea of identity, which further problematizes the analysis in some ways. The obvious problem lies in the fact that whereas

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[4] This method has been employed by, among others, Koslowski and Kratochwil (1994).

rationalism stipulates the relevant actors, the constructivist analysis continuously has questioned whether the actors' identities and relevant characteristics are unchanged. Therefore, the constructivist approach suffers the risk of becoming too complex, which in turn calls for some simplification. Hence, when such has been used, it has also been clearly noted.

1.2　　　The Process of EU Enlargement

Since its inception, the EU has gone through five enlargements, resulting in the current EU with 27 members. One important stage in this process is the European Council in Copenhagen in 1993, where formal accession criteria, the so-called Copenhagen criteria, were formulated. These criteria have only been invoked twice since then; first in the accession process of the ten Central and Eastern European (CEE) states who joined in May 2004, and then as Romania and Bulgaria joined in January 2007. The reason why the European Council thought it necessary to formulate these criteria ought best to be interpreted as a response to the risk of the EU's becoming too shallow regarding integration, and perhaps also, relatedly, too diverse regarding the different member states' interests and domestic political structure.[5] Importantly, according to article 49 in the Treaty on European Union, any state that is European and respects the principles of liberty, democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law, is entitled to apply for membership in the European Union.[6] Moreover, the Copenhagen European Council considered it important that the applying states have stable economies as well, since the EU in important aspects is an economic union and depends highly on the structure of the internal financial system. In more detail, the Copenhagen criteria encompass three distinct claims. First come the political criteria, according to which 'the applicant country must have achieved stability of its institutions, guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and the respect for and protection of minorities'.[7] Second come the economic criteria that claim the applicant country 'must have a functioning market economy, as well as the capacity to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the EU'.[8] Third, the Copenhagen criteria demand that 'it must have the ability to take on the obligations related to membership, including adherence to the aims of political, economic and monetary union'.[9]

　　　Once an applicant country has met the accession criteria, the question of enlargement will be negotiated by the Commission and the applicant country, and

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[5] See e.g. the document 'European Council in Copenhagen 21-22 June 1993 Conclusions of the Presidency'.
[6] See the Treaty on European Union.
[7] See the document 'The Copenhagen criteria'.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Ibid.

thereafter decided in the Council of Ministers. Regarding issues as important as enlargement of the EU, decisions must at this point be made unanimously,[10] enabling any one current member to block the accession of an applicant country. In this way, the process of joining the EU implies one very clearly stated condition, which is that once the applicant country meets the Copenhagen criteria, it is welcome as a member. This process also has one more imprecise demand, namely that it is up to the decision of each member state to grant the applicant membership. To make things even more complicated, it will be shown that not even the first demand is as clear-cut and straightforward as often is asserted; moreover, it will here be argued that the first demand actually is about as arbitrarily settled as the second one.

1.3   Is Turkey a Special Case?

As described above, the first condition an applicant country must fulfil in order to join the EU is to meet the Copenhagen criteria. These criteria are divided into three categories, with the purpose of specifying to some degree what is demanded in order for a country to become a member. What is essential, in any case, is that no matter how specified the accession criteria are, in the end it will be a matter of interpretation whether Turkey really has met the criteria or not. In order to prove this point, a brief comparison between how well Turkey has fulfilled the accession criteria and the Commission's opinion on Bulgaria's degree of meeting the same criteria, at the time for its accession negotiations, will here be provided.

One thing is directly interesting; in the 'Commissions opinion on Bulgaria's application' paper it is stated that: 'Bulgaria's accession is to be seen as part of an historic process, in which the countries of Central and Eastern Europe overcome the division of the continent which has lasted for more than 40 years, and join the area of peace, stability and prosperity created by the Union.'[11] It is often assumed that a problem for Turkey is that it is a very poor country compared to the rest of Europe, and that this would be a problem. By measuring the GDP per capita an indication of the economic development could be produced, and by this measure Turkey is well below the average of EU-15, and also significantly below the acceding countries of the 2004 enlargement. However, if Turkey is compared to the countries of the 2007 enlargement round, things are not as apparent. Instead, Turkey's level of development is here well in level with that of Romania and Bulgaria.[12]

Turkey is now considered as fulfilling the political as well as the economic conditions of the Copenhagen critieria, whereas it still has some work to do

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[10] Bomberg & Stubb (2003), p. 182.
[11] See the Commission document 'Commission's opinion on Bulgaria's Application for membership of the European Union' from 1997, p. 5.
[12] See IMF webpage at http://www.imf.org.

concerning the ability to take on the obligations related to membership in the EU.[13] All things considered, the accession processes for Bulgaria and Romania have been far from smooth. The fact that there were several 'areas of serious concern' listed by the Commission only half a year before their actual accession[14] indicates that whether Bulgaria and Romania really sufficiently fulfilled the criteria is a matter of dispute.

As here has been shown, it is impossible to specify the exact criteria by which the applicant country should be determined; it will always be a question of interpretion whether a country has to a sufficient degree met the conditions or not. The Commission's decision to recommend a certain country as a member or not is also founded on information gathered by a vast amount of organizations and authorities of different kinds, and this fact further emphasizes the interpretional aspect of the issue; all additional participants will necessarily imply further interpretations. What is absolutely certain is that the different member states of the EU are the ones holding the key to Turkish membership, in a more direct way than often is assumed. It certainly is telling that, regarding the Bulgarian accession, the Commission specifically stated that their accession should be 'seen as part of an historic process', in this way suggesting that any possible shortcomings on Bulgaria's part in fulfilling the precise conditions of the Copenhagen criteria could be overlooked.

The discussion among the EU members about enlargement is claimed to be primarily a matter of rational calculation in which both the EU and the applicant country are supposed to benefit. In this way, enlargement can typically be seen as something that is an intentional and collective action by the member states the applicant country. However, it seems this intentional manoeuvre often results in normatively determined outcomes, where a description in terms of the different parties' individual benefits from the process seem inapt to determining the factual outcome. The following chapters will as a result include an examination of whether the original intentions of the EU have been lost and instead left the outcome to be determined by the perhaps more diffuse concepts of norms and values.

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[13] See the Commission document 'Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council. Enlargement Strategy and main Challenges 2007-2008.', pp. 56-8.
[14] Lavenex & Schimmelfennig (2007), p. 146.

2   Theoretical Framework

2.1   Constructivism

Concerning IR theory, constructivism has in recent years become a major challenge to the more established rationalist theories, namely neorealism and neoliberalism.[15] Emphasizing that ideational factors should be accorded significant weight in the analyses of political phenomena—sometimes at the expense of material factors—and that the national level is important to take into account when analyzing the international, constructivism seems to be able to explain certain events that former theories were unable to.[16] However, IR theories are usually not designed to apply to European integration. The two most important theories are here liberal intergovernmentalism and neofunctionalism. Constructivism is not yet as common an analytical tool in this field.[17]

One axiom of IR theory has been, though often implicitly conveyed, that the actors of international politics are independent and clearly defined, seeking to maximize some or all of their preferences. Robert Gilpin, for example, claims that 'international relations continue to be a recurring struggle for wealth and power among independent actors in a state of anarchy'.[18] In the modern world, the state is commonly regarded the most important political actor regarding IR. Although clothed in other words, rationalist theories all embrace the above stated basic principles of international relations; states being the (most important) political actors on the international arena, and what is of interest is delineating and analyzing the interaction of these actors. Constructivism opposes this approach. On this view, in order to understand the relations and events on the international arena, domestic events must also be investigated. What goes on inside the states will, hence, often have consequences in the relations with other states. The same line of reasoning will, mutatis mutandis, be applicable to all political actors. The

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[15] On the rationalist foundation of these views, see e.g. Wendt (1992), p. 391.

[16] For example, Koslowski and Kratochwil have provided a description of the demise of the Soviet empire, which they claim neorealism cannot provide a coherent explanation to (Koslowski and Kratochwil (1994)). Since it is widely assumed that there are no 'grand theories' about world politics (see e.g. Laffan *et al.* (1999), p. 33), constructivism should not be supposed to be one, but it certainly provides a complementary description of political events that have been hard to tackle with earlier theories.

[17] Risse (2004), p. 159.

[18] Gilpin (1981), p. 7.

internal simply affects the external in a highly relevant way, and therefore the internal must be considered when regarding the external, and vice versa.

According to the constructivist approach, norms, rules and values form an important part of the explanation or understanding of political events. As Koslowski and Kratochwil claim: 'in general, institutions are settled or routinized practices established and regulated by norms',[19] and accordingly societal institutions, both formal and informal, can be regarded as dependent on the norms and rules surrounding them. Relatedly, history can have an impact on the behaviour of political actors. Since actors preferably are regarded as free in important ways, but simultaneously limited in their freedom by structure, here relevantly represented and manifested by different instititutions, the trajectory of a political phenomenon is almost impossible to predict. These institutions also have the effect that they help define what is 'right' and what is 'appropriate behaviour'. A constructivist description of political action is thereby characterized by actors trying to find out what the relevant rules or norms concerning a certain situation are, and following these. This logic of action, clearly contrasting the 'instrumentalist logic' rationalists typically embrace, is often called 'the logic of appropriateness'.[20] In the present context, understanding the prevailing discourse implying certain norms, values and rules is imperative in understanding the dynamics and events of European integration and enlargement. Constructivism does not, however, completely exclude arguments instrumentalist often invoke; to the extent actors behave freely, it is of course possible and even probable that they compare different possible prospects and opt for the most beneficial one.

So far the discussion has concerned the effect structure has on individual actors, which of course is the most pertinent and definitely the most obvious aspect of agency-structure discussions. However, in applying a constructivist approach to European enlargement, we need to discuss the converse effect as well. Arguably, including Turkey in the EU would be considered a major political event, and, following Koslowski and Kratochwil, we need therefore to take into account also how discursive changes affect politics: 'fundamental change in the international system occurs when actors, through their practices, change the rules and norms constitutive of international interaction'.[21] Such a change in rules and norms also has the potential of affecting the actors themselves and hence also their identities. The relevant aspects of change in rules and norms will therefore be scrutinized in this paper.

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[19] Koslowski and Kratochwil (1994), p. 222.
[20] March & Olsen (1998), p. 951.
[21] Koslowski and Kratochwil (1994), p. 216.

2.2 Problematizing Identity: The European Self and Other

Identity is a central notion in constructivist analyses of European enlargement. The idea is that the more two countries identify with one another, the more likely they are to 'pursue horizontal institutionalization', in Frank Schimmelfennig's and Ulf Sedelmeier's words.[22] Starting with the assumption that institutions are settled or routinized practices established and regulated by norms, and that these norms are contingent on the interplay between different actors, institutions therefore are susceptible to the effect change in the behaviour of different actors has. Koslowski and Kratochwil correspondingly claim: 'in all politics, domestic and international, actors reproduce or alter systems through their actions'.[23] In this way, there exists in a relevant sense a dialectical relationship between agent and structure that often is needed in order to explain certain political phenomena. Agents are affected by structure, but structure is sometimes also irreducibly affected by agents. Constructivism therefore claims that some properties of structures and agents cannot be defined adequately in terms of the other.[24]

Opposing another of the rationalist premises, constructivism does not assume identity and preferences to be exogenously given. Instead, these are better regarded as formed in the political process itself. Constructivism therefore claims that the identities of political actors, as well as the shaping of preferences, are endogenous to the political process.[25] A consequence of this assumption is that the characteristics of political actors have the potential of undergoing significant change over time, and as do the actual identities of these actors. Here an important question is how Europe perceives itself. In order to sort this out, the notion of Europe's Self will be utilized, contrasting Europe's Other. This presented dualism simply aims at defining the boundaries of Europe. One way to define the European Self is of course to try to find out what 'European characteristics' really are—in other words, what the European essence is. Such approaches are, however, generally considered fruitless. Most definitions of Europeanness simply prove inadequate, since there is no one property that refers to Europeanness; neither geographic, ethnic, religious, nor political definitions have provided any satisfactory solution.

A description of the European Self and Other in constructivist terms is different from the axiomatic essentialist descriptions rationalists have to depend on. As aforementioned, constructivists claim that the actor's identities and preferences are endogenously given, which means that they are social constructions emanating from the political process and its actors. In this process, the identities that are the result are merely more or less arbitrarily defined, and

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[22] Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier (2002), p. 513.
[23] Koslowski and Kratochwil (1994), p. 216.
[24] Risse (2004), p. 161. On this aspect of the agency-structure discussion, cf. Giddens (1982).
[25] Wendt (1992), p. 394.

referred to by convention. Accordingly, identity can be, and sometimes is, changed. Such an understanding of a certain change across time regarding the identities of political actors is not especially controversial. Germany serves as the perhaps most obvious example. An understanding of something's identity reasonably implies an understanding of its role in a certain context. In the context of pre-Second World War, Germany's identity implied some well-known facts about its role in relation to other countries. These facts changed dramatically after 1945, but at the same time it would be strange to claim that the country at issue was not Germany any more; too many things normally associated with the identity of Germany were held constant during this whole period. The inhabitants of Germany were to a large degree the same individuals, to name one important example. This means that Germany both ought to and ought not to be considered the same during this time. A plausible understanding of this is certainly that the identity of Germany has changed as regards its characteristics (it is no longer the enemy of Great Britain, for example), but that a reference to 'Germany' still refers to something that is quite unambiguously defined. In this way, Germany's identity changed the structure, but was very obviously changed in turn by the structure.

Importantly, this dialectical process has even more wide-ranging implications pertaining to the formation of identity, and calls for a second perspective. Any description of a political process should incorporate an idea of the causal mechanisms involved, and since actors' wills commonly are thought to be important parts of the causes of political processes, their wills and intentions must be properly connected to their identities. This second perspective thusly emphasizes the actors' impact in understanding political processes. A constructivist understanding of the shaping of identities is, however, only partly contingent on the question of structure and agency. Instead, the shaping of identities is best understood through the way different actors interact, and which anticipations these actors have. In order to illustrate the process through which political actors, here primarily referring to states or the EU, develop their identities and thereby their roles in international politics, an interesting parallel can be made; political actors, broadly conceived, share many characteristics with individual persons in how they are considered to act intentionally and thereby develop a certain identity.[26]

2.3   Conceptualizing the Interplay between the EU and Turkey

Constructivism's advantage over rationalist theories is partly its problematization of the identity concept. This idea is important since the rationalist approach with exogenously given identities seems to be inadequate in describing certain political

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[26] Alexander Wendt has discussed this parallel in his (2004).

events. At the same time the constructivist approach has an advantage, it seems to run the risk of having certain drawbacks as well, though. Once the door has been opened to questioning the existence of well-defined political identities (and thereby actors), it seems the established concepts, such as causality and intentionality, for understanding political phenomena and events, become questioned as well. One can full well envisage the application of a Foucauldian understanding of agency, according to which the actors are considered the locations of action rather than actors in the common sense of the word. Following Anthony Giddens's critique of this idea of agency, I believe such an extreme view should be discarded.[27] Consequently, there exist agents that intentionally (and of course also unintentionally) cause certain events, and the question to ask is only 'to which degree?' Therefore, before a model of the interplay between the EU and Turkey, or any other international actors for that matter, can be presented, it must be determined what is meant by an actor, and which ones should be considered the relevant actors in the situation at issue.

That nation states are international political actors is commonly agreed upon. The EU, however, is no ordinary nation state, although it has some of the required features, such as the right to pass laws. Many therefore instead claim that the EU should not be considered an international actor on its own right, but instead as the result of the different member states' wills. The impact of what is often perceived as the EU's actions as a unitary actor should on this view instead be reduced to the actions of the different member states.

This way of viewing the EU seems however not entirely correct. Surely many actions usually ascribed to the EU cannot instead be described entirely as the work of the different member states? To sort this question out, we need to look at the organization of the EU. The EU deals with a lot of different issues. Most obviously, we can consider the three pillars that constitute the EU, representing three different policy areas. Only the first of these, the EC pillar, has formally a supranational character in that decisions often are taken by a qualified majority vote (QMV) instead of by unanimous vote. The two other pillars, the CFSP (Common Foreign and Security Policy) and the JHA (Justice and Home Affairs) require unanimity in order to reach decisions.[28] As Åsa Lundgren observes, even though the CFSP pillar, which is the one formally managing foreign affairs, has no supranational elements in its voting procedures, it ought still be considered an actor in itself.[29] This assertion can be supported in two ways. First, the reason for counting the nation state an international actor is arbitrary. True, the nation state has long since been the most important actor in IR. In two of the most important theories of IR, neorealism and neoliberalism, the nation state plays the most important role in the analysis. Still, other actors, such as NGOs, share some of the nation state's instruments in international relations. Moreover, the nation state is seldom a unitary actor in the ideal sense, since many decisions taken by the

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[27] See Giddens (1987), ch. 4.
[28] Bomberg & Stubb (2003), p. 129.
[29] Lundgren (1998), ch. 3.

government does not necessarily mean that the state as a whole is united in the question. Therefore, the claim that the nation states are the only actors on the international arena is arbitrary and partly false; it could as well be claimed that large NGOs or single individuals should be regarded international actors.

Second, it can be argued that the EU should be considered an international actor because of the different expectations other actors have on the EU.[30] In many cases, regardless of how the formal decision-making structure within the EU works, other international actors expect and treat the EU as if it were capable of handling different issues connected to IR. Reasonably, then, even if the EU really is merely the result of its member states' actions, the member states behave different from the way they would have behaved should the EU not exist at all. Gunnar Sjöstedt develops this line of thought. He claims that in order to figure out what the EU's real contribution as an international actor is, we should compare with how the international interaction between states would look like if the EU would not exist at all.[31] Of course, such comparisons are always difficult to make. Still, it is hard to deny that the EU considered as an international actor with certain palpable capabilities to affect other actors exists. In this way too, the EU can arguably be considered an important international actor. Thus it is not at all obvious that the nation states are the natural subject of investigation concerning the issue of Turkey's bid for membership in the EU. Moreover, it is not even evident which the relevant actors in this process are, even if we agree that the most plausible description entails intentional action by agents. This further buttresses the constructivist approach of investigating norms, values and rules rather than the behaviour of individual actors.

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[30] Lundgren (1998), p. 53.
[31] Sjöstedt (1977), pp. 15f.

3   Empricial Context

Any construal of the accession process for Turkey needs substance. As stated in the introduction, the empirical material for this paper comprises a variety of sources, with the intention of providing a picture of the norms, values and rules that are commonly referred to, implicitly or explicitly, in the process, and in this focusing especially on those expressed by the leaders and representatives for the different EU member states. Since the construal provided here is made in constructivist terms, the empirical material will hence be structured and presented according to three categories that are central to the constructivist perspective. First, the applicability of the 'logic of appropriateness' and what history entails is examined. Second, the relation between the idea of a 'European identity' and the accession process is highlighted. Third, a brief description of the relevant historical events is presented.

3.1   The Logic of Appropriateness

Constructivism's emphasis on how the 'logic of appropriateness' explains the behaviour of agents is another important point in the understanding of Turkey's accession process. Here the Copenhagen criteria serve as a good example of which norms, values and rules are important in the EU's enlargement process. As a parallel with the presentation of the criteria above, rather than seeing the criteria as absolute rules that cannot be broken, they would according to a constructivist reading indicate what behaviour is appropriate and what is not. The values referred to that are strongly emphasized are mainly the so-called political criteria, namely the respect for and protection of minorities and the rule of law, which have several important implications for Turkey.

First, the Cyprus issue is problematic for Turkey. The long history of the conflict between Turkey, controlling the northern part of Cyprus, and the rest of Cyprus, a sovereign state, has in recent years led to a stalemate in the accession process for Turkey, since Turkey never has recognized the independence of the Greek-Cypriot part of the island. In this conflict, the Turks refuse to open their ports and airports to Cyprus, and it seems they will continue to do so until the EU ends the trade embargo on the Turkish part of Cyprus.[32] The conflict on Cyprus is a multifaceted problem for Turkey. To begin with, since Cyprus is a member of

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[32] See e.g. BBC, December 18 2006.

the EU it has the right to veto Turkish membership in the EU. Reasonably, such a conflict, especially while contemplating its history, would be a reason to block Turkish accession. The problem does not end there, though, since Cyprus is not the only member in the EU that finds the Turkish position in the question unacceptable. As a response, Turkey's Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan said: 'so long as the economic isolation of Turkish-occupied northern Cyprus continues, there can be no change in Turkish policy'.[33] Erdogan's stern attitude on the Cyprus issue can of course be interpreted as hostile towards the EU as a whole, since it implies that Turkey expects the EU to make the first move in order to solve the problem. Both France's and Germany's reactions on Erdogan's statement were very negative.[34] In case none of the sides takes the initiative, the situation seems to lead to a stalemate, and Turkey suffers the risk of effectively being placed outside the EU.

Admittedly, the Cyprus issue is not directly affected by the Copenhagen criteria, since it is unclear whether the issue could be interpreted as involving any minorities at all. However, it is not hard to imagine that what is considered 'appropriate' by the EU in the situation is that the Cyprus issue must be dealt with before any accession can take place. This line of reasoning is further strengthened by the fact that the EU officially claims that 'The Union is founded on common European values such as respect for human dignity, the rule of law, tolerance and non-discrimination. As a community of values, one of our strengths is that we are united in diversity.'[35]

Second, another issue that is problematic for Turkey is their official opinion on what has recently been called the genocide of the Armenians during the First World War.[36] The Turkish government has fervently opposed the label 'genocide' to the killings of about 1.5 million Armenians that started in 1915, claiming that the deaths instead were the result of 'inter-ethnic strife'.[37] The fact that the EU uses the notion 'genocide' as well[38] indicates a clash of perspectives between the EU and Turkey. Naturally, what is considered the appropriate rule for the EU to follow in this context is of course that Turkey must recognize the killings as genocide, not least because the political accession criteria's emphasis on the respect for and protection of minorities seems to imply this.

Third, the question of the Kurds must be solved in order for Turkey to become a member. The situation has improved greatly for the Kurdish minority in the eastern and southern parts of Turkey, but it is still far from acceptable. Since the Turkish government has succeeded in improving much of what is demanded in order to become an EU member, including the protection of minorities, the attitudes of the Kurds have seemingly somewhat been changed. At the outset, before Turkey officially became an applicant country in 1999, many Turkish

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[33] The Economist, November 11 2006, p. 43.
[34] Ibid.
[35] See the webpage 'Myths and Facts about Enlargement'.
[36] CNN, October 10 2007.
[37] BBC, October 11 2007.
[38] See e.g. http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/lang/languages/langmin/euromosaic/pol7_en.html

Kurds aimed at a proclamation of a Kurdish Republic as a solution to end the oppression of the Turkish state. At the present, the Kurds instead increasingly see the progress towards EU membership for Turkey as a solution to the problem. It is at least reasonable that many Kurds, who have earlier thought an independent Kurdish state the only possible solution, instead can see the influence of the EU positively.

Forth, the infamous article 301 of the Turkish penal code continues to upset the Europeans. According to this article, it is a criminal offence to insult 'Turkishness', the Republic itself or the Turkish parliament.[39] Conspicuously, Orhan Pamuk, in 2006 awarded the Nobel Prize in litterature, was in 2005 arrested for insulting the Turkish state. That event caused a lot of attention around Europe,[40] presumably because such behaviour very obviously conflicts with the European ideal of freedom of speech. This difference in practice is obvious also to the Turkish leaders: On November 6th 2006, Turkey's Prime Minister Erdogan gave the impression that this issue would be reconsidered, and that article 301 perhaps would be amended, but not scrapped.[41] Later Turkey decided to amend the article, and the then Foreign Minister Abdullah Gül used the following motivation: 'I want this article amended because it puts a shadow on Turkey's reform process', and continued, 'it is damaging Turkey's image. It is portraying Turkey as a country where hundreds of journalists and intellectuals are jailed for their speeches. This is wrong.'[42]

The four here stated examples represent questions in which Turkey's behaviour conflicts with the formally stated norms of the EU, which according to the constructivist understanding of behaviour as following the logic of appropriateness most credibly would imply that the norms or rules to follow for the EU at this point is not to let Turkey become a member before the above questions are conveniently settled. The Cyprus question, even though it is not directly in conflict with the Copenhagen criteria, must be regarded as important in determining whether Turkey should or should not be granted membership, especially since Cyprus now is a member of the EU. The conflict about the Armenian killings in the early 20th century is definitely derivative to European norms about the respect for and protection of minorities and the ideas about human dignity and tolerance. The conflict with the Kurds conflicts very obviously with the criterion that applicants must respect and protect minorities, whereas the fourth example instead is about Turkey failing to fully implement the rule of law.

These issues are important in two ways. First, in order for the EU to continue to represent certain values, such as the respect for and protection of minorities, any new EU members must be viewed as following these as well. Second, the EU can use the offering of membership to countries as a policy instrument, which

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[39] Amnesty International's Website, http://www.amnesty.org/en/region/europe-and-central-asia/balkans/turkey.
[40] See e.g. The Independent, February 13 2007.
[41] The Economist, November 11 2006, p. 43.
[42] The Independent, February 13 2007.

means that at this stage has a great opportunity to affect Turkish internal policy.[43] Great Britain seems to see this instrument as an effective one, since it has in fact led to huge improvements in Turkey concerning issues like human rights and the protection for minorities.

3.2   Questions about Identity

Constructivism's departure from the rationalist approach of exogenously given identities and preferences means that identities and preferences are created within the system, and hence that an understanding of the accession process of Turkey needs an investigation of this question. Analyses of the identities in political processes easily become very complex, and thereby requiring extensive elaboration in order to provide plausible and intuitive descriptions. Even though an examination of identities in politics heavily depends on the problematique of agency and structure, such analyses must nevertheless draw upon empirical observations.

It is clear that the rhetoric used concerning Turkey and the CEE countries, respectively, differ significantly. For example, when the former enlargement commissioner Günter Verheugen talked about the CEE countries prior to the 2004 enlargement, these were his words: 'These are countries that were kept apart from us against their will and now want to join our family permanently, once and for all.'[44] The statement obviously implies that the EU-15 and the CEE countries share an identity, namely the European one, and that this identity should be the reason why the CEE countries should be granted membership.

Concerning the issue of how the European identity relates to the Turkish identity, much remains unclear. What can be said directly is that the majority of the European people think that Turkish membership in the EU primarily would be in the interest of Turkey, whereas only 20 per cent think it would be primarily in the mutual interest of the parties.[45] Among the European governments, the stance towards Turkish membership is very divided. Since all members of the EU unanimously must decide whether an applicant country can be granted membership, it is strictly speaking exactly as important if Luxemburg disapproves as if Germany does. However, I believe it is reasonable to claim that the bigger member states in fact have a bigger influence on the enlargement policy discourse. Hence, it is also more important what the bigger member states' positions regarding the Turkey issue are, and also to regard this from the position of the decision makers. In the media, Germany, France and Great Britain seem to dominate the forum.

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[43] See e.g. Smith (2003), p. 64. This was also brought up in The New York Post, October 19 2007, p. A 13.
[44] Speech in the European Parliament on October 9 2002.
[45] See the Commission's Eurobarometer 2006, p. 69.

Germany, first, is portrayed as divided concerning the politicians' attitudes. Gerhard Schröder, the former German Chancellor, was generally supportive of Turkey as a future member. However, his successor, Angela Merkel, is well known for her reluctance to including Turkey. The official opinion of Merkel's party, the Christian Democrats, is that they are against full membership for Turkey, and propose instead that the only alternative should be a privileged partnership with the EU. The reluctance to including Turkey in the EU seems to be well-spread in Germany. According to a Eurobarometer survey, Turkey was in 2006 the one of all candidate or potential candidate countries that gave rise to the most disapproval in Europe.[46] Of the EU countries that disapproved, Austria had the highest percentage of persons opposed to the accession of Turkey in the EU (81 per cent), followed by Germany and Luxemburg (69 per cent each). By comparison, in EU-25 48 per cent were disapproving, and only 22 per cent of the Turks.[47] In relation to this, it is certainly worth noticing the arguments claiming that one important reason why Angela Merkel and the Christian Democrats were elected was because they so clearly opposed a future membership for Turkey.[48] Further, Angela Merkel seem to put a lot of emphasis on the conflict between Turkey and Cyprus, and declared that if Turkey refused to change its mind concerning the issue, the situation would be 'very, very serious',[49] even though the whole issue about Cyprus is diffuse.

The way that the German Christian Democrats put forward their message is not popular in all arenas. Gary Titley, leader of British Labour MEPs in the European Parliament, opposes the Christian Democrats' way of arguing: 'The Christian Democrats are fervently opposed. The trouble is they express their opposition in a way most of us cannot accept—talk of a Christian club is manifest nonsense and unacceptable'.[50]

Second, France displays similar signs of division concerning the issue. Jacques Chirac, the former French President, was positive to a future Turkish membership. His successor, Nicholas Sarkozy, is instead strongly against it. Just as in the Germany case, Sarkozy's disapproving position is widely thought to have had an impact on French voters during the presidential election in May 2007.[51]

It seems Sarkozy faces a dilemma. On the one side, he has to stand by his promise to the French voters to the effect that he must oppose Turkish membership in the EU. On the other side, such a stubborn attitude towards a candidate country is not viewed positively in the EU. Sarkozy's alleged preference of a 'privileged partnership' between Turkey and the EU is, among

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[46] Ibid., p. 70.

[47] Ibid., p. 71.

[48] Merkel's political opponents have implied that her stance if for tactical reasons. See e.g. Herald Tribune, September 17 2004.

[49] The Economist, November 11 2006, p. 43.

[50] BBC, September 24 2007.

[51] According to a Eurobarometer poll, 6 per cent of the French voters said 'enlargement' was their reason for their no vote in the 2005 French referendum on a constitution for the EU. See EUObserver, June 27 2005: 'Enlargement Played Small Role in Constitution No Votes'.

other things, therefore seen as a way for Sarkozy to fulfil his promise to the French people while simultaneously avoiding a major EU crisis. That Sarkozy's ardent opposition towards Turkish membership is an important EU question, and that the official EU stance is that Turkey is welcome as soon as they fulfil the Copenhagen criteria, are made obvious by the fact that the President of the Commission, José Manuel Barroso, called on Sarkozy not to block Turkish membership altogether, which Sarkozy also has promised not to.[52] Barroso further said that 'I have every confidence that Nicolas Sarkozy, whose convictions I know and whose strong beliefs are known to all, will play a driving role in resolving the institutional question and in consolidating a political Europe'.[53]

On the issue of Turkey's future membership and the rhetoric on Europe generally, Sarkozy often uses the word 'protection', and emphasizes that Europe instead has to improve the lives of its citizens.[54] The rhetoric Sarkozy uses in his statements are often referred to by Turkish citizens commenting on the discussions about including Turkey in the EU. For example, Hakan Altinay, director of the Open Society Institute, says that the pessimistic attitudes of the Turkish people can be related to Sarkozy's statements.[55] Certainly Sarkozy's win in the presidential election has been important in the dynamics of Turkey's bid for membership, but it should not be over-emphasized. Already in November 2006, half a year before Sarkozy was elected President, France was considered a fierce critic of Turkey, especially regarding the official Turkish stance on the killing of Armenians during the First World War. France's position was already at that time that Turkey must recognize the killings as genocide before it could join the EU.[56] Moreover, the French Foreign Minister Philippe Douste-Blazy, demanded that the timetable for Turkey's accession talks must be 'rethought' unless Turkey officially recognized Cyprus by the end of 2006.[57] In this way, the French rhetoric amounts to continuing the membership talks for Turkey, while at the same time placing demands that traditionally have been sensitive issues for Turkey (especially the Armenian killings and the Cyprus issue) in a way that makes Turkish membership still harder to achieve.

Third and last, Great Britain differs significantly from Germany and France on the issue. The official British position is supportive of full Turkish membership of the EU.[58] This more pro-Turkish attitude is also reflected in how the citizens of Great Britain think of the accession of Turkey to the EU, where 42 per cent were in favour and 39 per cent were opposed, according to a Eurobarometer survey in

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[52] BBC, May 7 2007.
[53] Ibid.
[54] See The Economist, July 23 2007.
[55] BBC, September 24 2007. Sarkozy's effect on the Turkish attitudes can be further emphasized by the Turkish newspaper Milliyet's headline 'Sarkozy the new obstacle on the path towards EU' (BBC, May 7 2007).
[56] BBC, November 7 2006.
[57] The Economist, November 11 2006.
[58] BBC, September 5 2007.

2006.[59] In both Germany and France, a clear majority instead oppose Turkish membership.[60]

British rhetoric is mainly based on economic and rationalist arguments rather than arguments founded on historical events or culture. Some arguments that are put forward amount to the British seeing the EU as an opportunity, referring to how Turkey could become the first Muslim country entering the EU and thereby serving as a democratic role model for other Muslim countries.[61] Many of Tony Blair's statements also go in line with this reasoning, emphasizing that a Turkish membership would improve the security situation in Europe, and that it is important not to signal to the world that there is a difference between Europe and Turkey that cannot be surmounted.[62] Often Turkey is viewed as the representative of the Muslim world, and something of a bridge between the Occident and the Orient. This ambassadorial role that Turkey is often thought to have certainly has the potential to make the issue over Turkish membership in the EU a more important one. At the same time it is crucial to question this putative reconciling role of Turkey. It is uncontroversial to claim that Turkey is a Muslim country, since an overwhelming majority of the population there is Muslim. Though, Turkey is also a highly secular country, with a clear division between the church and the state. Moreover, it is sometimes claimed that whether Turkey becomes a member or not is unimportant from this point of view. 'Turkey has no real connection to the Arab world, so whether Turkey gets into Europe or not doesn't really matter to the ordinary guy in Amman or Riyadh', says a Palestinian commentator.[63]

3.3   Identity and History

It is hardly controversial to claim that a country's history has significant impact on its present identity. Turkey's interesting location geographically, culturally and politically has through the years had a huge effect on how the rest of the world views the country.

Mustafa Kemal Atatürk is in many ways the most important symbol for the modern Turkey. During the 1920s and 1930s he was the main organizer of a substantial development of the nation, pertaining to various societal areas such as religious, ethnic and political matters. Through a series of reforms Kemal successfully continued the already initiated institutional reforms of the late Ottoman state and transformed the Turkish society in a process that implied, for example, democracy, secularization of the state, the rule of law, abolishing the

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[59] See the Commission's Eurobarometer 2006, p. 71.
[60] Ibid.
[61] See e.g. The Economist, March 19 2005.
[62] See e.g. BBC, July 27 2005.
[63] The Economist, December 6 2006.

caliphate and introduction of the latin alphabet instead of the arabic, with the aim of modernizing the whole society. This transformation also in many ways implied a 'Westernization' of the society, which also meant that Turkey in a sense moved closer to Europe. In order for Kemal to succeed in his modernization of Turkey, the idea of a multi-national empire was rejected. One result of the pursuit of a homogenous society resulted in the killings of about 1.5 million Armenians.

Turkey did change in a whole range of areas, but it can be argued that some of the old attitudes from the Ottoman era still have an influence on the Turkish society. For example, the army's coup d'état of 1980 was a reaction to the anti-Kemalist influences of the politicians, who in Resat Kasaba's words were labeled by the military as 'embittered remnants of an old order'.[64] It is hardly an exaggeration to claim that Turkish society in many ways is characterized by a conflict between 'the old society' and the traditions, norms and values that are inherited, and 'the new society' referring to such aspects as modernization and the ambition to develop Turkey, especially economically. Turkey's aspirations to in this way modernize the society are closely associated with Kemalism itself. Among others, in examining Turkish modernity, Ibrahim Kaya confirms that 'Kemalism has been emphasized, by both critics and supporters, as aiming to Westernize Turkish society'.[65] He also conveys the picture of Turkey as often considered to be 'somewhere in between', but simultaneously claims that this characterization is problematic: 'Turkey has often been assumed to be a bridge between the West and the East, more specifically a bridge between the Islamic East and the Christian West. […] However, to assume that Turkey might play such a role is problematic, in that Turkey has never aimed to achieve full membership either of the Islamic East or of the West.'[66]

The view of Turkey as Europe's Other reaches far back in time. During the Renaissance, Europe was strongly associated with Christianity.[67] Even though Europe to a large extent is secularized, it is often still viewed as a Christian community. The fact that an amendment, suggesting that Judeo-Christian values were to be included in the proposed Constitutional Treaty, was tabled by the Christian Democrat Group in the European Parliament in 2003, even if it ultimately was turned down, can be seen as a clear indication of this.[68] Turkey, instead, with a population typically characterized as Muslim, is in this way very clearly considered Europe's Other. The fact that the Turkish identity is partly founded on the Ottoman heritage, and that the Ottomans widely were considered the enemies of many European countries during the 16th and 17th centuries—conspicuously illustrated by the Ottoman siege of Vienna in 1529—suggest that the historical aspect further emphasizes Turkey as Europe's Other.

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[64] Kasaba (1997), p. 15.
[65] Kaya (2004), p. 10.
[66] Ibid., p. 9.
[67] Stråth (2000), p. 28.
[68] On the proposed amendment, see http://www.euro-fam.org/scripts/spop/articleINT.php?LG=EN&XMLCODE=2003-09-25-1457.

History in this way seems to accentuate the differences between Turks and Europeans. Important to note, however, is that history is not best conceived as absolute or essential. Bo Stråth describes this: 'Although national feelings of belonging and sameness are tenacious, this does not mean that they were given by nature or that they have essential proportions', and he continues, 'these structures of demarcation between Us and Them are in permanent transformation and transition.'[69] Descriptions of historical events have to be interpreted, and reasonably the interpretations are best described to convey the ideas of Us and Them—of Self and Other.

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[69] Stråth (2000), p. 40.

4   A Constructivist Interpretation of the Accession of Turkey

Constructivist analyses do, as claimed above, not deny the importance of individual political actors. However, instead of trying either to assume that one level of analysis, i.e. either the national, supranational or subnational one, should be the outset of analysis, constructivism investigates the norms, values and rules of the process. In this way, the different levels of analysis are viewed as interrelated in a complex way that cannot without considerable loss of information be reduced to an analysis in terms of either the national, supranational or subnational. This is therefore the reason why what goes on within the borders of the different EU member states has effects on what happens between the states. First, the empirical material will be analyzed in terms of appropriateness, in order to determine whether a constructivist analys is applicable at all. Second, and narrowing down the analysis one step, the identities of the relevant actors will be outlined by analyzing different manifested norms, values and rules. Third, and further narrowing down the analysis, the notion of change concerning these identities will be discussed.

4.1   Analysis in Terms of Appropriateness

One way to determine which the different actors are is to analyze what is considered appropriate in different situations. If all political events can conveniently be understood in terms of the prevailing norms and values, talk about the behaviour of different actors is uninformative. In such cases it would be more interesting to investigate what the source of the norms and values are, instead of which states follow which norms. Normally, though, it is of course interesting to examine different actors and their preferences as well. Regarding the accession process of Turkey to the EU, the different member states ought certainly to be considered individual actors to some degree, since they very obviously have different agendas for their behaviour. According to the classic rationalist understandings of international relations, typically arguments concerning security or economics are considered important. These arguments are not unimportant in constructivist theory either, but they can be interpreted in a slightly different way.

Turkey is often considered an important region in terms of geopolitics. 'Bringing economic and political stability to a country described by one analyst as "the most geo-strategically important piece of real estate in the world" is a grand

goal, almost on a par with bringing democracy to Iraq', is how The Economist describes it.[70] To call it an important region is hardly an exaggeration. Turkey borders on e.g. Iraq, Iran, Syria as well as the EU. It is formally part of both Europe (the part on the North-Eastern shores of the Bosporus) and Asia (the rest). Besides, it differs a lot from the other European countries in that it officially has a different religion; more than 99 per cent of the Turks are Muslims. Turkey's history as a NATO member played an important role during the Cold War since it then bordered on the Soviet Union while being allied to the United States.[71]

Bearing this in mind, there should be lots of reasons why Turkey would be of interest for the EU as a member. Certainly the rationalist interpretation must be accorded certain weight; the region is important from a geopolitical point of view, and this might entail several advantages for the rest of the EU. However, a constructivist understanding might provide another important perspective. On this view, it is not the geographical position as such that is important, but rather the common understanding that it is important. Understood in terms of the logic of appropriateness, the norm is to understand and treat the region as if it is important, more or less regardless of its 'real' value.

Another kind of argument rationalists by tradition advance is, as claimed above, economic ones. Reasonably, granting Turkey membership will also have profound economic implications. Since Turkey is well below the EU average concerning most economic issues, e.g. GDP per capita, granting Turkey membership would initially entail significant costs on behalf of the EU. Based on present figures, Turkey would be the poorest state of all EU members in such a hypothetical future, which would entitle Turkey to large amounts of economic support and thus greatly restructure the EU's internal economic policy. In terms of net profit, a membership would be a good affair for Turkey, while no EU members would gain. Of course, such a line of reasoning must be explicated. Including Turkey might be a bad economic move in the short run, but might simultaneously be profitable for both parties in the long run. Mehmet Simsek, a market economist, claims that: 'Initially, Turkey will be a net recipient [of EU aid]', and continues, 'but I think probably from 2018, 2020 onwards, Turkey will actually be a net contributor to the EU budget, on the basis of the fact that Turkey is currently growing three to four times the EU trend growth.'[72]

Arguments that have to do with the economic advantages or drawbacks of Turkish membership are commonly considered important. One of the main characteristics of the EU is arguably the economic one, e.g. its role in enabling the functioning and stability of the European market. The assertion that Turkish membership would have a certain economic effect on Europe is of course important, but not decisive. There is an interesting comparison that can be made: How does the situation regarding Turkey's possible accession differ from the ones

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[70] The Economist, March 19 2005, p. 4. See also The Independent Commission on Turkey's report 'Turkey in Europe: More than a promise?', p. 43.
[71] See Kuniholm (1991).
[72] BBC, October 4 2005.

in 2004 and 2007 when the last enlargements were made? The ten CEE countries included in 2004 did certainly have an effect on the EU budget, since among these countries many were much poorer than the EU average. The same applies to the 2007 enlargement.[73] The answer is that the EU members did hesitate on this issue. Many voices were raised concerning the expected massive inflow of migrating workers from new EU member states to the richer established ones, all exploiting the free market within the EU.[74] The result turned out not to be as bad as expected, though.[75] What might be concluded from the comparison, though, is that the EU has experienced the inclusion of poor countries earlier, and that the economic issue did not prove to be decisive at that point. Reasonably, the economic issue itself should not be considered decisive concerning Turkey either.

4.2 Analysis in Terms of Present Identities

Arguably, Sarkozy's actions can be given a plausible explanation in constructivist terms. As described, Sarkozy has on the one hand a responsibility towards the French people in keeping his promise not to include Turkey in the EU. On the other hand, he cannot whole-heartedly and without compromise simply refuse Turkey membership, since such a stubborn attitude would cause a major political upheaval in the EU; the prevailing norm concerning potential member states is very clearly that any European country that has met the Copenhagen criteria for accession can become a member. It would be strategically bad to make such a move. At the same time, the French people are very adverse to a Turkish membership. Valery Giscard d'Estaing, a former French President, claimed that Turkey is not an appropriate EU member since it has 'a different culture, a different approach, a different way of life'.[76] It surely seems a widely spread assumption among the French people that Turkey differs significantly from France in the values they endorse. What is interesting, though, is that Giscard d'Estaing also chaired the convention that drew up the EU motto 'Unity in diversity',[77] which certainly is part of the core values of the EU 'social project'. In this way, a constructivist understanding of the dynamics focuses on the conflicting norms that exist. Sarkozy is thus not described to have a 'rational choice' to make, but instead heavily influenced by what is appropriate to do in the situation. In this complex and delicate question, viewing Sarkozy as having a clear-cut choice between two quantifiable alternatives seems an austere explanation.

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[73] The New York Times, January 2 2007, p. A4. See also the Commission (2006b): 'Enlargement, two years after: an economic evaluation', May 2006, p. 33.
[74] See e.g. The Economist, March 19 2005, p. 4.
[75] The Commission (2006a): 'Report on the Functioning of the Transitional Arrangements set out in the 2003', especially pp. 13-15.
[76] The Economist, March 19 2005, p. 3.
[77] Ibid.

The German situation can be analyzed in a similar way. As described above, Germany too has an official stance that more or less opposes Turkish membership. The former German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder's position was cautiously positive to Turkish membership, whereas his successor Angela Merkel holds the opposite position. Also similar to the attitudes of the French people, the German people are among the most opposed to Turkish membership in the EU. From a constructivist point of view, the German case is interesting in another aspect too: namely, how the Cyprus issue affects Turkey's accession. Merkel described Turkey's behaviour concerning the independence of Cyprus as 'very, very serious', and thereby seems to imply that an additional condition for membership in the EU for Turkey is that it recognizes Cyprus. Merkel's behaviour can be interpreted in two very different ways. First, it could mean that it is the moral duty of Turkey to recognize Cyprus, which would be an explanation in terms of which norms are prevailing concerning the issue. This explanation moreover implies that the attitude the EU stands by is that Cyprus should be considered an independent state. A constructivist explanation in terms of which norms are prevailing seems here a satisfactory way of describing the matter.

Second, we have a rationalist explanation, which instead assumes that the preferences of the different actors are given exogenously to the process, and hence that the actors goals are being determined by aligning these preferences with the situation at issue. According to such a rationalist description, the EU's demand that Turkey recognize Cyprus should instead be regarded as part of the ongoing struggle for power between different political actors. The different rationalist theories would, admittedly, have slightly differing explanations to such a situation. Liberal intergovernmentalism, being primarily a theory about European integration, would certainly explain the situation in a somewhat different way than neorealists or neoliberalists would, but the struggle between certain clearly defined actors trying to maximize their own preferences, defined in different ways, would provide the framework of the broader rationalist explanation. What they all share, however, is how they must stress that the rhetoric surrounding the Cyprus issue in fact should be construed as something other than a question of what is right to do, or what is morally demanded of Turkey. Instead the rationalist description becomes a highly parsimonious one that leaves out certain characteristics that plausibly seem a necessary part of the understanding of the interaction between the EU and Turkey.

Parallelling the accession procedure of Turkey, the CEE countries that became members in 2004 and 2007 were sometimes described as 'returning to Europe'. Described in constructivist terms, talk about 'returning to Europe' means that the prevailing discourse in the EU implies that these countries were at one point taken from Europe during the events of the two World Wars and subsequently the Cold War, and then finally becoming one with Europe after the fall of the Soviet empire. Thus the constructivist explanation provides a very direct way of describing the accession process of the CEE countries. As John O'Brennan

notices, rationalists would instead argue that 'the "return to Europe" is simply a linguistic convention', and continues that it is 'hollow and without real persuasive force'.[78] A rationalist description would in this way interpret explanations in terms of norms and values simply as a cover for the 'real' explanation, namely that such references to a 'united Europe' and the like simply are rhetoric means in the CEE countries' pursuit for reaching their aim, namely to join the EU.

The fact that the members of the EU to this point represent very different attitudes to Turkey and its accession process is also interesting from a constructivist point of view. Quite naturally, differences regarding e.g. historical and cultural factors suggest that different countries take different positions regarding the Turkey question, but even if only putative realist and liberalist factors are referred to, the member states still disagree as to whether Turkey should become a member or not. If these countries then were to act according to their respective preferences, Turkey would definitely be excluded from the EU. This seems however not to be the case, even though the accession negotiations at the present have run into problems.[79] Instead, the current situation, in which Turkey is regarded as an applicant country continuously aspiring to become a member, is better described as one in which Turkey actually will become a member as soon as it fulfils the required accession criteria. The Commission's official position can be illustrated by the statement of a Commission official: 'We have to show that we are honouring our commitments to Turkey by opening some chapters soon in the accession negotiations. But we also need to see reforms, especially as regards freedom of expression.'[80] It is without doubt that the official EU stance is that Turkey is welcome as a member when they are ready. At the same time, the empirical material clearly shows that both Germany and France are opposed to Turkish membership, and that the peoples of both countries are in agreement with their political leaders. The EU as a whole (but perhaps especially France) has been accused of trying to add further and further conditions for Turkey to fulfil before accession can be granted. The fact that there never have been as many chapters in any accession process before in the history of the EU has been taken as evidence for this claim.

In this accession process, it would naturally be terrible for the EU if it were to be considered not able to stand by its word. In all of its relations with other countries, its reputation, reliability and trustworthiness are extremely important. In relation to Turkey, which in many ways is considered a representative and a symbol for the Middle East and the Islamic world, the question of reputation is perhaps of even greater importance. A break of such a promise would simply be seen as inappropriate. For this reason, the EU has to stick with its earlier promises to Turkey. The EU can in this way be seen as caught in its own rhetoric and thereby forced to include Turkey even though it may not be in the actual interest of the EU. Similarly, France and Germany may be forced to accept Turkey's bid

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[78] O'Brennan (2001), p. 183.
[79] An important example of this is that eight of the 35 chapters were frozen in December 2006.
[80] Financial Times, November 6 2007, p. 1.

since their membership in the EU requires a certain amount of loyalty and adherence to the interests of the EU as a whole, which of course could mean to accept Turkey against their wills.

4.3   Changing Identities?

Is the accession process for Turkey to the EU to be regarded as a clash of identities? Samuel P. Huntington's description 'the clash of civilizations'[81] is perhaps useful when describing the process? Following constructivism's rejection of any historicist or determinist description of politics, the above conclusions reasonably must be rejected as well. Since norms, values and rules are supposed to be social constructions emanating from the interaction between political actors, and since identities typically change across time, a major change in the political system, such as granting Turkey membership in the EU, is best viewed as possible. Change in the political climate is however a complex process, and following Giddens's approach of understanding the agency-structure problematique, according to which the nature of the connection between agency and structure makes it impossible to view more than one side at any moment, the idea of 'methodological bracketing' will here be employed.[82] This section will therefore start by describing how agents are affected by structure in this process.

What is obvious is that history matters. Statements by Turkey's Prime Minister Erdogan, as well as by other Turkish officials, can repeatedly be connected to historical issues: the genocide of Armenians during the First World War is one prominent example. Another result of historical events is of course the development of national identity. Turkey is to a large extent characterized by the dominant religion Islam. The fact that Turkey formally is politically secular does not entirely change this fact, since the conflict between religious and secular ideals is a recurring theme in Turkey. One example of this is Turkey's President Abdullah Gül's wife, who wears the Islamic headscarf even though it is banned from state institutions since the days of Atatürk, and this is described to upset secularists.[83] The EU is here a clear contrast to Turkey, and often viewed as a Christian community. This religious contrast obviously results in certain behaviour of both the EU and Turkey that seems to be connected to their respective religious backgrounds.

It is of course important not to treat the EU exclusively as a unitary actor, but also to focus on e.g. the member states and what their actions are. The same applies to Turkey as well, especially since it is generally considered to be a 'deep state', in which the army sometimes intervenes in politics as well. Regarding the EU, this paper has shown that the different member states exhibit very different

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[81] Huntington (1996).
[82] Giddens (1984), pp. 288-93.
[83] See e.g. BBC, August 28 2007.

attitudes and behaviour towards the accession of Turkey. A fair reading of this, if focusing initially on how the actors are affected by structure, is to claim that the EU has not yet succeeded in uniting the attitudes of the member states as concerns enlargement. Instead, the EU is characterized by diversity, leading to different political controversies, such as the French and German stances that challenge the official EU position.

Are there any signs of change in structure, then, as a result of the actions of the different political actors? Turning instead to examine the structural part of the situation, according to Giddens's 'methodological bracketing', the institutions are here investigated. Institutions should however here be interpreted broadly so as to include the established norms, values and rules suggested by the empirical material. The Commission's President José Manuel Barroso's appeal to the French President Nicholas Sarkozy not to block Turkish membership can here be seen as a sign of a harmonizing tendency within the EU that amounts to reaching a consensus concerning the Turkey issue in particular, but also changing the norms concerning European enlargement and integration in general.

Another important aspect is the comparison between the 2007 accession round, when Romania and Bulgaria became members, and the discussions about the accession process of Turkey. In connection with the accession process of Romania and Bulgaria, the idea of 'the return to Europe' of these countries was widely shared. In that case, it is likely that structural changes about whether the EU and these two countries shares an identity or not played an important role in the events leading to their membership. It is quite clear that the corresponding accession process of Turkey does not display any direct signs of such rhetoric. So far, at least, the common idea in many European countries is that Turkey primarily is not considered a part of Europe in the relevant sense.

The prospect of transcending the agency-structure problematique, and thereby the complexity of the interplay between the actors relevant in this paper, is not especially viable. There is, however, another aspect of the situation that is of interest, namely by which means the actors interact. It is evident that the dialectical effects of this interplay has the potential of changing the prevailing norms, values and rules that serve as the logic of action. If these norms, values and rules will change enough to result in Turkish membership of the EU, however, remains unclear. Importantly, such a change is complex. The complexity major changes in relations between countries implies, makes the means of communicating one's intentions central. An analogy with a basic principle of the development of human individual's identities is here relevant; as well as the intentions of human individuals are impossible to fully convey and thereby rules out perfect reciprocal understanding, so is communication between countries hampered by the complexity international relations for different reasons imply.

5   Conclusion

As implied in the presentation of the theoretical framework of this paper, a constructivist analysis of the accession process of Turkey does not have the pretentions to make any predictions about the future outcome. Instead this paper has aimed at illuminating the process up to this point.

The conclusions that can be drawn from the analysis can be viewed from three aspects. First, it seems that describing the dynamics in terms of the logic of appropriateness provides an excellent alternative to the instrumentalist logic that rationalists use. The constructivist understanding here seems to provide a more complete picture than the rationalist one. Second, there is much indicating that Turkey's application is importantly related to the different member states' conception of the European versus the Turkish identity, and how these relate to each other. The fact that references to religion, culture and values are common among the European leaders and other influential people is an indication of the importance of including a discussion about identities in describing the issue. Third, it seems the concept of political change can be given an intelligible explanation within the constructivist framework. It is obvious that history plays a role in the understanding of political phenomena, especially concerning international relations. An actor's reputation, and hence other actors' anticipations in connection with this, are important concepts to consider when studying the behaviour of political events. The complex interaction between political actors on different levels makes the constructivist approach of examining norms, values and rules especially suitable.

Even though the primary aim of this paper has not been to compare constructivism with rationalist approaches, some sections indeed have benefited from such comparisons. What can be claimed, though, is that the rationalist approach has been accused of being unfit to describe European enlargement in a plausible way. This paper has shown that the constructivist approach, by contrast, provides a very reasonable understanding of such.

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