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FEUTURE Working Paper

Mapping milestones and periods of past EU-Turkey relations

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Abstract

This Working Paper aims to embed FEUTURE's analysis of drivers of EU-Turkey relations in a historical context. It does so by outlining and discussing several narratives which represent influential interpretations of EU-Turkey relations at different times in history. It is argued that narratives on EU-Turkey relations became increasingly competitive in the course of time, both within EU and Turkey as well as between them. The paper maps these changes of narratives in light of different historical milestones and phases. The periodization also serves to outline trends of conflict, cooperation and convergence as manifested in the political discourse. Thereby, the paper also serves as starting point for the ensuing qualitative analysis of a vast set of sources, representing the debates in Turkey and the EU.

Bu çalışma FEUTURE'nin (FEUTURE projesinin) AB-Türkiye ilişkilerinin belirleyici faktörlerini analiz eden araştırmasını tarihi bağlama oturtmayı amaçlar. AB-Türkiye ilişkileri hakkında farklı dönemlerde yapılmış olan etkili yorumlamaları çeşitli anlatılar olarak ele alır, özetler ve tartışır. Söz konusu anlatıların zamanla hem AB ve Türkiye içinde hem de aralarında bulunan ilişkide gittikçe rekabetçi bir hâl aldıkları öne sürmektedir. Çalışma anlatılar kapsamında vuku bulan değişimleri tarihi dönüm noktalarının ve evrelerin ışığında aydınlatmayı tasarlamaktadır. Elde edilen periyodizasyon aynı zamanda siyasi söylemden yola çıkarak çatışma, işbirliği ve yakınlaşma trendlerini belirlemeğe yardımcı olur. Böylelikle, bu çalışma Türkiye ve AB'deki tartışmaları temsil eden geniş bir dizi kaynakların nitel analizinin başlangıç noktasıdır.

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1. Introduction

FEUTURE’s historical approach is based on the conviction that in order to fully grasp the present and make predictions for the future, it is necessary to understand and analyse past dynamics of relations. In this understanding, history represents an important variable that influences present and future relations. Therefore, FEUTURE aims to analyze how narratives on both sides changed over time and how they have been and continue to be manifested in the political debate since the beginning of formalized relations between Turkey and the Community in 1959.

This Working Paper argues that after the first decades, narratives on EU-Turkey relations became more and more controversial and competitive, not only between the Turkish debates and the one in the European Union (EU) but also in the domestic sphere. To grasp this in more detail, the paper discusses a set of narratives that have been influential in the Turkish and European debates at different times. To put these narratives in a historical context, this paper aims to assess the debate in light of different historical milestones and phases, covering the time frame since the beginning of the formalized relations between Turkey and the EU with the Turkish application for associated membership at the end of the 1950s. In doing so, this paper sets the analytical framework for the ensuing QDA analysis¹, which will also serve to test the narratives discussed here.

At the same time, this Working Paper aims to contribute to embedding the analysis of drivers of EU-Turkey relations in a historical context by sketching out the most relevant issues which drove the relations in one or the other direction in the past. Hence, the periodization takes into account FEUTURE’s six thematic dimensions: politics, economy, security, energy and climate, migration as well as identity and culture.

In line with the project’s overall research design the historical analysis also aims to outline trends of conflict, cooperation and convergence as manifested in the political discourse, and can thereby contribute to fleshing out FEUTURE’s three ideal-type scenarios for the future.

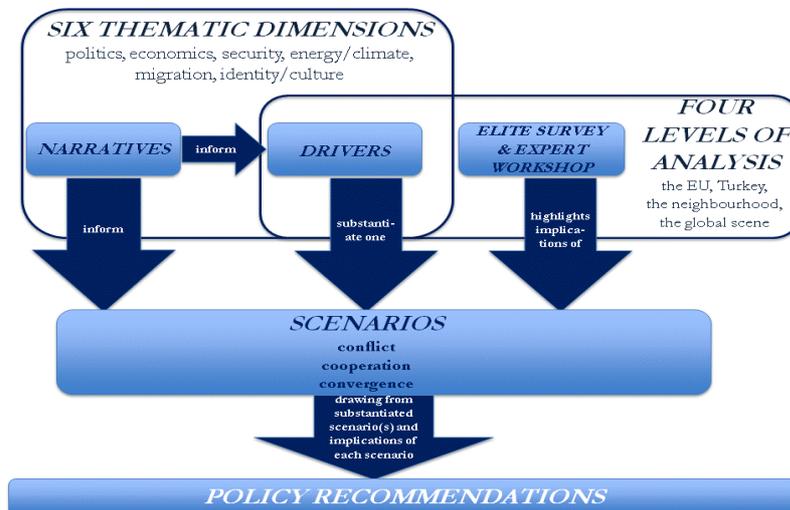
The project generally distinguishes three scenarios (see also D1.1 Background Paper on Scenarios): The *conflict* scenario sees Turkish EU membership as clearly off the table and EU and Turkey develop in different ways. In this scenario, Turkey is perceived as an estranged partner for the EU and vice versa. The *cooperation* scenario envisages that Turkey and the EU engage in functional forms of cooperation and integration, which could also be understood in the sense of a strategic partnership. The third scenario of *convergence* would mean a fundamental change for the better with some form of membership, also entailing significant progress of Turkey in fulfilling the Copenhagen criteria and the *acquis* – although different forms of internal integration could also play into this scenario. The historical analysis therefore aims to outline if and how past narratives refer(red) to these different scenarios and how this changed over time. By identifying these patterns of argumentation, the historical analysis of narratives informs FEUTURE’s aim of a substantiation of possible scenarios.

¹ This will encompass the coding of a vast corpus of textual documents representing the EU and Turkey debate. Unlike many narrative approaches, this project aims to base its research on a systematic empirical approach by using a codebook and QDA software for the analysis of the text sources. The research teams at METU and University of Cologne will use a jointly developed codebook. The results of the QDA Analysis will be published in Deliverable D1.

Corresponding to the project’s main assumptions, we assume that the relations not only in the present but also in the past have been influenced by variables at several analytical levels: Turkey, EU, the neighbourhood and the global scene. This holds true for domestic developments – such as those years of progress or setbacks regarding democratization in Turkey or for the financial and economic crisis in the EU since 2008 – but also for constellations at the international level – such as the end of the East-West conflict 1989, the political implications of the 9/11 attacks, or the “Arab Uprisings” which unfolded in 2011.

The Graph below illustrates the role of the historical analysis of narratives in FEUTURE’s research design, informing both the analysis of thematic drivers as well as the substantiation of scenarios.

Graph 1: Historical analysis of narratives in FEUTURE’s research design



2. State of the Art and Conceptual Framework

There are many academic contributions from the Turkish and EU academic community that concentrate on EU-Turkey relations and their history². Various authors have examined the (elite) discourse³ or the public opinion⁴ in Europe with regard to Turkish membership and vice versa. A particular interest has been paid to the role of identity in forming attitudes towards the Turkish accession perspective⁵. This is due to the fact that the opposition in EU Member States against Turkey’s membership, at least in the public, has traditionally been higher than towards other enlargement candidates⁶. At the same time, this cannot only be explained by the argument that Turkey did not fulfill the Copenhagen criteria yet, which is why identity-related perceptions are

² See e.g.: Aydın-Düzgit/Tocci 2015; Eralp/Torun 2013; Eralp 2009; Eralp/Şenyuva 2011; Hauge/Wessels 2015; Müftüler-Baç 2016; Müftüler-Baç 1997; Narbone/Tocci 2007; Öniş 2001, Öniş 2008; Turhan 2011; Yılmaz 2008.

³ See e.g. Aydın-Düzgit 2012; Aydın-Düzgit 2013; Macmillan 2013; Şenyuva/Akşit/Gürleyen 2011.

⁴ See e.g. Gerhards/Hans 2011; Ruiz-Jiménez/Torreblanca 2007; Tocci 2007; Yuvachi 2012.

⁵ Macmillan 2013; Rumelili 2008; Aydın-Düzgit 2012.

⁶ see e.g. Ruiz-Jiménez/Torreblanca 2007

assumed to be influential⁷. A recent example was the instrumentalisation of the Turkish accession question in the Brexit campaigns⁸, which seemed to have been an important factor for the success of the Brexit camp.

However, so far no research has been conducted examining narratives in the political debate as comprehensively and systematically and with this strong comparative focus on covering both the EU and Turkey debate. Therefore, FEUTURE’s historical analysis will significantly contribute to the academic discussion.

Political action as such often consists of language or talk, i.e. documents, written statements or speeches. In analyzing the debate as represented in the official documents from EU and Turkish political actors in the last decades, we aim to trace and compare patterns of argumentation and narratives over time as well as between EU and Turkey. We believe that narratives play a critical role in the construction as well as assessment of political behavior because they shed light on how political actors make sense of the past, present or future and how they justify their political actions.

Generally, approaches of narrative analysis in social sciences⁹ can be placed in the theoretical context of the so-called ‘argumentative turn’, bringing together theoretical approaches which highlight the importance of language and meaning in the policy process. This term was coined by Fischer and Forester¹⁰, who were interested in the role of language in policy-making, drawing also from the works of Jürgen Habermas and Michel Foucault. Central to these approaches is the conviction that language has an independent influence and that it should be understood as an important and powerful variable in politics.

By and large, in social science one can differentiate between approaches that view narratives as their object of research and those that use narratives as a strategy for conducting research or presenting research results¹¹. The latter understanding is e.g. popular among historians. However, this project belongs to the first strand of approaches since narratives are the phenomenon under scrutiny. Biegon and Nullmeier also provide an additional useful differentiation of those approaches are interested in narratives as research object, namely by distinguishing (post-)structuralist and actor-centered approaches. (Post-)structuralist approaches do not assume that narratives can be employed strategically by political actors. Narratives are understood as systems of meaning or as discourses, which constitute identity. On the other hand, the actor-centered approaches put the political actors in the focus of their attention and understand them both as producers and users of narratives¹².

⁷ see e.g. Öniş 2001: 106f

⁸ Aydın-Düzgit 2016

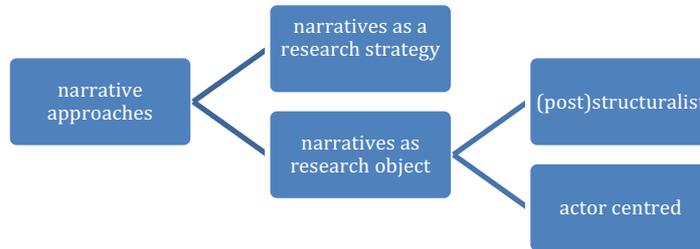
⁹ See for an overview of narrative approaches in political science Patterson/Renwick Monroe 1998, p. 315.

¹⁰ Fischer F./Forester J. 1993

¹¹ see e.g. Biegon/Nullmeier 2014

¹² Ibid.

Graph 2: Narrative approaches in social sciences



Source: Own visualization based on Biegon/Nullmeier 2014.

This paper shares the assumption that narratives can be employed strategically by political actors, for example in order to frame a certain policy outcome that they prefer. In this reasoning, narratives can be understood also as a communicative tool by which political actors try to make sense of the past, present or future¹³. For example, a narrative depicting Turkey as incompatible with an allegedly ‘European’ culture may be put forward strategically by political actors who are against a Turkish membership to the EU.

When it comes to defining narratives, there is a broad variety of definitions. When staying close to the literary origin of the term, narratives could be defined as stories, displaying features such as setting, plot, characters (e.g. heroes, villains, victims), and a moral of the story (e.g. a policy solution)¹⁴. Jones et. al. for example claim that these criteria are constitutive for the form of a narrative. While the setting refers to the context of a specific policy problem, the plot relates the characters of the story in different ways.¹⁵ A policy solution in the case of EU-Turkey relations could for example take the form of a plead for Turkish membership to the EU.

This paper does not assume that all narratives will necessarily have a plot and characters in this rather narrow understanding of a story that Jones et. al. follow. Nevertheless the analysis will pay attention to the element of the ‘moral of the story’, e.g. by identifying references to the three scenarios for the future developed by FEUTURE. Naturally, narratives are to a substantial degree a product of a certain time and context. Therefore, the analysis will of course take into account the specific historical situation and developments and therefore factor in the ‘setting’ as well.

Emery Roe on the other hand argues that narratives can either take the form of stories with a beginning, middle and end, or of an argument with premises and conclusions. If they do not have a beginning, middle and end, they are nonstories. If the stories run counter to the dominating narrative, they are counterstories. A metanarrative in Roe’s approach is then “the candidate for a new policy narratives that underwrites and stabilizes the assumptions for decision-making and policy making on an issue whose current policy narratives are so conflicting as to paralyze decision making”¹⁶. Roe’s differentiation of stories and counterstories will be of particular interest for this analysis, since this is important for reflecting the high degree of polarization that can be observed in the debate on EU-Turkey relations.

¹³ Miskimmon et al 2013

¹⁴ See for an overview of narrative in political science Patterson/Renwick Monroe 1998.

¹⁵ Jones, M./Shanahan, E./McBeth, M. 2014

¹⁶ Roe 1994

In FEUTURE’s historical analysis, the character of the texts that will be analysed ranges from statements to progress reports or debates in parliament. These texts have quite distinctive linguistic features. Debates in parliament for example will be more argumentative than a progress report, which usually has language that is more matter-of-fact. Therefore, our definition of narratives has to be broad enough to work for all of these sources and focuses more on the content than on the form. Narratives are here defined as *predominant interpretations by political actors of the evolution, nature and/or finalité of EU-Turkey relations, which may change over time*. While *evolution* may refer to interpretations that actors have of the historical development, including references to historical milestones, by *nature* we mainly mean the remarks or arguments that actors make regarding the (current) framework of relations, i.e. the form of cooperation in scope of integration. Lastly, *finalité* refers to the question where this can or should lead, hence the possible aim of relations.

The analysis also considers the influence of the ‘time factor’¹⁷. We expect to identify elements of continuity and discontinuity, meaning that some narratives are relevant over decades. These narratives which have a more comprehensive relevance and dominate the debate over time will be categorized as *master narratives*. Hence, master narratives in our understanding are stories with a broader relevance, possibly over long time period. Other narratives however may disappear, lose relevance or reappear, such as the concept of “privileged partnership”. It will be of particular interest to trace in the empirical analysis which narratives reoccurred and dominated over time¹⁸.

3. Debates on EU-Turkey Relations: Identifying Narratives in Turkey and EU

Although the comprehensive qualitative analysis of the official documents will be continued, this paper will already outline some narratives that the authors assume have been influential in the past and present. These narratives are deliberately formulated in an attenuated way so that the main line of argumentation becomes clear. Hence, they are understood as guiding assumptions in the sense of a framework for the analysis and will be updated, adapted and complemented during the following analysis in light of the qualitative analysis of primary documents.

In order to structure the analysis, narratives can be differentiated according to the level they are referring to. For example, a differentiation between narratives that mainly comprise representations of national identity and other narratives that mainly include the interpretation of the state of relations, i.e. the relationship level, makes sense. On the other hand, a distinction needs to be made between narratives comprising representations of national identity – either in Turkey or the EU Member States – and at the supranational EU level. The following table gives an idea of how narratives could be differentiated according to the level they refer to.

¹⁷ Eralp 2009

¹⁸This will be in close coordination with Work Package 7 on Identity and Culture which also has a strong historical focus in examining drivers from an identity and culture perspective.

Table 1 Narratives at different levels

	Level	Explanation	Example
Identity level	National level	referring to national identity in Turkey or EU Member States	e.g. Neo-Ottomanism narrative
	EU level	referring to European Union level	e.g. Europeanization narrative
	Relationship level	referring to the EU-Turkey relationship and its framework	e.g. Partnership narrative e.g. Enlargement narrative
	System Level	referring to the international system or neighbourhood level	e.g. Turkey as Geostrategic Partner narrative

Source: Differentiation of issue, identity and system narratives see Miskimmon et al 2013: 7; besides these elements, this is a compilation by the authors.

The following paragraphs will present a set of those narratives that the authors consider candidates for influential narratives in the last decades. They have been developed both in an intuitive approach as well as through a review of the extant literature and selected primary sources.

Westernization: In its focus on Turkey, the Westernization narrative is mainly located at the national level, but has implications for the relationship and system level as well. This narrative has been influential in Turkey at least since the beginning of the Tanzimat period in the Ottoman Empire. It captures the perspective that Turkey’s own modernization is and should be closely aligned with its ‘European’ and ‘Western’ partners. In line with this reasoning, it is only logical that Turkey should under all circumstances strive to become a member of the European Community/Union. This narrative was particularly dominant among the Kemalist elites in Turkey, but also among political elites in Europe. Due to its huge importance particularly in the first phases of relations, it is a candidate for a *master narrative*.

Neo-Ottomanism: Like the Westernization narrative, this narrative would be located at the Turkish national level but not exclusively. It has to be understood as an alternative or even counter narrative to the previous Westernization narrative. This perspective depicts today’s Turkey mainly as inheritor of the Ottoman Empire and as strong regional power. It also has to be interpreted against the background of the substantial growth that the Turkish economy experienced. For the foreign policy this implies a strong focus on the Southern neighbourhood and the so-called Islamic World.

Enlargement: This narrative is situated at the EU and relationship level. It focuses on the principles of the Union’s enlargement process. As one crucial element refers to the political, economic and legal criteria that any accession candidate needs to fulfil – the Copenhagen Criteria. More specifically, it includes the causal implication that any candidate state which sufficiently fulfils the accession criteria will accede the Union. However, it is clear that this decision on accession remains with the EU itself, which ‘grants’ this status to the applicant. However, in the case of Turkey, the clause of ‘open-ended process’ is usually mentioned by the EU institutions, implying that the EU keeps the door open for a rejection of the application, even if the criteria are fulfilled.

Europeanization: This narrative mainly refers to the relationship as well as EU level. This perspective sees the enlargement process as a strong, power tool triggering transformation processes in applicant countries, as expressed by the phrase ‘democratization through enlargement’. Hence, it also refers to the role that the EU enlargement process has in the candidate states and for the EU’s overall goal of contributing to stability and peace in its neighbourhood. The case of Turkey is particularly important in this context because after a phase in which the government passed several

reform packages in line with the *acquis*, the reform momentum was lost after 2005. According to this perspective, this would be related to the lack of a credible accession perspective for Turkey, which undermined the conditionality mechanism.

Partnership: This narrative is situated at the ‘relationship level’. It refers to the notion of a special form of partnership for Turkey beyond – or rather below – membership. One example was the ‘privileged partnership’ put forward by several European leaders particularly in Germany, vaguely referring to a special partnership with Turkey instead of a full membership, an idea which was strongly rejected in Turkey. This rejection is of particular relevance since there is a considerable group of actors in Turkey – and also in the EU – who are convinced that Turkey’s application is treated differently. Hence, the analysis will also be interested in the comparison with the debate on other membership candidates and whether and how this varied compared to the case of Turkey¹⁹.

Economic Cooperation: This is a narrative at the relationship level, which represents those voices that see economic cooperation and interdependence between Turkey and the EU as the most important driver for the relations and therefore also as the main motivator for an increase or decrease of cooperation.

Turkey as Geostrategic Partner: This perspective has a strong focus on the security dimension and is based both in Turkey’s geographic position as well as its role as military power. This narrative, like the following, is mostly related to the system level since it mainly covers Turkey’s international and regional role.

Turkey as Bridge: This narrative at the identity level comprises a certain perspective which understands Turkey as a bridge to the Islamic World. Turkey is here considered a reliable partner that could even represent a “model” for the Arab World in its perceived successful combination of Islam and democracy. This interpretation can also include a positive effect of Turkey on the stability in the neighbourhood. This view was voiced particularly in the early and more positive years of the so called “Arab Spring” when options for a democratic change of the political systems in several states such as Tunisia or Egypt were discussed.

Turkey as the Other: This is a narrative located at the identity level. Many authors argue that European identity construction and an understanding of Turkey as ‘the other’ in this context is of high importance regarding the issue of Turkish EU membership. Particularly because this dimension seems to have a special relevance for the question of Turkish membership, it is revealing to find out whether and how political leaders took up this kind of narrative in the political debate. Arguments related to this narrative allude to the borders of Europe and are questioning that Turkey belongs to Europe. We expect that identity and culture related arguments are voiced less prominent in the official discourse (such as in the European Council conclusions) and that such arguments Turkey became more frequent in the debate when the Turkish accession became concrete in the 2000s. At the same time we also expect that there is a gap between the official discourse, which neglects this issue, and the public discourse in this regard.

¹⁹ see e.g. Müftüler-Baç/Çiçek 2015

When trying to link these narratives to the logics of the FEUTURE scenarios, several of these narratives tend towards the convergence or cooperation scenarios. These are mainly the *Westernization, Enlargement* and *Europeanization* narratives, which are most obviously linked to the accession perspective. However, also the *Economic Cooperation, Turkey as Bridge* and *Turkey as a Geostrategic Partner* narratives can be employed in order to argue for an accession scenario or at least for a scenarios including a close form of partnership. The *Turkey as the Other* narrative most clearly links to the conflict scenario, although it could also be linked with the partnership narrative, e.g. when these are employed in an effort to substantiate claims why Turkey should not become an EU member.

The next chapter aims at outlining different phases in EU-Turkey relations along important milestones and linking these with the discussed narratives and with FEUTURE’s thematic dimensions.

4. Mapping Phases and Milestones

This chapter aims to develop a periodization from both an EU and Turkey perspective²⁰ and is structured along the major milestones of EU-Turkey relations. At the same time, the distinction of the different phases reflects whether relations tended to move forward or whether they were characterized by standstill or conflict – and how this was reflected in the narratives that shaped the political debate.

Phase 1 (1959-1970): The Ankara Agreement – Economy and Security as Main Drivers

Date	Milestones
September 1959	Turkish application for associate membership of the European Economic Community (EEC)
May 1960	Military coup in Turkey
September 1963	‘Ankara Agreement’: Association Agreement between Turkey and EEC is signed

Turkey has been on the sidelines of the European integration project from a very early point onwards: it applied for associate membership to the European Economic Community (EEC) as early as in 1959 and together with Greece. The first historical phase distinguished here starts with this milestone since it represents the beginning of the formalized relations with the EEC.

Regarding Turkey’s relations to the EEC, one of the most important historical milestones overall is certainly the signature of the so called Ankara Agreement in 1963, which established Turkey’s Association to the EEC and still represents the legal foundation of the relations between Turkey and the EU. The Ankara agreement did not mention full membership to the Community explicitly, but aimed at the inclusion of Turkey in the Customs Union and differentiated a preparatory, transitional and final stage to achieve this goal. However, the agreement already raised hopes for more, mainly due to this formulation: ‘As soon as the operation of this agreement has advanced far enough [...] the Contracting parties shall examine the possibility of the accession of Turkey to the Community’²¹.

²⁰ See also Eralp 2009; Hauge/Wessels 2015.

²¹ Ankara Agreement 1963, Article 28, Title III

When taking the Agreement text as the basis, formalizing and deepening Turkey’s economic ties with Europe was in the foreground and the establishment of the Custom Union was the main aim. In its own words, the Agreement aimed to ‘ensure a continuous improvement in living conditions in Turkey and in the European Economic Community through accelerated economic progress and the harmonious expansion of trade, and to reduce the disparity between the Turkish economy and the economies of the Member States of the Community’²². A main pillar of the agreement was also the financial assistance for Turkey in order to achieve this economic improvement: i.e. the First Financial Protocol foresaw loans of up to 170 million ECU for the period 1963-1970.

However, the preamble of the agreement also mentioned the aim to ‘preserve and strengthen peace and liberty’²³, which alludes to a further dimension that was crucial in this phase: the security dimension. Hence, Turkey’s main target of getting close to the USA and Western Europe in this period was motivated by the Cold War context²⁴. While economic considerations were officially in the foreground, efforts – also on the on the European side – were heavily motivated by security and geopolitical interests since Turkey was seen as a crucial partner against the threat of the Soviet expansion. As an example for this geopolitical perspective, German Chancellor at the time Adenauer claimed that ‘its [Turkey’s] existence is of vital importance in light of the live-threatening danger in which the free world is in’²⁵.

This is also manifested in Turkey’s membership in several of the ‘European’ institutions. It became the 13th member of the Council of Europe in 1950, is one of the founding members of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and has also been a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) since 1952.

One quote stands exemplary for the optimism of this early phase and forms part of Commission President Walter Hallstein’s speech at the occasion of the signing of the Ankara Agreement. He claimed that Atatürk’s reforms to modernize the political system and society were ‘an event without parallel in the history of the influence exerted by European culture and politics. I would even say that we sense it in a certain kinship with [...] the unification of Europe’²⁶. Hence, one perspective related to the identity dimension was captured by his concluding quote that “Turkey is part of Europe”.

Overall, in this first phase we identify indicators for a certain correlation of perspectives and narratives in the European and Turkish debate, particularly with regard to the ‘Westernization narrative’, which refers to the inclusion of Turkey in the European institutions and a strong anchorage in the Western alliance (see Chapter 3). Therefore, we can conveniently assert that the Association Agreement was an important institutional arrangement in line with Turkey’s Westernization and modernization around European values and ideas²⁷.

²² Ankara Agreement 1963, Preamble

²³ Ibid

²⁴ Eralp 2009

²⁵ Adenauer cited in Gürbey 1990: 147, translation by the authors

²⁶ Hallstein 1963: 1f

²⁷ see Eralp/Şenyuva 2011

Phase 2 (1970-1989): Growing Conflict – the Political Dimension Gains Ground

Date	Milestones
November 1970	Additional Protocol and 2 nd financial protocol to the Association Agreement are signed
March 1971	Military Memorandum in Turkey
July 1974	Sampson Coup and Turkish intervention in Cyprus
September 1980	Military Coup in Turkey
December 1987	Application for formal membership (rejected in 1989)

This second phase was characterized by turbulences in Turkey and a growing degree of conflict, particularly until the mid-1980s. One factor complicating the relations was the escalation of the Cyprus question with the Turkish occupation of Northern Cyprus. The dispute over Cyprus is also one of the mostly discussed topics with regard to Turkey in the European Council Conclusions since its creation 1975.

The military memorandum of 1971 and the coup d'état of 1980 had severe implications on the relations. The EU institutions increasingly criticized the democratic deficits and human rights violations resulting from these interventions. In 1981 the financial aid to Turkey was even suspended. Also the activities of the EU-Turkey Joint Parliamentary Committee were suspended immediately after the coup. Only a few years later in 1986, the EEC Association Council was reconvened. The European Parliament (EP) was particularly involved and issued 11 resolutions regarding human rights violations between 1980 and 1985. More than 20 motions for resolutions by Members of the European Parliament were tabled during that time, whereas no such motions had been tabled during the five years before²⁸. For example, it criticized the death penalty, torture carried out as well as the mass trials against demonstrators²⁹. Further, the EP in a report stated that “political democracy cannot yet be considered to exist in Turkey while major political parties [...] remain unrepresented in the country’s parliament, while leading political figures such as Mr Demirel and Mr Ecevit remain excluded from active political life [...]”³⁰.

With these two coups, Turkey experienced an authoritarian turn – unlike its Mediterranean neighbours Greece, Spain, and Portugal. These countries on the other hand started to be democratized, converging to the values of the European Community. Hence, the difference to the other South European accession candidates grew and Greece, which had applied for membership together with Turkey, became member already in 1981, and Spain and Portugal followed in 1986 (see Eralp 2009). One could identify a rise of competing definitions of democracy³¹.

However, in 1982 a new constitution was introduced and the Turgut Özal government pushed through important reforms, particularly for the liberalization of the Turkish economy. Against the background of these steps, Turkey applied for full membership to the Community in 1987. However, two years later Community officially rejected Turkey’s application for membership, while at the same time underlining Turkey’s unchanged eligibility for membership. In its opinion the Commission

²⁸ Balfe 1985: 79

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Balfe 1985: 5

³¹ Eralp, 2009; Eralp & Şenyuva, 2011

argued that there was a 'substantial development gap'³² between the Community and Turkey in economic terms and also listed democratic deficits³³. Further, the Commission argued that it would not be 'appropriate' for the Community to start negotiations with a new candidate at this point where it is still 'undergoing major changes' itself³⁴, referring also to the completion of the single market, which was in the focus of attention at the time.

On the other hand, one can identify a growing divergence between narratives within Turkey and a rise of perspectives challenging the 'Westernization narrative' perspective. Turkish business elites for example challenged the aim of a Customs Union with the EC/EU, also in the next phase. These tensions were reflected in the political slogan to which both the left and the right in Turkey gave voice: "They are the partners; we are the market." The European Community was also characterized as a "Christian Club" by the newly-established pro-Islamic political entities³⁵.

When looking at the EC, one could argue that in the 1980s the European leaders started to put more and more attention to the political dimension of European integration and therefore also with regard to the accession candidates. This is also reflected in the European Council conclusions in this period. Issues such as human rights, rule of law and democratization dominate in this time frame. Even if the 1980s and 90s were the years during which the parties rehabilitated the economic relations, the fundamental political issues in the fields of human rights and democracy, that is, the political agenda remained as the major factor in the relationship³⁶.

In this period, we do not expect to identify a master narrative, but there are increasing challenges to the previous master narrative of Westernization. There was a growing divergence between Turkey's internal conditions and the European dynamics. Moreover, within the framework of cultural and religious values the attitude towards Turkey and the perception that Turkey has no place within the civilization project of the EC/EU became widespread in this period³⁷. Consequently, there is a rise of counter-narratives in this period, which tend to points towards a conflicted relationship.

Phase 3 (1989-1999): Post-Cold War Europe: a Marginalized Turkish Application

Date	Milestones
November 1989	Fall of the Berlin Wall
January 1993	Establishment of the European Single Market
June 1993	European Council Copenhagen
January 1996	Customs Union between Turkey and EU comes into force
December 1997	Luxembourg Summit: European Council decides against candidate status of Turkey

The fall of the Soviet Union in 1989 represents the start of this third phase. This milestone was a major turning point not only for the international level but also for the EU-Turkey relations. As one consequence, these changes induced a strong focus of the Community on the Eastern European

³² European Commission 1989: 5

³³ Ibid:7

³⁴ Ibid:8

³⁵ Eralp 2009; Eralp/Şenyuva 2011

³⁶ Eralp 2013; Eralp 2009; Eralp/Şenyuva 2011; Hauge/Wessels 2015

³⁷ Hauge/Wessels, 2015; Eralp/ Şenyuva, 2011

countries, which led to a marginalization of the Turkish application. On the other hand, one could argue that this milestone or turning point may not be of the same relevance for Turkey as for the EU.

However, in the security dimension, the events of 1989/90 reduced Turkey’s geostrategic importance to a high extent, since the threat of the Soviet Union expansion was dissolved. Nevertheless, Turkey remained a major partner in dealing with conflicts in neighbouring regions such as the Caucasus, the Balkan region and the Middle East. In the context of the Turkish active involvement in the Gulf War of 1990/91, President George Bush called his Turkish counterpart President Turgut Özal a ‘staunch friend of the United States’³⁸.

The year 1993 brought – besides the establishment of the single market in the sense of ‘deepening’ – also important implications for EU enlargement and ‘widening’ dimension. During the meeting of the European Council in Copenhagen 1993 the heads of state or government decided on the criteria that any country needs to fulfill in order to accede to the Union. These Copenhagen Criteria lay down the political, economic and legal conditions that an applicant state needs to fulfill in order to be eligible to join the EU.

In Turkey, the violent conflict with the Kurdistan Worker’s Party (PKK) became more and more violent and cost the lives of several thousand people. In this context, an issue that beclouded the relations to Germany, was Berlin’s decision to stop the shipments of military goods to Turkey in 1995. Background for this were German doubts whether these arms would actually be used in the fights against PKK. Kramer interprets this German decision as a sign that value-based considerations gain the upper hand over the pure security-oriented interests³⁹.

As a brief positive interlude in this decade, one needs to mention the establishment of the Customs Union, which entered into force in 1996 – an important historical milestone for the overall relations. Obviously, economic considerations remained a key variable for the progress of relations. Imports from Turkey into the 12 member states had risen by 108% between 1986 and 1993 with the growth rate having been even greater in the textiles and clothing sectors. Exports to Turkey from the Community even rose by 150%⁴⁰. Hence, with Turkey being the EU’s most important trade partner in the Mediterranean region, the creation of the Customs Union was an important step from the EU perspective. In April 1995, Hans van den Broek, Commissioner in the Santer Commission in his speech, underlined that the “Customs union will have a major impact in the political as well as the economic sphere. It will reaffirm Turkey’s allegiance to the values which underlie European democracy and thus contribute to its stability and security”⁴¹. Hence, we notice a mixture of economic and geopolitical motivations that seems to be the basis for the efforts to deepen relations.

However, this positive development was followed by a rejection of the second Turkish application for full membership at the Luxembourg European Council in 1997. Müftüler-Baç describes the feeling on the Turkish side as being ‘left in the cold’⁴². The group of Eastern European applicants in the

³⁸ Bush 1990

³⁹ Kramer/Reinkowski 2007: 486

⁴⁰ European Commission 1995a

⁴¹ European Commission 1995b

⁴² Müftüler-Baç 2000: 1

following started the negotiation process, only Turkey was not accepted. From the Turkish perspective this rejection was considered as an unequal treatment compared to the Eastern European candidates. As a consequence, the Turkish government froze the relations to the EU.

This marginalization of the Turkish application is also exemplified by the ‘European Strategy’ that was developed particularly for Turkey and put forward by the European Council. The European Council Conclusions justified the decision as follows: “While the political and economic conditions allowing accession negotiations to be envisaged are not satisfied, the European Council considers that it is nevertheless important for a strategy to be drawn up to prepare Turkey for accession by bringing it closer to the European Union in every field”⁴³.

This decision could have marked the beginning of a narrative that prefers a framework of relations ‘below’ membership i.e. the *partnership narrative* (see above). The German role seems to have been a major one in this negative decision. Chancellor Kohl in this context apparently stated that it was ‘indeed out of question that Turkey will be integrated into the EC and that one should not raise such hopes in Turkey’⁴⁴. However, he also underlined Turkey’s important strategic role: ‘Turkey will become one of the most important countries in the region, or even in the Muslim world. Therefore one should have as many contacts as possible’⁴⁵. Nevertheless, this quote at least indirectly proves his conviction that Turkey is rather to be situated in the Muslim World than in Europe, in line with the above described *Turkey as the other* narrative. Unsurprisingly, in Turkey harsh criticism against the rejection was voiced, with the narrative characterizing the EU as ‘Christian club’ gaining ground⁴⁶.

Phase 4 (1999-2005): Turkey Becomes Accession Candidate – a Positive Turn with Geopolitical Motivations?

Date	Milestones
December 1999	Helsinki Summit of the European Council: candidate status is granted to Turkey
September 2001	Terror attacks in USA
December 2002	Copenhagen Summit: European Council agrees to start negotiation process if Turkey fulfils Copenhagen criteria
May 2004	Cyprus becomes EU member
December 2004	European Council decides to open accession negotiations
October 2005	Accession negotiations begin

This phase starts with one of the most important milestones in 1999: the European Council’s Helsinki meeting and the decision to grant candidate status to Turkey. The European Council in its conclusion “welcome[d] recent positive developments in Turkey [...] as well as its intention to continue its reforms towards complying with the Copenhagen criteria.”⁴⁷. In the next sentence of the conclusion, the European Leaders found it necessary to underline that the same criteria were applied to Turkey

⁴³ European Council Luxembourg 1997

⁴⁴ Kohl cited in Schwarz, 2012: 714

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ see e.g. Rumelili 2007: 89ff

⁴⁷ European Council Conclusion, Helsinki 1999

as to the other candidate states. This can be interpreted as a response to the widespread criticism that Turkey was not treated equally compared to other applicant states. The phase following this turning point was characterized by the most evident trends towards convergence in the sense of a Turkish membership in the history overall.

Political change on the Member State level was one of the factors that made this happen. In Germany, the newly elected social-democratic/green government coalition replaced the conservative government, which had been more than skeptic of a Turkish accession. Also the Greek policy underwent a radical change under the new Prime Minister Yorgos Papandreou and a new round of negotiations between Greece and Turkey was started. As a consequence, Greece did not use its potential blocking veto against the European Council’s decision. Hence, one could argue that Germany and Greece had become critical players affecting the attitude of the EU in a positive direction in the Helsinki Summit⁴⁸. Another, less political, factor that has been mentioned as favourable in this context was the earthquake that shook Turkey and Greece in the aftermath of which the two countries supported each other⁴⁹.

The tensions between Turkey and the EU regarding the Turkish fight against the PKK, that had escalated at the end of the 1990s, declined with the capture of PKK leader Öcalan. At the same time, the changed international atmosphere as a result of the dramatic events of 9/11 also impacted the relationship between Turkey and the EC/EU in a positive way and at this point led to an inclusionary attitude towards Turkey among many political leader with the stability of the East-Mediterranean countries in mind, as described above in the *Turkey as a bridge* narrative. Reflections of this new attitude towards Turkey can be found in the 1999 Strategy Report and the Progress Report prepared by the Commission with their emphasis on geopolitical considerations (see Eralp 2009).

The decision to grant candidate status to Turkey has to be evaluated against the background of variables at the international level, including in the security dimension the Balkan Wars. Turkey’s contribution in the effort to stabilize the region and its considerable military capabilities increased the incentive to closely cooperate in foreign and security issues and to grant the candidate status (Emerson and Tocci 2004). Only a few years later the US intervention in Iraq was perceived in Europe as a threat on its borders which led some to believe that Turkey could be a stabilizing factor whereas others were afraid that it could import instability⁵⁰. One could argue that the security-related motivation behind the EU’s decision to take a step forward in Turkey’s aim to become a member is a repeating pattern – when remembering that the Cold War context had been a major motivator to conclude the Ankara Agreement⁵¹.

The Copenhagen European Council of 2002, however, was more of an ambivalent milestone. Firstly, it decided to “welcome” ten new members including the group of Eastern European countries as well as Cyprus and Malta in 2004. As for Turkey, the Heads of State or Government were only ready for a *rendezvous-clause*, i.e. for deciding on a date for beginning the negotiations. The European Council also decided to increase the pre-accession financial assistance to Turkey.

⁴⁸ Eralp, 2009; Eralp & Şenyuva, 2011

⁴⁹ see e.g. Aydın-Düzgıt/Tocci 2015: 19

⁵⁰ Aydın-Düzgıt/Tocci 2015: 23f

⁵¹ see e.g. Turhan 2011

In Turkey, the year 2002 also marked a major domestic change with the landslide victory of the Justice and Development Party (AKP). This was followed by several reform packages, which brought the political and judiciary system more in line with the accession criteria. However, this reform process as well as the optimism on both sides lost momentum shortly after the beginning of the negotiations, which is why this paper differentiates a fifth phase starting after 2005.

One could argue that during this phase there was a strong competition of narratives with fierce opponents and supporters of Turkish accession to the EU and a highly polarized debate. In this line of thinking, the Helsinki decision also legitimized a new official narrative, that was mainly coined by EU institutions and political elites, and which could be characterized as *enlargement narrative*. This reasoning underlines the argumentation that Turkey can become a member as soon as it fulfills the Copenhagen Criteria (see above). The other side of the spectrum is exemplified by a quote of the former French president Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, who openly claimed that "Turkey is a country that is close to Europe, an important country ... but it is not a European country"⁵².

Phase 5 (2005-2013): Between Stagnation and Growing Tensions

Date	Milestones
July 2005	Turkey signs Additional Protocol extending the Ankara Agreement
December 2006	European Council decides to suspend negotiations on eight chapters due to dispute over Cyprus
December 2010	Protest in Tunisia mark the beginning of the 'Arab Uprisings'
May 2012	European Commission launches 'Positive Agenda' to overcome stagnation
July-December 2012	Turkey freezes relations with EU during Presidency of Cyprus

This fifth phase was characterized by stagnation in Turkey's the accession process. The relationship testified a negative turn with the initiation of negotiations, which "makes the case a unique and challenging one in terms of the history of the EU's enlargement"⁵³.

Several factors both in the EU as well as in Turkey led to this standstill. In the EU, growing skepticism was voiced to Turkish EU membership, including a rise of anti-Islamic and xenophobic notions. This was less apparent in the EU Institution's official discourse, but more obvious in the national debates⁵⁴. Aydın-Düzgüt and Tocci sum the main dynamic of this phase up by stating that "since 2005 'anti-Turks' in Europe and 'anti-Europeans' in Turkey have reinforced each other, generating a spiral of antagonism and lack of reform in Turkey and increasing the distance between them"⁵⁵.

After 2008 the EU experienced the severe financial crisis culminating in the crisis of the Eurozone, which certainly marginalized the *widening*-dimension of European integration and led to serious doubts concerning any future enlargement rounds. "There will be no new enlargement in the next five years", the Commission President Juncker said rather directly in 2014 before taking up his office. The European Council conclusions also clearly mirror this development. Turkey is not mentioned

⁵² The Guardian 2002

⁵³ Arisan Eralp/Eralp, 2012

⁵⁴ See for an analysis of national debates in that time frame Tocci 2007.

⁵⁵ Aydın-Düzgüt/Tocci 2015: 31

there under the headline of “enlargement” anymore, but only in reference to other topics. Furthermore, the crisis in Europe steered the actors in Turkey more skeptical, and some underlined that Turkey would not need the EU economically since it was doing much better itself. As Eralp sums up. “EU’s timetable did not converge with Turkey’s timetable” with the EU being “immersed in its own problems”⁵⁶. In Turkey, Euroscepticism was on the rise in this phase, influenced also by the continued sense of rejection. Not only the governing party, but also opposition parties become increasingly critical of the EU. One could argue that a new narrative emerges that can be summed up as “Neo-Ottomanism” and could possibly even prove to become a master narrative (see above).

In the political dimensions, European institution harshly criticized the Turkish governments’ reactions in the context of the Gezi Park protests in 2013. The EP even issued a resolution on the situation in Turkey, voicing serious concern “at the disproportionate and excessive use of force by the Turkish police in its response to the peaceful and legitimate protests”⁵⁷. On the other hand, the Turkish government claimed that the protests were a conspiracy led by foreign powers, which further heated up the debate.

The still unsolved Cyprus issue was a further blocking factor, even more so after Cyprus entered the EU in 2004. Turkey issued a declaration in 2005 that it would continue not to apply the Additional Protocol of the Ankara Agreement to Cyprus. The European Council therefore decided to suspend negotiation of eight chapters and claimed that no chapter would be closed until Turkey would recognize Cyprus by applying the protocol.

During this phase, also several Member States blocked the negotiations, which represented a new development⁵⁸. In 2007, For example, French President Nicolas Sarkozy vetoed the opening of the chapter ‘Economic and Monetary Policy’, which he had promised in his election campaign. In 2013 the German, Dutch and Austrian governments temporarily blocked the opening of a new chapter as a reaction to the violence against the Gezi Park demonstrations⁵⁹. In an effort to overcome the standstill, the European Commission launched a ‘Positive Agenda’ in 2012 with the aim to trigger ‘a virtuous circle in Turkish-EU relations’⁶⁰ – which however did not lead to a major change.

All in all, this period indicates the presence of multiple narratives and the further rise of alternative narratives to those of *Westernization* and *Europeanization*. One of these emerging narratives in Turkey can be called Neo-Ottomanism narrative. This possible candidate for a master implies a Turkish focus on the neighbourhood, particularly in the Middle East (see Chapter 3). Hence, in several thematic dimensions, this phase predominantly saw tendencies of the conflict scenario. It is noteworthy to say that this meant a unique situation, namely negotiating with a candidate country within the framework of a rather conflictual relationship.

⁵⁶ Eralp 2009

⁵⁷ European Parliament 2013

⁵⁸ see e.g. Müftüler-Baç/Cicek 2015

⁵⁹ FAZ 2013

⁶⁰ Füle as cited in BBC 2012

Phase 6 (since 2013): Migration as a Driver Forward and Political Change in Turkey

Date	Milestones
Nov/Dec2013	Opening of new chapter on regional policy, start of dialogue on visa liberalization
2015	More than 1 million refugees try to make the journey to Europe
November 2015	EU-Turkey Summit: Joint action plan is activated
March 2016	EU-Turkey Summit: “Refugee deal”
July 2016	Failed Military Coup in Turkey

This paper argues that the year 2013 could represent a new turning point of relations and narratives, since it saw a comparatively high degree of cooperation and interdependence. The year of 2013 witnessed a revival of relations⁶¹. Despite the heated debate during Gezi park protests in summer 2013 and the high level political corruption scandal that Turkey experienced, some promising developments were observed in terms of the future of the relations at the end of 2013, which may be characterized as ‘cautious optimism’ atmosphere⁶².

As the most important variable, the migration dimension and the flow of refugees to Europe brought a new dynamic into the EU-Turkey relations and a need to cooperate. With Turkey being Syria’s immediate neighbor and therefore being one of the main transit countries and currently ‘hosting’ almost 3 Million registered refugees itself, it is a crucial – if not the most important – partner for the EU the effort to tackle this challenge and humanitarian crisis.

This led to a definite turning point in the year 2015. The Action Plan that the EU and Turkey decided upon in the fall underlines a regular and more institutionalized High Level Dialogue. Certainly, the migration dimension has to be understood as a major driver of this development, but also energy, economy and security issues are part of the Action Plan. The document also envisages a high-level energy dialogue. For the Turkish side, the question of visa liberalization was the main motivator. This intensification of the political dialogue and also accession process resulting in the so-called refugee deal of March 2016 came rather unexpected for many observers and is only one example of how quickly the dynamics of this relationship can change. It was also an example for how changes at the regional level can have a major impact on EU-Turkey relations.

On the other hand, we can only speculate which consequences the failed military coup in Turkey of July 2016 will have on EU-Turkey relations. The EU welcomed the broad political and public consensus against the undemocratic coup, but it also voiced harsh criticism on some measures that followed, such as the discussion on the death penalty and the introduction of the state of emergency (see e.g. Mogherini/Hahn 2016, European Parliament 2016).

While the first half of 2016 with the progress with regard to the visa liberalization seemed to indicate a phase of closer cooperation after almost a decade of standstill, the more and more outspoken criticism on both sides in the aftermath of 15 July could introduce a phase of growing conflict.

Evolving narratives in this current period first seemed to tend towards the “cooperation” scenario. However, this kind of partnership relationship is rather an ambivalent one since it has the potential

⁶¹ Kivilcim/Kilit 2014

⁶² Hauge/Wessels, 2015; Arisan Eralp 2014

to evolve towards a strengthened cooperative relationship, with a possibility of the energizing of the accession process, but also of evolving towards a more conflictual relationship. Overall, it could nevertheless be argued that the narratives in this period may converge around a more interest-driven approach in the sense of “realpolitik”.

5. Conclusion

Relations between Turkey and the Member States of today’s European Union have always been as close as they have been contested. Turkey’s application for associated membership was submitted as early as in 1959, making Turkey the longest candidate in the history of European integration. Since then and until the present, times of rapprochement – mainly in the sense of a trend towards membership for Turkey – seem to take regular turns with phases of estrangement, or even conflict.

The analysis of six different historical phases has shown that on both sides some narratives and lines of argumentation seem to have changed substantially over time, while others remain influential in the debate. The same applies to the relevance of the different thematic dimensions. Hence, while during the Cold War the beginning mainly economic and geostrategic arguments were the motivators for deepening relations between EU and Turkey – and one can identify a certain convergence of narratives in this time – this changed in the 1980s. In this phase, the political dimension and particularly the quality of democracy and human and minority right gained importance and from this time onwards, a polarization of the debate and the divergence of narratives grew. On the other hand we can see that geostrategic motives reoccurred as decisive factor for the relations, particularly when steps were taken towards closer cooperation.

Linking the above discussed narratives to the project’s scenarios, this paper puts forward the following hypotheses for the continuing analysis. These try to relate the patterns of convergence or divergence of narratives with the likelihood of the realization of different scenarios.

1. If there is a convergence of (positive) narratives among major actors domestically, then the likelihood of the cooperation scenario in the relationship increases.
2. If there is a convergence of narratives among Turkish actors that correlate with the narratives of EU actors (dynamics of European integration) then the relationship is more likely to move ahead. In this case, the cooperation scenario has the potential to move towards convergence/accession (which historically has not been the regular pattern).
3. If there are multiple competing narratives among actors in Turkey and the EU which also predominantly have negative narratives based on identity politics, then the scenario on conflict gains the upper-hand (which is the more usual pattern).

Overall, these hypotheses highlight the relevance of analyzing the political debate systematically and from a comparative approach encompassing both the Turkish and the EU perspective, as will be elaborated in FEUTURE’s upcoming publications.⁶³

⁶³ Mainly in the deliverable D1.5.

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