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TURKEY'S PERCEPTION OF EUROPE

Pascal Kluge

1. INTRODUCTION

At one time, the Ottoman presence in Europe was profound, and the resultant impacts of that presence were not only militaristic, but also political, cultural and religious. As one of the leading powers on the European continent, impressive and formidable, the Ottoman Empire devolved over time, however, into the *sick man of the Bosporus*. Among other factors, weak leadership, poor economic infrastructure, a lack of modern military equipment and effective battle strategies, and increasingly powerful nationalist movements weakened the empire. Some ascribed the misfortunes of the empire to a lack of modernisation, believing that salvation required the adoption of European-styled reforms in legislation, the military, the economy and, ultimately, society. As a national project of Europeanisation, the first wide-ranging socio-political reform was made in 1839, heralding the *tanzimat* period. Numerous steps were taken with the aim of structural reorganisation of the country. However, the downfall of the Ottoman Empire and the loss of most of its possessions could not be halted. In Europe, only a small territory in Thrace was retained. Nonetheless, Europeanisation continued, culminating in widespread restructuring within the newly founded Republic of Turkey based on a European model, headed by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. A Western-oriented Turkish state identity was institutionalised, and the country found a safe haven in the Western world, not least by being member of numerous organisations. After the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the bipolar world order, however, familiar affiliations were questioned and alternative models for society were more openly discussed. However, those models could not firmly become established, and today, despite having a government with roots in political Islam, Turkey's Western orientation continues to constitute the state's self-proclaimed identity. Turkey's unceasing quest to join the European Union is only one indicator of its orientation towards the Western world and Europe.

Taking into account the fact that Turkey has had centuries of close, if not always friendly, relations with European countries, it should come as no surprise that there have been an abundance of scholarly studies done on Turkish-European relations. In this context, also European perceptions of Turkey have been extensively examined.[1] However, perceptions of Europe from within Turkey have received far less attention.[2] One reason for this lacuna might be that there are countless university departments in Europe which focus on studies of Turkey, from Turkology to Islamic Studies and beyond, while Turkey is just one country with fewer universities. The main aim of this paper, therefore, is to further close this gap.

For this purpose, selected Turkish print media have been analysed. Three newspapers have been chosen for this study: *Cumhuriyet*, *Zaman* and *Ortadoğu*. They represent the range of the prevailing ideological movements in Turkey, which also dominate in the political landscape: secularist Kemalism, the religious reform movement and ethnocentric nationalism. Various articles will be analysed, and, in the course of the analysis, different perceptions of Europe will be elaborated upon. The findings of the analysis will be situated within a diachronic context to de-

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[1] See, for example, Burçoğlu (ed.), *The Image of the Turk*.

[2] See, for example, Bülbül, Özipek, Kalın (eds.), *Aşk ile Nefret*; Turan, 'Osmanlı Diplomasinde'; Criss, 'Europa in den Augen'; Asiltürk, *Osmanlı Seyyahlarının Gözüyle*; Şirin, *Osmanlı İmgelerinde*; Kuran, 'Osmanlı Türklerinin'; Findley, 'An Ottoman Occidentalist'; Ercan, 'Bir Türk Diplomatının Gözüyle'; Lewis, *The Muslim Discovery*; Okay, *Batı Medeniyeti*.

termine if today's perceptions have their roots in history rather than in contemporary developments. Considering the substantial differences between ideological movements in Turkey, one might suppose that their perceptions also differ greatly. However, although all three ideological movements clearly vary in respect to their concrete political agenda, we will see that there are certain underlying similarities: long held perceptions seem to prevail in today's approaches towards Europe.

The articles examined were published within a period lasting from August 2006 to September 2007. Most of them were written as columns. During the period chosen, some important developments concerning Europe were covered in Turkish newspapers: the visit of Pope Benedict XVI to Turkey in November 2006, overshadowed by his speech at the University of Regensburg which was understood by some as an insult against the Islamic faith; the suspension of eight mostly trade-related chapters in the course of Turkey's accession process into the European Union in December 2006, following Turkey's decline to open its ports to Cypriot vessels; the election of the French president Nicolas Sarkozy in May 2007, highlighted by his critical evaluation of Turkey's bid for membership in the European Union; and the general elections held in Turkey in July of 2007, which focused not only on local and regional issues, but on Europe as well.

The results of this study are significant as they can promote mutual understanding by overcoming long-time misunderstandings, possibly opening up new modes of rapprochement between Turkey and Europe, especially in light of Turkey's sometimes difficult accession process into the European Union. In addition, the increasing political, cultural, strategic and economic importance of Turkey, as well as the millions of Turks living in European countries, contributes to the importance of this topic.

2. MEDIA RESEARCH

As newspapers will comprise the core of this analysis, the question regarding *if* and *how* media can be used as research material should be clarified. Undoubtedly, the media play an important role in today's societies. Without media such as newspapers, it would be impossible to comprehend the outside world in its broader dimensions.[3] As a main provider of information, the media are seen – along with family, peer-groups, school, work and other elements of society – as an important factor within the process of socialisation,[4] and thus as an integral part of society.[5] As the consumer of media wants to discover a sense of the developments in the world, she or he is also subject to already acquired structures of knowledge. Anderson's schema theory refers to this, arguing that schemata, as organised bodies of knowledge that direct the selection of information, help people to handle this information.[6]

The agenda-setting approach of McCombs and Shaws refers to another feature of the media.[7] The intuitively plausible concept of agenda-setting suggests that the media "do not simply report events but rather set agendas."[8] It is mostly the elites of a country which have the power to determine which topics dominate the media and thus to initiate a public discourse, using media as a vehicle.[9] Rephrased in an exaggerated way, we can say that particular people select particular topics for discussion in particular ways.[10] Media itself dispose of a certain inviolability as

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[3] Carnevale, Ihrig, Weiß, *Europa am Bosporus*, pp. 24–25.

[4] Peuckert, Scherr, 'Sozialisation', p. 267.

[5] Früh, *Realitätsvermittlung durch Massenmedien*, p. 17.

[6] Ibid., p. 48; Anderson, Spiro, Anderson, 'Schemata as scaffolding', pp. 433–40.

[7] McCombs, Shaw, 'The Agenda-Setting Function', pp. 176–87.

[8] Abercrombie, Hill, Turner, *Dictionary of Sociology*, p. 10.

[9] Hall, 'Die strukturierte Vermittlung', p. 141.

[10] Abercrombie, Hill, Turner, *Dictionary of Sociology*, p. 10.

the consumer of media usually is at a physical distance and thus not able to verify the presented facts.[11] Media, therefore, do not only participate in, but also shape discourses. They reflect what is being thought, but they also give instructions on *how* to think about *what*.[12] However, there is also evidence that those issues which are given priority in the media are much the same as those prioritised by the public.[13]

In this double function, media could well be considered a mirror of the values of society and social realities beyond the journalistic field.[14] However, there are always views and opinions that do not appear in media, whether due to lack of sufficient financial means, or lack of desire to expend the financial means necessary to publish them, or due to the use of political means to prevent certain views from appearing in the media.[15] Thus, the temptation to believe that every single one of society's views could possibly be grasped through media analysis alone should most certainly be cast aside. Nevertheless, as a mirror and transmitter of values and ideologies, media constitute a forum for the *crucial* ideological lines of argumentation present.[16]

3. STEREOTYPING THE *OTHER*

According to Giddens, all social groups develop characteristic structural features such as moral codes, types of domination and class structures,[17] creating differences and ultimately boundaries between them. Those boundaries which delineate and constitute social groups can establish themselves under different circumstances and are subject to change. However, moral codes and other structural features are not easily modified, involving a long process.[18]

As the boundaries of social groups are not demarcations of self-contained entities,[19] they necessarily include a concept of the *Other*.[20] The construct of the *Other* makes a social group conscious of its own identity and is one constituting factor within the development of modern societies.[21] Identity depends on "the ability to distinguish itself from something other than itself."[22] The *Other* is thus, next to the *Self*, a necessary component in the construction, development and maintaining of identity.[23]

The *Other* has two dimensions – a negative and a positive one. On the one hand, the *Other* is a projection of one's own wishes, something to strive after, and an entity with which one desires to harmonise.[24] On the other hand, it is a projection of one's negative aspects, or functions as a means to distract from one's own deficiencies by pointing out deficiencies over *there*.[25] These institutionalised perceptual patterns not only ensure that individuals be satisfied with their identification with the group in question, but provide a means for handling constantly resurfacing

[11] Schiffer, *Die Darstellung des Islams*, p. 143.

[12] Ibid., p. 22.

[13] Abercrombie, Hill, Turner, *Dictionary of Sociology*, p. 10.

[14] Schulz, 'Inhaltsanalyse', pp. 41–63.

[15] Tılıç, *Medyayı Anlamak*, pp. 141–50.

[16] Seufert, *Politischer Islam*, pp. 11, 78.

[17] Cohen, 'Anthony Giddens', p. 281.

[18] Abercrombie, Hill, Turner, *Dictionary of Sociology*, p. 409; Peuckert, 'Werte', p. 354.

[19] Cohen, 'Anthony Giddens', p. 282.

[20] In sociology, cultural and gender studies, the term *otherness* is increasingly abandoned for the term *difference*. See Nederveen Pieterse, 'Europe and its Others', p. 43.

[21] Gukenbiehl, 'Universalien, soziale', p. 331.

[22] Delanty, 'Identity', p. 13.

[23] Ibid., pp. 12–13.

[24] Bilgin, *Sosyal Bilimlerin Kavşağında*, p. 112.

[25] Winkler, 'Ethnische Schimpfwörter', pp. 320–37.

challenges and problems within society as well.[26] Especially the negative attributes and the allocation of blame play an important role in this context.[27]

As the perception of the *Other* is usually based on limited information, it is closely related to the concepts of stereotype and prejudgement.[28] A stereotype is a highly consolidated positive or negative judgement of individuals, incidents or objects, based on incomplete or distorted information and on the norms and values of one's own group.[29] Stereotypes are assembled into a logical, what is assumed to be plausible argumentation, and turned into verities.[30] They develop into a self-fulfilling prophecy and are simultaneously a mechanism of marking the *Other*.[31] This is a natural and a necessary system to be able to categorise observations and experiences during the process of perception. As they mirror the norms and values of the group, stereotypes govern profoundly the process of perception.[32] Since they are based on belief and expectations, and characterised by coherence, they are not easily changed.[33] The affirmation of the expected prevails.

From a Turkish perspective, Europe can be considered as occupying the role of the *Other*. Although there exist more *Others* for Turkey, such as the Arab *Other* or the Kurdish *Other*, Europe takes on a prominent role in Turkey's self-concept.

4. TURKISH RELATIONS WITH EUROPE IN HISTORY

In pre-modern Ottoman times, contact with foreigners and the possibility to obtain information about foreign countries was quite limited for the general public. Also, for Ottomans of higher status, sources of information were scarce, derived mainly from diplomats, traders and travellers who conveyed their experiences and views, shaping the picture of Europe.[34] Surely, on occasion they provided invaluable information concerning the social and political state of Europe. However, the value of those reports depended for a great part on the receptiveness of those conveying them,[35] and sometimes also on the writer, *kâtip*, who put them to paper.[36] Later, the translation of European texts provided information on Europe as well, especially after the introduction of the mechanical printing press in the Ottoman Empire in 1728.[37]

Discourses on Europe can be traced back for centuries. They have developed into an overall coherent, yet sometimes contradictory, system that has become firmly established.[38] In medieval and early modern times, the Ottoman drive to conquer European lands, often justified by religious causes, was crucial to shaping relations. As religion was a divider that justified hostilities

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[26] Gukenbiehl, Scherr, 'Soziologische Theorien', p. 284.

[27] Akçam, 'Hızla Türkleşiyoruz', p. 156.

[28] While stereotypes focus more on a cognitive and thus an orientational function, prejudgments display mostly an affective-emotional component. However, newer socio-psychological research no longer clearly distinguishes between prejudgements and stereotypes, as it characterises both as judgements on other individuals, objects and correlations that are unfounded and are verified only through minimal information. See Peuckert, 'Vorurteil', p. 343.

[29] Ibid., p. 342.

[30] Schiffer, *Die Darstellung des Islams*, p. 45.

[31] Ibid., p. 220.

[32] Ibid., p. 48.

[33] Ibid., p. 221.

[34] On reports of the Ottoman embassies and of the foreign diplomatic community in Istanbul, as well as on translated European texts as sources, see Aksan, *Ottomans and Europeans*, pp. 13–22.

[35] Ibid., pp. 16–18.

[36] Şirin, *Osmanlı İmgelerinde*, p. 112.

[37] Aksan, *Ottomans and Europeans*, p. 18.

[38] Schiffer, *Die Darstellung des Islams*, p. 220.

and wars, Europe was mainly perceived as a *religious Other*.[39] The policy of welcoming non-Muslims into the empire, however, created a heterogeneous society, made up of Muslims, Christians, and Jews. The considerable number of Christians living within the Ottoman Empire surely prevented the Ottomans from speaking of Christians as an unknown power or threat. As religion was not an unsurpassable barrier, the Ottoman Empire cooperated at times with European countries, depending on its strategic interests. In 1536, for example, an alliance treaty with France was ratified. With time, economic relations grew stronger as well, and Europe became an important trade partner. In the beginning, mostly Ottoman Christians and Jews set up trading connections with European countries. Those ventures through Europe helped build not only commercial, but also cultural and political ties.[40] Later, cultural exchange intensified as also Muslim Ottomans travelled through Europe and studied at European universities, and the first Ottoman embassies were established in European capitals.[41] Over time, Europe has thus evolved not only into a *religious*, but also into a *political*, *economic* and *cultural Other* for the Ottoman Empire.

By the end of the 16th century, the Ottoman Empire was woven into the European order of states and into the European economy. However, also from the late 16th century onwards, the position of the Ottoman Empire gradually weakened in respect to the other European powers. This was evinced in many ways, not least in an almost uninterrupted series of lost wars and territories by which, year by year, the empire dwindled. But also technologically and economically, the Ottoman Empire was surpassed by European states.[42] As the empire weakened and the economy lost ground, its position shifted from that of aggressor to that of potential prey. In that period of decline, the *capitulations* were believed to have accelerated the process as they were used by some European powers to exploit the Ottomans economically and politically. These originally voluntary and mutually beneficial concessions had achieved treaty-like status as the balance of power between Europe and the Ottoman Empire shifted westward.[43]

At the beginning of the 19th century, some of the Ottoman elite and bureaucrats were of the opinion that the empire needed reforms based on European standards.[44] For them, Europe comprised the prime model with its advanced technology and in its approach to modernity.[45] With the *tanzimat* reforms of 1839, the Europeanisation of the empire was *officially* initiated, followed by a series of reforms thereafter.[46] The army and the administration and eventually also the daily lives of many Turks were Europeanised.[47] For some, such as the Young Ottomans, an organisation of nationalist intellectuals formed in 1865, the reforms were not extensive enough, and they demanded even broader action. However, Europeanisation was not welcomed by all inhabitants and institutions of the empire. Religious institutions dreaded a loss of influence over society and politics, some members of the religious minorities feared a curtailment of their privileges, and the rural population felt estranged by the European lifestyle.[48] For others, Europeanisation equalled an estrangement from the Islamic civilisation which would eventually lead to enslavement by the West.[49] Generally, it was not so much an inner need to change legislation,

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[39] Goffman, *The Ottoman Empire*, p. 228.

[40] Ibid., pp. 15–17.

[41] Aslan, *Die Türkei*, p. 61.

[42] Zürcher, *Turkey*, p. 19.

[43] Ibid., p. 11.

[44] Ibid., pp. 51, 56.

[45] Aslan, *Die Türkei*, pp. 65–67.

[46] Zürcher, *Turkey*, pp. 56–57.

[47] Dağı, 'Transformation', p. 22.

[48] Aslan, *Die Türkei*, pp. 65–67.

[49] Dağı, 'Transformation', p. 23.

state structure and lifestyle, but more the political and economic circumstances that made Europeanisation tempting as a way out of the crisis.[50] Nonetheless, the process of Europeanisation continued and culminated in the establishment of the Republic of Turkey in 1923.[51] The cultural revolution Atatürk had initiated, accelerated this process and further intensified relations with Europe. Atatürk was thus continuing the process that had begun in the 19th century. However, it is his name which is uniquely connected with the Europeanisation of the country in the minds of many Turks.[52]

After the Second World War, Europe was often perceived as a *promised land* where people lived in prosperity and new technologies made life easier. Especially with the arrival of mass media, notably television, this perception was reinforced.[53] The large Turkish population living in Europe also began to shape relations between the two entities, reinforcing the economic and cultural ties between Turkey and Europe.[54] On the political arena, Turkey became member in numerous organisations, such as NATO, and could establish itself profoundly in the Western world.[55] Through the admission process into the European Union, and through Turkey's participation in many of its institutions, Turkey is widely involved in European politics.[56] However, the long process of accession marked by many setbacks has surely negatively influenced perceptions of Europe, in particular the successful accession of ten countries in 2004 and of Romania and Bulgaria in 2006. It was felt by many in Turkey that it was unfair to accept countries that had just broken with communism,[57] and not Turkey, a country that had applied for associate membership of the organisation as early as 1959 (and was accepted in 1963) and for full membership in 1987. However, despite the setbacks, Turkey's aspirations to join the European Union have not waned.[58] The recent reforms undertaken by Turkey to comply with EU regulations further show Turkey's willingness to join the organisation.[59]

The fall of the Soviet Union, however, left Turkey for some time in what could be termed an identity vacuum, as former ideological boundaries began to dissolve and Turkey lost its position as Europe's buttress against the Soviet border. Politically, Turkey found a new role as Europe's and the West's connection to the East – to Central Asia,[60] the Caucasus, and the Middle East,[61] often acting as mediator in the region.[62]

5. IDEOLOGICAL MOVEMENTS IN TURKEY

In Turkey, three different ideological movements are represented by political parties in parliament: secularist Kemalism, the religious[63] reform movement and ethnocentric nationalism.[64]

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[50] Kürşat-Ahlers, 'Leitreferat', p. 19.

[51] Mert, 'The Political History', p. 50.

[52] Seufert, Kubaseck, *Die Türkei*, p. 90.

[53] Köse, 'East is East', p. 182.

[54] Soysal, 'The migration story', p. 206.

[55] Demirtaş-Coşkun, 'Systemic Changes', p. 50.

[56] Vural, 'Türkiye'nin AB Yolculuğu', pp. 93–104.

[57] Kasaba, 'Introduction', p. 1.

[58] Keyman, Öniş, *Turkish Politics*, p. 86.

[59] Ahmad, 'Politics and political parties', p. 263; Acar, 'AB Sürecinin', pp. 71–72.

[60] Zürcher, *Turkey*, p. 331.

[61] Kasaba, Bozdoğan, 'Turkey at a crossroad', p. 11.

[62] Daly, 'Turkey emerges as a Mediator', viewed 17 January 2010, <http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=33319>.

[63] The term *religious* has been chosen over *Islamist* since religiously radical political moves departing from an open and secular society have not generally been observed within the movement.

The secularist Kemalists and the religiously oriented party dominate politics in Turkey, but nationalist sentiment has also become widespread.[65]

Secularist Kemalism (also referred to as Kemalist ideology or Kemalist movement), centres on Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's principles, aimed at transforming Turkey into a Western-orientated secular nation-state, with a focus on educational and scientific progress.[66] This movement sees itself as the true advocate of the secular, modern Turkish nation-state. It regards the Turkish army as the ultimate arbiter and guardian of the system, maintaining secularism not only as a constitutional order but also through its discourse on Islamism.[67] The movement is furthermore backed by large sectors of the bureaucracy.[68] The Republican People's Party (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*, *CHP*) is the party that represents this movement politically. The *CHP* is in favour of a Turkish accession to the European Union. However, it has appeared in recent years much more inward-orientated and has become somewhat reserved in its support,[69] since it started to doubt that such values as democracy, freedom of speech and freedom of religion are fully compatible with Turkey's realities as they would mainly strengthen political Islam.[70]

The religious reform movement (also referred to as political Islam or Islamist movement) is a movement that gained strength after the 1970s,[71] although religion began to be used for political purposes already in the 1950s.[72] Many religious institutions have been pervasive in society since then, transforming the face of modern day Turkey.[73] Political Islam was at first more extreme in its views. It has, however, increasingly displayed more moderate tones,[74] especially concerning the secular character of Turkey and its stance towards the West.[75] The shift of the Islamist movement to the secular centre and to the West can be assessed also as an attempt to position itself as an alternative to the Kemalist elite which claims to be the only supporter of the secular westernisation of the country.[76] In the 1990s, political Islam became a mass phenomenon and has in recent years gained, through electoral successes, access to state institutions.[77] The Kemalist movement fears that the religious movement has a secret agenda to Islamise Turkish society by filling important positions with its supporters.[78] Today, the Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*, *AKP*) is the political party that represents the religious reform movement in parliament. In respect to the European Union, the *AKP* does not advocate the hos-

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[64] Kürşat-Ahlers, 'Leitreferat', p. 30.

[65] In the general elections of July 2007, the Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*, *AKP*) received 46.66 percent of the seats, while the Republican People's Party (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*, *CHP*) and the Nationalist Movement Party (*Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi*, MHP) won 20.85 and 14.29 percent respectively. Besides the *AKP*, *CHP* and *MHP*, there are also 26 independent parliamentarians, mostly from the pro-Kurdish Democratic Society Party (*Demokratik Toplum Partisi*, DTP), which won their seats through direct votes. However, this party was banned in December 2009, and it had represented a rather Kurdish-Turkish view of Europe. See *ntv msnbc*, viewed 21 December 2009, <http://www.secim2007.ntvmsnbc.com>.

[66] Aslan, *Die Türkei*, pp. 78–80.

[67] Dağı, 'Transformation', p. 24.

[68] Kürşat-Ahlers, 'Leitreferat', p. 30.

[69] Öniş, 'The political economy', pp. 104–28; Özel, '21. yy.'da'.

[70] Dağı, 'Transformation', p. 33.

[71] Ahmad, *Turkey: The Quest'*, p. 139.

[72] Zürcher, *Turkey*, pp. 232–34.

[73] Tibi, *Aufbruch am Bosporus*, p. 95; Berk, *Translation and Westernisation*, p. 222.

[74] Vardar, 'Le Parti de la Prospérité', pp. 141–42.

[75] Demirtaş-Coşkun, 'Systemic Changes', p. 51.

[76] Dağı, 'Transformation', p. 33.

[77] Tibi, *Aufbruch am Bosporus*, pp. 161–62.

[78] Ahmad, 'Politics and political parties', p. 263.

tile stance of its predecessors or of some of today's radical Islamists; at the contrary, it actively promotes Turkey's accession.[79]

The third ideological movement examined here is the nationalist movement which gained strength in a politically very strained period. In the 1960s, as Turkey suffered severe economic and social hardships, ultranationalists and leftists were pitted in violent opposition, bringing the country to the verge of civil war.[80] Beginning with that period, but especially in the 1970s, the ultra right-wing and nationalist movement began gaining clout.[81] The nationalist movement sees itself as the preserver and defender of *true Turkishness* and strives to keep Turkey as independent as possible.[82] It is very cautious when it comes to partnerships with other states, fearing that Turkey might have to submit to rules dictated by foreign countries and institutions. The political party that represents that ideological movement today is the Nationalist Action Party (*Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi, MHP*). The party combines nationalistic ideas with religious symbols and values.[83] However, it can hardly be compared to political Islam as it established a far more secular profile.[84] The discourse of the *MHP* is based on the idea that the *real* owners of Turkey are the Anatolian non-elite who have been disadvantaged under the present system.[85] It displays a high degree of egalitarianism and anti-elitism.[86] For the *MHP*, relations with the European Union should be mutually respectful, and Turkey should at no cost accept all of the demands put forth by the EU, including lifting the death penalty or allowing broadcasts in other languages than Turkish, as it holds to the idea that those measures might endanger the national unity of the country.[87]

6. NEWSPAPERS IN TURKEY

Newspapers play an important role in the Turkish media world. The five largest newspapers reached – during the period of research – a circulation of more than 2.5 million copies per day.[88] The actual number of readers is presumably higher, since one single newspaper is often read by more than one person. Also, the circulation of a newspaper does not necessarily correspond with the attention it receives. Some newspapers have a relatively small circulation, yet receive comparatively more attention – for example in television commentaries – as they reflect important movements or ideologies. The presence of exclusive online news sites such as *Açık Gazete* underlines the importance of news in written form.[89]

For the development of a free press, the concept of civil society is central. The concept is still relatively young in Turkey and appeared only after the 1980s, an era marked by radical economic and cultural changes. As the concept is in the process of gradually being understood as a vital area for democratisation,[90] newspapers and other media have also begun to develop as a

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[79] Kösebalaban, 'Torn Identities', pp. 14–15.

[80] Zürcher, *Turkey*, pp. 256–58.

[81] Mert, 'The Political History', p. 55.

[82] Buhbe, *Türkei,* pp. 89–90.

[83] Mert, 'The Political History', p. 67.

[84] Buhbe, *Türkei*, pp. 89–90.

[85] Mert, 'The Political History', p. 69.

[86] Ibid., p. 51.

[87] Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi, *Türkiye'nin AB*, p. 64; Şen, 'Die Türkei zu Beginn', p. 30.

[88] For circulation figures for the period from 4 to 10 June 2007 see *IV. Kuvvet Medya*, viewed 18 November 2009, <http://www.dorduncukuvvetmedya.com/dkm/article.php?sid=8642>.

[89] *Açık Gazete*, <http://www.acikgazete.com>.

[90] Keyman, *Turkish Politics*, p. 279.

political platform for civil society.[91] However, the question of censorship is still an important topic when analysing Turkish newspapers. With the constitutional reform of 2001, many laws were changed in favour of a more independent press,[92] but in 2005 the tables turned again. The new reformed penal code included articles restricting freedom of the press and placed the reality of free journalism once more into question.[93] It automatically required stiffer penalties for the press when an offence was committed.[94]

Yet, the large number of newspapers with different ideological backgrounds (e.g. Islamist, conservative, Kemalist, nationalist, liberal, leftist) are still indicative of a rather broad spectrum of opinions and arguments. Furthermore, in a traditionally somewhat less restricted position are the columnists (*köşe yazarları*) who enjoy a certain degree of freedom. Some columnists are very well-known and influential personalities.[95]

Another characteristic of the Turkish newspapers market is the affiliation of many newspapers with holding companies. The *Doğan Holding*, the biggest holding group in the media sector, controls more than half of the country's media. It owns six newspapers and 18 TV stations, in addition to companies in the energy sector, in the automobile industry, in tourism and in other fields.[96] Other holding companies active in the press are *Çalık Holding* and *Çukorova Holding*. Newspapers that belong to a holding company are usually less focused on investigative journalism; they act rather in the interest of finance.[97] A large number of newspapers, however, have no affiliation to holding groups, such as the liberal-progressive *Taraf* and the leftist *Bir Gün*. Furthermore, none of the three newspapers chosen here – *Cumhuriyet*, *Zaman* and *Ortadoğu* – are part of a larger holding company. They represent different ideological movements and sometimes look back on a long history in the media world.

Cumhuriyet was established in 1924, in the time of Atatürk, and is therefore one of the longest-established newspapers. Its circulation is comparably low (80.000/day at the time of research). Its reputation as representative of Kemalist ideologies, however, makes it more important than its circulation would suggest. It is principally in favour of the European Union project of Turkey, but is not very outspoken on the topic. *Zaman* can be considered a conservative newspaper with religious tendencies, and acts as a voice for a moderate form of political Islam.[98] It is close to the movement of Fethullah Gülen,[99] the head of a Turkish order who was expelled from Turkey, and who supports various religiously-based educational institutions and enterprises in Turkey and other countries.[100] *Zaman* generally is supportive of the EU aspirations of Turkey. It was founded in 1985 and has a high circulation figure within the Turkish newspaper market (650.000/day, making it, after *Posta*, the second largest newspaper at the time of the research). *Ortadoğu* was founded in 1972 and represents, as a voice of the *MHP*, chauvinistic and nationalistic views. It fosters what it considers to be *true* Turkish values. In terms of accession to the European Union, the newspaper displays a cautious to dismissive view, generally not

[91] Berk, *Translation and Westernisation*, p. 223.

[92] Mirel, 'Medien in der Türkei', p. 161.

[93] Arat, 'Women's struggles', p. 407; Commission of the European Communities, 'Turkey 2006', p. 6.

[94] Haraszti, 'Review of the Draft ', viewed 10 January 2010,
<http://www.sissco.it/fileadmin/user_upload/Dossiers/negazionismo/documenti/turchia_osce_2005.pdf>.

[95] Erzeren, 'Die Macht der 'Ecken'', pp. 19–23.

[96] Thumann, 'Premier gegen Pressezar', p. 29.

[97] Tılıç, *Medyayı Anlamak*, p. 69.

[98] Bozbel, *Zaman*, pp. 28–32.

[99] Seufert, *Politischer Islam*, p. 146.

[100] White, 'Islam and politics', p. 377.

much in favour of this project. It has a relatively small circulation figure (20.000/day at the time of research).

7. ANALYSIS OF THE NEWSPAPERS

To see where there are differences and similarities in perceptions of Europe, articles in the selected newspapers – mainly columns – have been analysed. Many of the articles focus on the European Union, but other topics have also been considered. As the debate on the EU dominates the media, the perception of Europe has been shaped considerably by this organisation. Often the term *Europe* was used when writing about the European Union, indicating that the union represents, to some extent, the whole of Europe.

7.1. *Cumhuriyet*

Europe is seen as an entity that had many negative impacts on the Ottoman Empire and continues to do so down to the present day. The *capitulations*, agreements that the Ottoman Empire had with some European countries, are connected with a colonisation of the country. However, as much disadvantageous as the *capitulations* might have been at a later stage, it is not mentioned that these agreements initially had positive effects also for the Ottoman Empire. When looking at more recent times, Europe is perceived as making efforts to dismantle the Republican and secular ideals of Turkey.[101] Here, *Cumhuriyet* alludes to Europe's claim to implement more democratic legislation in Turkey, especially concerning the freedom of religion, freedom of speech and minority rights. This claim is not looked upon altogether favourably by Kemalists as they fear a strengthening of the minorities and of religion in the public sphere. When it comes to the topic of religion, this newspaper holds that Europe fears Islam, a tendency *Cumhuriyet* locates also among educated people.[102] The Vatican and Pope Benedict XVI are seen as symbols of this unfounded European fear of Islam and further Islamisation.[103] It is believed that in Europe the knowledge about the state-religion relations in Turkey is limited and often even wrong, leading to false interpretations.[104] Furthermore, Europe is depicted as an entity trying to exercise control over Turkey and other countries. Euro-Islam, for example, a concept that combines the principles of Islam with contemporary European cultures and values, is assessed as a new form of colonialism and a means of control over Islam.[105] The core countries of Europe are believed to be aiming for a re-establishment of their former status as superpowers. France (especially after Sarkozy's election for president), Germany and Great Britain are presented as striving in that direction.[106] Europe is also perceived as displaying many double standards. This view is often expressed in discussions concerning the European Union. Sarkozy's signing of a secret arms deal contract with Libya is seen as one example of this, as Sarkozy, on the one hand, displayed anti-Turkish sentiments, labelling the country as not democratic and not fit for the European Union, but, on the other hand, sold arms to an indisputably non-democratic country.[107] Bruno Gollnisch, a member of the French right-wing party *Front National*, serves as another example. It has been criticised that he was accepted as a member of the European parliament, even though he was trialled for questioning the Jewish holocaust, while Turkey is labelled anti-democratic and unfair to its minorities. Generally, the success of the *Front National,* which displays xenophobic elements, has been seen as one sign of a decline of Europe; and the continent

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[101] Manisalı, 'Avrupa'yla Geçen Hayatım', p. 11.

[102] Çetinkaya, 'Ümmetçi Faşizm…', p. 5.

[103] Dış Haberler Servisi, ''Yayılıyor'', p. 11.

[104] Moroğlu, ''Laik azınlık' ???', p. 16.

[105] Manisalı, 'Avrupa-Komünizm', p. 11.

[106] Cerrahoğlu, 'Sarkozy ile yaşamak', p. 16.

[107] Cerrahoğlu, 'Sarko'nun' Akdeniz'i', p. 17.

is perceived as having lost its former dignity and modesty.[108] Other topics the newspaper comments about are the numerous mishandlings and injustices Europe is responsible for. Examples given are how the crisis in Yugoslavia was handled, an overall decrease in security in Europe, Europe's ailing economy and an inadequate reaction to a world of growing globalisation.[109] Furthermore, European society is perceived as supersaturated and visionless.[110] Positive statements concerning Europe are very rare in *Cumhuriyet*. Some commentaries display a certain degree of understanding for the EU's sometimes sceptical position of a Turkish membership, considering the possible dangers for the security of the European Union when bordering Iran and Iraq.[111] Also, some political achievements of Europe are perceived as positive, such as the long uninterrupted period of peace in most European countries and the dismantling of borders.[112] Despite all reservations, however, the Western, and particularly the European hemisphere are seen as Turkey's only vital alternative when it comes to the political and social orientation of the country.[113]

7.2. *Zaman*

When writing about Europe, *Zaman* often focuses on its Christian identity, describing it as a stronghold of Islamophobia and a place where – after the September 11 attacks – Muslims sometimes are associated per se with terrorism.[114] The Vatican is depicted as critical of Islam and as a centre of Europe's scepticism towards Turkey. Pope Benedict XVI's itinerary during his visit to Turkey was criticised for its focus on the Patriarchate in Istanbul, as he, as a head of Vatican state, should have paid more attention to consultations with Turkish state representatives.[115] In a similar way, the European Union is seen as an association that consists of only Christian countries, giving non-Christian aspirants only a small chance of accession.[116] It is felt that Turkey is deliberately being kept out of the union, not acknowledging the numerous reform efforts the country has made.[117] In one article the accession process was compared to a game of chess, implying that the EU sees the process as a strategic game.[118] The European countries that are currently in favour of Turkey's accession to the organisation are praised. Nevertheless, they are regarded as not powerful enough to assist Turkey successfully. In addition, the question on Turkey's accession seems to depend to a large extent on the prevailing distribution of power in European parliaments.[119] To explain Europe's sceptical position towards Turkey, *Zaman* looks back in history and explains that Europe's attitudes are still shaped by the Ottoman Empire's advance up to the gates of Vienna in 1529 and 1687, two military actions that Europe has not yet overcome emotionally.[120] Europe is also criticised for interfering in Turkish domestic politics, such as the *Armenian question*, and thus acting hegemonically.[121] There are also believed to exist many double standards in Europe, notably when it comes to topics such as democracy, plural-

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[108] Cerrahoğlu, 'Avrupa'da son durak', p. 17.

[109] Sirmen, '50 yaşındaki Avrupa', p. 4.

[110] Cerrahoğlu, 'Quo vadis', p. 17.

[111] Cerrahoğlu, 'Avrupa bakışı…', p. 17.

[112] Sirmen, '50 yaşındaki Avrupa', p. 4.

[113] Interview with Vural Öger, 'İslamcı zihniyet', p. 12.

[114] Alpay, 'Batı'ya tepki', viewed 05 January 2009, <http://www.zaman.com.tr/yazar.do?yazino=516768>.

[115] Alkan, 'Vatikan'ın ilginç', viewed 05 January 2009, <http://www.zaman.com.tr/yazar.do?yazino=427484>; Ünal, 'Papa'dan jest', viewed 05 January 2009, <http://www.zaman.com.tr/yazar.do?yazino=460077>.

[116] Yavuz, ''Demokrasi' istemek', viewed 05 January 2009, <http://www.zaman.com.tr/yazar.do?yazino=521454>.

[117] Ünal, 'AB reformları', viewed 05 January 2009, <http://www.zaman.com.tr/yazar.do?yazino=486585>.

[118] Alkan, 'Vatikan'ın ilginç', viewed 05 January 2009, <http://www.zaman.com.tr/yazar.do?yazino=427484>.

[119] Alpay, 'Avrupa'ya karşı', viewed 05 January 2009, <http://www.zaman.com.tr/yazar.do?yazino=471449>.

[120] Ünal, 'Gül Baba', viewed 05 January 2009, <http://www.zaman.com.tr/yazar.do?yazino=493187>.

[121] Alpay, 'Avrupalıların', viewed 05 January 2009, <http://www.zaman.com.tr/yazar.do?yazino=434014>.

ity and laicism – especially in the case of Turkey.[122] When looking at European society, it is regarded as cold and heartless. Furthermore, modern-day media in Europe is perceived as possessing egocentric traits and few values. Along with the deterioration of its values, Europe is also seen as a place of increasing racism – not only within marginal groups, but also in the midst of society.[123] It is argued that racism, ethnocentrism and orientalism (as a dismissive Western interpretation of Eastern cultures) even have their origins in Europe.[124] Consequently, *Zaman* rejects the idea of Europe as a role model for Turkey, as it had been in the past.[125] When looking at the positive sides of Europe, often its economic potential and significance for Turkey are mentioned.[126] Europe's ideals – although maybe no longer thriving in Europe – are still regarded as representing positive examples for Turkey.[127] Sometimes European criticism of Turkey is accepted and even understood. Especially when it comes to the topic of human rights such as the freedom of speech, Europe is appreciated as righteous in its criticism of Turkey.[128] In that case, however, the attitude might be co-governed by the rivalry between the religious movement and the Kemalist elites, the latter being held responsible for numerous restrictions on Islamists concerning the very freedom of speech.

7.3. *Ortadoğu*

When *Ortadoğu* describes Europe historically, it is foremost referred to as a continent which had been politically and militarily dominated by the Ottoman Empire, but also as a continent that profited from Turkish rule.[129] Europe's religious identity is also an important topic, as the newspaper often puts its predominantly Christian identity at the centre of debates.[130] Europe is perceived as dismissive towards Muslims, exemplified by the Bosnian conflict, in which Europe is believed to have protected human rights only when Christians were involved.[131] Furthermore, the newspaper pays considerable attention to the topic of the protection of *Turkishness*, especially when it comes to Turks living in Europe. It depicts the *Turkishness* of those expatriates as compromised and as on the edge of being lost. European host cultures are believed to exercise substantial pressure on those Turks who, in turn, find it very hard to maintain their identity.[132] Europeans are imagined as taking several measures to assimilate the local Turkish population into their cultures, such as the refusal to allow the opening of Turkish schools.[133] Europe is also sometimes assumed to be conspiring against Turkey.[134] Examples given are an alleged protection of Kurdish terrorists by France, or Turkey's slow industrialisation which is believed to be caused by foreign – European – powers.[135] A domineering attitude can, according to *Ortadoğu*, also be observed in Europe's relations with other countries. Europe's position regarding countries of the Maghreb is seen as a proof of its hegemonic intentions. It is argued that Europe, especially France, strove for control over the Maghreb, while it tried to convince the world that

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[122] Dumanlı, 'AB'nın vizyonu', viewed 05 January 2009, <http://www.zaman.com.tr/yazar.do?yazino=475300>.

[123] İpekçi, 'Saldırganlığın', viewed 05 January 2009, <http://www.zaman.com.tr/yazar.do?yazino=586907>.

[124] Hilmi Yavuz, 'Irkçılık', viewed 05 January 2009, <http://www.zaman.com.tr/yazar.do?yazino=501801>.

[125] İpekçi, 'Saldırganlığın', viewed 05 January 2009, <http://www.zaman.com.tr/yazar.do?yazino=586907>.

[126] Sezen, 'Yabancıdan', viewed 05 January 2009, <http://www.zaman.com.tr/haber.do?haberno=571076>.

[127] Korkucu, 'CHP', viewed 05 January 2009, <http://www.zaman.com.tr/yazar.do?yazino=468024>.

[128] Ünal, 'Özgürlük çelişkisi', viewed 05 January 2009, <http://www.zaman.com.tr/yazar.do?yazino=429104>.

[129] Küçük, 'Avrupa'da 'Türk öncüleri'', p. 10.

[130] Şahin, 'Avrupa Türkleri'nin geleceği', p. 6.

[131] Şahin, 'Avrupalı asla adil olamaz', p. 6.

[132] Küçük, 'Avrupa'da 'Türk öncüleri'', p. 10.

[133] Şahin, 'Avrupalı Türklerin sorunları', p. 6.

[134] Öncü, 'Al sana', p. 4.

[135] Şahin, 'Avrupalı asla adil olamaz', p. 6; Şahin: 'Avrupalı Türklerin sorunları', p. 6.

these measures were only made to promote democracy in those countries.[136] Europe is also perceived as acting within a system of double standards. One example given is the common definition of the Armenian massacres of 1915 as genocide. It is argued that certain European countries accuse Turkey of a crime without accepting full responsibility for their own dark past, such as the French rule over Algeria.[137] *Ortadoğu* is very sceptical towards Turkey's accession into the European Union. It fears that Turkey would have to give up many national rights and its self-determination. Its membership would also weaken the Kemalist and secular foundations of the country. It is also feared that the Christian religion could have more influence over the Turkish population and that Christian missionaries might come into the country to convert Muslim Turks to Christianity.[138] One positive aspect mentioned about Europe is that it is considered to have economic potential for Turkey, although it has also been claimed that Turkey should always be cautious since Europe might want to exploit Turkey's abundance of resources.[139]

8. LINES OF THOUGHT

The three ideological movements discussed above clearly comprise vastly differing attitudes towards Europe. While the Kemalist movement, since the time of Atatürk, has seen Europe mainly as a role model for a secular society and modern legislation, the religious movement sees rather pragmatic advantages in having deeper ties to Europe, as they find such values as the freedom of speech or freedom of religion attractive. The nationalist movement perceives Europe as an untrustworthy foreign entity, fearing that it might interfere too much in domestic affairs. The Kemalist and the religious movements argue both in favour of Turkey's accession to the European Union, while the nationalist movement is more cautious in that regard. However, despite the ideological differences, there seem to be parallel lines of thought concerning Europe in all of the three movements. None of the movements perceive Europe in purely positive terms; at the contrary, all of them regard it rather as a place scored by internal problems and as unfair against Turkey and other Muslim countries. These views – stemming from the same historical experiences and transferred into today's perception – have become manifest in an often stereotyped way. Thus, certain stereotypes regarding history, religion, politics, society and economics have persisted over time, transcending various layers of society.[140]

RELIGION

Europe is perceived to a great extent in terms of its dominant religion, Christianity. It is seen as ruled by its religious background, and also as opposed to Muslim Turkey. The Christian background of Europe is thus looked at as the main boundary between Europe and Turkey. Europe is believed to be not genuinely interested in Islam, using it often as a means to produce fear among its people. It is sometimes assumed that Europe wants to spread Christianity in Turkish lands. Europe is, nevertheless, regarded as having lost contact with its own religious roots and to have a debilitated spiritual foundation. This perception of Europe as the *religious Other* can be found throughout history, beginning with the first encounters of Turks with Europeans, using religion often to justify conquests of Christian territories.

HISTORY

The Ottoman Empire – as the predecessor of modern-day Turkey – is described positively and as one of the most powerful empires in history. The Ottoman-European relations are mostly depicted as having been more or less equal. Sometimes, however, the control the Ot-

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[136] Özbir, 'Avrupa uçurumu', p. 6.

[137] Çolak, 'Avrupa'nız başınıza çalınsın', p. 10.

[138] Tavadoğlu, 'Avrupalı olma gafleti', p. 9.

[139] Özbir, 'Avrupa'nın çıkarı', p. 6.

[140] For the case of German stereotypes on Turkey see, for example, Kleinlogel, *Exotik – Erotik*.

tomans exercised over large parts of Europe is emphasised. Turkey's relation with Europe is seen as being influenced by a deep-rooted fear which has taken root in Europe. The reason for that fear has been partly attributed to the hegemony the Ottoman Empire held over Europe at one point in history, which resulted in Ottoman armies twice penetrating as far as the gates of Vienna.

POLITICS

Europe plays a key role in Turkish politics today, and accession to the European Union is a main objective. However, Europe is seen as displaying hegemonic and imperialistic features, striving for more power and influence in world politics. Concepts such as democracy are partly seen as a mere tool for Europe to attain its hegemonic goals. It has also been stated that there is a European conspiracy, or secret accord, against Turkey. Furthermore, Europe is regarded as politically acting according to double standards. However, some political achievements, such as the long period of peace enjoyed by most European countries, and some political values, such as democracy, are seen positively. This twofold perception of Europe was also held in former times. On the one hand, Europe was perceived as hegemonic and imperialistic when the *capitulations* were exploited by some European countries, while, on the other hand, Europe served as model for numerous reforms in the late Ottoman Empire and the early Turkish Republic.

SOCIETY

European society is perceived in both positive and negative ways. On the one hand, achievements such as the numerous freedoms Europeans enjoy are generally viewed as positive for the individual. On the other hand, the price which European society has to pay for the tolerance and the freedom it grants its citizens is believed to be a sign of moral decadence. Europe is regarded as partly having lost control over society. In an extreme view, Europe is perceived as a moral failure, even close to collapse. Hence, Europe's values are often viewed with scepticism and sometimes seen as not fully compatible with Turkish society. These mixed perceptions can be also observed by taking a look back in history. Turkey's orientation towards the West was, on the one hand, natural for a country which has been in close contact for hundreds of years with Europe; on the other hand, reaching out to Europe was regarded as the last attempt to save an ailing empire, the results of which eventually turned out to be inapplicable for Turkish society.

ECONOMY

The European economy constitutes an important market for Turkey, and is often mentioned as being vital for the country. Further economic growth – although sought after through economic relations with other countries as well – is basically seen as only being possible via closer integration into the European economy, by profiting from its diversity and its international strength. In contrast, the European economy is also seen as posing a possible risk, as Europe could attempt to exploit Turkey's resources. Also, fears have been raised that Europe may not genuinely be interested in the further economic progress of the country. Looking back in time, the European economy has also been judged both positively, as a chance for prosperity, and negatively, as an aggressive and unfair competitor.

9. CONCLUSION

Turkey's perception of Europe has changed over the centuries. At first, Europe was seen mainly as a continent to be conquered, often justified by the fact that it was inhabited mainly by Christians. Thereafter, Europe was also regarded as an important zone for trade. As relations intensified further, Europe was perceived as a cultural entity as well. After centuries of contact, but also due to political necessities, a profound process of Europeanisation in Turkey was initiated, reaching its first peak in 1839 with the beginning of the *tanzimat* period. Also, the influence of

Atatürk's cultural revolution is not to be underestimated, as he is still considered by many as the leader who carried Turkey into modern times. From this perspective, Europe was seen as a guide and model for Turkish society, comprised as it was of modern states with successful economies. One sign of the ongoing Europeanisation of Turkey has been the aspiration to enter the European Union, which began in 1959 with the application for associate membership in the organisation.

However, as with all revolutions and all upheavals, once the new order settled down, links with the past began to emerge – transcending different layers of society. When looking at the three main ideological movements in Turkey – secularist Kemalism, the religious reform movement and ethnocentric nationalism – and analysing their perceptions of Europe, one notes many similarities in their views. Positively viewed is Europe's economy and some of the social achievements enjoyed there. However, Europe no longer functions as an all-encompassing model for Turkey – an emancipation from the doctrines of the 19th and 20th century. It is, at times, perceived as bringing violence, war, exploitation and imperialism into Turkey and the Islamic world. A lack of spirituality and social decadence are additional negative attributes. Europe is furthermore considered to be hegemonic and guilty of employing double-standards in its political actions. In particular, Europe's Christian background is perceived as a barrier for communication and rapprochement.

Looking back in history, one can easily find examples of similar views concerning Europe. As these views have not changed fundamentally over time, they are more than mere perceptions of the *Other*; rather, they can be seen as stereotypes. As stereotypes are mainly collective concepts, they have also an effect on intercultural relations, in this case on relations between Turkey and Europe. In this way, this analysis of contemporary perceptions, in light of historical experiences and developments, can provide us with some insights regarding the ongoing dialogue between the two entities. It can be especially useful in indicating where difficulties in the dialogue – for both sides – are located. Only by acknowledging and comprehending the perception of the *Other* – not only in today's framework but also within its historical dimension – can new ways and channels of communication and understanding possibly emerge.

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