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1

The Politics of Accession Negotiations

Knud Erik Jørgensen

The process of EU enlargement has never been a straightforward affair. Whereas every single instance of EU enlargement has followed a path of application, accession negotiations, ratification and membership, some applications have been rejected without much ado (Morocco) and others have been rejected twice, as in the case of the United Kingdom. Some accession negotiations have been concluded successfully, only to be rejected during the process of ratification (Norway). One partial breakaway has also occurred – Greenland leaving the EC (but not Denmark) in 1986. Sometimes political reasoning has trumped economic logic – for example in the cases of Greece, Spain, Portugal and, more recently, Central and East European applicants. No matter which sequence applies, analysts widely agree that enlargement processes are made up of politics and law, administrative systems, socio-economic interests, grand bargains, phases of adjustment and EU self-reform. By contrast, cultural factors seem not to have played a significant role in any previous accession. In debates on relations between the EU and Turkey generally, and the 1987 Turkish application for EU membership specifically, cultural factors figure prominently among master variables, sometimes almost by default, constituting the seemingly most relevant or powerful explanatory factor. Thus, on the one hand, we have more than a dozen previous accessions that were ‘culture-free’, but on the other, in the case of Turkey’s potential accession, the ‘cultural factor’ has been introduced as a key nodal point in public and political discourse. This is truly puzzling. Are we perhaps witnessing an example of ‘culturalizing’ affairs that are anything but cultural?

Heinz Kramer emphasizes that the issue of accession ‘is highly complex, multi-faceted and not easy to handle’ (Kramer, 2004, p. 1). In the following, an attempt will be made in handling the issue

analytically by means of two distinctions and a delimitation. Against this background, the prime aim of this chapter is to analyse the *politics* of accession negotiations, but throughout the chapter the distinction between politics and culture will play an important structural role. Furthermore, it is useful to make a distinction between the politics of accession negotiation in a narrow, and a wider sense. The first sphere comprises accession negotiations in a narrow sense – that is, the actors directly involved, the procedures for their interaction and the institutional framework providing an environment for their negotiations. The second sphere focuses on accession negotiations in a broader sense – that is, the sphere includes political and economic actors in society who have direct interests in the outcome of negotiations. In a certain sense they constitute the political *hinterland* of negotiators. The third category focuses on public debates on Turkish membership of the EU, public opinion, general images and widespread conceptions of Europe and Turkey. Ever since the 2002 Copenhagen summit reconfirmed the accession perspective, this third sphere has been heavily politicized. Referenda have been promised in Austria and France, and debates on the Constitutional Treaty have been mixed with debates on Turkish membership. The relationship between these three spheres determines the politics of accession negotiations.

Finally, regarding the politics of accession negotiations, a delimitation will be made so that the period in focus will last from the opening of negotiations (3 October 2005) until a treaty of accession has been signed. Obviously, it is not possible to analyse future events and developments but the likely framework for political action can be outlined. Hence, I will not include the politics of the follow-on ratification process, a phase that will be influenced by the outcome of the accession but is likely also to display its own specific political dynamics. In this fashion, the outcome of the accession negotiations will not only cast a shadow into the future but the negotiations will also be conducted in the shadow of the future.

From a long-term perspective, negotiations will be among the key factors determining economic, political and legal developments in Turkey – and in the EU – during the next twenty-five years. Thus, some observers expect negotiations to last eight to ten years, to be followed by a long transition period of ten to twenty years. Such a scenario is not unlikely, in part because long transitions are known from previous accessions. In short, to the degree to which social engineering is possible, the first three decades of the twenty-first century are already on the drawing board as part of the pre-accession strategy. During this time

span, not only Turkey but also the EU is likely to change significantly, in part as a consequence of the Turkish accession perspective.

The politics of accession negotiations: take one

Every single previous enlargement of the European Union (EU) has prompted debates on issues such as applicants' qualifications, the need for EU self-reform, the impact of specific policies such as the common agricultural policy or regional policy, and the appropriate or prudent balance between widening and deepening. These issues have been described in a rich literature on EU enlargement (Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier, 2005). However, it is also worthwhile noting that every enlargement has been accompanied by a fairly brief but distinct and seemingly powerful emergence of the so-called *acquis communautaire* (Jørgensen, forthcoming 2008). Turkey's application is no exception. A careful reading of official documents related to Turkey's accession reveals no predominant cultural content, and no cultural encounter between Turkey and the European Union.¹ Instead, issues being addressed include such things as the *acquis communautaire* and the Copenhagen political criteria. According to the former European Commissioner, Günter Verheugen, speaking at Boğaziçi University in 2000, the accession process includes three dimensions: political, economic and legal. As mentioned earlier, many of the documents related to the pre-accession strategy refer to the *acquis*. When browsing the 523-page *Turkish National Programme for the Adoption of the Acquis*, we learn that it is divided into three main sections: criteria (subdivided into political and economic) and capacities (subdivided into administrative and 'undertaking membership obligations') and, third, 'global financial assessment of the reforms'. Among issues such as the death penalty, cosmetics, toys, plant health, statistics, air quality and many, many more issues, we find, on pages 389–92, 'culture and audio-visual policy'. In other words, whereas the list of Turkish laws and regulations that need to be changed in order to comply with the *acquis* is very long, the list of cultural aspects hardly exists.

Second, from a certain perspective it makes no sense to talk about the politics of accession negotiations. First, because negotiations are highly technical, and truly political matters do not find their way on to the agenda of the talks. Rather, talks will focus on, for example, the future distribution of milk quotas and standards related to radio frequencies or trucks. Furthermore, because it is not negotiations among equals, characterized by give and take, and aimed at reaching some

consensus. On the contrary, there is a highly asymmetrical relationship between a ‘wannabe’ or ‘demandeur’ and an exclusive club having strict rules for membership. It is therefore easy to predict that the possibility of negotiation will be very limited. According to recent assessments, some 95 per cent of the issues on the agenda are beyond the scope of genuine negotiations (Grabbe, 2004, p. 2). Also, Kramer is explicit on this point:

the Union and its member states are faced with the difficult task of bringing home to Turkey’s politicians, media, and public the very unpleasant reality that accession negotiations are not a level playing field. Accession to the EU does not mean the negotiated merger of the Union with the respective candidate, but a process of mostly one-sided adaptation to the EU by a state accepting the EU’s demands for accession. (Kramer, 2004, p. 7)

As it will be seen in the next section, this point can be overstated with a view to playing down the processes of mutual adjustment. But even mutual adjustment is not necessarily a *negotiated* mutual adjustment. In general, it follows from this proposition that the politics of accession negotiations consists in determining where and when there is room for manoeuvre – that is, within which chapters the temporary measures should be aimed at, when, and for how long in force? But then again, it is the EU – the presidency in close collaboration with the Commission – determining when to open and when to (provisionally) close chapters for negotiations. Thus it is worthwhile to keep an eye on the planned sequence of future presidencies (see Figure 1.1). In brief,

Germany, 2007–1
 Portugal, 2007–2
 Slovenia 2008–1
 France, 2008–2
 Czech Republic, 2009–1
 Sweden, 2009–2
 Spain, 2010–1
 Belgium, 2010–2
 Hungary, 2011–1
 Poland, 2011–2
 Denmark, 2012–1
 Cyprus, 2012–2

Figure 1.1 Rotating presidencies 2007–12 (as of 2006)²

the kind of politics at play are to a large extent the politics of tactical manoeuvre. Since room for manoeuvre is so limited, the term 'accession negotiations' is a rather unhelpful euphemism that creates an image of real negotiations and is subsequently a prime source of predictable future frustration.

If institutionalist approaches to the study of politics have any merit, then the politics of the framework for negotiations should have our attention; – that is, we should explore the institutional set up for negotiations – institutions (in a broad sense), the machinery and the road map, including inbuilt roadblocks that can be activated. Unlike the fifth enlargement, the EU need not contemplate whether negotiations should be concluded by means of a regatta approach or by some other common approach. On the contrary, a country-by-country approach has been adopted and no common entry time has been suggested. Negotiations with other candidate countries (Croatia) or potential candidate countries (the Ukraine, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, Albania, Serbia, Macedonia) seem not to have had an impact on the conduct of negotiations with Turkey.³ As in the case of previous accession rounds, a pre-accession strategy has been in place for some time, and has been instrumental in shaping expectations among those closely involved. In this fashion, the pre-accession strategy will structure the accession negotiations, in part by introducing the thirty-five chapters of the *acquis* (mirrored in the *Turkish National Programme for the Adoption of the Acquis*). In the Commission's recommendation to open negotiations, a three-pillar approach has been suggested. The first pillar focuses on the Copenhagen political criteria, an accession partnership framework and an annual Commission review of implementation. The second pillar concerns the accession negotiations as such, conducted within an intergovernmental conference. So-called benchmarks will be specified by the Council – that is, preconditions for closing individual chapters of the *acquis*. The Commission has attempted to shape expectations by pointing to a need for special arrangements concerning the CAP, structural policies, and the free movement of workers. The Commission also points out that the EU's budget for 2014–21 needs to be in place before negotiations can be concluded. In this context, it is useful to note that the budget covering 2007–13 was concluded in December 2005, a year before it was applicable. The third pillar focuses on inter-society dialogues on issues such as culture, religion, migration, minorities and terrorism. According to the EU Presidency Conclusions, the European Council at its meeting in December 2004 'invited the Commission to present to the Council a proposal for a framework for

negotiations with Turkey, on the basis set out in paragraph 23. It requested the Council to agree on that framework with a view to opening negotiations on 3 October 2005' (Presidency Conclusions, Brussels, 16–17 December 2004).⁴

Two kinds of actors will be involved in the intergovernmental conference: Turkey's chief negotiator – currently Mr Ali Babacan – and his experts, as well as the EU permanent representatives representing Council ministers. In addition, the European Commission (DG Enlargement) is closely involved and the European Parliament is also involved. The General Secretariat of the Council provides a secretariat for the accession intergovernmental conference. No matter how precise the framework for negotiations is, the first phase of negotiations is the screening of existing Turkish legislation, and that has already been completed.

Finally, the politics of accession negotiations will be determined by attitudes on both sides. Relatively recently, the EU has concluded negotiations with ten states. This fifth enlargement was in terms of population (some 60 million combined) of a size that is fairly similar to Turkey. However, it will not necessarily be easier to negotiate with negotiators representing a single state. Furthermore, while Central and East European states have been reinvented after the Cold War, Turkish state institutions are well established and relatively efficient. Such well-established administrative cultures may induce Turkish negotiators to believe that they are in a stronger position than in fact they are. It may also take a longer time for the adaptation of the *acquis* to 'sink through' the institutions.

Box 1.1 An illustrative example of non-adoption

Concerning the chapter of the *acquis* on fisheries, the Commission 2003 Report points out that: 'No progress has been made with regard to resource management, inspection and control, structural actions, market policy, state aids and international fisheries agreements.' Is the situation described more positively in the subsequent report one year later? Not really. In the 2004 report, the Commission points out that: 'Since the last Regular report, Turkey has made no substantial progress concerning the alignment of its regulation with the *acquis* ... No progress can be reported with regard to resource and fleet management, inspection and control, structural actions and state aid' (EU Commission, 2004, p. 99).

The relatively slow (voluntary) adoption of the *acquis* suggests that negotiators believe that most issues are up for discussion, applicable for special arrangements, or that the EU is not serious in demanding compliance with the *acquis*.⁵ During the first phase of negotiations, the European Commission has screened Turkey's adoption of the *acquis*, going through the 80,000–95,000 pages, and provision after provision. The present outcome of the screening indicates a considerable gap between the EU's *acquis* and Turkey's present legislation. The size of the gap is a helpful measuring rod for assessing how long it will take to conclude all thirty-five chapters. On the other hand, achievements so far have been impressive in terms of Turkish domestic reforms. Indeed, the pace and scope of these reforms have caused the accession of Turkey to rise the top of the European agenda. Only a few years ago, not many observers believed such developments would be possible.

In summary, it seems that contemporary relations between Turkey and the EU are anything else but 'cultural'. Not much in the accession negotiations invite the exploration of cultural issues. Of course, it is common knowledge that Turkey and the EU have previously engaged in cultural encounters continuing the old, seemingly endless, story about Turkey 'and' or 'in' Europe. Politicians, diplomats and media people on both sides have employed representations of the other that clearly define the relationship foremost as 'cultural'. Some politicians have been inclined to reject Turkey's application with reference to Article 237 of the Treaty of Rome – that is, that any 'European state' may submit a request to accede. From their perspective, the boundaries of Europe should be drawn at the Bosphorus. The European Council effectively rejected such an option in 1999, stating in the conclusions of the Helsinki Summit that 'Turkey is a candidate state destined to join the Union on the basis of the same criteria as applied to the other candidate states' (Presidency Conclusions, December 1999). Seemingly, relations between the EU and Turkey have been free from the burden of culture since 1999. If issues at stake in the context of Turkish membership of the EU are political, economic or legal, then why employ the entire apparatus of a cultural explanation? What is the value of bringing culture back in?

One possible answer is that cultural aspects may be important in a different sense, not least if we focus on phenomena such as administrative cultures, cultures of national security (Katzenstein, 1996) or political culture (see Chapter 11 in this volume). The accession process is likely to have an impact on all three spheres of culture. Indeed, the entire idea of fulfilling the Copenhagen political criteria and adopting

the *acquis* is to *change* administrative cultures in Turkey. Furthermore, part of the essence of the common foreign and security policy (CFSP) and European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) is to leave certain traditional conceptions of national security behind. Finally, a key variable is the degree to which Turkish negotiators have become familiar with the specific political culture of EU institutions and EU member states.

The politics of accession negotiations: take two

The handling of this sphere of second-tier negotiations is crucially important for a successful outcome. According to the Czech Republic's former chief EU negotiator, Pavel Telicka, 'Accession negotiations are 80 per cent in your own country, 15 per cent in the EU member-states and only 5 per cent in Brussels' (Grabbe, 2004, p. 5). This Czech experience is far from unique and is in fact the rule rather than the exception. In order to describe the politics of accession negotiations in this second, broader meaning, five illustrative aspects have been selected.

The politics of two-level games

Most chapters of the *acquis* will have a direct impact on the interests of numerous NGOs, interest groups and individual companies. Turkish negotiators will therefore face both diplomatic challenges and domestic actors, thus being involved in a classic two-level game (Putnam, 1988; see also Evans *et al.*, 1993).⁶ In other words, while the chapters and the contents of the *acquis* are fairly well-known, it is less often taken into consideration that behind most chapters we find a complex setting of policy communities – that is, policy networks of interest groups, NGOs, businesses, politicians and so on (see Peterson, 2004). These policy networks and collective actors have strong vested interests in the standards, rules and norms of given chapters. Negotiators will know about these interests – or will be informed informally about them – and hence will not be a free agent in a closed-circuit system of accession negotiations. This observation is valid for both Turkish and EU negotiators. Negotiators on both sides will therefore have to be very patient, capable of listening but also most skilful in explaining – presenting reasons for action, and justifying or legitimizing positions and decisions taken. In the future, vested interests will be challenged and well-established channels of influence will be redefined. The management of expectations is a crucially important aspect of the accession process, in part because the process is not bound to produce winners only.

The politics of temporary measures

The treaty of accession with country X can serve as an illustrative example of transition periods, derogations and so on. It should be noted that Turkey is not alone in wishing for transition periods. It also applies to the EU. Akçakoca, *et al.* (2004) identify a number of sectors in which Turkish players are not fully competitive – for example, ‘live-stock, dairy and cereals’ as well as ‘banking and insurance’. Some chapters include provisions that will be extremely costly to implement in the short run, such as provisions on certain environmental standards. In such cases it would make sense for Turkish negotiators to plead for the acceptance of transition periods or other temporary measures. Other chapters include provisions on state subsidies, competition rules and mutual market access. It is predictable that actors in Turkish society will suggest – softly or less – to negotiators that they go for the adoption of (temporary) protective measures, particularly in sectors where these actors are less competitive. In some cases it will be very difficult to deliver such measures, and in other cases it will be downright impossible, not least because the EU negotiators also will have EU ‘domestic’ actors closely monitoring events.

The politics of sovereignty

Several authors (Caporaso, 1996; Sørensen, 1997, 2001; Cooper, 1996, 2002) employ a typology of state types – modern, postmodern and post-colonial – in order to conceptualize the contemporary diversity of statehood in different parts of the world. When using such taxonomy, where should we place Turkey? It is common knowledge that Turkey has never been a colonial state, thus logically cannot qualify as a post-colonial state, and it can hardly be regarded as a postmodern state either. Hence the country seems to belong to the category of *modern* states. Indeed, this category suits dominant political conceptions of the Turkish Republic extremely well. Ever since its was created in 1923, being *modern* has been among the country’s prime political endeavours. It has quite simply been the official state identity, even if the self-image of being *also* the successor state to the Ottoman Empire adds flavour to Turkish conceptions of modernity (for Ottoman legacies ‘alive and kicking’, see Jung, 2001). By extension of this observation, and in the context of Turkey’s possible accession to the EU, two particularly relevant questions arise. First, does Turkey really want to change from being a modern state to become (merely) a member state of the European Union – that is, becoming a postmodern European state? In other words, is Turkey prepared to redefine or reinvent itself, to transform

itself from being a nation-state into a member state; accepting that accession negotiations is a strong instrument of Europeanization (see Glenn, 2004; see also Chapter 4 of this volume) Clearly, this implies leaving something behind that key political and sometimes military, actors have fought very hard for.⁷ Therefore, the second question is what, in this context, is Turkey?

The politics of foreign policy

Chapter 27 of the *acquis* concerns Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and ESDP issues.⁸ Within this context, at least three dangers lurk. The first is to underestimate fatally the significance of CFSP and ESDP – to believe that accession will have no impact on Turkish foreign policy, or that the CFSP is nothing but declaratory politics. Certainly, there is plenty of evidence to support such an approach to Chapter 27; for example, the EU's handling of the conflict in Bosnia, non-preparedness to take responsibility of operation Albania, and the EU's absence in the political process leading to the war in Iraq. In general, many would find it comfortable to generalize such findings – that the CFSP is foremost a declaratory action and not worthy of the attention of men of real action. The problem is that there is also plenty of evidence supporting the proposition that the CFSP/ESDP *does* matter, that together they make a difference, and that Turkish foreign policy on certain issues will have to change in order for Turkey to comply with the CFSP. The second danger is to believe that the event of accession negotiations presents a particularly good opportunity to leave Turkish fingerprints on the priorities of the CFSP and ESDP. On the one hand, all member states concentrate on their traditional foreign policy areas. To have such areas is considered appropriate, indeed a fact of life, and is often a source of inspiration for EU foreign policy in the making. Thus, soon after Spain and Portugal joined the EC in the late 1980s, the EC foreign policy (EPC) got a stronger Latin-American dimension. When Finland and Sweden joined in the mid-1990s, the EU's northern dimension was launched soon afterwards and since Central and East European states have joined, the eastern dimension has been strengthened. In short, the CFSP and ESDP reflect member states' interests and concerns. In theoretical terms, we are talking about a process of collective identity and preference formation (Wendt, 1994). In the case of Turkish foreign policy, there is a clear overlap between the EU's newly launched New Neighbourhood Policy (NNP) and Turkish areas of concentration. A comprehensive foreign policy analysis would point to numerous examples of shared EU and

Turkish areas of concentration, but also to a range of contentious issues. At this point there is no need to elaborate further on this issue, because all these policy issues (as well as the CFSP machinery) are not up for negotiation during the accession talks.

Concerning the third danger, the European Commission has pointed out that Turkey to some degree has aligned herself with EU positions; that Turkey is relatively less alignment-prepared than other applicant countries and that a number of problem-loaded issues remain.⁹ Furthermore, the EU and Turkey have been on collision course on specific issues, such as the planned second EU–Organization of Islamic Conferences (OIC) Summit in Istanbul (October 2004). When reading the EU Commission’s Regular Reports on Turkey, it is difficult not to get the impression that alignment on foreign policy issues is not really that important for Turkey, and that CFSP and ESDP commitments do not really matter. Perhaps Turkey’s foreign-policy-makers believe it will be possible to negotiate special arrangements – for example, with reference to Turkey’s key concerns. The logic of the CFSP rules is that individual concerns are sometimes elevated to become shared EU concerns. At other times, partners may conclude that concerns are legitimate or understandable, and therefore provide passive support. However, sometimes understanding is not forthcoming, and some of Turkey’s key concerns belong to this latter option. If this description of attitudes about the CFSP, of beliefs and ideas about foreign policy are correct, it will be very difficult to reach a conclusion concerning Chapter 27 of the *acquis*.

The politics of mutual adjustment

The terms of accession are often presented as a ‘take-it-or-leave-it’ option and, they are just that – a fairly accurate description of the state of affairs. None the less, it is also a misleading notion, because every single enlargement has been a process of mutual adjustment (see Chapter 4 of this volume). It is highly unlikely that Turkey’s accession will constitute an exception to this rule. However, the point is that EU decision-makers do not believe it is for Turkey or Turkish negotiators to determine how, when and to what degree the EU should or should not adjust itself. Rather, the impact of Turkey’s possible accession will automatically force the EU decision-makers to contemplate possible avenues of adjustment. In other words, the EU that Turkey might eventually join will not be the EU we know today – and the Turkey that might eventually join the EU will not be the Turkey we know today. Thus, when thinking about the politics of mutual adjustment, we are talking futures.

The politics of accession negotiations: take three

Denmark's former chief EU negotiator, Poul Skytte Christoffersen, emphasizes that negotiations with Turkey have to be conducted on the basis of a shared aim of arriving at a successful outcome, defined as Turkey's accession. In this view, there are two preconditions: first, that Turkey fulfils all criteria for membership; and, second, that current EU member states are under on obligation to create public support for Turkish membership (*DJØF-Bladet*, 15 April 2005, p. 30). The point is, once again, that negotiations should not be regarded as a narrow diplomatic game, – they are part of a broader picture. The third sphere focuses on public discourse on Turkish membership, general images and widespread conceptions of Europe and of Turkey.

On the one hand, public discourse and opinion can be regarded as an obstacle, created intentionally to function as a barrier of last resort against Turkish membership. But public opinion can also, on the other hand, be regarded as a fact of life – the result of non-intentional political action. The two claims are not mutually exclusive. This third sphere has increasingly been politicized. Referenda on Turkish membership have been announced in Austria and France, and the issue of Turkish membership has to some degree influenced debates within the EU on the Constitutional Treaty.¹⁰

This third perspective on the politics of accession negotiations can be sub-divided into three aspects, called 'upgrade', 'under the varnish' and 'autonomous fields', respectively. The first school of thought claims that talking about EU–Turkish relations as a cultural encounter is unnecessarily diplomatic. Instead, the relationship should be viewed as an example of clashing civilizations. The second school of thought argues that culture may not figure prominently or explicitly in Turkey's accession strategy, yet just underneath the thin layers of technical, political and legal varnish, the deep layer of culture lures, and as long as this remains unrecognized, it is bound to cause endless problems. The third school of thought argues that relations between Turkey and the EU cannot be a cultural encounter, because a common culture is absent on the EU side. What we find in Europe is not a European culture but many national cultures, occasionally sharing some features but often not sharing much, and thus leading to a continent characterized by cultural diversity.

Upgrade, please

Istanbul is, seemingly, a perfect symbol of 'cultural encounters'. After all, an endless number of guidebooks point out that Istanbul is where

Europe meets Asia. An equally intriguing image points to Turkey as a borderland between Europe and the Middle East. Both conceptions push Turkey beyond the boundaries of Europe, and indeed are based on a distinction between Europe and Turkey. On the other hand, the Ottoman Empire was in Europe; during the latter half of the nineteenth century being perceived as ‘the Sick Man of Europe’. A ‘sick man’ for sure, but, significantly, *of* Europe. Similarly, a dominant image of Turkey is that of a democracy, based on the rule of law, strictly secular, with a French-inspired constitution and a Swiss-inspired penal code. In short, Turkey is a ‘European state’, enjoying the right to apply for membership of the EU. In other words, if we are looking for a symbolic venue for *political* Europe meeting Asia, we should be looking at cities such as Kars, Van or Urfa. To the degree that a cultural encounter can be observed in Istanbul, it is the dramatic encounter between urban and rural cultures.

But then, this first perspective is more demanding, because relations between Europe and Turkey should not be regarded merely as a cultural encounter. Rather, they should be viewed as an encounter between civilizations. One version of this perspective suggests that such encounters cause deep and enduring conflict; see Samuel Huntington’s (1993) notion of a clash of civilizations. While Huntington’s book does not need our attention in the present context, its reception does, since many people seem to share his ideas. When Russians explain why they are fighting in Chechnya, some point out that they, on behalf of Europe, are fighting the forces of Islam. When Serbs were fighting the governmental forces of Bosnia or the Albanian minority in Kosovo, their line of reasoning was pretty similar. When representatives of West European parties argue why Turkey should not be allowed to join the EU, they point out that Europe does not, cannot or should not include states in which Islam is the pre-eminent religion. In other words, Europe and Turkey belong to different civilizations.

This line of reasoning is in some way a continuation of a discourse that was particularly strong in the nineteenth century. Every standard textbook on relations between Europe and the Ottoman Empire point out that it was hotly debated whether the Ottoman Empire met the standard of civilization (Gong, 1984; Neumann, 1999). Reluctantly, the conclusion was reached that the Ottoman Empire could join the international society of states, provided that it complied with the rules and principles that guided relations between states in international society.

In general, a significant part of public discourse is constituted by such images, which in turn underlie the formation of public opinion.

Orientalism has been in place for centuries, long before the EU was created.¹¹ In comparison with the task of explaining to the public why Turkey should be allowed to join the EU, the task of conducting accession negotiations is a relatively straightforward affair. Often diplomats are not very good at public relations.

Under the varnish

The essence of this position is that many issues can be presented in more than one way – for example, as political, legal, economic or cultural. Such issues belong to the essentially contested features of social and political life, having a presence in several representations, serving different functions. For example, what are human rights if their political, legal and cultural dimensions are not combined? They are part of the values and principles that the EU claims to employ in its conduct of foreign policy, and some Turkish actors quote human rights as one of the reasons they support Turkish accession. Some Turkish ways of life will be challenged significantly by accession (for better or worse). The EU also knows that some technical issues are considered cultural. Thus, in the context of World Trade Organization (WTO) negotiations, the EU has argued strongly that films, at least some films, are not just commodities being produced for a market. They are ‘culture’. Perhaps, ‘culture’ has been a hidden, unrecognized dimension that has influenced all previous instances of Enlargement. Perhaps, we can explain certain difficulties experienced during the construction of Europe by pointing to British, Irish, Danish or Greek cultural characteristics.

Autonomous fields

Some claim that culture is culture, politics is politics and social technology is nothing but that. Hence it is acknowledged that culture exists, yet it does not and should not interfere with politics. Former Enlargement Commissioner, Günther Verheugen, does not attempt to hide or dismiss cultural aspects. He begins a speech by pointing out that ‘Istanbul is one of the most cosmopolitan cities in the world, a crossroad of cultures and civilisations with a glorious past and no doubt a dynamic future.’ Furthermore, he addresses the ‘culture of fear’ issue, pointing out that ‘some people fear the country will lose its cultural and linguistic identity. I want to reassure you that cultural diversity is the very heart and soul of Europe – a heritage we cherish and preserve at all costs’ (Verheugen, 2000). In other words, he claims to be cherishing and preserving cultural diversity and, in his view, the reform process flowing from Turkey’s pre-accession strategy does not

interfere in cultural affairs. Key players will be aware of this non-linkage, but outside the confines of the technically highly competent epistemic community, such knowledge is limited.

Conclusion

Though accession negotiations will take place in the shadow of considerable uncertainty, their politics is very simple: to make possible a transfer from A (the opening of negotiations) to B (a signed treaty of accession). In the case of the ten Central and Eastern European accession states, this process took between three and five years.¹² Having reached B, then follows the exercise of getting from B to C – that is, to get through the no less important ratification process. Accession negotiations began on 3 October 2005. However, this does not change the fact that Turkish membership of the EU remains nothing more than a possibility. Turkey has been deemed sufficiently qualified to open negotiations, but to qualify for membership is something fairly different and much more demanding.

This chapter has argued that the politics of accession negotiations is constituted by three separate yet intimately linked ‘games’: the accession negotiations as such; the broader framework of negotiation positions and domestic politics; and the wider game of general images, public opinion and contending conceptions of Europe. The conduct of accession negotiations in the narrow sense is an elite affair, involving highly skilled diplomats and experts. Negotiations will not be a case of negotiation across cultures (see Cohen, 1997) but a rather dull process, focusing on political, economic and legal dimensions. Relations between diplomacy and domestic politics (the second game) also involve politicians and representatives of interest groups and NGOs. The third game is likely to be the most difficult and, apart from groupings mentioned so far, this game will also include journalists, academics and many others.

Notes

1. A simple search on the European Commission’s website (<http://www.europa.eu>) reveals that the key word ‘Turkey’ generates a list of some 5,000 documents.
2. Provided that the Treaty on European Constitution will eventually be ratified in all member states, group presidencies will be introduced by 2007. Each group presidency will serve for 18 months and will comprise one large and two smaller member states. In case the Constitutional Treaty is not ratified, the sequence above and the traditional six-month term will apply.

3. Accession treaties with Bulgaria and Romania, respectively, have been signed and they have become full members as of January 2007. This will thus not interfere directly with Turkey's accession negotiations. On the other hand, the two new member states might contribute to accession fatigue.
4. The Commissions recommendations have largely been followed by the European Council; see Turkey in the 2004 Brussels European Council Presidency Conclusions, <http://www.mfa.gov.tr> (accessed 20 April 2005).
5. Concerning the Customs Union, observers have noted a similar reluctance to comply with obligations.
6. It could be argued that a three-level game model more accurately describe the parallel levels of Turkish domestic politics, bilateral relations with EU member states and negotiations with the European Commission (on three-level games, see Patterson, 1997). However, in the present context, the aim is not to analyse the games themselves but to point to the presence of more than one level.
7. Obviously, accession would also imply giving up political visions of becoming pre-modern.
8. For overviews of the CFSP, see Smith (2003) and Smith (2004).
9. In several Commission Regular Reports on Turkey.
10. According to a Eurobarometer survey, 11 per cent of respondents state the prospect of Turkish membership as a reason for voting 'no' to the Constitution.
11. According to an intriguing article by Makdisi (2002), Orientalism is not an exclusive Western European feature, but can also be identified in the Ottoman Empire. He explicates his view in the following fashion, 'By Ottoman Orientalism, I mean a complex of Ottoman attitudes produced by a nineteenth-century age of Ottoman reform that implicitly and explicitly acknowledged the West to be the home of progress and the East, writ large, to be a *present* theatre of backwardness (italics in original)' (p. 770).
12. First opening in 1998/9 and the treaty was signed in Athens in April 2003.

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