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Turkish Accession and Defining the Boundaries of Nationalism and Supranationalism: Discourses in the European Commission

Senem Aydın Düzgit and Semin Suvarierol

The European Union in general and the European Commission in particular are characterised by supranational governance. The enlargement policy gives the Commission the opportunity to export and promote supranational norms and define the boundaries of Europe as a supranational polity through the conditionality of membership and intensive contact with the candidate countries. This article analyses the discourses of the Commission on Turkey and gives us insights into how well Turkey fits the supranational model in the eyes of Commission officials. It demonstrates how the boundaries of supranationalism are set and even challenged by the prospects of Turkey's accession.

Keywords: Turkey; European Integration; European Commission; Nationalism; Supranationalism; EU Membership; EU Enlargement

The European Union (EU) is characterised by its supranational mode of governance according to which member-states pool sovereignty. As such, the EU diverges from the neo-realist conceptions of international relations with their visions of the world as consisting of antagonistic nation-states. Whereas this view of inter-state relations rests on the tenets of nationalism wherein 'the 'other' was almost always something to fear, to attack, to colonise, to dominate and to keep at bay' (Urry 2000, p. 1), the EU's supranationalism rests on a Kantian conception according to which states peacefully work *with* each other instead of against each other (Aydın Düzgit 2006). This Kantian worldview is translated in practice into the supranational governance of the EU. Supranationalism is most pronounced in the European Commission, whose task is to represent the common interests of the whole EU. This role endows the Commission not only with the duty to represent European interests, but also to uphold the EU's supranational regime, especially in its relations with third parties. Enlargement policy is, in this respect, an interesting case, since it gives the Commission the opportunity to

promote supranational norms through the conditionality of membership and intensive contact with the candidate countries. In a sense, the candidacy phase is also a trial period for working together as future governance partners: the EU and the candidate state get to know each other by working on accession chapters and through early cooperation on various issues. The Commission is the only body in the EU that engages on a daily basis with the applicant country, through both the country's official/governmental bodies and its civil society institutions.

The member states, through the Council of Ministers and the European Council, are responsible for delivering the ultimate decisions in the accession process of an applicant regarding the acceptance of the country's application, the opening of accession negotiations and (together with the European Parliament) the final decision on accession. Nevertheless, the Commission is often considered a 'central player' that is 'engaged in all stages of the enlargement process' (Diedrichs & Wessels 2006, p. 231). This pivotal position of the Commission in enlargement policy also endows it with a significant role in defining the contours of Europe in discussions about the candidates, due to the requirement that any candidate has to be a European state. Thus, debates and decisions over enlargement also entail discussions about 'Europe' and 'Europeanness'. Hence when the Commission reports and makes recommendations on enlargement, this is not independent from its conceptualisations of Europe and its boundaries.

The case of Turkey in this matter deserves special attention in assessing the boundaries of the supranationalist discourse in the Commission, as it is a contested candidate on grounds of the goodness of fit between its European credentials and the future order of the European project. Analysing the discourses of the Commission on Turkey gives us insights as to how well Turkey fits the supranational model in the eyes of Commission officials, and, if it does not, the reasoning behind such evaluations. Hence, it demonstrates how the boundaries of supranationalism are set and even challenged by the prospects of Turkey's accession, thus questioning the extent to which supranationalist tendencies should be taken for granted in an unqualified fashion in the European Commission. It also sheds light on the ways in which problematic areas in EU–Turkey relations are wrapped up in repertoires of sovereignty and nationalism in the Commission.

We begin the article with a brief theoretical introduction on the central concepts of our study. In this theoretical section, we also refer to existing literature with regard to these issues in the enlargement debate on Turkey and in the analyses of the institutional identity of the Commission. Next, we introduce the data from which the discourse analyses are derived. We follow the analysis of the empirical data with a concluding section where we discuss our main results.

Theoretical Background

Supranationalism is embedded in the institutional identity and discourse of the European Commission at various levels. At the level of EU governance,

supranationalism (as opposed to nationalism) is a historical *raison d'être* of the EU. At the institutional level, the Commission endorses the norm of supranationalism, which is formally defined as being independent from any particular interests (national or other) and mandates through the Treaties and Staff Regulations. Lastly, at the individual level, there is recent empirical evidence that the Commission is a 'hothouse for supranationalism' (Trondal 2007), as it both attracts officials conducive to supranational norms (Suvarierol 2007, 2011) and transforms its officials into adopting supranational norms¹ (Laffan 2004; Risse 2004; Suvarierol 2007, 2011), even officials who join the Commission on temporary contracts such as the seconded national experts (Trondal 2007). This can be explained with the 'logic of appropriateness' (March & Olsen 2004), which posits that (political) actors will act in line with the norms of the organisation they work for. Moreover, as socialisation theory has shown, long and intensive exposure to supranational norms leads to their internalisation (Checkel 2001; Egeberg 2006).

The foregoing theoretical and empirical insights lead us to expect that Commission officials will also adopt a supranational discourse and promote supranationalism in its contacts with third parties. The contacts with candidate countries are an important case in point, as enlargement policy provides the Commission the opportunity to diffuse supranationalism to its prospective members. If one of the fundamentals of the Commission's discourse on Europe relates to sovereignty and the related dichotomy of nationalism and supranationalism (Laffan 2004), we can expect these governance issues also to be present in Turkey's accession process, as attitudes with regard to national or shared sovereignty could be seen as indicators of Turkey's compatibility with the EU. Accordingly, we hypothesise that in their encounters with Turkish officials Commission officials will be supportive of supranationalist ideals and wary of nationalistic viewpoints that are protective of national sovereignty.

On the other hand, the EU has also often been criticised for building a 'European fortress' by creating a safe haven for the free mobility of goods, services and persons within the EU while being strict and closed towards third countries, especially in the areas of border security and immigration (Armstrong & Anderson 2007). In such sensitive policy fields where member-states are unwilling to transfer national sovereignty and where there is a lower level of supranationalism, the Commission's role conception might be blurred: Commission officials might either be faithful to their supranational discourse or be protective of European sovereignty in line with the nation-state discourses. If this ambiguity does exist on the part of the Commission, it has consequences for the effectiveness of the principle of conditionality in enlargement (Schimmelfennig & Sedelmeier 2005). If the Commission does not practise what it preaches in terms of adopting supranational norms, then we might speak of a credibility problem, as the signals it is sending to candidate states – in this case Turkey – will not be consistent with its own approach towards national sovereignty. One of the aims of the empirical analysis of the discourses of Commission officials on Turkey is therefore also to address the following question: Are Commission officials convinced supranationalists or 'Euro-nationalists' vis-à-vis Turkey?

The Data

The data analysed in this study cover 19 in-depth qualitative interviews with Commission officials, carried out between April and October 2007. The respondents were all 'AD' (formerly A-level) rank staff of the Commission and consisted of mid-level desk-officers, international relations officers and programme managers working on enlargement in their directorate generals (DGs). Among the 28 DGs, only those DGs (14) that had a specific department/desk dealing with enlargement-related issues including relations with Turkey were approached.²

The study makes no claims to having a representative sample of all European Commission officials. While it cannot be dismissed that any such official may have personal opinions on the issue of Turkish accession, the opinions of many would be highly irrelevant to the purposes of this study. First, speaking to 'any' official would make the study little different from any public survey on attitudes towards Turkish accession, since officials working on other matters have little input and influence in the policy-making and debate-formulating process regarding Turkey. Second, such an approach would run the risk of weakening the spoken data and hence delivering 'limited narratives' due to the possibility of 'limited knowledge' that a professionally uninvolved official could deploy in order to construct her/his arguments on the subject. Attention was thus paid to contacting and speaking with officials who were familiar enough with the affairs of Turkey and its relations with the EU, as well as having the means to shape the discursive sphere on Turkey.

These considerations overlap with the research objective, which is to attain lengthy narratives on the 'substantive content of identity' that 'captures variability in meanings' (Checkel & Katzenstein 2009, p. 17). Nevertheless, nonnumeric quantitative expressions such as 'often', 'overwhelmingly' and 'frequently' are used in describing some segments of the discourse. Schegloff (1993, p. 119) argues that this kind of informal quantification helps to deliver 'a characterisation of distribution fully though tacitly informed by the analytic import of what is being characterised', which establishes 'a sense of importance' rather than 'statistical significance' (see also Wood & Kroger 2000, p. 138).

The questions that were posed in the interviews focused on various dimensions of EU–Turkey relations, including democracy and human rights, women's rights, religion, culture, immigration, security and the state of the Turkish economy. For the purposes of this study, only the responses relating to sovereignty, nationalism and supranationalism have been taken into consideration; in other words, the excerpts that are the subject of analysis consist only of those instances where an interviewee invokes any one of these (or other) issue areas in Turkey–EU relations as a matter of Turkish national sovereignty or of the EU's functioning as a political project. From among a larger corpus of data, only a select number of these excerpts are presented in the analysis below. The choice rests on a concern to display an exemplary variety of the argumentation strategies utilised in the discussions on Turkish accession from the viewpoint of sovereignty-related matters. The analysis, thus, not only accounts for

the most frequently made arguments, but also covers the less common views encountered on these matters. The goal is to make coherent claims through interpretation, by accounting for exceptions and alternatives.

Turkey as a Sovereign: Turkish Nationalism and EU Accession

Eurobarometer results and previous research on the Commission's top officials have shown that 'Commission officials are more likely to identify with Europe and are more in favour of shifting policy to the European level than national elites or citizens' (Hooghe 2005, p. 875). Our empirical data also confirm that one of the binding elements of 'Europe' in the discourse of the Commission bureaucrats is 'shared/pooled sovereignty', which is crucial in upholding the common European interest in the EU:

COM 10³: We should work together, for common goals that we can no longer achieve individually. Being European for me is also realising our own smallness, in terms of our old borders. European means we should try to work together, to overcome our smallness where it is necessary. What would be the effect of Turkey joining this Community? I do not know whether there is a strong desire in Turkey to build together. It will cause big problems in the preparation stage if the country is not convinced that it will have to give up sovereignty in joining the EU. Joining the EU means giving up sovereignty. You no longer have the rights to define your own trade policy. If the member states together decide to impose sanctions on I don't know which country, you have to follow that. There is no way out.

In combination with the 'we' pronoun that constructs Europeans as a bounded group, the excerpt above utilises predicates such as 'work together for common goals', 'working together', 'build together' and 'overcoming our smallness' that serve to discursively promote a 'consciousness of common belonging' within 'Europe'. As Abélès highlights, such a consciousness that is promoted in Commission discourse via the invocation of a common good/common interest/common European idea can be interpreted as an affirmation 'against what is established as alterity (that of nation-states as opposed to Community) and as particularisms (national histories as opposed to modernity)' in the Commission (Shore & Abélès 2004, p. 11). Hence, the use of such notions in Commission discourse not only aims to serve operational purposes in the sense of fostering efficient policy-making, but, more importantly, helps to define 'Europe/EU' vis-à-vis the member states of the EU (ibid.). In the excerpt above, the reference to 'old borders' designating nation-states of the EU prior to the establishment of the Community, and defining their previous isolated presence as an act of smallness demonstrates how such a definition can be invoked in combination with the notions of common goals and interests.

Within the scope of Turkey-related discussions, this overwhelming emphasis of the Commission officials on 'working together for common goals' is interlinked with the way in which they conceptualise Turkey's outlook on nation-state sovereignty. When probed on their construct of 'Europe' and the positioning of Turkey in this wider discursive construct, the Commission bureaucrats often highlight the issue of

‘sovereignty’ as one of the key problematic areas in Turkey’s accession to the EU. In particular, those respondents working in DGs that are responsible for policy areas that constitute significant segments of the *acquis* infiltrating into national policy-making (i.e. DG Environment, DG Justice and Home Affairs, DG Agriculture, DG Regional Policy, DG Internal Market) highlight ‘problems’ regarding Turkey’s attitude towards ‘state sovereignty’:

COM 15: Integration with Turkey will be difficult. I think sovereignty and attitudes play a role. When you discuss with Turkish authorities issues which are not mainly political but to a large extent technical, you feel immediately that this issue of sovereignty is very close to the surface. And of course, when you are a country of 70 million people, you do not have the habit of being told what you have to do and so on. So I understand that there is this sort of a survival instinct, which is still very strong in Turkey and which is necessary given the neighbours. Just to take a comparison: we had in the context of the accession process the screening with Croatia and screening with Turkey, and the nationalist flavour is ten times higher in Turkey, which is not a criticism. I am just saying for historical, size reasons.

COM 8: First of all, Europeans do not consider themselves to be different from one country to another. Of course they have their specificities, North–South–East–West, but this is a plus. I have the feeling that Turkey stands as Turkey versus Europe. This does not happen with other countries. Of course, they are defending their national interests and principles, but one does have the impression that they have something deep, completely different. Europe is a family and Turkey, for the time being, by its own willingness, considers itself Turkey versus Europe, if you understand. They think that what they are thinking and what they believe in and so on are above criticism. They have the knowledge; they have the right ideas.

Both of the excerpts above predicate Turkey as a ‘proud’, ‘nationalist’ and ‘arrogant’ country unwilling to delegate sovereignty to the EU. In the first excerpt, this ‘proud’ nature is essentialised further via the biological metaphor of the ‘survival instinct’, justified through reference to Turkey’s neighbours and hence securitising them in a different context. The second excerpt above constructs a clear-cut binary division between Turks and Europeans, homogenising them, positioning them against one another and engaging in stereotypical attributions for both parties. The stereotyped European is defined by similarity rather than difference and bound by natural properties as implied by the ‘family’ metaphor. While the interviewee constructs Turkey as standing opposed to Europe at its own will, she also essentialises this ‘will’ by tying it to the innate nature of the country and its people.

It is notable here how the dominant stereotype of ‘Turks as proud people’ utilised in eighteenth-century European accounts of the Ottoman Empire is still present in the Commission elite’s discourse on Turkey.⁴ In a majority of interviews, Turkey’s attitude towards state sovereignty is tied to the existence of a ‘proud’ mentality and culture. What further binds the two excerpts above is the way in which both silence alternative narratives that highlight that ‘the problem of reconciling the demands of European integration with national “pride” ... is by no means unique to Turkey’ (Diez 2005, pp. 171–172) and concerns even present-day member states (see Checkel 2007). This is

not to engage in discussions regarding the 'proudness' of nations and hence to justify such generalising constructs in the first place, but to point to the danger of constructing a flawless homogeneous European identity against a posited Turkish nationalism vis-à-vis the EU.

This issue of 'sovereignty' can also arise in contacts of Commission bureaucrats with their peers working in the relevant Turkish ministries:

COM 18: People within different ministries that I met are very intelligent, smart and well-educated, so there is no trouble there. But Turks should understand the principles on which the EU is established. The main principle is communication between member states. So for me it is very important that Turkey understands this principle. This, I see, as a bigger problem in Turkey because there is this nationalist feeling that the EU is going to steal their autonomy, that they will lose their sovereignty if they join the EU ... The way they communicate is that they do not want to provide a lot of information; they feel that this is for a later stage, that this is some kind of trade off. I find this a big difference because I come from Central and Eastern Europe and we were more open. We provided a lot of information and we admit our shortcomings. Turks have a tendency to say, 'We are the best', and sometimes I also had the feeling that you have an agreement, and then in one or two days, you find out that the agreement is not in place.

As also demonstrated in the excerpt above, the Commission elite often defines its Turkish interlocutors in a positive manner, underscoring their intelligence, education and, in some cases, modern and European outlook. Nevertheless, the experiences they recount with their Turkish counterparts often take a turn for the negative when the latter's approach to sovereignty enters the picture. The 'pride', 'arrogance' and sometimes 'unreliability' of the Turkish elite, coupled with 'mistrust' towards the EU, are presented as significant problems that prevent a constructive dialogue between the two sides. In the excerpt above, these properties are described as 'national' traits, positioned against those of Eastern Europe, the region from which the interviewee comes.

Hence the positive attributes assigned to their Turkish interlocutors does not preclude the Commission elite from defining their counterparts as comprising culturally determined traits governing the way in which they negotiate with the EU, primarily in reference to their attitude towards sovereignty. This is once again a recurring theme in the interviews of those employed in DGs that deal with 'politically sensitive' issues requiring a great degree of sovereignty delegation from the nation-state level to the EU. For some of these officials, the Europeanness of the Turkish elite is explicitly overshadowed by a culturally inspired stance in their conduct of international relations:

COM 11: The oriental cultural side of Turkey, of the Turkish elite is that they are very at ease with satisfying the formal requirements without strong commitments behind it, so they deal with formal things with nothing behind it. They do not care; this is not a problem for them. So my preconceived idea about the oriental mentality was not really challenged by the Turks. This was the fashion in public administration, but that was also their duty; they were mandated to be like that.

The excerpt above explicitly utilises the historical concept of the oriental mentality which dates back to the eighteenth century (Said 1995; Çırakman 2005) in stereotyping

Turkish people in general and the elite in particular. The notion of ‘ungrounded pride’, in particular, seems to have survived to this day in describing the way in which Turks conduct their relations with the EU. It needs to be noted, however, that the concept denoted a much wider range of predicates at the time it was first coined and utilised (i.e. slavish disposition, fanaticism, ignorance) which do not seem to be carried to this day, thus suggesting that caution is required in drawing historical parallels as such.

Perhaps more importantly, what the last two excerpts above suggest is that the narratives on professional/institutional interactions of Commission officials play an important role in assigning to the ‘Turks’ certain general attributes through discussions on the issue of sovereignty, providing further support to studies that highlight that institutional contacts play a key role in constructing narratives of identity in the European Commission (Laffan 2004; Risse 2004; Suvarierol 2007). Hence, it can be argued that the Commission officials’ experiences within the ‘epistemic community’ (Haas 1992) that they form with their Turkish counterparts provide key nodal points around which certain narratives of identities are constructed in Commission discourse. The stereotypes and generalisations utilised in referring to the Turkish counterparts also show that the new information that has been gained through contact does not seem to have changed the EU officials’ existing stereotypes substantively, as they still rely on them to make sense of the behaviour of Turkish officials.

Europe as a Sovereign: Euro-nationalism and Turkish Accession

While the Commission elite often perceive the attitude of Turkey and the Turkish elite towards national sovereignty as problematic, the empirical data suggest that the way in which the Commission bureaucracy conceptualises Europe and the EU is not too distanced from the classic nation-state mode whereby national sovereignty is replaced by the sovereignty of Europe. This is most evident in discussions on two topics: namely the capacity of the EU to integrate new members – also referred to as the absorption/integration capacity of the EU – and security-related matters:

COM 19: We first need to decide on deepening and strengthening the EU, before we go any further with enlargement policy. We need a strong Europe, with well-functioning institutions and feasible budgetary arrangements. Europe should be capable of decision-making. Clearly, Turkey’s size is an issue that needs to be looked at, and even if you project economic trends twenty years into the future, agriculture for example will play an important role in the Turkish economy. There are problems about immigration, again to do with size, and, well, certain politicians have jumped on that for very specific reasons. As long as Turkey continues to boom as it is now, well, hopefully they will create some jobs, because that is the main problem . . . Turkey needs to develop, Turkey needs to create jobs, Turkey needs to educate its population. When this happens, I would have no fears on the part of the EU. Otherwise, Turkish accession would be detrimental to the interests of the member states and the Union.

As also demonstrated in the excerpt above, the Commission elite in general are concerned about the current functioning of the EU and argue that an unchanged Turkey in political and economic terms would further undermine the institutional and budgetary

capacity of the EU. Thus, while most of them argue that the concept of absorption capacity is being utilised by national politicians as a cover for their hostility to Turkish accession, they believe that there is also some truth to the argument, which, however, could be resolved through a reform of the EU and substantial reform within Turkey.

Nevertheless, in probing the institutional and budgetary effects of the EU, a paradoxical situation arises with respect to their previously mentioned views on the problem of sovereignty in Turkish accession. As seen in the previous discussion, the way in which Turkey guards its national interest is perceived as highly problematic by the Commission elite, against the background argument that national sovereignty should no longer matter in the EU. However, when it comes to the concrete impacts of Turkish accession on the EU and its member states, guarding the national as well as the European interest is acceptable to the Commission elite. This is particularly the case in discussions on the economic impacts of Turkish accession as well as the outlook on Turkish immigration into the EU. It needs to be mentioned that this discourse has already partially been translated into policy by the European Commission. The Negotiating Framework with Turkey⁵ already allows for permanent safeguard clauses in areas such as freedom of movement of persons, structural policies and agriculture, and has been applauded by the Enlargement Commissioners in their various speeches both prior to and after the publication of the framework document in June 2005.⁶

The remnant of the nation-state model in the EU also surfaces in debates over immigration, which is almost always portrayed as an issue with a strong security dimension:

COM 14: If you look at the region at your southern borders, it is clear that a lot of people will be knocking on the Turkish door and their final destination is the EU. I think there is a problem; there is a huge migration pressure. Is it by definition bad? I mean we have a problem in Europe as well. Our population is becoming older and older and we need migrant workers to come here. So I think it is completely wrong to look at it in a very negative manner, saying that the migration problem is by definition bad. We will need people to come to work in Europe, otherwise we will lose our standard of living. But it needs to be done in a way which is not causing additional burden to the societies. So there is an unhealthy tension in society which needs to be addressed. So my position would be a very balanced one . . . The border question is a very complex one. You cannot expect that a country bordering regions or countries like Iraq and Iran just applies the same Schengen standards as Poland does with Belarus or Ukraine. The situation is completely different.

The excerpt above, delivered in response to the question on the security dimension of Turkey's accession, hence securitises the issue of 'migration', granting it a sense of urgency whereby it is construed as an 'existential threat' (Buzan, Waeber & De Wilde 1998, pp. 21–25). While other works have argued that migration is not always securitised in the discourses and policy practices of the EU, it has also been found that the tendency to securitise increases when the issue concerns Muslim communities already resident in Europe (Boswell 2007). Migration is also predicated as a 'problem' for the EU due to the region that Turkey borders as a 'transit country'. More importantly, the utilisation of container metaphors such as 'door', 'pressure' and

'burden' constructs Europe/EU as a bounded space that needs to be protected from external threats (Charteris Black 2006). Container metaphors utilised as such play a key role in legitimising restrictive policies regarding border controls, since 'the existence of a clearly defined container also implies a conscious controlling entity that fills or empties the container', namely governments (*ibid.*, p. 576). Thus, as commonly seen in the case of the nation-states, discourses on the control of (transit) migration in discussions over Turkish accession in turn help reify the EU as a bounded space and justify centralised policies in this field.

Related to the discussion of the previous excerpt (on p. 476), this interviewee also invokes the 'interests' of EU 'societies' in discussing the implications of migration to Europe/EU from or through Turkey once it becomes a member. Thus, once again, guarding the European interest comes to the fore in debates over Turkish accession, this time more specifically over migration handled as a security matter.

This paradoxical situation in which the Commission elite construct Turkish national interest as problematic while they construct common European/EU interests (as well as national interests in some cases) that need to be upheld, and in which they model Europe/EU on conceptual underpinnings similar to those of the modern nation-state model which they often claim the EU to have surpassed, suggests that the perceptions of the Commission bureaucracy on the cultural dimensions of Turkish accession could provide further important insights regarding their reliance on the model of the nation-state as well as its implications for a multicultural Europe/EU that can govern the EU's relations with its immigrants as well as the other non-European collectivities in its neighbourhood. This, however, would require further research, which would go beyond the scope of this article (see Aydın Düzgüt 2012, forthcoming).

Conclusions

This article has aimed to show the extent to which supranationalism as a norm is reflected in the discourses of the European Commission regarding Turkey's membership in the EU. The interview excerpts have shown that Commission officials stress supranationalism and are critical of what they see as manifestations of Turkish nationalism. Yet, when it comes to strategic reflections on Turkey's membership or to sensitive issues where EU member-states are still attached to their national sovereignty, the discourses of Commission officials become 'nationalistic' themselves – what we in this article have termed 'Euro-nationalism'. Whereas the discourses are critical of sovereignty and nationalism when it comes to Turkey, they are protective of European sovereignty and interests in their own discourses on Turkey without framing them as nationalistic.

These findings challenge the image of the Commission as a supranational actor. Besides concluding that the Commission's supranationalism cannot be taken categorically, how can we explain its Euro-nationalism? On the one hand, one might argue that the Commission in this sense merely represents the dominant line set out by member-states themselves. In other words, the outlook of the member-states are nationalistic in policy areas such as security, border control and immigration, and the Commission merely

reflects these standpoints. The Commission functions independently from the instructions of national governments, but it is also its task to take the dominant political climate into consideration in order to come up with acceptable policies and to safeguard its legitimacy in the eyes of member-states and eventually of citizens. Moreover, if we conceptualise the Commission as the representative of pooled sovereignty, then the attempt to define and defend the interests of this supranational whole flows from the formal role definition of the Commission. Still, it could be defined as Euro-nationalism to the extent that it is protective of the EU's interests and becomes crystallised in its relations with outsiders, in this case Turkey.

In any case, one could argue that the Commission is acting as a nation-state in the domain of enlargement policy. Whereas its internal governance is marked by supranationalism, it follows the classical rules of international relations when the policy in question extends beyond EU borders. This is reflected in the double discourse on Turkey: whereas Turkey is expected to act as an insider and surpass its nationalism in sovereignty-related issues, the Commission itself frames Turkey as an outsider with regard to issues touching the sovereignty of the EU (or its member states). In fact, this may well be seen as yet another reflection of the problem of credibility in EU–Turkey relations (Aydın Düzgit & Çarkoğlu 2009). Overcoming the insider–outsider distinction as reflected by the discourses on sovereignty could possibly lead to more credibility in socialising candidate countries in general, and Turkey in particular, into supranational norms. We argue in turn that this would increase the transformative power of the Commission in particular and the EU in general, since the candidate country would be given an unequivocal message with regard to complying with the norm of shared sovereignty.

This article has only focused on the Commission as the supranational agent in the governance structure of the EU. Previous research has shown, however, that the discourses of the European Parliament and some member-states on Turkish accession show striking parallels with the Commission on the issue of sovereignty (see Aydın Düzgit 2012, forthcoming). Whilst our data do not allow us to make any concrete statements on temporal change, one may argue that sovereignty-related concerns as such may have even been strengthened further since 2007 with the difficult ratification of the Lisbon Treaty and intensifying debates on the potential destabilising impact of Turkey on the EU, fuelled by Turkey's domestic upheavals and its foreign policy activism in the Middle East. We expect that the normative power and credibility of the EU as a policy actor on the international scene would increase if it could approach candidates as insiders in order to create dialogue as partners in a common European project. Whether the EU's approach will change in the short term is partly dependent on the political climate and attitudes in Europe towards enlargement and Turkey.

Notes

- [1] For a counterargument, see Liesbet Hooghe's work (1999; 2001; 2005). She argues that the socialisation capacity of the Commission is limited at best and claims that the supranational norms the officials endorse have been acquired at the national level.

- [2] These DGs are: Trade, Economic and Financial Affairs, Competition, Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, Agriculture and Rural Development, Energy and Transport, Environment, Research, Fisheries and Maritime Affairs, Internal Market and Services, Regional Policy, Education and Culture, Justice, Freedom and Security and Enlargement.
- [3] The respondents are hereafter referred to as COM (COM standing for the Commission and the digit standing for the number assigned to the interviewee).
- [4] For British and French representations of the Turks in the eighteenth century, see Aslı Çırakman (2005).
- [5] See Negotiating Framework (Turkey), 3 October 2005, available online at: http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/st20002_en05_TR_framedoc.pdf#search=percent22percent22negotiating percent20framework percent22 percent2C percent22turkey percent22 percent22
- [6] See, for example, Prodie (2004a, 2004b) and Rehn (2004, 2005).

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