Beyond the Bosphorus?

Comparing German, French and British Discourses on Turkey's Application to Join the European Union

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Abstract

This article examines the impact of national borders on public discourses, based on a case study of the struggle surrounding Turkey's application to join the European Union (EU). Comparing opinions, reasons and interpretation patterns in press commentaries about enlarging the EU beyond the Bosphorus, the findings confirm the paramount importance and robustness of national cleavages between the German and the French public sphere on the one hand, and the British on the other. Whereas Turkish membership was predominantly rejected on the continent, the British commentators strongly and almost unanimously supported Ankara's request to open doors. These similarities and divergences, I argue, are first and foremost the result of, and linked with, competing visions of Europe's finality, especially regarding various constitutional ideas and cultural principles. Against this background, the Turkey question was partly exploited as an instrument supporting or repressing different conceptions of the European Union's future.

Zusammenfassung

Dieser Beitrag untersucht den Einfluss nationaler Grenzen auf öffentliche Diskurse am Fall des Streits um einen eventuellen Beitritt der Türkei zur Europäischen Union (EU). Ein Vergleich der Meinungen, Begründungen und Deutungsmuster in Pressekommentaren zu einer EU-Erweiterung jenseits des Bosporus bestätigt die herausragende Bedeutung und Robustheit nationaler Konfliktlinien zwischen der deutschen und französischen Öffentlichkeit auf der einen Seite und der britischen auf der anderen. Während eine geplante Mitgliedschaft der Türkei auf dem Kontinent überwiegend abgelehnt wurde, unterstützten die britischen Kommentatoren den Beitrittswunsch Ankaras nachdrücklich und nahezu einstimmig. Diese Ähnlichkeiten und Unterschiede, so meine These, resultieren in erster Linie aus und sind verknüpft mit umstrittenen Visionen zur Finalität Europas, insbesondere mit verschiedenen Verfassungsideen und kulturell-religiösen Grundlagen. Vor diesem Hintergrund wurde die Türkeifrage teilweise als ein Instrument missbraucht, um unterschiedliche Zukunftsmodelle der EU zu unterstützen oder zurückzudrängen.

Keywords

Schlagwörter

General note on content

The opinions expressed in this paper are those of the author and not necessarily those of the IHS Department of Political Science

Contents

1.   Introduction[1]

In the age of transnationalisation and globalisation (see Held et al., 1999; Held, 2000), the relevance of national borders seems to be diminishing slowly, but continuously. Certainly, the general predication that »Europe today is a Europe without borders« (Berezin and Schain, 2003: vii) is a sweeping oversimplification and exaggeration, but it refers to a manifest and probably irreversible transformation. In particular, the European integration process has led to far-reaching changes and to an assimilation of domestic law systems in many policy fields, which had been exclusive subjects of national governance since the emergence of the modern nation-state (see Caporaso et al., 2001; Olsen, 2002; Featherstone and Radaelli, 2003; Jessop, 2004; Leibfried and Zürn, 2005). This »governance beyond the nation-state« (cf. Zürn, 2000; Jachtenfuchs, 2001) has entailed multi-faceted deregulations and standardisations both internally and between EU member states – the launch of the »Euro« and the abolishment of border controls in the EU after the »Schengen Agreement« highlight just the most prominent and directly noticeable outcomes of these developments. A new polity has been created in Europe, and even though state territories will naturally continue to exist in the European Union, we should assume in the face of these fundamental shifts that features like identity, culture or language repertoires have also become more and more similar in national societies as a consequence of the increased transnationalisation of communication flows and mobility between them. However, most studies show a distinctive robustness and resistance of national identities and cultures. Even if first tendencies of change have been identified, the majority of the citizens still see themselves as German or French, for example, and not primarily as Europeans, and only a few among them can demonstrate a good command of more than one foreign language (Eatwell, 1997; Herrmann et al., 2004; Bruter, 2005; Robyn, 2005).

In contrast, the impact of national borders on opinions, reasons and interpretative patterns in *public discourses* about EU policy issues is still unclear and has not yet been systematically analysed. A relatively exhaustive corpus of literature on the normative requirements and deficits of a »European public sphere« is available (cf. van de Steeg 2002; Eriksen 2005; Peters 2005), but these studies do not contribute much to finding out if, and to what extent, national public discourses differ in the run-up to important EU decisions, and to which factors these differences or similarities can be attributed. From an analytical point of view, in this comparative study the term »public discourse« denotes argumentative discussions on contentious statements, assertions and justifications in the public sphere, especially represented in the mass media as the most important forum for the formation of public opinion. In this working paper, I will try to answer two questions: firstly, do national borders have a dominant impact on opinions, reasons and interpretation patterns in public discourses about European issues, or are the discursive communities more *camp*-dependent than *state*-dependent? Do we find specific contents and structures in public discourses which can be traced back to the respective nation-states in which they are held, or do national borders have no significant impact on public discussions dealing with EU policies? A discursive community means discourse participants who have the same – or at least similar – opinions, reasons and interpretative patterns in public discourses about a certain issue. If the discursive communities are *camp*-dependent it will not be national borders but instead several social groups (e.g. the »conservatives« or the »unions«) who define the transnational ideological memberships, provided they represent similar positions and arguments. If the discursive communities are *state*-dependent, first and foremost the nationalities of the discourse participants (Germans, French etc.) will define the ideological memberships. Secondly, why do we find, or why do we not find, state-dependent cleavages in public discourses about a particular European issue? My main argument is that the impact of national borders on public discourses about European issues depends on different visions of Europe's finality which dominate in national societies and were brought into the discourse by the discourse participants either implicitly or explicitly. With the term »Europe's finality«, I mean particular ideas or preferences concerning the final state of the European integration process, following old controversies between a politically integrated European federal state (*Bundesstaat*) and an intergovernmental association of sovereign nation-states (*Staatenbund*). If a particular model of the European Union's future goes hand-in-hand with a certain political decision, we will observe strong public support; but if a vision of Europe's finality conflicts with a certain political decision, public protest and opposition will emerge.

For a long time it has been recognised that not only state power and national interests play an important role in international politics and transnational socialisation processes, but also beliefs, rules and norms regarding the legitimacy or morality of political institutions and decisions (see Kratochwil 1989; Goldstein and Keohane 1993; Yee 1996). Following these clas-

sical and well-known works, Thomas Risse has encouraged the scientific community to confront European studies with the theoretical knowledge of neighbouring disciplines like »International Relations Theory« and »Comparative Policy Analysis« in order to »gain a better understanding of the role of ideas and principled beliefs in the EU integration process« (Risse-Kappen 1996: 54). Thereupon, Markus Jachtenfuchs and his colleagues analysed the stability and continuity of normative ideas about legitimate political orders for developing the Euro-polity in German, French and British party programmes over several decades. Their study confirms the assumption that these deep-rooted beliefs about an appropriate political organisation in Europe have influenced many political decisions in the Council concerning the configuration of the current multi-level system of governance in the European Union (cf. Jachtenfuchs et al. 1998). Shortly afterwards, Martin Marcussen and his collaborators underlined the long-neglected identity dimension in European politics by providing evidence for the argument that explanations solely based on material, economic or geopolitical interests are insufficient to understand national variation in political attitudes towards the »Euro« in Germany, France and Great Britain. Instead, »differences in the construction of collective elite identities pertaining to the nation-state and to Europe explain the controversies among the political elites in the three countries as well as the variation in attitudes« (Marcussen et al. 1999: 147). Attention should be drawn to the analytical concept of »discursive nodal points« by Thomas Diez, with which he demonstrated through a case study on the British Europe debate how much images of Europe influence and control national EU discourses (cf. Diez 2001). Finally, Ole Wæver and his colleagues designed a discourse analytical framework to disentangle the nested relationships of state, nation and Europe in domestic identity constructions to provide a valid concept in order to explain and to predict selected policies (see Wæver 1998, 2002; Larsen 1999). This paper ties in with these innovative studies by asking if, and to what extent, it is possible to explain state-dependent differences and similarities in *public discourses* about particular EU issues by reverting to specific European future visions or finality ideas.

In order to test the impact of European finality visions on public discourses, I selected *Germany*, *France* and *Great Britain* as cases, because in these countries the cleavages on the European Union's future constitution are partially very similar and partially very different. Without a clear divergence between the selected countries it would not be possible to provide evidence for the potential impact of state-dependent future visions. As I will reconstruct in the first section of this article, in Germany and France very similar visions on the future of the European integration project dominated the public and political discourse. Most of the political, social and journalistic elites have generally recommended and supported an institutional strengthening and political deepening of the European Union, even though with rather different arguments. Provided that the thesis whereby visions of Europe's finality have an effect on public discourses about EU issues applies, a comparison of German and French de-

bates should show no, or at least only a few, state-specific differences – the cleavages should be *camp-* and not state-dependent. On the other hand, in Great Britain a completely different image of Europe has prevailed which assesses the issues of institutional strengthening and political deepening of the European Union in a rather sceptical and negative manner. Accordingly, the cleavages between Germany/France and Great Britain should be structured *state-* and not camp-dependently. If general visions of Europe's finality do influence public discourses about EU issues, then we will expect to see a distinct difference in this second constellation of comparison, which can be traced back to state-specific factors. Furthermore, we should be able to deduce and to document unambiguous evidence on the interrelation between these overriding finality visions and specific European policies from the discourse contents.

All these assumptions will be scrutinised in a comparative case study on the public discourse about Turkey's application to join the EU. The question if, when, and under which circumstances the European Union should open its doors to Ankara became a highly contested topic in these three EU member states and was commented on intensively at the same time. For each of these countries I selected two leading quality newspapers as examination material, namely the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (FAZ) and the *Sueddeutsche Zeitung* (SZ) for Germany, *Le Monde* (LM) and *Le Figaro* (LF) for France, as well as *The Guardian* (GUA) and *Financial Times London* (FTL)[2] for Great Britain. Previous content analyses have shown that these newspapers report relatively extensively on European Union policies and provide substantial space for opinion-oriented articles in comparison with other types of print media, like tabloids or the regional press (see Kevin 2003: 53f). In order to keep the basis of comparison constant and to guarantee the reliability of results, for each country one rather conservative and/or economic-liberal paper (*FAZ*, *Le Figaro* and *FTL*) as well as one rather progressive and/or social-liberal paper (*SZ*, *Le Monde* and *The Guardian*) were considered. Reliable and meaningful statements concerning the impact of European finality visions on public discourses about specific EU issues can only be formulated if the examination material is held as equal as possible under all other conditions in each country (*ceteris paribus*). Therefore, all editions of these six newspapers published between the 1st October and the 31st December 2002 were surveyed using the online databases *Factiva* and *LexisNexis* (search

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[2] At the beginning, I planned to select the traditional *The Times* instead of *The Financial Times London* as the second British quality newspaper in addition to the more left-wing *The Guardian*. But, my own preliminary studies had shown that the Turkey question was not discussed in *The Times*, apart from two short commentaries at the day of the Copenhagen summit so that the number of articles would have been too small. However, the opinions, reasons and interpretation patterns on Turkish EU accession in these two *The Times* comments did not differ from the London edition of *The Financial Times*.

items: *Turkey* and/or *European Union*, *EU* in the respective language). These three months are sufficient to capture a self-contained phase of the public debate on Turkey in the run-up to the Copenhagen summit on 13-14 December 2002, since at least in these newspapers no further opinion articles were published in the two months before and after. Then, in a second content analytical preselection, all opinion articles (leaders, comments and columns) written by German, French and British journalists who revealed their opinions in these newspapers on the controversial question if, when, or under which circumstances Turkey should become a member state of the European Union were chosen from the text sample.

This article sample was subjected to a qualitative discourse analysis.[3] The theory, epistemology and methodology of discourse analyses are still highly contested subjects not only in linguistics, but also in »International Relations« and in »European Integration Studies« (see Milliken 1999; Holden 2002; Wæver 2004). Nevertheless, many scholars preferring social constructivist approaches in political science adopt various types of discourse analysis in order to provide evidence for the role of norms, identities, argumentation, and rhetorical action in international or European politics (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998; Checkel 1999; Risse 2000; Schimmelfennig 2001; Müller 2004) – sometimes linked with, or embedded in, the poststructuralist works of Foucault, Lacan or Derrida (cf. Diez 1999; Howarth and Torfing 2005). The existence of these multiple approaches is often ascribed to the fact that the cognitive interests in the field of discourse studies are very problem-oriented and diverse so that firstly the appropriate method for answering the central research question has to be found. On the one hand, this situation leads to several problems, because it is hardly possible to resort to established and reliable standards. On the other hand, a real opportunity is opened up to follow innovative research interests and to convert them empirically through the search for new methodological paths. Following the practice of »Critical Discourse Analyses« (see Wodak 2001; Fairclough 2003; Oberhuber et al. 2005), the text sample of this comparative study was examined specifically according to the following three interrelated questions:

Opinions: To what extent are the opinions of the respective journalists on the Turkey question similar or different? Do we find similar cleavages in the quality press of all three national public spheres so that the opinion constellation is camp-dependent, or are the cleavages in the national public spheres differentially structured in each country?

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[3] The article sample contains all in all 70 (sometimes very long) opinion articles by 46 different journalists (GER: *FAZ* 20/10, *SZ* 11/6; FR: *LF* 8/5, *LM* 7/7; GB: *FTL* 10/7, *GUA* 14/11); the opinion articles of politicians and scientists (and intellectuals) were not included in this study in order to keep the basis of comparison in all three countries constant.

<u>Reasons:</u> To what extent are the reasons with which the journalists try to justify their opinions similar or different? Do the respective newspapers use the same, or similar, reasons and justifications cross-nationally (camp-dependent), or are the reasons in the newspapers of each country different (state-dependent)?

<u>Interpretation patterns:</u> To what extent are the interpretation patterns which the journalists of the respective newspapers associate with the Turkey question similar or different? In short, interpretation patterns relate to the mode *how* an issue in a public discourse is understood, construed or framed, e.g. as a problem, as a risk, or as a chance (cf. Entman 1993).

In the first section, I reconstruct the dominant national visions on the future of the European integration project in Germany, France and Great Britain, which can be derived from the literature, in order to prove similarities and differences as a confirmation of the case selection. The following section starts with a brief reminder of an interview with the former French president Valery Giscard d'Estaing, which can be identified as the starting point and initialisation of the public debate on Turkey in Europe, and which was noted attentively in all three countries. Then, I refer and concentrate on the opinions, reasons and interpretation patterns on the Turkey question in the six newspapers and demonstrate the paramount importance and robustness of national cleavages between the German and the French public sphere on the one hand, and the British public sphere on the other hand. Whereas a planned Turkish membership was predominantly rejected on the continent, the British commentators strongly and almost unanimously supported Ankara's request to open doors. These similarities and divergences, I argue in the final section, are first and foremost the result of, and linked with, competing visions of Europe's finality, especially on various constitutional ideas and cultural principles. By showing that the Turkey question was discussed in the shadow of different visions of Europe's finality and has been exploited as an instrument supporting or repressing different conceptions of the European Union's future, my previous assumptions on the linkage between state-dependent visions on Europe's finality and public discourses about Turkey's application to join the EU can be verified.

2.   National Visions on Europe's Finality – A Short Reconstruction

In brief, the majority of German political and social elites were, and are still, in favour of supporting and pushing the model of a deeply integrated European Union. The national identity has been linked with the idea of Europe as a common peace project: »Since the 1950s, a fundamental consensus has emerged among political elites, and has been generally shared

by public opinion, that European integration is in Germany's vital interest« (Marcussen et al. 1999: 622). Since Chancellor Konrad Adenauer, the Christian Democrats and, after some internal conflicts, the Social Democrats as the two dominant German parties argued to continue European unification by endorsing the Maastricht Treaty and the European Monetary Union in the 1990s: »The Federal State remains the prevailing concept« (Jachtenfuchs et al. 1998: 431). They interpreted European integration as a welcome opportunity after the self-inflicted catastrophe of the Second World War to bind the newly founded Federal Republic to the Western state community, hoping to become an enduring and reliable ally (cf. Díez Medrano 2003: 179f.). As a result of the continuous transfer of national sovereignty and competences to the European level, the German governments purposely weakened and curbed state power to demonstrate that they had learned their lessons from their own history now: »The tendency is to restrict German self-confidence by the moral scruples of the past and therefore cover German national interests under the roof of international alliances and particularly of the European Union« (Spohn 2002: 286). The future vision of a European federal state culminated in the well-known speech of the former German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer at the Humboldt University of Berlin in 2000 and found its continuation in the political support of the European Constitutional Treaty: »However, evidence suggest that despite the end of the Cold War, unification and the coming to power of the red-green government, Germany's European preferences […] have remained pro-integrationist and in many aspects similar to those held by previous governments« (Thielemann 2004: 359). Besides historical reasons, another driving force behind pushing the integration process was the considerable benefits that Germany's export-oriented economy gained from the Single European Market and the »Euro« as a common currency (cf. Moravcsik 1998: 478). Furthermore, some Germans prefer European integration in order to establish an instrument that could fuse the economic and political potentials of the powerful EU member states as a counterweight against the United States, Russia or China in the future (see Spohn 2002: 305). All in all, there seem to be several reasons that lead to the same objective: a politically integrated European Union with wide-ranging competencies for effective problem-solving.

In France, the question regarding the meaning of Europe also included controversies about the French role in world politics since the beginning of European integration: »Europe was seen as the centre of the World, and France as the central country in Europe and in European civilization« (Frank 2002: 311). In some French views, the precondition for a strong and influential France has to be a strong, influential and institutionally stabilised European Union so that the EU Eastern enlargement without prior institutional reforms has already been a very contentious issue in the intensive French debate on their national relationships to Europe: »France had become too small, and its mission must be taken over by Europe« (Wæver 1998: 120). Accordingly, many French people interpret the EU as an instrument for acting together with other European states as a (moral) counterbalance against the United

States, able to hold its own alongside its American ally, especially by strengthening the Franco-German axis: »A central goal is to establish Europe as a powerful international actor with increasing independence from the USA« (Jachtenfuchs et al. 1998: 430). Against this background, today's French political and social elites are generally pro-European after years of political struggle among the Gaullist – recalling the »empty chair crisis« in the 1960s – and the conflicts in the Socialist Party (see in detail Gueldry 2001: 15f). It was not until the 1980s that the French Socialists tried to reconcile French identity with European »we«- constructions by arguing »that the future of France was to be found in Europe. As Mitterrand once put it: ›France is our fatherland, Europe is our future‹« (Marcussen et al. 1999: 621). This paradigm shift implies no guarantee for a pro-European line as a basic principle, of course, but afterwards it has become more and more difficult to imagine a policy projecting an attractive and realistic model for France without implicating European Union politics (see Parsons 2000). In connection with German reunification, uncertainties and old fears with re- spect to national security and sovereignty appeared in the face of a more powerful Germany on the other side of the Rhine. But, as after the end of Second World War, French politicians again encouraged Germany's integration by deepening the European Union as a protection against the potential danger of a new unilateralism (see Webber 1999). Besides Germany, the French government advanced to become a major supporter in the negotiations which led to the agreement on the Maastricht Treaty (see Mazzucelli 1997). After the success of the Economic and Monetary Union, many French political actors thought that the time had come for a »more political, more social, and more democratic Europe« (Jabko 2004: 285). Within the Convention on the Future of Europe, the French government thus continued to argue for a broad reform of EU institutions that would satisfy its federalist preferences. Having in- vested so much political effort and diplomacy in the success of a »Constitution for Europe«, the negative referendum result in 2005 was a shock for nearly all political and social elites in France.

In contrast to France and Germany, where at least in the elite discourse pro-European vi- sions and ideas have been, and still are, predominant, public opinion in Great Britain has been based on an absolutely different image of Europe: »Whereas the German and French debates are centred around the state model, the situation is very different in Britain. The ma- jorities within both Conservatives and Labour are advocates of the Economic Community, and therefore often characterized as ›anti-European‹ by supporters of a Federal State« (Jachtenfuchs et al. 1998: 432). The so-called »Euroscepticism« (Forster 2002) on the island is still so far-reaching that many Britons even mistrust the affiliation of the United Kingdom to Europe and rather speak about »the continent«: »To probe the meaning of the word ›Europe‹ in British usage is straightaway to appreciate one of the defining features of Britain's Euro- pean debate, namely a profound ambivalence about whether or not Europe includes the United Kingdom« (Ludlow 2002: 101). Instead, according to the prevailing perceptions in the

literature, the British feel historically, ideologically and politically more strongly connected to their most important transatlantic ally, the United States, and counteract all endeavours of the EU to establish a political or even a military counterweight against the USA, or to impose a »European Constitution« upon them (cf. Kassim 2004). Even the accession to the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1973, especially the partial relinquishing of parliamentary sovereignty, was already exceedingly contested in Great Britain: »The maintenance of commercial, political, and emotional ties to the Commonwealth and the Labour Party's goal of implementing socialist policies were perceived as incompatible with the European framework« (Díez Medrano 2003: 129). Whereas the Liberal Democrats, who have never been a part of the British government since the Second World War, are still predominantly in favour of European integration (cf. Clarke and Curtice 1998), Labour and the Conservatives as the two main parties practised cautious EU politics of »little steps« and with »different velocities«, as the rejection of the »Euro« has shown (cf. Ludlam 1998).

If future visions of Europe's finality really have an impact on national public discourses about specific EU issues – in this case the Turkey debate – we can expect that the public opinions, reasons and interpretation patterns will be nearly congruent in the German and French discourse, whereas we should expect to find clearly marked differences between Germany and France on the one hand, and Great Britain on the other. In addition, there should be a noticeable interrelation between these general finality visions and the Turkey question that can be derived from the discourse contents and which makes a contribution to the explanation of the state-dependent divergences and to the validation of the thesis.

3. The Struggle on the EU Membership of Turkey in Comparison

The former French President and Chairman of Europe's constitutional convention, Valery Giscard d'Estaing, declared in an interview with the French newspaper *Le Monde* on November 9th 2002 that opening doors to Turkey would mean no less than »the end of the European Union«. Turkey might be an important partner that is close to Europe, but due to its geographical position as well as its culture and history it is not even a European country according to Giscard. In addition to these reasons, which in his opinion should rule out the possibility of a Turkish EU membership, he emphasised that in the first instance the forthcoming accessions of the Central and Eastern European countries must be resolved successfully in order to prevent an administrative overstrain of the EU institutions and a financial collapse of the EU budget. From a political point of view, one should take into consideration that Turkey, with its 66 million inhabitants and its positive demographic development, would

presumably become the most populous EU member state after accession and could dele-
gate more representatives than any other EU country in the European parliament, so that
Turkey would climb to a powerful veto player in European politics overnight. Giscard
d'Estaing predicted that if the European Commission begins to bargain with the Turkish gov-
ernment, Morocco will propose a (renewed) application for membership immediately. Fur-
thermore, the former French President accused the supporters of Turkish EU membership of
thwarting the European integration project and diluting the EU into a free trade area reaching
as far as the Middle East. All those who were currently pushing for an early entry of Turkey
were »the true opposers of the European Union«, and not those people like him who were
warning against an EU membership. The Heads of State and Governments in the European
Council who had recently stocked new hopes for giving a date to start accession talks with
Ankara before the summit in Copenhagen, were accessed of being »hypocritical« by Giscard
d'Estaing: the majority of them would oppose Turkish membership in secret, but nobody
dares to say it in public.

Although the European Council wanted to fix a concrete date at which the European Com-
mission should start accession negotiations with Ankara at the summit conference in Copen-
hagen in December 2002, the public debates at the same time were dominated by the more
fundamental question of whether Turkey, as an Islamic country bordering Iraq and Syria,
should ever become a member state of the European Union – even if it would, sooner or
later, accomplish all necessary membership criteria. Thus, in this early phase of the public
discourse the question if Turkey, as a predominantly non-Christian society and a state terri-
tory which extends beyond the traditional borders of the European continent, should be con-
sidered a member state of the EU *in principle* was taken up again. According to this focus of
the public debate, this comparative discourse analysis concentrates on the discussion about
a general EU membership of Turkey too. In addition, I restrict the following description to the
two most important and contentious points which were discussed in all three national public
spheres intensely, in order to reduce the complexity of the paper to an appropriate level and
to provide for a reliable and significant comparison:

Widening and deepening conflict: To what extent, and with what kind of arguments, did the
discourse participants expound the problem that further integration of the EU might be
thwarted as a consequence of Turkish accession? This part of the debate pertains to the
questions of whether the political deepening of the EU would be hindered firstly through an
enlargement of the geographically large and populous Turkey, and secondly, whether this is
interpreted as being a problem by the discourse participants.

Culture and identity conflict: To what extent, and with what kind of arguments, did the dis-
course participants expound the problem of the cultural and religious differences between

the current EU member states and Turkey? This part of the debate concerns the questions of whether Turkey belongs historically and culturally to Europe, and secondly, whether cultural and religious differences in general should rule out the possibility of EU membership.[4]

3.1   Public Opinion and Turkey Debate in the German Quality Press

Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung

The journalists of the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* argued unanimously against an early beginning of accession talks, as well as against the EU membership of Turkey *in principle*. In particular the positions and reasons of the »red-green« Federal Government (Social Democrats/Greens), who supported the membership application of Ankara firmly, were criticised vehemently and called into question again and again by the FAZ journalists. In their consideration of the problem of widening versus deepening the EU, as well as regarding the culture and identity conflict, they gave Ankara a distinct rejection.

As a central justification they referred to the, from their point of view, unsolvable conflict between the attempts of the government to integrate the EU politically more deeply on the one hand, and an excessively enlarging and internally differentiated European Community, which would be hardly capable of acting, on the other: »The more the EU will extend itself […], the looser will be its cohesion, the sharper will be the battles for shares and the weaker will be its institutions. That is a political law of nature, which cannot be changed by treaties and constitutional texts« (*FAZ*, 11 Dec. 2002: 1), as Guenther Nonnenmacher stated. He argued that the future of the European integration project would change so fundamentally as a result of the EU accession of Turkey that the question of the European Union's finality should have to be posed and discussed anew. The Europeans could not get around of responding to the questions regarding the aims, forms and borders of the EU now, which they avoided in the past centuries. One could not speak »enthusiastically about a Europe as a ›federation of nation-states‹« or »want to develop ›Europe to a political power‹« and support its expansion in all cardinal points at the same time (cf. *FAZ*, 11 Dec. 2002: 1). Turkish EU membership would reduce the primal idea of an »ever closer Union« which was defined in the founding era to absurdity, because the affiliation of Turkey would mean a complete different calibre than the Eastern enlargement which already confronted the EU with an enormous integration challenge. The course would therefore lead away from the plans that Adenauer, de Gaulle

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[4] Due to length limitations, only a small number of articles can be quoted; therefore, I selected the articles in which these two important points were discussed most extensively and detailed.

and De Gasperi, and later also Mitterrand and Kohl, had once proclaimed for Europe – notwithstanding all dissensions among them (cf. *FAZ*, 7 Dec. 2002: 1): »Europe's politicians have fooled themselves and their citizens for a long time that the deepening of integration would not afflict with the enlargement of the EU. But that is nonsense. Everybody who supports the full membership of Turkey […] gives up the aim of a political Union« (*FAZ*, 14 Dec. 2002: 1), Berthold Kohler wrote.

In the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, the widening and deepening conflict was often explicitly linked with the culture and identity conflict. The unification project, Klaus-Dieter Frankenberger expressed unmistakably, would not be a matter to which »one adds nation-states arbitrarily without asking for culture and identity« (*FAZ*, 4 Dec. 2002: 12). Europe would not be an »accumulation of nation-states according to geo-strategic calculations or reciprocal economical advantages«, Daniel Deckers added, but »a society of nations which have formed common values in many centuries and have joined together in freedom, under the impression of the endangering of these values« (*FAZ*, 16 Dec. 2002: 1). But that Turkey belongs historically and politically to this Europe was doubtful for good reasons. Guenther Nonnenmacher stated that Turkey would share significantly more similarities with countries like Australia, Argentina or the USA, which nobody would ever seriously associate with EU membership, because »their political systems have European roots based on constitutions following European examples, the cultural relations to Europe are close [and] a large part of the today's population has European ancestors« (*FAZ*, 20 Dec. 2002: 12). The aim of a political Union could only be achieved on the foundation of common collective identities and value conceptions, therefore Turkey's membership must also be rejected for cultural-historical reasons: who would seriously want »to make believe a public, which already sees the today's Union […] as being distant from the citizens or even menacing, that a geographically unbordered and politically, economically as well as culturally heterogeneous construction can remain a supportive community« (*FAZ*, 11 Dec. 2002: 1)? Against the background of this critical opinion concerning Turkish EU accession, it does not seem surprising that the FAZ journalists consistently supported Giscard d'Estaings point of view. In their view, the former French President had merely expressed openly what was in fact believed in almost all capitals but was not admitted for strategic as well as tactical considerations – that Turkey is not a European country, neither geographically nor culturally, and that its membership would hopelessly overstrain the European Union: »The affiliation of Turkey would modify the nature of the EU«, Berthold Kohler wrote, »this discussion is much more about the EU than about Turkey. Giscard reminded the Europeans just once more of it« (*FAZ*, 9 Nov. 2002: 10).

Sueddeutsche Zeitung

In obvious contrast to the FAZ, the journalists of the *Sueddeutsche Zeitung* did not argue in both central contentious points against a Turkish membership. Whereas most of the SZ jour-

nalists recognised the potential widening and deepening conflict and rejected Turkey's EU accession for this reason too, they turned away from culture and identity arguments. Consequently, they declared themselves against Turkish EU membership on the first contentious point and in favour on the second contentious point.

The main argument of the *Sueddeutsche Zeitung* against Turkey's accession was, as well as in the FAZ, the structural conflict between widening and deepening the EU. Also the majority of the SZ journalists placed more weight on a politically integrated and consolidated EU than on its rapid territorial enlargement and argued for other forms of cooperation beyond EU membership. It would naturally be »the legitimate right of Turkey to press towards Brussels«, but it should remain the right of the present EU member state governments to reject an accession application as well. Provided that they would be convinced Europeans, they would not have any other choice according to the spirit of the European project, Stefan Ulrich wrote, because an »affiliation of the large, populous, politically and socially differently structured Turkey with its distinct awareness of sovereignty would continue to weaken the at this stage already poor cohesion energies of the EU« (*SZ*, 13 Nov. 2002: 4). Therefore, Russia or Ukraine would be ruled out as potential members too, if the European project »should not dilute to a Eurasian regional organisation of the United Nations«. The question of whether Turkey could join the EU or not depended on the aim that should be pursued with the European integration project. If the EU represented nothing more than an »instrument for the stabilisation of other nation-states«, nothing would stand in the way of Turkey's accession; but if one aspired to another future vision, it would be feared that this one could not be realised afterwards: »But, anybody who sees the EU actually as a work as such, as a common destiny of relatively homogeneous nation-states, slowly melting together, must fear that the accession of Turkey prevents the perfection of this work« (*SZ*, 6 Dec. 2002: 4), Stefan Ulrich added in another commentary. As well as the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, most of the SZ journalists also criticised the German Chancellor Schroeder and his foreign minister Fischer for their inconsistent intention to solve problems efficiently with the help of the EU instrument without at the same time maintaining the chances of political integration. The affiliation of Turkey would »destroy those European promises« with which »the government in Berlin promotes new EU visions vis-à-vis the voter«. The political elites should take into consideration: »Anyone who misplaces Europe's Eastern borders to Kurdistan overexpands the EU so much that it threatens to collapse internally« (*SZ*, 13 Dec. 2002: 15).

However, the arguments against Turkey's accession directed at culture and identity, put forward by the FAZ, were rejected by the SZ journalists almost unanimously. Even if a Turkish EU membership was impossible due to other reasons or was not feasible in the near future, cultural and religious differences should not be accepted as counter-arguments. Indeed, many citizens agreed with the assertion that Muslim Turkey certainly does not fit into the Christian Europe, Stefan Ulrich conjectured, but instead of that they should concede that

»the secular, modern EU is actually committed to many values, but not to one exclusive religion alone«. Democracy, freedom and the unconditional respect for universal human rights constituted »the true value limits to Europe« (*SZ*, 13 Nov. 2002: 4), and not any specific cultural or religious imprints. And these values could be upheld by Christians as well as by Muslims too – or even »dragged in the mud by both groups« (ibid.). Today's European Union, Heribert Prantl noted resolutely, represented a geographically and culturally open future project and not the end of European historiography: »Turkey signifies a great chance for the European Union«, because it »is a bridge-country, a country between the continents, the synthesis of European-Christian and Middle Eastern Islamic culture« (*SZ*, 18 Nov. 2002: 13). The future of the EU did not rest upon a homogeneous culture community according to the spirit of a »Christian Club«, but instead upon a secular-democratic community of values to which Turkey could also belong in the future. Besides this basic conviction that a culturally and religiously pluralistic EU represented a more appropriate model for a modern and cosmopolitan Europe than the outdated battle for a Christian-orthodox community construction, Matthias Drobiski was arguing pragmatically that Islam had captured its place in Europe for a long time – together with its »mosques, doner kebab stands, headscarf and Koran editions«. Indeed, we should discuss if »Turkey is politically consolidated and economically strong enough« to join the European Union at any point in time. But the belief that one could keep Islam away from Europe by refusing Turkey's membership would be »a fabulous autosuggestion« because between 14 and 17 million Muslims already live in Europe: »As long as Islam in Europe fails to become a part of the European culture, there will be no united Europe« (*SZ*, 23 Dec. 2002: 4).

Summary

In the German quality press, the Turkey debate was led extraordinarily engaged and completely overshadowed by general visions on the finality of the EU. Concerning the first central point, the widening and deepening conflict, both newspapers argued predominantly against a Turkish EU accession, because they took for granted that the realisation of a politically integrated Europe would be aggravated and complicated materially in the future if Turkey joined the EU. The journalists of both newspapers agreed widely upon the presumption that enlarging the EU for the large and economically backward Turkey would be incompatible with the ambition of politically deepening and consolidating the EU institutions, and they rejected an early Turkey accession for this reason. Regarding the second contentious point, the culture and identity conflict, the FAZ and SZ journalists held different, actually opposite, opinions and reasons. The Turkey critique in the FAZ was supported by the conviction that a political deepening of the European Union would only be possible on the basis of common culture-historical identities, that Turkey would not belong to a Christian cultural sphere and that its accession would run contrary to collective identity formation for this reason. In contrast, the

SZ journalists argued against the validity of the culture and identity argument by affirming that Europe's social integration, as a precondition for the political deepening of the EU, did not rely on any particular culture or religion, but instead on the respect to the universal principles of freedom and human rights. In a nutshell, both newspapers broadly agreed that a further political integration of the EU would be a positive ambition, and secondly, that deepening the European unification process could only be realised on the solid basis of a collective identity. The conflict between both leading quality papers in Germany culminated in the question of whether the formation of a collective identity in Europe presupposes common cultural-religious principles (*FAZ*), or if the respect of universally accepted human rights is suffice as an identity resource in order to perpetuate the vision of a politically integrated European Union (*SZ*).

3.2   Public Opinion and Turkey Debate in the French Quality Press

Le Figaro

Along with the liberal-conservative *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, the journalists of *Le Figaro* also argued against Turkey's EU membership without exception, and they emphatically excoriated the pro-Turkish attitude of their President Jacques Chirac. They stressed the widening and deepening conflict a few times, but concentrated on defending the culture and identity argument against Turkish EU accession, which was brought forward in great detail in the face of deteriorating prospects for political integration after enlargement.

Whereas the FAZ journalists criticised the pro-Turkish policy of the German Federal Government and highlighted the structural widening and deepening conflict, this first central issue played a slightly subordinate role in the commentaries of the LF journalists. Only Renaud Girard noted that Turkish EU membership would significantly reduce the capacity of EU institutions to integrate and to act in the future. Realising enlargement before the European Union has consolidated itself internally would be a »historical mistake« that could have fatal consequences for the institutional Europe, he feared. Eastern enlargement, which was highly contested in France, would already »paralyse the EU institutions« enough, but additionally trying to assimilate Turkey would mean »plain and simple to give the Union the final coup de grace« (*LF*, 27 Nov. 2002: 13). These arguments were supported by the contention that Turkish accession would destroy the required cultural-religious identity fundamentals of a politically integrated EU. In a very dramatic and accusatory style, the LF journalists tried to defend the idea of Christian Europe. Before the European leaders abandoned themselves to their blind enlargement enthusiasm even more, Europeans should first agree on who they actually are, and determining their commonalities and their collective identity – urgent and important questions, even if they »must sound unbearable to the ears of universalists« (*LF*,

15 Nov. 2002: 13), Ivan Rioufol commented. In this context, the traditional values of the Turkish majority population, which in no way conformed to the secular system of government, were identified as longstanding obstacles to EU membership.

Louis Morel insinuated that the Turks did not respect the fundamental Western value conceptions of freedom and human rights, and particularly the principle of equality between men and women, in a way that people in Continental Europe have long internalised. Even if one tacitly accepted religious differences in the EU and even though some secular tendencies in Turkish society were noticeable, Turkey would still »belong to the Muslim civilisation« (*LF*, 2 Nov. 2002: 14), he wrote. The Turks, Louis Morel continued, have not adopted many elementary Western norms in their personal life-worlds – everyone who has already been in the Anatolian hinterland could and should be able to confirm this observation. Large parts of the Turkish population have internalised another cultural identity, which could not be reconciled with European society, even if one decidedly tried to, and indications for a real departure from this were hardly recognisable. Indeed, these notes should not be misunderstood as a general rejection of Turkish culture and way of life, but merely highlight that under these circumstances the Europeans have the right to dismiss Turkey's application to join the EU. The Turks could not be real Europeans, simply because they had not experienced the process of enlightenment: »Europe was built on the dual heritage of Christianity and Enlightenment. But Turkey was not« (*LF*, 27 Nov. 2002: 13), Renaud Girard got straight to the heart of the problem. For the LF journalists, as well as for the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, the former President of the European Convention, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, personified a central point of reference – his statements were highlighted affirmatively in almost every critical commentary in *Le Figaro*. According to Ivan Rioufol, hardly any other statesman had expressed himself so courageously in the past and justifiably stressed that »this Muslim country of Asia Minor definitely does not have its place in the European family, neither culturally nor geographically« (*LF*, 15 Nov. 2002: 13). The major argumentation strategy of *Le Figaro* and FAZ consisted not only of the (empirical) assertion that the Turks did not belong to the European community of values as a result of their way of life, but also that Turkey's accession application should be rejected in the light of these value based differences. The more popular idea of a further political deepening of the European integration process, which still prevails among the French political elites, could only be realised within a Christian-western value community, for whose strengthening Turkish EU accession would be detrimental.

Le Monde

Virtually congruent with the SZ journalists and contrary to *Le Figaro*, the journalists of *Le Monde* did not fully reject Turkish EU membership in both central points. The conflict between widening and deepening the EU was also interpreted against Turkish EU accession by the majority, because it would make the realisation of the future vision of a socially and politi-

cally integrated European Union almost impossible, whereas the second contentious point, the culture and identity argument, was completely revoked and dismissed by the LM journalists.

Against the background of the continental future vision of a politically deepened European Union, the central problems of Turkish EU membership were also deconstructed and brought to the point by the journalists of *Le Monde* several times. Daniel Vernet critically noted that the EU has not »adjusted its institutions to enlargement«, neither for ten nor for twelve new members, and that the most supporters of enlargement were »the enemies of a powerful Europe«, of a Europe that would have the ability to speak with one voice in international politics and whose function would not be reduced to a free trade area without political relevance in the end. In brief, enlarging the EU beyond the Bosphorus was »a synonym for the dilution of the European construction and run counter to the project of the founding fathers« (*LM*, 11 Nov. 2002: 13). Claire Trean, who had referred to a statement of the then French Foreign Minister de Villepin, also expressed scepticism towards his hopeful point of view that both Europe as well as Turkey were well prepared for EU membership. Indeed, a mutual opening could serve as a valuable sign that, on the one hand, Europe would be in a position to integrate a very large Muslim country, and one the other hand that a Muslim country would be able to modernise itself sufficiently in order to bring Turkish society in line with European standards. But, as Claire Trean added, they were unfortunately not be ready for this step »neither on the one nor on the other side« (*LM*, 26 Nov. 2002: 17). This was due to the fact that Turkey could presumably not cope with the task of implementing the numerous EU directives and regulations in national law or at least of guaranteeing their compliance on the one hand, and that the Union could not absorb the overhasty affiliation of more countries for the time being on the other hand. The economic, social and political backwardness of Turkey would jeopardise the continuation of the European integration process, Trean predicted, because the common denominator upon which all representatives of the Council of Ministers could agree would become smaller and smaller the more dissimilar EU member states become.

Even though the journalists of *Le Monde* unanimously expounded the problems of Turkish EU membership due to the widening and deepening conflict, they dismissed the culture and identity argument brought in and defended by the FAZ and Figaro journalists almost in an identical way with the *Sueddeutsche Zeitung*. The LM journalists argued that Christian Europe and Muslim Turkey did not embody two independent cultural areas, but that the existing religious differences should have no influence on the question of Turkish membership due to the fact that the EU represented a secular project. Instead, they tried to show historically that the original roots of Christianity and Islam were closely interwoven with each other and that the construction of a dichotomy was misleading. In a comparatively detailed analysis, Bertrand Le Gendre provided evidence for the early genealogy of Christian ideas in Gali-

lee and their diffusion from Asia Minor to Europe. For this reason, cultural-religious differences should not be misinterpreted as insuperable obstacles for EU membership; the historical sense of belonging to European civilisation was much too deeply-rooted in the Turkish society. Finally, it was exactly the »capacity to blend and to aggregate the most differential influences«, that »made up the strength of Europe«, as Le Gendre noted (*LM*, 23 Nov. 2002: 14). Also Henri de Bresson doubted the correctness of the historical argument by mentioning that Turkey had been »a cradle of the Greek civilisation«, before it later became the seat of the Ottoman Empire, even if he was sceptical about EU accession of Turkey in other respects (cf. *LM*, 10 Dec. 2002: VIII). This rejection of the culture and identity argument was – similar to the *Sueddeutsche Zeitung* – supported by the firm belief that the collective community sub-structures of Europe, as a precondition for a continuation of the political integration process, should not be founded on one exclusive culture or religion, e.g. Christianity, but instead on universalistic norms such as freedom and human rights. As soon as these rights were permanently respected by the government in Ankara and were carried through to Turkish society, there would no longer be, in the eyes of the LM journalists, any justification to dismiss Turkey's application to join the EU *for cultural-religious reasons*.

Summary

The struggle over Turkey's EU accession also temporarily dominated the public discourse in France and actually pushed domestic issues intermittently into the background. A comparison of the German and the French debates shows that searching for state-dependent differences is like looking for a needle in a haystack. Concerning the widening and deepening conflict, in both countries a relatively broad consensus existed that EU accession of Turkey was highly problematic in the light of the ambition to deepen European integration, which was favoured by the national elites in both countries, because this next enlargement step would presumably reduce the EU's capacity of problem-solving as well as the institutional ability to act, and would substantially complicate consensus-finding in the European Council and the European Parliament. This position was held, as we have seen, more or less intensively in both countries by the conservative and/or economic-liberal, as well as by the rather progressive and/or social-liberal newspapers. Regarding the workability of the culture and identity argument, in both national public spheres a cleavage between the respective newspapers and between the camps was established. With cultural-religious reservations, the FAZ and Figaro journalists additionally fought against Turkish EU membership by arguing that collective identity is an essential precondition for a politically integrated Europe which could only develop and consolidate itself within the solid framework of Christian-western value perceptions. In contrast, the SZ and Le Monde journalists tried to justify the opposite position, whereby common collective identity, which they also denoted as an important basis for a politically integrated Europe, must not necessarily be supported by a special cultural-

religious imprint – such as Christianity, for example. More decisive was the political compliance with, and the social acceptance of, universal freedom and human rights, which already were, or at least could be, practised successfully in Muslim countries too. Moreover, some journalists of *Le Monde* argued that constructing a gulf between Christianity and Islam was historically wrong, because both religions had similar roots; and for this reason they argued that Turkey doubtlessly belongs to the »European family«.

3.3 Public Opinion and Turkey Debate in the British Quality Press

Financial Times London

Controversial national discourses, which we were able to follow in the German and the French public sphere in extenso, did not take place in Great Britain. That Turkey should join the European Union sooner rather than later was not controversial in the British quality press, nor was it an issue for the most influential British political parties, the Labour and the Conservative Party. In both newspapers, the widening and deepening conflict was not interpreted against an EU accession of Turkey or even construed as a problem, and the British did not accept the (unchallenged) cultural-religious differences as a legitimate obstacle for EU membership.

The strained relationship between widening and deepening the EU expounded vehemently in Germany and also in France were not really understood as a *conflict* by the FTL journalists. Amongst others, Quentin Peel picked up this interpretation pattern and reflected the fears of many continental Europeans that one could maybe affiliate Turkey into a free trade area without concerns, but not into a community which aspires to political integration: »The [argument] is that Turkey is too big – it will soon have a larger population than Germany – and too economically backward to be accommodated« (*FTL*, 13 Nov. 2002: 21). His response towards this continental objection was remarkable: after the forthcoming Eastern enlargement, the future vision of an ever closer federation, which some idealists in Europe were obviously still dreaming of, could not be realised anyway, because an EU with 25 member states could no longer develop the same unifying force as the good old »club of 15« in the past. Therefore, Turkish accession would not overstrain the EU institutionally. Quite the contrary, Peel added, since the affiliation of further countries, like Turkey, would in fact become much easier as a consequence of the extension to the East: »The enlargement of the EU is going to transform the nature of the bloc. The new member states to be admitted at the Copenhagen summit next month may not be as big as Turkey, but they are closer to it economically. A 25-member EU will be more fluid and varied than the present club of 15. New members should become easier to absorb« (ibid.). For that reason, the threatening costs of Turkey's accession were not as dramatised in the British discourse as especially in Ger-

many: all involved parties, in particular the new member states, should accept as early as possible that there will definitely be no second Greece or Spain, which have significantly benefited from the opening of the European Single Market and the EC Structural Funds, in a European Union expanded to the former Eastern Bloc. In the course of Eastern enlargement, the European integration process would be automatically stopped and must go into reverse – a »cash cow« for the Turks as a welcome present could realistically not be demanded then, Peel asserted.

Contrary to what one could perhaps have expected, the Turkey issue was not initially regarded from an economic point of view in the *Financial Times London*. Instead, the FTL journalists polemicised against the interpretation of Europe as an exclusive »Christian Club«, which many other British commentators associated with continental critique of Turkey's accession. The belief, that the EU was, and should remain, a »Christian Club« would »amount to dangerous nostalgia«, because »Europe's values of democratic government and respect for the rule of law may have emerged from Christian civilisation, but they have evolved«. To insist on their Christian content would »encourage precisely the sort of discrimination that European values are supposed to prevent. The continent is now irretrievably multicultural, and the better for it« (*FTL*, 13 Nov. 2002: 21). In particular this central idea of the insistence on a particular religion as a necessary condition to join the EU strictly contradicted those values which the European Union wants to protect according to the European Charter of Human Rights – namely religious and cultural self-determination and tolerance – was denounced by the British press again and again. It seems simply inconsistent and unfair to preach religious and cultural neutrality on the one hand, and to refuse all those countries the entrance tickets whose population is predominantly Muslim on the other hand. The question, whether the Turks in fact accepted Western values and norms satisfactorily within their own society, as was frequently doubted especially in the French discourse, was quite irrelevant for the FTL journalists. As a reflection of their »Eurovisions«, the criteria regarding collective identity did not play a decisive role, since transnational common feelings would not have to be developed inside an intergovernmental free trade area which is characterised by a low integration level so that the cultural-religious differences between most EU member states and Turkey were in no way interpreted as serious obstacles to accession. According to this attitude, the public reactions towards the Giscard d'Estaing interview were consistently marked by rejection and protest in both British newspapers, first of all in the comment by Philip Stephens: »Some, like Valery Giscard d'Estaing, […] further insist that the only permissible definition of Europe is its Christian heritage. The admission into the EU of Turkey, he says, would mark the ›end of Europe‹. The Islamists (or would he say the barbarians?) must be stopped at the gates. Such are the ugly prejudices of the ancient regime. They are also profoundly stupid« (*FTL*, 6 Dec. 2002: 23).

The Guardian

In *The Guardian*, the Turkey question produced some more and detailed commentaries than in the *Financial Times London*. The Guardian journalists also vociferously supported the EU ambitions of Ankara; consequently, it was not possible to uncover a national cleavage in the Turkey debate, despite the different political orientations of both newspapers in other respects. As well as in the FTL, the widening and deepening conflict was not interpreted as a problem, and culture and identity arguments against the EU accession of Turkey were also strongly rejected by the Guardian journalists.

The Guardian's central argument in favour of beginning accession negotiations and for Turkish EU membership in general rested on the strong belief that EU accession would consolidate and strengthen the democratic reform process in Turkey as it has done in other formerly autocratic states like Spain for example. The prospect of EU membership in the near future, Jonathan Steele supposed, would significantly encourage secular modernisers on-site, since no other international organisation in Europe had been as successful and effective in the past with the implementation, monitoring and support of democratic structures as the EU. The »rigorous membership criteria are having an effect in getting countries in eastern and central Europe with authoritarian traditions to start implementing the concepts of individual human rights, rule of law, and democratic governance. The EU should take Turkey in now« (*GUA*, 12 Dec. 2002: 22). Following up typical security-related arguments, and in absolute opposition to all opponents of Turkish membership in the German and French newspapers, Chris Alden interpreted the territorial size and the rapid population growth not as a substantial structural disadvantage, but instead as the greatest advantage for Turkey's application for the Western world which nobody on the continent wanted to take notice of seriously: »The most obvious strengths to Turkey's case are its size, strategic position and powerful military« (*GUA*, 12 Dec. 2002: 18). From a classical »realist« point of view, which was taken up by many British journalists who were unable or reluctant to see much more in the European Union than a European NATO, Europe's power and sphere of influence could be reinforced and extended up to Iraq, he argued without hesitation: »This would also be beneficial to the US and Britain, because Turkey has bases not far from its border with Iraq« (ibid.). The conflicts between widening and deepening the EU expressed almost ad nauseam by the FAZ journalists were not even perceived as a problem in passing by the Guardian journalists, so incomprehensible was the ambition of a deepened political integration to them.

However, the interpretation pattern of overriding importance for the Guardian journalists was the strict rejection of the so called »Christian Club«, which – according to the conservative camps in the German and French discourses – should be closed for Turkey due to the alleged cultural-religious differences. In the face of the historical decisions in the course of the Eastern enlargement, the impending EU summit in Copenhagen would provide an excellent opportunity for all Europeans »to cut away the detritus of the past« and to avow that the

Turks are a part of Europe and unambiguously belong »to us«. The European Union was perceived to be at the crossroads, since with a renewed deferral to Ankara the shortcomings of the European integration project would almost irreversibly become apparent. The early ideal of a liberal and in some ways transnational community, without special cultural and religious borders, could no longer be believable or seen as realistic: »A Turkish rebuff at the very moment of the largest-ever enlargement could be a defining choice. Europe as an ideal, as an inclusive, cooperative project and as an economic and legal entity would have discovered its limits – and its limitations« (*GUA*, 6 Dec. 2002: 25). In a much elaborated opinion article, the columnist Simon Tisdall was quite astonished, too, why so many Europeans evidently did not want to come to the decision to marry »the intrigued, fascinated, but a bit frightened young girl« named Turkey, with whom the changing governments of the EU member states have openly flirted for forty years. In addition to many other British journalists, and without taking a critical look at their numerous counter-arguments, Tisdall alleged that the main reasons for the continental opposition towards Turkish EU accession »boils down to prejudice – racial, ethnic, historical and yes, perhaps, religious«, although the Europeans would knew exactly how »unacceptable, unjustifiable and ugly« that was. For this reason, the EU should »open its arms to the Turks and seize the grand bargain« as soon as possible (cf. *GUA*, 21 Nov. 2002: 24). Valery Giscard d'Estaing, whose statements were otherwise, like already in the *Financial Times London*, rejected by all Guardian journalists, gained popularity at least for his courage to have said aloud what many Heads of State and Government were muttering behind their hands for years – namely that they never wanted Turkey to become a member of the EU due to cultural-religious reservations. Behind their fine words, there was thus not much more than »the dross of hypocrisy« (*GUA*, 11 Nov. 2002: 17), as Peter Preston claimed in a typically British style in his column.

Summary
Notwithstanding its lack of controversiality, the Turkey question has led to formations of public opinion in Great Britain, too – even if the British debate did not reach the same intensity as the German or French debates. As a matter of fact, all British journalists, who gave their opinion on the Turkey question in the selected newspapers, supported either the immediate start of accession talks or were generally in favour that Turkey should join the European Union sooner or later. The FTL and Guardian journalists argued unanimously against the idea of a culturally and religious predefined and exclusive Europe, which tries to defend itself against multicultural influences, and instead called for a culturally and religiously neutral Europe which should only be bound to the rights of individual self-determination, including cultural and religious freedom. In this context, and from the perspective of the British image of Europe, they stated explicitly that the development of a transnational collective identity was not a necessary precondition for the functioning of an economic community. Against this

background, potential conflicts between widening and deepening the EU identified by the German and French journalists were not perceived as a problem in the British quality press. The British journalists simply declared that the vision of a politically more closely integrated European Union had already been lost its credibility after the decision to accept Eastern enlargement – therefore, the accession of Turkey could be managed in a much better way today than in the past. The potentially high costs of Turkish membership were qualified and played down with a similar argument. Since the British journalists preferred the future model of a European free trade area, and due to the very different productivity levels between the national economies after the Eastern enlargement, the redistributive EU subsidies and structural funds should be reduced as much as possible in the future so that Turkey's accession would carry a smaller financial burden.

4. The Turkey Question in the Shadow of Europe's Finality

Firstly, to what extent did national borders have a dominating impact on opinions, reasons and interpretation patterns in the case of the public debate about Turkey's application to join the EU in national quality papers? Was it really possible to trace certain discourse contents and structures back to the respective national public spheres in which the discourse took place, or did national borders barely have any significant influences on the pan-European debate over Turkey's eventual EU membership? Or, to put it more succinctly, were the public discourses in the national quality papers structured *camp*-dependently or *state*-dependently?

Table 1: Cleavages in German, French and British Discourses on Turkey's EU Accession

Country	Germany		France		Great Britain	
Newspaper	FAZ	SZ	Le Figaro	Le Monde	FTL	Guardian
Widening/Deepening	– –	–	– –	–	+ +	+
Culture/Identity	– –	+ +	– –	+ +	+ +	+ +

Legend: + + = unanimously pro Turkey's EU accession; + = majority pro Turkey's EU accession; – – = unanimously contra Turkey's EU accession; – = majority contra Turkey's EU accession

Table 1 summarises the central results of the qualitative discourse analysis. In the two lines at the top, the six newspapers from the three selected countries Germany, France and Great Britain can be found. In the two lines below, their respective positions to the widening and deepening conflict and to the culture and identity conflict are listed. Two plus signs (+ +) denote that the journalists argued unanimously for a membership of Turkey regarding the re-

spective contentious point, whereas one plus sign (+) was inserted if at least the majority were in favour of Turkish accession to the EU. In contrast, two minus signs (– –) signify that the journalists argued unanimously against Turkey concerning the respective contentious point, whereas one minus sign (–) symbolises that the majority were against Turkey's accession. The justifications for these positions were described, expounded and quoted in detail in the content analysis of the commentaries of the six newspapers.

The table shows the confrontation of the same discursive communities, or camps, in the German as well as in the French discourse so that in this first case of comparison – as suggested at the beginning – no state-dependent, but rather *camp*-dependent cleavages were observable, even if the arguments and interpretation patterns of the respective national newspapers representing a similar political orientation differed slightly. In both conservative and/or economic-liberal papers (*FAZ* and *Le Figaro*), the accession of Turkey to the EU was categorically rejected with the widening and deepening argument *and* with the culture and identity argument – therefore, it was not surprising that Giscard d'Estaing received broad support from the journalists of both newspapers. Also the journalists of the rather progressive and/or social-liberal papers (*SZ* and *Le Monde*) were predominately against EU accession of Turkey and argued like the FAZ and Figaro journalists with the potential widening and deepening conflict, but without bringing forward the culture and identity argument against membership, from which the SZ and Le Monde journalists explicitly dissociated and distanced themselves. Thus, the Turkey debate in the German and French quality press was not characterised by state-dependent cleavages, because in both public spheres almost the same camps commented on the Turkey question with very similar reasons and interpretative patterns. In contrast, the comparison between the German-French discourse and the British discourse revealed some significant state-dependent differences. Independent from their political orientations, all journalists of both British newspapers declared themselves as Turkey supporters by vehemently rejecting the culture and identity argument (like the rather left-wing papers *Sueddeutsche Zeitung* and *Le Monde*). At the same time, however, they rarely expounded the widening and deepening conflict as a problem, but tried to interpret it more positively in favour of Turkish EU accession – such a constellation of opinions towards the main contentious issues never occurred in the newspapers of the other national public spheres and therefore marks a significant state-dependent feature. According to this public opinion, and in absolute contrast to most journalists taking part in the German or French discourse, the statements of Giscard d'Estaing were disapproved emphatically and almost unanimously.

The question if, and to what extent, national borders have an impact on public discourses about EU policy issues obviously depends remarkably on the countries and their national public spheres which are compared with each other. The central thesis of this article assumed that the impact of national borders on public discourses about EU issues, such as the

Turkey debate, depends on different and contested visions on Europe's finality, which have been consolidated in the national societies and dominate the current national discourses about the EU until now. In fact, the comparative content analysis of the national Turkey debates in German, French and British quality newspapers confirmed this presumed interrelation without doubt. The German and the French discourses were overshadowed by the approach of a politically integrated Federal state (*Bundesstaat*) which explicitly or implicitly underlay the specific debate on Turkey's EU accession in both public spheres. Concerning the first contentious point, the widening and deepening conflict, almost all German and French journalists of both newspapers argued against Turkish accession because they feared that EU membership would preclude, or at least complicate, the political deepening of the European integration project due to Turkey's large territory and its economic backwardness. Additionally, a broad consensus existed in the newspapers of both countries that the aspired political integration would presuppose the formation and consolidation of a common collective identity of all Europeans, but the necessary conditions of such a transnational identity construction were very controversial in the German and French newspapers. The conservative and/or economic-liberal oriented papers (*FAZ* and *Le Figaro*) argued that only common culture-historical imprints and the profession of a certain religion, namely Christianity, could successfully work as collective identity substructures for Europe. Since Turkey, as an Islam dominated country, does not fulfil these preconditions, EU membership should additionally be rejected because of cultural-religious diversity. In contrast, the more progressive and/or social-liberal papers (*SZ* and *Le Monde*) argued that collective identity formation did not depend on the shared fundamental of *one specific* culture or religion, but that a common belief in the norms of universal freedom and human rights, which could also be accepted in a modern and secular Turkey, would provide a sufficient and solid basis for a collective European identity. Therefore, the SZ and Le Monde journalists at least dismissed culture and identity arguments against Turkey's EU accession, even when they were in opposition to membership in other respects. Controversies about Europe's finality and about its presumed cultural-religious principles, which have been dominating German and French EU discourses until now, were the crucial factor for opinion formation regarding the Turkey question in the print media.

This argument gained additional empirical validity through the comparison with the British Turkey debate, in which the usually as eurosceptic characterised journalists of both newspapers intensively promoted and pushed forward Turkey's perspectives to join the EU. This public support, as well as the fundamental opinion and interpretation differences concerning the Turkey question between the German/French and the British quality press, can only be understood against the background of the dominant vision of Europe's finality in Britain. The British image of Europe is still completely in line with the idea of an association of sovereign nation-states (*Staatenbund*) cooperating in some selected economic and security policy

fields. This contrasts sharply with the continental vision of a European federal state. Turkish EU membership thus fits perfectly into their construction of Europe. Consequently, the structural conflict between widening and deepening the EU was not interpreted as a *conflict*, and therefore as a problem, by the British journalists because the option of continuing the European integration project was not viewed as a positive aim. Furthermore, if one bears in mind that the realisation of a politically integrated and institutionally consolidated European Union – as supported by almost all German and French journalists – would be materially complicated through Turkey's EU accession according to the predominating opinion, then one piece of the puzzle fits neatly to the other. In fact, the pan-European debate on Turkey's application to join the EU was a welcome instrument for the British journalists to demonstrate the limited feasibility of continental »Eurovisions« and to bury the »old-European« idea of a federal state once and for all, if their support for Turkish membership should finally be successful. On the other hand, they used the culture and identity arguments against Turkey's accession, which were extensively emphasised in the two conservative newspapers (*FAZ* and *Le Figaro*), as a stepping stone to protest against the suspected image of a »Christian Club«. Beside the belief that a multicultural Europe would constitute a more contemporary future model than a backward »Christian Club«, this protest also conceals a strategy to drive forward the favoured finality vision by promoting more cultural-religious diversity in Europe. If the assumptions of the FAZ and Le Figaro journalists were applicable, whereby deeper political integration of the EU would be only possible on the basis of common cultural-historic experiences and imprints in the long run, membership of the Islamic Turkey could, as a matter of fact, prevent the implementation of continental »Eurovisions«.

Actually, this motive was sometimes explicitly assigned to the British in the German and French discourse. In the German discourse, Christian Wernicke accused the Labour government and the Conservatives of propagating »the Europeanisation of Turkey with the ulterior motive of decreasing the demand of each integration on the level of a better free trade area called European Single Market« (*SZ*, 13 Dec. 2002: 15). And in the French discourse, Renaud Girard suggested that the British campaigned for Turkey's accession particularly because »they have always dreamed of an extended free trade area which could preserve their sovereignty, as well as their indispensable role as a pivotal point in transatlantic relations at same time« (*LF*, 27 Nov. 2002: 13). This leads to the following conclusion: the opinions, reasons and interpretation patterns concerning the Turkey question in German, French and British quality newspapers can primarily be traced back to future visions or ideas on the finality of the European Union, which dominate in the respective national societies. In the future, further case studies on other national public spheres and other EU policy debates have to show if, and to what extent, this theory on the impact of European finality visions can be verified and confirmed.

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