Europe and the Other Turkey
Fantasies of Identity in the Enlarged Europe

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Abstract

The European public debate on Turkey’s EU accession either emphasizes Turkey’s political (in)competence for EU membership, or marks its cultural difference. Based on the discourse analysis of this debate in the German mass media, this paper questions the dominant European perspective, by placing emphasis on how and where the symbolic borders of an imagined Europe become visible. I will argue that the debate surrounding Turkey’s accession to the EU reveals an ambivalent discursive process as it places the construction of the self-definition of Europe at the frontier of its Turkish-Islamic “Other.”

Key words: Turkey, European identity, Orientalism, European Enlargement, Muslim migrants in Europe.

1 This paper is based on my dissertation, which I completed in 2007 at the Humboldt University in Berlin. A revised version of the dissertation has been published as Türkei und das andere Europa: Phantasmen der Identität im Beitrittsdiskurs, Bielefeld: transcript Verlag (2008).
Introduction

From the vantage point of European Studies, European political integration is perceived as a self-contained process that does not define a strict boundary between Europe and other regions or societies; rather, it is motivated by internal dynamics and mechanisms. Thus, the constitutive “Other” is not to be found externally, but in relation to a shared negative past — i.e., the two world wars and the Holocaust. Nonetheless, it has been argued that Europe lacks a collective identity because of the lack of intermediary spaces and mechanisms that, in territorially defined and democratic nation-states, serve to keep a check on political authority from below. Given that collective identities are said to be formed in the public sphere, empirical research findings lead one to conclude that the absence of a European public sphere points directly to the lack of a collective European identity. Yet, Klaus Eder has identified a model of an economic and judicial community with its corresponding institutions, which has developed in the project of the Europeanization of Europe. Eder’s model indicates potential for the formation of a modern statehood that transcends the confines of the nation-state. This suggests the emergence of a trans-national European community that stretches beyond the borders of the nation-state and includes different cultures, migrants and other ethnic minorities. A European post-national society does indeed exist “in itself,” but it does not yet possess a collective identity “for itself.”

I argue that, if the search for an imaginary European identity is to be continued only in the supposed “heart of Europe” — that is, in its developing institutional framework — fundamental questions will remain unasked and unanswered. As Ringmar has emphasized, “[w]e can never come up with a conclusive answer to the question of what we […] ‘really are,’ but this does not for a moment stop us talking about what we or others are like.” From this perspective, a discernible European identity appears in moments of ambivalence, or in the gray zones where a “European self” confronts both insiders and outsiders. In the very moment that “Europe” begins to tell a narrative of itself and its “Other,” representations of past experiences are dialogically reconstructed. The debate on Turkey’s EU membership reveals such an ambivalent discursive moment, as it locates the construction of a

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European self-definition at the frontier of its Turkish-Islamic “Other.” Based on a discourse analysis of this debate in the German mass media, I will question here the dominant European perspective by focusing on how and where the symbolic borders of an imagined Europe become visible in the enlargement debate regarding Turkey.

Long-term notions of the “East” have always held an ambivalent function in the construction of a Western European identity. It is for this reason that this border, more than any other, has functioned to safeguard the identity of Europe; yet, it is also an imaginary border that has been continually transgressed and redefined.7 For as long as the “heart of Europe” continues to shift and transform itself, the processes of fixing its Eastern border will continue as well, both in terms of transgressing the border and the repeated exclusions of the East. Historically, this border has been consistently redefined and re-organized. After all, this is a border that must be both defended and transgressed. In this regard, it simultaneously provokes fear and attraction. Across these historical moments, every new demarcation has maintained traces of the old.

Maria Todorova has pointed out that Eastern Europe is more than a spatial-geographical unity and that the name “the Balkans” describes more than a mountain range. These concepts are saturated with Eurocentric meanings and images. Eastern Europe appears to constitute a link between Europe and the Middle East, an ambivalent space where these bounded and oppositional entities promise to unite.8 Eastern Europe serves as a mystical topography, as the “antithesis of West European civilization within Europe, the ‘heart of darkness’ in its own flesh.”9 From the Enlightenment to the rhetoric of Europe’s expansion to the East and beyond, Eastern and Southern Europe (the Balkans) have become the “quantitative Other”10 of Western Europe, its ambivalent and inferior annexes. Today, Eastern Europe is no longer considered “anti-Europe”; rather, it is increasingly considered a “lesser Europe.”11

For Western Europe, Turkey is neither Eastern Europe nor the Middle East, but rather a gray zone somewhere in between. It is neither friend nor foe, but an “indefinable” Other that cannot be captured through binary opposites;12 depending on one’s approach to Turkey, it can mean either. Turkey transports the European outside to the inside and, hence, challenges the European symbolic order. It directly raises the question about where the Eastern boundaries of Europe are located. On the one hand, Turkey disrupts the European social and political imaginary; on the other, it allows Europe various identity-building moments in so far as the diverse meanings of “West” and

“East,” “Europe” and the “Islamic World” are communicated and structured in the German and European public. Thus, the question is not whether Oriental and Occidental figures are used in the discursive narrative strategies of Europe’s identity-building processes, but how they are used.13

Theoretical and Methodological Reflections

Edward Said’s canonical work Orientalism continues to offer us theoretical points of departure for an analysis of the representations of the Oriental and Occidental in the context of Turkey’s EU membership.14 Influenced by Foucauldian discursive theory, Orientalism for Said is a specific way of thinking that operates along essentialist categories between the “Western self” and the “Oriental Other” and thereby constructs a subject that then speaks about the Orient. The Orient has emerged from the Western imagination. It has not come about as a result of naïve imagination and prejudices, but from an “episteme.”15 The Orient is something that is to be feared and, therefore, must be controlled by research and knowledge as well as through colonial occupation. Orientalism essentializes, as Said has maintained, the various non-Western societies as uniform and coherent. It marks not only the differences between West and East, but also rests on the notion of the superiority of Western culture.

Said has shown how Orientalist representations simplified and justified colonizing practices; he has demonstrated how the the Western subject’s penetration of the East and Orientalist representations reinforce and reproduce one another through an interplay of power and discourse. However, he has ignored the heterogeneous Western representations and antagonistic subject positions struggling for hegemony within the Western discourse.17 Discourses are indeed regular formations, but they are heterogeneous structures, which are not fixed in perpetuity. Through processes of articulation, discourses are changing formations, displaced through the practices of the Other. Every displaced occurrence is destructive, because it makes visible the absence of

13 See Neumann, I. B. (1999): Use of the Other: The East in European Identity Formation, p.207
15 The concept “episteme” denotes an alterable historical and cultural structure of recognition that makes possible and achievable certain experiences on the level of academic symbols, as well as the formation of language in semiotic dimensions.
identity; at the same time, it is constructive, because it engenders desire for new political identifications and social fantasies that attempt to sew up the “tear.”

Fantasy is an ideological promise embedded in myths, narratives, and history, as a retroactive effect of symbolism. The political mythologizing and construction of a threat can, for example, be understood as imaginary content or a masking of the lack of identity. The community regulates its reality through the stabilizing element of fantasy, by denying the inherent impossibility — that is, the antagonisms of the social. Statements are understood as discursive efforts towards the construction of a complete identity. In this regard, the representations of self and Others are multivalent and show different meanings in various social and historical contexts, because they are fragmentary due to multiple meanings and the ambivalence of concepts. The collective notions of identity and systems of meaning in Europe are differentiated by a particular historical moment, the nation-state and its political discourse. It is not about a unified, consistent meaning of the concept of Europe, and not about a particular tradition; rather, it is about relatively heterogeneous representations with historical and spatial differences. The concept of Europe can in this sense be considered a politically charged, hegemonic concept that is persistently contested: Europe, as a spatial-temporal imaginary construction, is translated in diverse political and ideological projects. Each notion of Europe has a relatively wide spectrum of Others and various forms of inclusion and exclusion, from the fortress Europe, to the community under the rule of law, and a Europe with relatively open borders.

Despite the fact that Said has distinguished between German and Anglo-French Orientalism in the nineteenth century, he has failed to establish the intimate interaction between the Orientalists and the strategic interests of national expansion in the German Orientalist tradition. He has rightly argued that Germany’s colonial expeditions cannot be compared with the Anglo-French colonial experiences, with their respective presences in India, the Middle East and North Africa. Yet, as Sheldon Pollock has argued, Said overlooked the constitutive role of German Orientalism in the formation of German identity. For Pollock, German Orientalism was not primarily directed towards the Orient and its colonization, but it was formed in the dialogical relationship with French and British Orientalism and tried to define Germany’s role in relation to France and England in Europe. German

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21 Said, Orientalismus, p. 28.
Orientalism “directs our attention momentarily away from the periphery to the national political culture and the relationship of knowledge and power at the core — directs us, potentially, towards forms of internal colonialism, and certainly toward the domestic politics of scholarship.”

For Pollock, the formation of a racist Indo-European identity against the Semites could not have been possible without German Romantic Orientalism. This tradition served as ideological basis for the Third Reich, which was then mobilized against its Jews and towards the occupation of Europe. According to Nehring, the small German states and their political impotence made it impossible for Germans to have their own colonies. This allowed the romantic poets to discover “mental colonies” in India and in the Sanskrit language. German Orientalism and nationalism together were searching for non-European cultural roots outside Europe. They were trying to find the “origins of their culture, dissociating itself from the Enlightenment and French Revolution, whereby the notion of ‘culture’ has functioned as a concept that opposed the French notion of ‘civilization.’

Andre Gingrich has made a similar point in his discussion of “frontier Orientalism.” The classic French and British Orientalisms were influential for the justification of an ideology of colonial rule, but they were never particularly fruitful in the formation of nationalism in England and France. By contrast, “frontier Orientalism” made possible the formation of nationalist ideologies particularly in Austria, Germany and Spain since the nineteenth century. In contrast to traditional Orientalism in France, England or the Netherlands — which, according to Gingrich, primarily addressed the national upper classes — “frontier Orientalism” became an important part of both elite and popular culture in German-speaking areas in Europe, particularly in Germany and Austria.

Orientalism is a complex, unstable and fragmentary discourse. Orientalist expressions and fantasies are to be understood not only as discourses that render the Orientalization of the Other outside of Europe, but also as discursive attempts that mask their own contradictions and defects in order to appear complete. To typologize these discourses as French or German is problematic, since discourses are considered to be limited to the national borders of particular European states. As I try to show in the analysis of the Turkish case, the boundaries of discourses transcend the national public sphere; they are intertextual. I have observed that there are mainly two distinct, antagonistically positioned hegemonic discourses, linked to each other along certain nodal points and metaphors in the German and European communicative space, whereby they produce two distinct competing meanings.

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25 Ibid, p. 29-34.
of Europe, with different power effects on Turkey. I will name these discourses not according to ethno-national categories, but according to their immediate power effects. I distinguish between inclusive and exclusive Orientalism, which address not only an imagined Islamic world in the geographical space somewhere outside Europe, but also constructs an internal Orient that manifests itself in the figure of Muslim Immigrants in Europe.

In order to analyze the hegemonic identification processes within the communication space I employ the term “discursive nodal points,” by which I mean those privileged words and metaphors that carry an important message in the discursive process and take over an integrative constructive role. As meanings that are historically and culturally traded, they allow the articulation of the experiences, fantasies and interests of the historically constituted social groups whose conflicts and power relations are expressed. The discursive nodal points manifest the dominant fantasy and express what is held to be relevant and “true” in a society. They channel social attention and show their structures of cultural resonance. They reveal a “topical power,” as a form of hegemony on the symbolic level. The analysis of nodal points is similar to social network analysis in that it does not look for key actors in a social environment, but for key words dispersed in the symbolic space. The question whether and how social networks are established between political actors remains outside the scope of this essay.

In the following, I will first summarize the discursive structure of the debate on Turkey’s EU membership, in order to answer which German and European actors, themes and narratives have become visible in a number of German newspapers in the period between 1997 and 2004. Then, I will analyze in detail how and through which narrative strategies German and European actors in their discourses frame and circulate dominant concepts,

26 See Laclau /Mouffe, Hegemony and Socialist Strategy.
28 The newspapers included in this study are the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (FAZ), the Süddeutsche Zeitung (SZ), and the Tageszeitung (TAZ). The FAZ represents the conservative end of the spectrum, the SZ the liberal, and the TAZ the left position. I have surveyed approximately 700 news items, including news articles and columns, and coded them systematically. I have employed correspondence analysis technique, which seeks to identify and visualize relationships among categorical variables in large tables. Thus, I was able to map associations between the rows and columns in a frequency table in a two- or three-dimensional space. The analysis proceeds in the following way: Firstly, the profiles (relative frequencies) and masses (marginal proportions) of categories are computed. Then, the distances between these points representing these parameters are calculated, and points are positioned in a two-dimensional space. I chose the December issues from each paper in 1997, 1999, 2002 and 2004 to frame my analysis. In December of 1997, the EU acknowledged Turkey’s bid for membership, but rejected any further discussion of EU candidacy. At the Helsinki Summit in December of 1999, Turkey officially received candidate status. In December of 2002, at the Copenhagen Summit a review date for accession negotiations was set for 2004, under the condition that Turkey met the “essential criterias.” The European Council Summit in 2004 decided that membership talks with Turkey would begin on 3 October 2005, as long as the requirements had been fulfilled.
meanings and images. By means of an interpretive process I will pose questions about the construction of European identity-building in relation to the Turkish Other. To this end, I will interpret exemplary articles from select newspapers in order to summarize the written results of discourse strategies: Which narratives, meanings and stereotypes dominate the discursive field, and in what forms of expression? Where and how do the symbolic boundaries of Europeanness become visible? Which roles do East-West representations play? In what ways are these statements connected by certain arguments, terms and metaphors? Common arguments, frames and narratives will show the extent of the formation of shared imaginaries, as well as the existence of an interactive communicative process beyond national spaces and imaginaries. The differences in frame and narrative strategies, in turn, display the lines of conflicts and the moments when communicative gaps open up. In other words, the interpretative discourse analysis will enable us to see not only the differences and boundaries between the discourses embedded in national contexts, but also the intertextualities and interactions on the symbolic level beyond national public spaces. This is crucial for understanding the identity/difference-building processes within the national and European public spheres.

One point should be clarified here: Germany is one of the most important agents of European expansion, especially towards the East. The German debate on Turkey’s EU membership thus deserves special attention, since inclusive and exclusive discourses are equally present. Moreover, the German debate also gives us essential clues about the articulation of the discourse of European actors in general. Since institutional and political EU actors and the national political actors of other EU members also become visible in the discursive spaces that I analyze, this research is not limited to the national public spaces of Germany and Turkey, but hopes to simultaneously analyze the meaning of Europe and of “Orient.” One also needs to remember that there are no popular intermediary mechanisms on the EU level, such as common mass media or a political party. Hence, the only mechanism consists of the communication channels and spaces on the national level, where we can see if and how certain European issues and which meanings of Europeanness are circulated, and how they are constructed, especially at the popular level.

**West-East Representations in the EU Membership Debate**

The year 1999 has emerged as a turning point when debates in the German public sphere on potential Turkish EU membership began to bifurcate along certain discursive nodal points. In discussions about Turkey’s possible EU membership, the German public sphere has become a location where two competing and antagonistic hegemonic discourses producing divergent images about self and Other have made themselves evident. This is rendered legible in
the diagram below, which visualizes the relationships between actor’s discursive positions, themes and nodal points dispersed in an abstract space. Important in this map are the distances between the points. Points are placed according to the pattern of their relative frequencies. Points that are close to each other represent similar discursive and political positions.

There are mainly two different discursive formations struggling in the symbolic field: One is the pro-Turkish discourse, which I will call inclusive Orientalism and which emphasizes the importance of Turkey’s political and economic stabilization, democratization, and its geo-strategic significance for European security. The inclusive discourse imagines Turkey as a bridge between Europe and the Islamic world, representing Turkey as the only Muslim country that can offer a suitable model for the Islamic world. The other is the counter-position, which I call exclusive Orientalism. For this position, Turkey’s exclusion is absolute. Exclusive Orientalism essentializes the cultural difference by underlining the incompatibility of Islam and secularism. It emphasizes the “overstretched nature” of the EU with respect to Turkey’s potential accession. This position regards Turkey as a “cultural border” between West and East. Both discourses construct immigrants as a particular “cultural problem.” However, they offer different ways of dealing with that “problem.” They both bring the interior and the exterior together and draw not only the border between an imagined Europe and the Islamic world outside of Europe, but also a border between Europe and an internal Orient, which is embodied in the figure of the Muslim-Turkish immigrant.

Mapping of the discoursive field

Exclusive Orientalism

Incompability of secularism and Islam
EU-CHRIST. DEMOCRATS
False Hopes
Turkey as Border
Absorption Capacity of Europe
CDU
Privileged partnership
FDP

Incompability of secularism and Islam
EU-SOCIALIST/GREENS
Dialog of civilizations
SPD
Turkey as Bridge
EU-COMMISSION
Overstretched/Fissured
TAZ

Incompability of secularism and Islam
GREENS
Cosmopolitan Europe

Community of cultural values

Community of political values

Integration Capacity of Turkey into EU
Turkey as Bridge: Inclusive Orientalism

The inclusive discourse communicates with the pro-European Turkish discourse; its formation is similar to the discourse of Eastern European expansion, which Sher has named the “discourse of Enlightenment.” The discourse of Eastern expansion was formed mainly in the context of security issues, whereby “conflicts” became Easternized and essentialized as such: Eastern Europe should be integrated in order to give the “insecure” region stability, and doing so will also strengthen the security of Western Europe. This discourse operates with the concepts of “deficiency,” “obstacles,” and “traditional conflicts.” If the East is not contained, then “traditional lines of conflict [...] shift from Eastern Europe into the EU again.”

According to the inclusive discourse, Turkey should be integrated into the EU for similar reasons. Gerhard Schröder (Social Democratic Party, SPD) in the German Federal Parliament (Bundestag) has defended the Turkish accession and argued that Europe should support those who stand for Atatürk’s secular system, so that Turkey does not “drift towards Islamic fundamentalism.” Turkey is an “important bridge” to the countries of the Near East, and it already fulfills these military and strategic bridge functions. Refusing Turkey’s membership, according to the former Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer (Green Party), “would drive the country into isolation,” and this would “risk a collaboration of the inner structures of Turkey.” The Turkish accession to the EU would allow a “preventative increase in security” in the “eastern problem areas.”

Similar to the pro-European Turkish discourse, Eberhard Siedel, a well-known columnist of the left-oriented newspaper Tageszeitung, has considered the decision in Helsinki a “breakthrough” which “confirms the Europeanness of Turkey.” “Turkey belongs to us; Atatürk’s vision finally receives the support of the state and government heads of the 15 EU states. Seventy-six years ago Mustafa Kemal wanted to lead Turkey into Europe, and now it has arrived.”

The inclusive discourse flatters the gaze of the secularist Turks by referring to the Turkish nationalist myth and strategically speaks to the heart of the Kemalist fantasy. The discourse appears to have been sensitized to the

30 See Kovác/Kabachnik, The Shedding Light on the Quantitative Other.
31 Fischer, cited in Sher, A Di-Vision of Europe: The Enlargement Union Enlarged, p. 256.
32 TAZ, 5 December 2002; SZ, 5 December 2002.
33 The bridge metaphor, which imagines Turkey as a space that brings together Eastern and Western cultures and traditions is one of the most popular self-images of Turkey. Particularly since the Copenhagen Summit of December 2002, the new Islamic-influenced government of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) and the columnists of the Turkish newspapers Zaman and Hürriyat have underlined the “bridge function” of Turkey.
34 FAZ, 20 December 2002.
35 SZ, 5 December 2002.
36 TAZ, 11 December 1999.
Turkish symptoms, hardly referring to minority rights and the Kurdish problem since 2002, whereas the exclusive German discourse has become an increasingly strong advocate of human and minority rights in Turkey, particularly after the Helsinki Summit. The inclusive position is embedded in the context of a security discourse that accentuates the geostrategic importance of Turkey. Nevertheless, this “friendly” message of the inclusive discourse does not reach its addressee — that is, the pro-Western secularist discourse — but comes from a symbolic breach where both discourses talk past each other.

In the post-1999 period in Turkey, we observe two shifting hegemonic positions in the Turkish political discursive field: namely, the popularization of elitist state nationalism, and the formation of neo-conservative and neo-liberal political Islam. The Kemalist elites, who formerly carried the Westernization process, now make up the counter-European block, while Europe’s former skeptics, the conservative Islamists, are now positioned as contemporary pro-Europe. Following this discursive relocation in the Turkish political field in 2002, the European inclusive discourse has altered its strategies and moved increasingly towards a culturalist framework that overshadows the discourses of security and democratization. The inclusive discourse now orients itself more towards the pro-European discourse of the Justice and Development Party (AKP). The latter styles itself as the authentic representative of the Islamic world, increasingly foregrounding the cultural “bridge function” of Turkey. Inspired by a speech of the well-known Orientalist scholar Bernard Lewis, Jürgen Gottschlich, the Istanbul correspondent of the Tageszeitung, has marked Istanbul as the place “where the Orient meets the Occident.” He has written:

> It is helpful that the current government in Turkey has its roots in an Islamic movement. This way it can play the role of a broker between the two worlds. This grants the current government a degree of legitimacy in the Islamic world that preceding governments did not have and which empowers its call for reform. Should the EU decide to commence accession negotiations with

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37 The nationalist-Kemalist bloc, which is based on the old secularist middle class, emphasizes the endangerment of “the unity of the state and the Turkish nation” through the accession process, while pragmatist-liberal Islamists foreground the “democratization of the country through the accession.” The nationalist bloc labels the political criteria for EU membership as “impositions” on a country that has lost a war and sees the fulfillment of the requirements as restrictive. From this emerges a negative image of Europe, a Europe that always intends to jeopardize Turkey’s interests, unity and identity. This discourse perceives the EU accession requirements as commensurate with the conditions set out in the Treaty of Sèvres after World War I. Europe is said to want to impose these “old promises” and to overrule the Lausanne Agreement step by step in order to divide Turkey. What the Europeans failed to achieve with military force, they would now carry out through “clever underhanded diplomacy.” After a bloodless military coup against the traditional first-generation Islamists in 1997, there occurred a split within the Islamist movement. There emerged a neo-conservative pragmatic interpretation of political Islam from the second-generation Islamist elites and the new middle class, the AKP, which has adopted neo-conservative ideas in politics and neo-liberal principles in the economy. They use the term “Europe” as a metaphor for more democracy, pluralism, religious freedom, and decentralization. The AKP has gradually increased its political power following the elections of 2002, 2004 and 2007, and since 2008 it has started to operate offensive politics against the bureaucratic-elitist center that is the old secularist middle class.
At first glance, the logic of inclusionary representation sounds revolutionary. Yet, as Maria Todorova has observed, it is in fact based on an Orientalist epistemological premise that sets up a binary between “Europe” and “the Islamic world” and understands both as closed civilizations. The view of Turkey as “broker” strikes a chord with the earlier claims of the German Orientalist scholar C. H. Becker who distinguished himself from the dominant Orientalist discourse of the early twentieth century when he considered Islam as an integral part of the “European cultural circle.” For him, Islamic civilization was not in opposition to European civilization, but instead stood for the sum of the elements of the ancient Orient: Jewish, Persian, Babylonian, Hellenic and Christian. Hence, Islam was a mediator between Europe and Asia:

[Islam] is located exactly in the middle between Europe and Asia. Ethnographically, it belongs more to Asia; however, from the point of view of decisive cultural issues that delineate cultural spheres, it has more in common with Europe […] the line […] runs not between Europe and Islam, but rather between Europe and Islam on the one hand, and Asia on the other.

What becomes clear in the current debate on Turkey is that the bridge function between Asia and Europe that Becker assigned to Islam is now taken over by Turkey as a bridge between Europe and the Islamic world. At present, Turkey appears well-suited for the role of a “broker,” since an Islamic-influenced government can assume, with some credibility, this task for the Islamic Other. As Gottschlich has suggested, with Turkey’s help as a model the Islamic World could move towards reform and critical self-examination. He sees the prospect of an increase in Turkish influence over the Muslim World, if the EU were to grant Turkey accession. This acceptance would send a clear message to an Islamic World continually on the alert about the changing relations between Europe and Turkey. The Islamic World would have the chance to transform itself, to set into motion what has been held back until now. Europeans should either answer to this attentive Islamic gaze, or at the very least accommodate it in some way. While the “Other” is not Turkey, but instead an imaginary “Islamic World,” the AKP is portrayed as its representative and, moreover, understands itself in this way.

The relationship between Europe and the Islamic World is marked here not simply by cultural difference; it suffers from a constant comparison with Europe. In this regard, the Islamic World facilitates the inclusive discourse in that it establishes a political and psychological position that alludes to something that is already different. The Islamic World as an imagined place — one that, as Said has shown, is always used for comparison — is forever

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associated with decadence and danger. Change would be introduced to the ill-fated Islam as a cultural-religious object in need of transformation in the form of Turkey’s entry to the EU. If a positive message is sent through Turkish membership, then the expectation is that the Islamic world would follow Turkey’s lead. Following this inclusive Orientalist logic, it becomes apparent that Turkey takes Europe as its model and that the Islamic world takes Turkey as its model. In a roundabout way, it draws on the example of Muslim Turkey.

The imaginary gaze of the Islamic world crystallizes in particular in the writings of several well-known secularist authors and local informants of non-Western origin — such as Karim El-Gawhary, Sadik Jalal Al-Azm, and Bassam Tibi — which appear in German newspapers. These authors, in speaking for the “Muslim world,” in a way come to represent it. As “authentic” voices of the “Other,” the narratives of these Arab-Muslim authors buttress Orientalist assumptions. In this respect, it is interesting to see that the writings in both the liberal-Islamist Zaman, and the left-oriented TAZ, which advocates multi-culturalism, resemble each other. Both emphatically speak of a “dialogue of cultures,” a “bridge function,” and the “Turkish model.” According to Karim El-Gawhary, the Middle East correspondent of several German, Austrian and Swiss newspapers, it is less the political dimension than it is the cultural that could break the dead-locked mindset. Above all, many liberal Arab thinkers believe that Turkey’s potential admission to the EU would initiate a medium-sized earthquake with a positive outcome. As maintained by El-Gawhary, many liberal Islamic movements align themselves with Turkey and collectively agree that the Turks tear down the borders simply by foregrounding their Europeanness. El-Gawhary also sees Turkey as a “model for the Islamic World.” Turkey’s admission to the EU illustrates one of the largest “civilization projects for Muslim countries.”

The inclusive discourse makes simultaneous efforts to disprove the exclusive Orientalist representation of the incompatibility of secularism and Islam, by making references to the Turkish model, which is constructed as an inspiring example for the transformation for the rest of the Islamic world. In doing so, the inclusive discourse welcomes the Turkish historical desire of being recognized as bridge between West and East. It targets the gaze of the Turkish Other by addressing flattering remarks to this popular self-image of Turkey. This discourse, while representing Turkey as a point where “two civilizations meet,” simultaneously reconstructs a coherent and consistent image of Europe and the Islamic world, whereby the West is considered the ideal to be imitated. As Meltem Ahıska has argued, the image of Turkey as a “bridge” has not been a pervasive one in the West, where Turkey is still considered far away from bridging the gap. Hence, with the new discourse of inclusive Orientalism the “Turkish model” has gained much ground. Yet,
employing the metaphor of “bridge” presumes a naturally defined “cultural circle” that could potentially be bridged by using a symbolic construction. West and East continue to be constructed as two closed entities; the imaginary border between West and East is not destabilized, and the Islamic world remains Europe’s “Other.”

**Turkey as a Border: Exclusive Orientalism**

While Turkey symbolizes an ideal “bridge” for the inclusive discourse, it represents an ideal place to define the borders of Europe for advocates of the exclusive discourse. The latter also divides the world into two separate entities believed to be incommensurate. The exclusive discourse re-articulates the well-known Orientalist narrative grounded on the dichotomy of traditional “Eastern Islam” versus rational “Western secularism.” For the defensive exclusive discourse, it is impossible to bring these two together, not even the “Turkish model” that the offensive inclusive discourse promotes.

The exclusive discourse operates along two lines of interpretative strategy. The first places the cultural differences between “Europe” and the “Islamic world” at the forefront. The second problematizes the capacity of the EU to integrate a country such as Turkey with its different, or rather “fractured culture” and “weak political structure.” Inside this discourse, then, Turkey is perceived either as an “Asian” country whose “Islamic outlook on humankind” distinguishes it from “Christian Europe,” a country that is not “in a classic sense” European, but rather “a part of Islamic high culture that has its spiritual center in far-away Mecca.”

As Elizabeth S. Hurd has figured out, cultural and religious opposition to Turkey’s accession is not only about defending the idea of a Christian Europe; rather, the prospect of Turkey’s accession has also stimulated a more fundamental controversy about European identity and the politics of religion within Europe itself. The doubts about Turkey’s accession resonate with a much larger proportion of the European population and political and intellectual actors of different political-ideological traditions. Even a number of prominent public intellectuals from the Social Democrat secularist camp have expressed ambivalence about and opposition to Turkey’s accession, despite their discomfort with the idea of a “Christian” Europe. The

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44 FAZ, 16 December 1997.
45 According to Hurd, there is a difference between the exclusive Judeo-Christian secularist and the inclusive laicist cultural and political traditions in Europe, a difference that produces two different European social imaginaries: While the Judeo Christian secularist tradition insists upon the fixed and exclusive nature of European identity, laicists believe that the exclusion of Turkey from Europe on cultural and religious grounds *per se* is unjustified. Laicism leads to a different set of conclusions regarding European identity and its relationship to Turkey’s accession. See Hurd, E. S. 2006: Negotiating Europe: The Politics of Religion and the Prospects for Turkish Accession, in: *Review of International Studies*, 32, p. 401-418.
contributions of the German historian Heinrich August Winkler, a secularist Social Democrat, to this debate have provided a comprehensive picture in this regard: A political union would demand a “European we-ness” that presupposes common “historical and cultural heritage.” The EU could no longer appeal to this supposed “we-ness” if it were to admit Turkey, since the cultural customs of Turkey are believed to be too dissimilar from those of Europe. These differences “have something to do with Christianity and Islam … Exceptional to the Christian Occident is the implementation over centuries of a separation of ecclesiastical and secular powers, the primal form of separation.”

Winkler locates a secular European political tradition in Christian values and norms and essentializes Western secularism, so that it becomes utterly unlikely that it could appear anywhere else in the world. The view of a European identity based on a set of values that evolved from a cumulative and exploratory historical-cultural tradition that spans from Greco-Roman era, the Renaissance, and the Enlightenment to the present day is sharply distinguished from the Islamic Turkish ontology. From this perspective, history is not only territorialized and trans-historicized, but also essentialized through a fetishization of geographic space. In fact, secularism has been interpreted and appropriated in different forms in different historical contexts in non-Western societies, and even within Europe there is no single interpretation and form of secularism. Even in different parts of Germany there is no standardized way of experiencing secularism and religion.

The democratic gains obtained through social struggles are seen as something one “owns” but cannot “make.” These norms, values and convictions are understood not as a process in constant flux, but as fixed entities. Consequently, in the language of

47 Winkler’s culturally deterministic exclusive discourse reminds us of Max Weber’s sociology of religion. Weber has attempted to reconstruct the development of (rational) Occidental-capitalism in its interaction with “spirit” and “form.” Weber posed the following question: How is it that only in the Occident a rational-methodical lifestyle, rational industrial capitalism, statehood and scholarship appeared, and why did these not develop in the same capacity in other places and religions — that is, in the Orient (China, Japan, and India, Judaism and Islam)? For Weber, Islam is the antithesis of modern life, and capitalism, reason and democracy are considered to stand in direct contradiction to Islam. (See Stauth, G. 2000: Islamische Kultur und Moderne Gesellschaft: Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Soziologie des Islams, Bielefeld: Transcript, p. 236.) Accordingly, in Islam the relationship between God and human beings is comparable to the relationship between ruler and subject and, therefore, constitutes a relationship of subservience. In Islam, predestination is said to refer not to the afterlife, but instead to the providence of the here and now. This has necessitated a fatalism that has possibly prevented a secularist, capitalist development, since Muslims are supposedly living out what Allah has already predetermined. See Schluchter, W. (1987): Max Webers Sicht des Islams: Interpretation und Kritik, Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, p. 15-41)
49 The German federal state is supposed to be neutral towards religion, but in fact there exist practices refuting this neutrality, such as obligatory church taxes. Furthermore, there are different traditions, interpretations and practices in different German provinces (Bundesländer). For instance, while in Catholic Bavaria a crucifix hangs in the rooms of public schools and hospitals, this is not the case in Berlin and Brandenburg, both provinces with Prussian Protestant traditions.
exclusive discourse, secular and modern norms and cultural values claim their meaning through strategic deployments against the Other.

For approximately 450 years, the Muslim Ottoman Empire led a relentless war against Christian Europe; the Ottomans stood at the gates of Vienna. This event is fixed not only in the collective memory of Europeans but also of the Turks. There is no call for the EU to admit the incarnation of such an adversary. This may be dismissed as the prejudice of a historian, but that does not change the fact of the matter that there has never been a long-lasting political union across cultures.\(^50\)

Much like Winkler’s, the well-known German historian Hans Ulrich Wehler’s epistemological premise assumes that these two cultures are incongruous. He has set up a binary of two closed civilizations with historically clear boundaries.\(^51\) Yet, unlike with Winkler whose arguments rely heavily on an secularist Enlightenment discourse, one can identify in Wehler’s presuppositions the central elements of the exclusive discourse of the Romantic period, one that Andre Gingrich has described as “frontier Orientalism.” According to Gingrich, the decisive paradigm of the border metaphor is the narrative of “blood and territory.” This directly refers to the Ottoman wars on the European continent when the Ottomans were a threatening power until the failed siege of Vienna in 1683 and the conclusive Hapsburg victory. Gingrich’s concept of “frontier Orientalism” is pervasive in Austrian popular culture as well as among the elites, as the rhetoric of Jörg Haider indicates. Posing a rhetorical question in his anti-immigrant petition for a referendum, Haider has asked: “For what reasons did our ancestors defend our country against the Turks if we are now letting them in again?”\(^52\) Austria’s former Prime Minister Wolfgang Schüssel (Austrian People’s Party, ÖVP) has also brought to mind this frontier-myth when he emphasized that Turkey must not “starve at the foot of the gate.” Instead “we” should “open the gate for Turkey,” but not at the cost of full membership.\(^53\) Clearly, Haider’s rhetoric is barely indistinguishable from Wehler’s account of a historical “incarnation of an adversary.” Whereas Winkler’s liberal-secularist values and cultural differences claim their meaning in opposition to the “Other,” the Social Democrat Wehler evokes the menacing image of the non-Christian, aggressive Turk in his position on European identity. Both employ different strategies in their pursuit of the same goal: excluding the Other.

Does Turkey have a self-evident place in Europe, similar to that of Poland or Hungary? This question has been asked by the Istanbul correspondent of the

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\(^{51}\) One should remember that Wehler is known as one of the leading left-wing intellectual figures participating, together with Jürgen Habermas, in the Historikerstreit (historians’ dispute) of the 1980s against conservative German historians such as Ernst Nolte.

\(^{52}\) For Gingrich, the bridge metaphor has replaced the fortress metaphor in the official wording of the 1970s and 1980s: Austria as a bridge between North and South, West and East. As discussed above, the line between bridge and fortress is ambivalent; both reproduce a dichotomy between West and East. See Gingrich, Österreichische Identitäten und Orientbilder, p. 33.

\(^{53}\) FAZ, 13 December 2004.
liberal-social democratic *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, Wolfgang Koydl, who points to the larger question of the debate: What exactly is Turkey? Evidently it is not just the country’s poor economic status, the incomplete democratization project, and the war in Kurdistan that hinder Turkey’s chances for accession. It is Turkey’s religion that points not to the West but to the East. Turkish society is looking for a new course. Turkey is undecided whether it should align itself with the “Koran or Kemalism.” Turks should ask themselves whether they want to tempt the Finns, Portuguese or Greeks to share in Turkey’s manifold interests in the Black Sea, the Caucasus, and Central Asia. An honest answer from the Europeans would help liberate the Turks from their “Euro-Fiction.”

Koydl has reconstructed here an image of Turkey as caught in the middle between modernity and Islam. Accordingly, Turkey displays “inner conflicts” between “Kemalism and the Koran,” experiencing a sort of identity crisis. Therefore, Turkey’s historical desire to be a member of the “European family” is represented as a sort of “psychological disorder.” The reason for this disorder is considered to be the “dishonesty of Europe” that deprives Turkey of the “secret truth” by detaining and giving “unfounded hopes” to Turkey. In fact, Europe has never desired Turkey, not because it is democratic or authoritarian, rich or pure, but precisely because Europe and Turkey belong to essentially different worlds. In a friendly voice, Koydl offers supposedly honest advice that flatters the fantasy of the anti-European nationalist discourse in Turkey, which has positioned itself against EU membership by constructing a negative image of Europe as being “double-faced” and “dishonest.”

Since 2002 there has been less of an emphasis on cultural differences to argue for a rejection of Turkey and instead more of a focus on the Europeanness of Turkey. This focus, as the following statements of European politicians will make clear, accentuates the absorption capacity of Europe and conjures up terms such as “deteriorate” (*untergraben*), “fissure” (*zerklüften*), “overstretch” (*überdehnen*), and “decay” (*zerfallen*). For the first time, EU candidacy no longer simply depends on fulfilling the requirements and conforming to European criteria. In addition, the candidate must now consider the absorption capacity of the EU. As indicated by Roland Koch (Christian Democratic Union, CDU) and Angela Merkel (CDU), a possible Turkish accession would “overwhelm European structures” and the “bonding-force of common institutions.”

And, in the words of the former French Interior Minister and incumbent President Sarkozy (Union for a Popular Movement, UMP), it is crucial to determine exactly whether Turkey belongs to Europe. The negotiations have begun; however, the end result should not be full membership, but instead a “privileged partnership.” Yet, as Winkler has maintained, Turkey’s EU accession poses a “problem of historical

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54 SZ, 14 February 1997.
55 FAZ, 7 December 2002.
significance.” In regard to future relations between Turkey and Europe, any decision should take into consideration the history and future of Europe.

The exclusive discourse links the “future of Europe” to an Orientalist notion of culture, for which an ideal of political and cultural integration is proposed. The assumption is that the characteristics of strong national ideals can easily be transferred to the cultural identity of Europe. Along these same lines, the methodology of the nation-state should help guide the way to European cultural cohesion. This resembles the discourse of the Romantic period of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Andrea Polaschegg has called this discourse German Orientalism, because in the nineteenth century the German (and European) image of the Ottomans served as a catalyst for the process of identity-building. The counter-image of the non-Christian Turks helped to constitute a cultural historical origin of the European self, which helped cut loose the Christian element from its Orientalist ties, yet simultaneously maintain the connections to a mythical prehistoric time. As I have discussed above, German Orientalism sets itself apart from British or French Orientalism, since it defined itself not against portrayals of a distant Orient, but through representations of an “internal Orient” within the boundaries of Europe. This Orientalist discourse construed a “historical German essence” in order to define Germany’s place in Europe. The present exclusive discourse would like to see the EU, in light of its strong negotiating capability as a political entity, use its position to offset the power of the United States. This role would demand investing in a European identity that is culturally “resilient” and strategically and politically able to perform the required functions. Thus, the discourse intends to penetrate the imaginary “Islamic world” to which a “fractured” Turkey “in part” belongs; yet, it aims to keep it at a respectable distance. Hence, it seeks to exclude the “Other,” but at the same time pushes towards the East while staving off Turkey’s push to the West. The exclusive discourse engenders hegemonic representations of “Europe” and the “Islamic world,” which contribute to a depiction of different cultural phenomena from either “Western” or “Eastern” societies as uniform, integrated, and coherent. In doing so, Orientalist representations not only ground a political and psychological positioning, but also stabilize the notion of an imagined, particularistic European self that has evolved by distancing itself from its imagined Islamic Other.

57 FAZ, 11 December 2002.
60 According to Balibar, the demand for a formidable Europe is justified either as “a demand for a check and balance, in order to countervail the American (super) power, or a demand for mediation within the ‘war of civilizations’ that America is now apparently waging.” In the former case, a strategic logic is pursued, in which power relations are articulated in military concepts. In the latter case, a moral normative logic is employed, one that does not exclude violence. See Balibar, E. (2002/2003): *Europe: Vanishing Mediator?*, Mosse-Lectures, Humboldt Universität zu Berlin, p. 14.
Constructing Immigrants as Internal Orient

The “integration” of Muslim immigrants is one of the most burning issues on the agenda in relation to Turkey’s EU membership. It acts as a kind of additional discursive field where we can observe a massive Orientalization of the integration discourse, through which the alterity of the Orient emerges in the figure of the Muslim immigrant, playing on an internal symptom. This approach is evident in the statement of the prominent Dutch author Leon de Winter, writing in the liberal German weekly newspaper Die Zeit:

In Western cultures respect is shown to the individual for personal accomplishments; but the children and grandchildren of Muslim immigrants demand “respect” for their religion and their group, which indicates that they are hampered by their traditional shame culture. When honor is concerned — for example, if a woman of the group violates the rules of sexual propriety — this threatens the status of the men and leads to the consequent societal decline of men.61

For de Winter, respect in Western culture is something individual, personal and effort-oriented. In the East, however, it is collective, attached to “honor” and the traditional “shame culture.” He attributes gender equality, rationality and individualism to the West, while he attributes patriarchy, inequality, irrationality, and communitarianism to the East. These social and cultural patterns, which de Winter reckons to be characteristic of the Oriental essence, are also considered to be valid for first-generation migrants and their third-generation descendants in the peripheries of European cities. For de Winter, it is not a question of how and under what conditions certain outsider positions have been created in the course of the migration processes, or by which mechanisms and practices these positions are solidified.

According to Der Spiegel, German society is uniting against the “Islamic threat” in German cities, with “leftist feminists, new and traditional conservatives” together acting against the “oppression of Muslim women by their husbands.” The daily’s secularist Orientalist discourse warns German society against a “false tolerance” or a “creeping Islamization” (schleichende Islamisierung) in order to protect liberalism against the abuse of the rule of law by immigrants. The secularist discourse presents itself as a defender or owner of secular values, by appearing as the emancipator of repressed Muslim women. Therefore, the taboo of how Germany should cope with its foreigners must finally be broken. It is ultimately a question of how much foreignness the Germans can endure: “Do Germans sometimes accept antiquated values of other cultures? Do they allow groups to live not just in a parallel society, but also in a different historical era and with a completely different speed? Is Germany not required to pick up the people alien to society and bring them at least to the present?”62

The logical conclusion of this construction, then, is to hinder the mobility of those immigrants who are identified as too much associated with Eastern traditions and therefore considered incapable of assimilating. Why multiply the number of such people by granting EU accession to Turkey? Yet, I argue that it is not so much the immigrants being unwilling to integrate, but their demands for equality and their increased degree of integration into society that engenders these stigmatizing and Orientalizing articulations. As long as the first generation of migrant workers (Gastarbeiter) in Germany remained in the sphere assigned to them and performed menial work, they were not necessarily welcome, but at least tolerated.63 As Norbert Elias has observed in a different but parallel context:

As long as the Negro remains a slave and the Jews small traders or peddlers, who are clearly recognizable in their appearance with their strange clothes wandering through the land or isolated in their Ghetto, the pressure and tension between insiders and outsiders is of course always available, but on a relatively low level.64

To put it in another way, especially third-generation migrants are referred to as threat, not because they are passive and silent victims, but precisely because they aspire to social, political and economic equality, threatening to dislocate the power position of insiders. This dislocation causes a sort of “moral panic,” a reaction of the establishment and a sort of collective hysteria that generates increasing hostility towards the political subjectivity of the Other.65 Migrants have changed their status from “foreigner” to citizen; they have begun to perform their subjectivity and show themselves in the public space. A German-European cultural identity is impossible without the figure of the Turkish-Muslim migrant, and this makes the politics and processes of identification through the Orientalist repertoire meaningful. This discourse is not only circulated in the German public space. In many other Western European societies, we can observe similar Orientalist representations.66 Muslim immigrants living in Europe are not seen as part of an imagined European demos, but as a kind of threatening Oriental ethnos.67 Consequently, the Orientalization of the Muslim immigrant leads not only to their

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64 Elias 1990 cited in Çil, Topographie des Außenseiters, p. 37.
discrimination, but also to the symbolic unification of European identity, masking European differences. Turkey or Muslim immigrants thus become a site of projection that helps establish a European identity.

Conclusion

The debate over Turkey’s possible accession to the EU has revealed that the existing European self-understanding — an understanding that constricts the external borders to a political-normative basis through the exclusive cultural notion of identity — has been put into question. In contrast to the discourse on Eastern European expansion, in which a consensus on the “reunification of Europe” between the so-called “discourse of Enlightenment” and the “discourse of Romanticism” prevailed, these two discourses are positioned in opposition vis-à-vis the Turkish case. The Enlightenment discourse portrays itself as inclusive, whereas the discourse of the Romantics is presented as exclusive, constructing Turkey either as “bridge” or as “border” between Europe and the Islamic world. According to the exclusive discourse, Turkey is “caught” between Western modernity and Islam, while for the inclusive discourse it becomes a “bridge.” The notion of “caught” seeks to describe a Turkey divided between Western rationalism and Eastern religion, between modern-secular and traditional-religious, and presents these inherent dichotomies as incompatible. Likewise, the metaphor of the bridge marks the differences between West and East, yet promises to connect this naturalized divide by representing Turkey as a “model” for the “Islamic world,” a model that provides evidence of the compatibility between democracy, secularism and Islam. The exclusive discourse is defensive and primarily addresses Europe in order to construct a resilient European identity, one that will secure the negotiation capability of Europe. The inclusive discourse, however, starts from an offensive and missionary position and has the desire to maximize the geostrategic interests of Europe under a thin political identity. As a result of these two discursive blocs, two images of Europe have emerged, two images that open up two politically competing negotiation options for Turkey: in one Turkey is included, in the other it is excluded. Yet, an inclusive representation does not disrupt the boundary between an imagined Europe and the Islamic world; instead, it relocates the boundary to a place beyond Turkey. The discord between the inclusive and exclusive discourses deflects from the question whether Turkey belongs to the European self or to the Islamic “Other.”

The integration of Turkish-Muslim immigrants arises as an additional discursive battlefield between the two German-European discourses in the context of Turkey’s possible EU membership. These discourses not only address an imagined Orient outside Europe, but also act upon an internal Orient, on immigrants inside Europe. Consequently, in place of Europe’s
structural lack of identity, a Turkish-Muslim fantasy object is positioned to conceal the fissures running through European society, with the figure of the ambivalent Turkish Other on the outside and of a Turkish-Muslim migrant on the inside taking on a central role in the formation of a European collective identity. They seem to act as a symptomatic internal and external Orient excluded from the European symbolic order. They manifest the constitutive lack of such an order and disrupt it. Turkey, or the Muslim immigrant, becomes a site of projection that helps establish the content of Europeanness. It is the clarification of the boundary between West and East in the figure of Turkey and Muslim immigrants that unsettles the cultural identity based on exclusion. It is the symptomatic ambivalence of the foreignness of Turkey and of the migrants that produces each formative accomplishment whose presence sparks a question in German-European society as to what is and what is not the European Other. In this respect, Turkey and the Muslim immigrant both make possible and prevent the construction of such a European identity. As Kürşat Erçuğrul has shown, Europe sways between a postmodern society with a principally offensive, inclusive identity and a defensive cultural society with an exclusive identity; thus, it sways between political openness and cultural closure. Along which of these political fantasies a particular meaning will be implemented and how structural shortcomings of identity will be reduced is not only dependent on the symbolic struggle within the European discursive field, but also on the discursive performances of Turkish Occidentalism.