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Turkey – a part of Europe?

The Construction of European Identity in the German Enlargement Debate¹

ABSTRACT: *This paper presents the results of a frame analysis focussing on identity constructions in the German public debate on Turkish EU membership. I start with a definition of the concept of European identity. Subsequently, the various ways in which European identity is discursively constructed are demonstrated. With regard to Turkey, exclusive and inclusive frames are distinguished and their sources of power assessed. It will be shown that multiple others can be identified in the enlargement debate, whereas explicit others tend to be more powerful than the implicit ones. I conclude that despite the fact that European feelings of belonging hardly exist among the citizens of the EU-25, the constructed, exclusive idea of a collective European identity functions as a discursive means of social closure.*

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1 Introduction

In many EU countries, such as Germany, France, Great Britain and Italy, there has recently been a fierce and highly emotional public debate on the question of whether or not Turkey should accede to the European Union. For the first time in the EU's history, we observe a media debate on the European identity of a candidate country: public elites, such as intellectuals and politicians, tried to operationalise Turkey's Europeanness by referring to its geographical position, religious orientation, history, and value system. It is stunning that this enlargement debate has only secondarily been about the fulfilment of the Copenhagen criteria. In a highly normative way, the public debate primarily concerned the crucial questions of whether Turkey belongs to Europe or not, and of whether it has developed – or is capable of developing in the future – a collective European identity.

An analysis of this identity discourse is fruitful as it allows inference on the construction of collective identities in general and the framing of European identity in particular. In the following, I will demonstrate how European identity is shaped in the German public discourse. To this end, we will first of all define a sociological concept of European identity that provides us with a working definition of the term (2). Guided by the Weberian conception of ideal types ([1904] 1991), we will present a typology of discursive identity frames and attempt to provide some explanation for their degree of discursive penetration (3). Finally, this paper attempts to draw theoretical conclusions on the questions of whether or not a collective European identity exists and how the discursively constructed image of Europe functions at the macro-level (4). Finally, some further research questions will be sketched out (5).

2 What is European identity?

The term European identity is used in so many research contexts, fields, and disciplines that its intransparency has increased to a degree that has completely deprived the term of analytical precision. Therefore, this colourful concept is in desperate need of clarification. In order to provide a working definition, I want to refer to Kohli's concretisation, which distinguishes four dimensions of analysis. In a first approach, he refers to a constitutional meaning or self-understanding of European identity, as it was

first expressed in the “Document of European Identity” and later in the Treaty of Maastricht². The second level of analysis is the discursive one, paraphrased by Kohli as the “idea” of Europe. Politicians and intellectuals in general, as well as sociologists and political scientists in particular, discuss the self-understanding and purpose of Europe and do so both in descriptive and normative ways, thus constructing ideas, ideals, or images of Europe and its identity. The third level implies what Nora called the “lieux de mémoire”, that is to say cultural practices such as a common anthem, flag, currency or public holiday (cf. Nora 1984). The fourth and last level of analysis focuses on the individual’s feelings of belonging to Europe as a social or political entity (Kohli 2000: 120ff.). In order to operationalise and measure these feelings, the populations of the EU-15 or EU-25 are usually defined as the subjects of identification, whereas the European Union itself constitutes the object of identification. European identity is, thus, tantamount to the sense of closeness or feeling of belonging between subject and object of identification (Gerhards 2003). We will come back to this definition later on and illuminate collective feelings towards the EU. In the following paragraph, I aim at throwing light on the discursively constructed image, ideal or conception of Europe and will, hence, first of all focus on the discursive level. At a later point, I intend to contrast my findings with survey data on collective feelings of belonging and, thus, focus on Kohli’s fourth dimension of investigation.

My analysis reveals that the existence of European identity constitutes a ‘master frame’ in the German public debate on the pros und cons of Turkish EU-membership.³ A master frame is defined as a pedestal of frames or interpretations, which is accepted, and, consequently, not questioned by any of the discussants. The discursive actors do not question the existence of a European identity, which *can* and *should* be concretised in a discourse like the one on Turkey’s accession to the EU. In other words: the assumption of a European identity has become an axiom that remains untouched and unquestioned throughout the debate. As not one single discourse fragment casts doubt on the existence of a European identity, it is the actors’ goal to define and concretise what the presumed identity is about. In other words: the question of whether there *is* a European identity or not doesn’t even come up – the discussion is rather on how to fill this identity with

² The Preamble of the (Draft) Constitutional Treaty, which had been elaborated by the Convention on the Future of Europe, falls under this definition. Here, universal values such as liberty, democracy, and the rule of law are defined as constitutive to the European Union.

³ I collected my data in the course of the year 2004, when the issue of the Turkish accession was most salient.

meaning, define its limits and, thus, insiders and outsiders. This connection is reflected by the questions that initiated the debate and keep it going until today. Does Turkey belong to Europe? Is Turkish EU-membership compatible with a European identity? Is Turkey capable of developing a European we-feeling? Do Turks feel European and why?

Discursive conceptions of European identity implicitly or explicitly refer to a common we-feeling, which is supposed to be shared by everybody who is defined as European. That means that the discourse is based on an “imagined community” (Anderson 1991) at the European level. In other words: *both opponents and supporters of Turkish EU-accession assume the existence of a collective defining itself as European and consisting of members who are linked to each other by feelings of belonging.* But where does this we-feeling come from? With regard to content, the various definitions of European collective identity couldn’t differ more. Referring to whether or not they comprise Turkey, we can analytically distinguish inclusive and exclusive frames. These conceptions refer to a European identity but attribute different contents to this identity, some of which complement one another and some of which are contradictory.

In order to measure the power of a frame, I opt for a quantitative approach⁴ and define the discursive standing of code, that is, its frequency, as an indicator. My analysis reveals a ratio of inclusive to exclusive codes of roughly 1:5. The following matrix visualises the standing of the various frames:

	Inclusive identity frames			Exclusive identity frames		
Codes	Geography (a)	History (b)	Universal values (c)	Geography (d)	Culture	
					History (e)	Religion (f)
Standing	1.9%	6.4%	7.7%	24.2%	45.3%	14.5%
Total	16%			84 %		
	100%					

Frequency of identity frames in the German media debate on Turkey’s accession to the EU⁵

⁴ The frames were analysed and counted with the help of MAXqda, a software for qualitative data analysis which allows computer assisted administration of texts and definition of codes.

⁵ A total number of 160 frames were reconstructed in roughly 400 press articles taken from a German quality press sample in the course of the year 2004.

These figures show that the exclusive frames clearly dominate the discourse. Thus, it can be deduced that the power relation clearly favours identity constructions that define Turkey as Non-European (total: 84%). Why is that so? In the following chapter, we not only present ideal types of inclusive and exclusive identity frames, but also attempt to explain why the former tend to be less dominant, i.e. less powerful than the latter.

3 Discursive constructions of European identity

3.1 Inclusive identity frames

Three inclusive frames can be distinguished in the discourse. To start with, a first group of actors includes Turkey on the basis of a geographic definition of Europe and European identity (a). This conception defines Turkey as a geographic and consequently also political part of the European continent:

Geography teaches us that Turkey is part of the European continent. Turkey constitutes Europe's last gate to Asia and Asia's gate to Europe. If the European Union wants to be a political Union and not a Christian club, if it's the Union's goal to bring together the civilisations, then Turkey needs to be a part of this Union. (Erdogan, Recep Tayyip in an interview published by *Der Spiegel*, 04.10.2004, translation E.M.)

This quote idealtypically shows how the political right to membership is directly derived from this inclusive conception of Europe. However, geographic definitions that include Turkey have not been very successful in penetrating the discourse (cf. above: 1.9 % of all identity frames). This is, firstly, due to the fact that this frame lacks consistency in the sense that it defines Turkey as a geographic part of Europe but refrains from stating where this geographic Europe actually ends. On an abstract level, this definition is obviously based on the assumption of a non-European, i.e. Asian or Oriental other, however, this remains implicit. Secondly, this inclusive frame contradicts the "traditional" geographic definition of Europe, that is the so-called textbook definition, according to which most of Turkey lies East of the Bosphorus Strait and, therefore, in Asia.

The second inclusive identity conception sees Turkey as a historical-cultural, and as a consequence “natural”, part of Europe (b). This interpretation aims at the construction of commonalities and similarities between Turkey and the EU countries on the basis of historical events dating from Ancient Greece, the Roman Empire, the Ottoman Empire and both world wars. The following representative selection of statements illustrates such arguments:

Basing the definition of Europe on Christianity, Turkey may rightly be called one of the cradles of Europe. [...] A connection to Europe could strengthen partly submerged traditions and bring Europe back to some of its roots. (Burgdorf, Wolfgang, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 06.01.2004, translation E.M.)

They all talk about Turkey, but nobody mentions the long Ottoman centuries, during the course of which Turkey has been writing European history, both with the blood of battles and the ink of treaties. (Stürmer, Michael, *Die Welt*, 15.10.2004, translation E.M.)

Istanbul used to be Constantinople and also capital of the Eastern Roman Empire. Troy was located in Turkey, and the exchange between the Arabs and the Turks brought about that Europe got in touch with mathematics and the antic world. (Sonderegger, Peter, *Die Welt*, 27.09.2004, translation E.M.)

This inclusive construction of a European community is based on references to historical roots which are shared by both the current EU-members and Turkey. Thus, this frame assumes the existence a common European identity that is based upon a common past, shared experiences and memories. It is noteworthy that a wide range of commonalities are put down to roots reaching back not just decades or centuries, but even millennia. Therefore, from an objective point of view, the construction of points of contact appears rather random.⁶ As to the credibility of this frame, the following question needs to be posed: if Turkey is constructed as an integral part of a European historical identity, what or who represents the non-European other? In this context, we can observe that European identity is positively constructed: commonalities with a positive connotation are emphasised and underlined (or this positive connotation is discursively constructed), whereas no explicit othering takes place. Actors imply the existence of a non-European other but again refrain from tracing exact border lines or explicitly naming the “other” or “stranger”. It can be put down to these consistency and credibility problems that the

⁶ It goes without saying that this also holds true for exclusive identity frames that aim at constructing cultural differences by referring to historical events.

level of penetration of this frame remains comparatively low and, thus, its power limited (cf. above: 6.4%).

A third concept of European identity includes Turkey through the assumption of a universal value community (c). In terms of frequency (cf. above 7.7%), this frame turns out to be as weak as the frame aiming at the construction of historical communalities. The ideal type of this frame reads as follows:

The European Union is a community of values. The Union is based upon values such as democracy, freedom, pluralism and tolerance. A democratic Turkey, committing itself to the European values, would prove that there is no contradiction between Islamic faith and an enlightened, modern society. (Schröder, Gerhard, *Die Welt*, 13.10.2004, translation E.M.)

The universal value system that is referred to by the German Chancellor has been fixed in the Copenhagen Criteria in 1993. These membership criteria require that a candidate must have achieved stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities.⁷ The mode of demarcation is, again, implicit: identity is not constructed via the explicit definition of a non-European other. It is, in fact, directed against all those who do not ascribe to the values outlined above. As there is no specifically European characteristic, this mode of inclusion strongly reminds us of the U.S. model of inclusion, according to which anybody committing him- or herself to U.S. values can become an American citizen. This explains why this identity frame typically goes hand in hand with additional remarks referring to the economic and geopolitical advantages of Turkish membership. Differently put, universal value-frames and remarks concerning the necessity of a Turkish membership are connected, because the inclusive identity frame itself lacks a definition of what is to be considered *specifically* European. This fact accounts for the lack of credibility and persuasive power.

To sum up, three inclusive identity frames can be reconstructed. These three conceptions do not dominate and penetrate the discourse in the way that exclusive definitions of

⁷ Furthermore, the existence of a functioning market economy as well as the capacity to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the Union has to be ensured. Lastly, the future member state has to have the ability to take on the obligations of membership including adherence to the aims of political, economic and monetary union. (cf. http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/enlargement_process/accession_process/criteria/index_en.htm, last access: September 5 2006)

European identity do. Their weakness can be put down to consistency and credibility problems. In the first place, inclusive frames lack clear demarcations as they refrain from an explicit distinction of the other, and remain rather vague in their definition of the European. As a result, these frames tend to be less persuasive than exclusive definitions of collective identity.

3.2 *Exclusive identity frames*

All three exclusive frames have a remarkably high standing and are correspondingly considered to be relatively powerful. To start with, the geography-frame locates Turkey outside the geographic boundaries of Europe (d):

Turkey does possess a small European enclave, however, this covers only five per cent of its territory and eight per cent of its population. The rest of the country is located in Asia, on the Anatolian Plateau. (d'Estaing, Valérie Giscard, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 26.11.004, translation E.M.)

In this context, opponents of Turkish EU-membership literally calculate the percentage of Turkey that is located in Europe and conclude that five per cent European territory is not enough to make the country eligible as a potential EU member. It is argued that the political Union should be defined according to geographic borderlines. These are perceived as naturally given and self-evident and appear, therefore, both unquestionable and unchangeable:

The accession of Turkey to the EU is not a purely economic or political issue, but a geographical one, as only a part of Turkey belongs to Europe. If we're not aware of our natural borders, where shall Europe end? Some people say that the EU should be opened to peoples which are similar to us in economic and political terms. But what about Australia then? The EU should be for Europeans and Europe ends where its borderlines are. (Fornt, Xavier, *Die Welt*, 21.08.2004, translation E.M.)

The above-mentioned figures demonstrate that this exclusive geography-frame is rather powerful. This is first of all due to the fact that this definition has been taught in German schools over many generations and appears in German textbooks until today (Schultz 2004). Therefore, this geographic concept of Europe is deeply rooted in people's minds and remains rather untouched, even in the context of discourses on European identity or society. On top of that, it is an advantage that questions regarding the borders of Europe

can be answered seemingly correctly and consistently at all times. Discourse participants generally ignore the constructive character of borders:

Chancellor Schröder belongs to this group of people who have obviously never heard about Orient and Occident and for this reason don't know that the geographical borders of the Occident are older than our calculation of times. There is a Europe and the European peoples can – given certain conditions – accede to the EU. (Munck, Ekehard, *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 18.12.2004, translation E.M.)

Needless to say that as geography constructed by man, there cannot be a definition of Europe that is timeless and valid at all times. However, it is the naturalisation of the geographic boundary between insiders and outsiders that makes this frame so powerful.

The second and the third frame – which in the figure above are subsumed under the code “Culture” (e and f) – both exclude Turkey by referring to unalterable historical or religious differences. As they construct distinctions that are closely linked to what happened in the past, these appear unchangeable and I therefore suggest calling them primordial. Primordial codes, as Eisenstadt and Giesen argue, link the constitutive difference to ‘original’ and unchangeable distinctions which are by social definition exempted by communication and exchange. These distinctions are attributed to structures of the world which are given and, therefore, cannot be changed by voluntary action (Eisenstadt / Giesen 1995: 75). Now how does this work in the case of Turkey?

First of all, the idea of a European “spirit” is constructed on the basis of a range of historical events. In this context it is argued that Turkey lacks a particular kind of civilisation and, thus, the mental foundations for developing a European value system and identity:

Turkey has not actively taken part in the spiritual and political development of Europe, but has merely played the role of an observer or recipient. That is why it has not developed a Western European civic society. (Schafberg, Herwig, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 06.08.2004, translation E.M.)

Moreover, codes refer to a perceived historical and cultural community which produced, over the years, all those ideas that nowadays form the basis of European integration. This value community is typically traced back to Christian roots and Greek philosophy. Others believe that Roman law, the Renaissance or the Age of Enlightenment have been

of prime importance for the development of a European identity. Consequently, it is argued that Turkey as a Middle Eastern country could only copy or rather imitate European values.

The heritage of [...] the renaissance and the Age of Enlightenment has not even touched Turkey – just as the harem culture has never touched us. (Köppel, Roger, *Die Welt*, 12.09.2004, translation E.M.)

The Europe of freedom of thought, of the rule of law and of democracy has its roots in the Christian Middle Ages as well as in the ancient world, but not in the Muslim world. (Hoffmann, Hartmut, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 29.04.2004, translation E.M.)

Different actors stress different historical events or periods. However, the perception of a *we-feeling*, which is based on the idea of a common history, culture and, hence, value community, forms an integral part of all these primordial codes. Looking back on Atatürk's work, it is argued that democratic reforms could certainly be imposed, but that they could never be rooted in people's mentalities.

Moreover, the perceived value community is traced back to religious roots, namely Jewish and Christian influences. The Christian heritage in particular is said to have laid the mental foundations of individualism, pluralism, freedom, the protection of minorities, solidarity, democracy, and the rule of law. In this context, special attention is paid to the issue of religion and the process of secularisation in Europe. This process is typically highlighted as a European particularity, unique in world history. The separation of church and state – which took place over the course of centuries – is said to be a characteristic European trait. However, despite its secular system, Turkey is referred to as oriental and non-European. It is argued that laicism was established only in the 1920s and, therefore, could not be rooted in people's minds. Neither the government's declared belief in secularism nor its concrete implementation in society seem to play a role for those denying Turkey a Western character.

These two exclusive identity frames construct universal values as a *typically European* thing, whereas the connection between the value system and its historical roots is shaped as *exclusively European*. To put it in a nutshell, it is argued that Turkey simply lacks the specific European past. Modern Turkey can certainly catch up on some developments. These will, however, never be approved as on a par with those developments that have

grown on Western or Central European ground. The others, as Eisenstadt and Giesen argue, “cannot be converted or adopted because they simply lack the essential preconditions of understanding” (Eisenstadt / Giesen 1995: 78).

Our findings show that over 80 per cent of all discursive identity frames define a European identity that excludes Turkey (cf. figure above). How come these frames are so extremely powerful? To start with, there is a long tradition of othering the East in general, and Turkey in particular (Said 1978; Wolff 1994; Huntington 1996; Todorova 1997). We can assume that “[t]he European first-level image of Turkey as the other, essentially different, exists” (Brewin 2000: 105). Neumann even pictures Turkey as Europe’s most dominant generalised other:

Present-day representations of Turkey thus carry with them the memory of earlier representations. These memories are among the factors operative in today’s Turkish-European discourse on European identities. (Neumann 1999: 62)

This is why discursive constructions of the “other” can rely on a broad repertoire of identity frames that are deeply rooted in the collective memory of “the West”. That implies that the narrative fidelity of these frames is to be considered comparably high: exclusive frames do not have to be newly invented but only reactivated and/or fit into already existing interpretative patterns or structures. These interrelations are reflected in survey data concerning public opinion on Turkey and its “Europeanness”. In 2001, only 27% of the German population saw Turkey as a European country. In 2002 and 2003, this percentage increased (33% and 35%), but was only 21% in the year 2004⁸ (the year of our discourse analysis). This implies that in the German popular perception, Turkey is a lot less European than Bulgaria (64%) and Rumania (52%).⁹ These data can be read as evidence of a *cultural stock* (Zald 1996: 267), i.e. some sort of cognitive repertoire of knowledge and interpretations, in which the above-mentioned exclusive identity frames are rooted.

⁸ In 2004, the German public discourse on Turkey, its European character, and the pros and cons of membership reached its climax in terms of intensity and emotionality. This was due to the fact that the European Council was expected to take a decision on the opening of accession talks in December 2004. Taking into consideration the dominance of exclusive identity patterns in the media discourse, it can be assumed that the considerable change in the perception of Turkey’s Europeanness (a loss of 14 percentage points from 2003 to 2004) has been strongly influenced by the public debate.

⁹ Source: Institut für Demoskopie Allensbach, opinion surveys 2001, 2002, 2003 and 2004.

Moreover, primordial identity frames draw their force from the naturalisation of boundaries. The construction of border lines as closely linked to the past makes them appear naturally given and unchangeable. As a consequence, there seems to be no point in questioning these ancient demarcation lines. This makes primordial frames credible, which in turn makes it easier to communicate them in public discourse. Thanks to the explicit “othering” of the Turk along well-known and seemingly self-evident borderlines, primordial frames appear both consistent and convincing. Furthermore, all the exclusive frames construct unambiguous others, whereas we have seen that inclusive conceptions remain rather vague in their definitions. It is obvious that this constitutes an advantage in terms of communicability and persuasion.

4. European identity: reality or fiction?

It can be concluded from our analysis that a European identity undoubtedly exists at the discursive level. The assumed existence of a collective identity – in other words: a we-feeling – could even be defined a master frame. However, six ideal types of identity frames can be reconstructed in the German media debate on Turkish accession to the EU, a fact that leads to the conclusion that, apparently, European identity means different things to different actors. With regard to Turkey, inclusive identity frames can be distinguished from exclusive ones, where the former tend to other implicitly and the latter explicitly. These findings have been confirmed by Risse – amongst others¹⁰ – who points out that Europe’s various others are referred to and represented in a context-dependent way: “This does not mean that anything goes but warns us not to reify the concept of European identity and to fix its meaning once and for all times” (Risse 2003: 12f.).

Moreover, our results clearly demonstrate that the construction of European identity does not necessarily imply the explicit definition of a non-European other. In contrast, positive constructions of identity put emphasis on historical commonalities and/or underline the European commitment to universal values. These inclusive frames refrain from a concretisation or personification of a non-European other or stranger. The

¹⁰ Cf. for instance Wodak’s analysis of the construction of European identity in interviews with EU officials (Wodak 2004).

vagueness of these concepts make it relatively hard for them to penetrate discourses, however.

The frame analysis further reveals that we are dealing with an identity discourse mainly consisting of exclusive European identity frames, the strong persuasive force of which was put down to traditions of othering, higher frame consistency and, thus, credibility. What is at stake here could be called *social closure at the discursive level*. According to Max Weber, social closure describes the action of social groups that restrict entry and exclude resources to those outside the group in order to maximise their own advantages. This is exactly the discursive function of the communicative action described above, i.e. framing of exclusive collective identities. Opponents of a Turkish EU-accession connect with exclusive identity definitions when arguing that Turkey should not, neither now, nor in the future, be eligible to become an EU member. Hence, they discursively close their ranks by denying the candidate the requested European character: The existence of a common we-feeling is assumed – be it based on geography, collective memory and/or religious roots – and the claim is made that Turks could never share in it.

In order to assess these findings, I will now briefly outline what had been defined the dimension of *collective* identity. Collective feelings of belonging are operationalised and measured by the European Commission's *Eurobarometer* on a regular basis. Interviewees are asked for their feelings of belonging¹¹ and can choose from the following answers: "Don't know", "Nationality only", "Nationality and European", "European only", "European and Nationality", whereby the latter two answers can be interpreted as indicators for a European collective identity. A closer look at data from 2004 – the year in which my frame analysis was carried out – reveals *that the discursive master frame obviously lacks empirical evidence*: 38% of the German interviewees said that they felt German only, whereas 46% felt German in the first and European in the second place. Only 8% answered that they felt primarily European (and secondarily German), and a minority of 6% defined themselves as entirely European (Eurobarometer 2004 B94). Further analysis of Eurobarometer data shows that these figures had not changed considerably over the previous six years (Nissen 2003, 2006). Moreover, they do not differ remarkably from the EU-15 statistical average. Thus, as to the dimension of European collective identity, we can conclude that only a limited number of Germans in

¹¹ Respondents answer the question: "In the near future do you see yourself as ...".

particular and EU-15-Europeans in general have developed a sense of togetherness so far (Nissen 2006: 171).

A comparison of the two dimensions of analysis leads us to a striking contradiction between the discursive masterframe and the descriptive empirical evidence. Whereas the assumption of a we-feeling constitutes a master frame in the debate on Turkish membership, public opinion survey data can provide little evidence for feelings of belonging amongst German Europeans. Starkly put: the master frame described above lacks empirical foundation. For this reason, arguing against Turkish accession by referring to a European we-feeling appears quite problematic. When asked for feelings of belonging, the typical German (like most other citizens of the EU-25) would hardly refer to feelings of togetherness at the European level. However, in the discourse on Turkish membership, the assumption of a collective European identity constitutes an unquestioned master frame. Especially the opponents of a Turkish EU-entry closely link their arguments to the assumption of we-feelings from which, in their view, Turkey is excluded both *per definitionem* and for good.

5. Summary and Outlook

To sum up, the existence of European identity depends on the point of view or, more precisely, on the analytical level at which European identity is investigated. As to the level of personal feelings of belonging, representative survey data prove that only a small elite identifies with Europe whereas the majority of the population still feels most attached to the imagined community of their nation state. In contrast, various European identity frames are constructed in the debate on Turkey's accession to the EU. As to this discursive dimension, we conclude that there is not one single, valid idea(l) of Europe that is agreed upon by all discussants. Rather, we observe a bunch of identity constructions that overlap and/or contradict each other. Multiple borderlines, and multiple others (both implicit and explicit) are constructed in the discourse, with explicit 'others' referred to more frequently and in more powerful terms. As exclusive identity frames are closely linked to membership claims, the assumption that Turkey does not (and will never) share the European we-feeling discursively functions as a means of social closure. This is problematic because the assumption of collective feelings of belonging lacks empirical evidence.

This paper has presented ideal types in the Weberian sense. As a result of this reconstruction work, we now know *how* European identity is framed. However, we still do not have any explanation for the described communicative actions. Crucial questions still remain unanswered. How come recent enlargement debates focus on identity issues? Why do, referring to the above mentioned case, most discourse participants construct identity frames that exclude Turkey? How can this bizarre form of social closure be explained in terms of social processes? Further research needs to illuminate the question as to *why* European identity is constructed as shown above. Little academic effort has been made so far to shed light on the link between identity constructions and the social actions motivating them. Further investigation, therefore, needs to focus on the connection between discursive identity patterns, collective feelings of belonging and social processes.

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