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Negotiating Europe/Avrupa: Prelude for an Anthropological Approach to Turkish Europeanization and the Cultures of EU Lobbying in Brussels

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1   In the post-1945 era, a new yet somehow familiar way of thinking about the world has been suggested as an alternative to the nation-state model, which had led to the dissolution of the great empires of Europe and movements of national self-determination that swept many parts of the world for most of the twentieth century.[1] This new way of thinking opened up the prospect of imagining the world through regional communities, many of which were first thought to be economic assemblages whose existence was expected to counter the nation-state (see Taylor 1991). According to a report published by *TheEconomist* in 1996, there were '76 free trade areas or customs unions set up or modified since 1948… [and] more than half have come in the 1990s' (Anon 1996, quoted in Sidaway 2000: 242). Today, the number of those regional communities across the world does not lend itself to easy calculation, as the boundaries of many of them overlap. Whether or not it is the case that many of these regional communities have been 'imagined' in somewhat similar ways as the nation-state (cf. Anderson 1991), this 'imagination of the regional communities' brought about 'a reimagination of the nations and states that constitute them' (Sidaway 2000: 243). If we listen to a political geographer, those regional communities are 'undecidable geographies', for 'often one cannot be sure whether the people who commit their time for the maintenance of those regional communities do so by representing those states and nations that make up these communities, or by producing them in the first place' (Sidaway 2000: 252). Once imagined as a powerful regional economic community in the post-World War II era, the past context of the European Union (hereafter the EU/the Union), the then European Economic Community (EEC), is a similar 'practice of regionalization' (Taylor 1991: 189).This paper calls for an anthropological approach in order to better understand the curious case of Turkish aspirations to become part of this particular regional community, that of the EU, by problematizing transnational encounters of those agents and actors who contribute from within and from without to the making of this particular techno-bureaucratic European community in Brussels. It thus seeks to demonstrate how anthropological knowledge of Turkish attempts to shape Europeanization offers insights into new forms of culture and power at work in the continent-wide polity, which will have constitutive effects on the emerging norms and forms of identifications, belonging, and governance in Turkey and in the wider 'new' Europe.

I. Turkish Europeanization and European integration

2   As a country with now more than 70 million people that hosts many ethnic and religious communities along with some of their claims for political and/or cultural recognition, Turkey's negotiations to become part of this European regional community began in 1959, not long after the EEC was officially formed in 1957. However, Turkey's history of Europeanization – here defined as a contested field of power within which 'a common European interest' (Bellier 2000b: 56; Abélès 2000) is articulated from a historically – and culturally-contingent perspective –has been a long one, through centuries of imperial and world-system interactions among many others.[2]'Europe' has been a symbolically charged concept for Turkish elites for much of the twentieth century, as it still constitutes one of the major reference points towards

which Turkish modernity and nation-state formation have historically been calibrated. Today, Europeanization is largely framed within the context of the country's integration into the EU.

3   Since the 1990s European integration has evolved into a new phase of public interest with successive cycles of eastern enlargement of the EU in the post-1989 era, through which the Union became the sole political economic power bloc in the wider European region. In its initial formulation in the 1940s, economics and politics were the key means for European integration, and their primacy continue to define the prospect of the European project as a political and an economic venture to an extent. Today, however, there are forces within the wider region acting to make European integration less about politics and economics, but more about culture –a transformation in which the EU appears as the primary actor, agent and beneficiary (Shore 2000; Wilson 1993, 2000). Hence, in Europe at large, 'sovereignty' and 'identity' constitute core concepts in integration programs as impelled from above, such as in the halls of national and EU-level governments, and sites of contestation of the European project from below, particularly at the regional level (Balibar 1998; Hedetoft 1994, 1997; Schlesinger 1992; Shore 2006; Stråth 2000; Wilson 1993, 1996, 1998). The process of Turkey's integration into the EU, which has also led to a revival of heightened debates about identity and sovereignty in Turkey, has surely been a strong additive to the cultural Europe of the EU. The possibility of Turkey becoming part of the ongoing eastern enlargement of the EU has already displayed its discursive significance for the domestic politics of member states at the national levels. The French voting down of the European Constitution in 2005, for instance, came after a year of campaigning by the national parties in France from the right and far-right to the left (all of which framed the debate over the Constitution as part of the ongoing discussion about EU's democratic deficit), which is then tied to French people showing their lack of support for the EU project in general, especially in the case of the Turkish integration, as arguably being one of the most recent showcases of the democratic deficit of the EU. Steering public campaigning on the future of the Union in member state capitals in close connection to Turkey's prospective EU membership during the recent European elections in June 2009 attests to the fact that the debate will endure in the near future.

4   Turkey is often touted as a prospective member of the EU-27[3] club whose application is sure to fail, due to its perceived differences in socio-economic structure ('too poor'), demographic profile ('too large'), and cultural values ('too Muslim'). Turkey-skeptics both in Turkey and in Europe argue that these are elements (taken together or alone) that could bring unprecedented challenges to the European integration project. Supporters of Turkey's integration to the EU, however, see these elements as a harvest not yet reaped. These groups put emphasis on the existence of large numbers of young and skilled Turks in terms of employment potential along with market opportunities they could offer for European capitalism with its growing and variegated consumer society. Supporters similarly maintain that that Turks successfully keep their political domain secular against the threat of occasional upsurges of Islamism, thus, offer a unique model of Muslim democracy that could then be emulated in the larger Middle Eastern region, and could create a 'Muslim-effect' for the troubled European multiculturalism. Despite numerous different perspectives regarding the country's prospective Union membership and insights gathered from past enlargements of the EU, European integration is a (never-ending) process; for the prospects of the Union and the region at large have an open future over which stakes are set high.

Lobbying for Turkey in the Europe-of-the-EU

5   Turkey's prospective membership in the EU provides a fertile ground to capture competing visions of advanced European integration –a process that is transforming European societies and polities at all levels. There are many forces at work in Turkey and across the EU to see the country through to accession (or to bar it from Union membership), and many of

them are driven by various, at times competing, national, regional, and local interests as being articulated in the capitals of the EU member states and in Brussels. And it is Brussels where key elements of Turkey's changing role in the Union are being decided within the country's European integration framework. Turkey entered into a customs union with the EU in the mid-1990s, became a candidate country in 1999 (previously, its initial application for membership in 1987 had been put on hold for detailed consideration), and began accession negotiations for future membership in the Union in 2005 –all after heavy 'campaigning' in Brussels. But these interests are faced with the problem of acting 'national' on a supranational stage: they must steer a course in political waters that are uncharted, in a political system with no historical antecedent.

6   In Brussels, the primary role of the nation-state in policy-making processes is clearly challenged by the EU's greater accommodation of non-governmental actors in its policy-making processes under the rubric of civil society partnerships (Richarson 2001) –actors whose accountability does not lie within the national-democratic domain or does so only inadvertently. Turkey's European integration is increasingly and primarily facilitated by groups who lobby Turkish and European publics and governments, and EU institutions in Brussels, for the interests of various constituencies from Turkey and Europe. Commonly known also as 'interest representation' and 'public affairs management,' in EU policy-making jargon 'lobbying' refers to 'all activities carried out with the objective of influencing the policy formulation and decision-making processes of the European institutions' and 'lobbyists' are 'persons carrying out such activities working in a variety of organizations such as public affairs consultancies, law firms, NGOs, think-tanks, corporate lobby groups or trade associations' (COM[2006]194, 03.05.2006). Lobbyists and government representatives are among the primary actors and agents of Turkish Europeanization, due to their proximity to European and other member states' policy-makers in Brussels. Their negotiations over Turkish Europeanization within the EU-27 and beyond are at the heart of the new cultural institutionalism of European integration, a process that has been a key focus of the growing anthropology of the EU, where culture has been perceived as an increasingly important component of all political, economic, administrative and social integration at every level of EU governance.

7   Turkey's European interests and their representation at the EU-level have increasingly become 'democratized' over the years, primarily due to the increasing involvement of civil society institutions and actors at all levels of decision-making processes in the country, including its relations with other European societies and states, and in Turkish political life in general. Thus, EU lobbying efforts for Turkey's European integration in Brussels have become pluralized both in practice and in discourse. Such multivocality, however, does not yield optimum efficiency with regards to smoothing the progress of integration for Turks, due equally to the difficulties it brings in terms of forging a coherent European position and integration policy by the Turkish side, and an enlargement policy by the EU. It is obvious that the lack of coherence in lobbying discourses and practices for Turkish European interests brings about both facilitating and hampering effects on Turkey's integration within the Union.

Beyond institutional adaptation and identity discussion

8   Turkish integration with the EU did not attract significant scholarly attention until the early 1990s. Today, a growing scholarly literature in political science, sociology and law on the prospects of Turkey's accession to the EU informs the majority of public discourses and government policies. Common themes for European and Turkish scholars have been the economic potential/challenge Turkey's integration could bring to the EU, the social dimension of the EU enlargement in terms of the capacity of the European institutions and other public domains to accommodate Turks and the subsequent policies on immigration and citizenship, and the assessment of respective public opinions over the integration process (Balkır &

Williams 1993; Brewin & Gökay 2003; Çarkoğlu & Rubin 2003; Eralp 1992; Griffiths & Özdemir 2004; Hale 1994; Kubicek 2005; Müftüler-Bac 1997, 1998, 2000; Müftüler-Bac & McLaren 2003; Tocci 2005; Uğur 1999; Uğur & Canefe 2004; Yılmaz 2005).

9   By approaching European enlargement from the perspective of the enlargement of the EU, the perspectives on Turkey's integration with the EU since the 1990s have privileged a certain structural-institutionalist interpretation of European integration whereby the hitherto harmonized political, legal, and economic structures of the member states would be articulated within the system of the acceding country without facing a major problem, that is, be implemented by the applicant country executive bodies without further difficulty, i.e. without much of a fuss. This debate is also known as the question of whether/when the Turkish economic and political systems are/will be ready for Europe. European integration has thus been perceived as a transfer of sovereignty from the nation-state to an emerging supranational entity (cf. Caporaso 2000; Delanty & Rumford 2005; Richardson 2001; Van Apeldoorn 2002). These perspectives have further maintained a problematical association of Union-membership with 'European identity' –the question of Turkey's 'Europeanness' (or lack thereof)– as far as the denial of the former is automatically assumed to be due to the lack of European identity (see Jenkins 2000 for a critique). The larger, procedural character of Turkey's 'actually existing European integration,' has thus been captivated by a perception of European integration and Europeanization to be either temporary or reversible (cf. Featherstone 2003: 4).

10   Available social and political scientific analyses of Turkey's European integration further display both descriptive and normative aspects throughout which scholars outline the ongoing framework for negotiations. The institution building talk goes into detail as far as to discuss 'what more needs to be done to qualify for certain benchmarks'. These *benchmark analyses* present the case at hand as being body-less, faceless, and agent-less. That is, the reader is left to wonder about *who* the agents of the integration process are, and *how* they do *what* they do and *where* they do it. Leaving these questions out, analysts have so far overwhelmingly ignored the banal fact that politicking and policy-making are also socio-cultural processes.

How can anthropology contribute?

11   Anthropological studies of Europeanization, European integration, and the EU have shown that European integration reconfigures forms of belonging and governance practices as a result of negotiations between actors and agents from supranational, national, and sub-state levels. Anthropologists have thus been careful in distinguishing the 'Europe of the EU' from the 'Europe of the peoples' (Jaffe 1993) and have identified Europeanization as 'a vision and a process' which 'fundamentally reorganiz[es] territoriality and peoplehood' (Borneman & Fowler 1997: 487). They have been successful in bridging the institutional domain of the Europe-building, *i.e.* the study of the people who populate those structures and institutions of the EU, and their techno-bureaucratic/technocratic environments (*e.g.* Abélès 1993, 1997, 2002; Bellier 2000a; Bellier & Wilson 2000; McDonald 1996; Shore 1999, 2000; Witte 1987; Zabusky 1995), with the everyday notions of 'Europe' from the bottom, *i.e.* the study of national, regional, and local identities in Europe (*e.g.* García 1993; Goddard *et. al.* 1994; MacDonald 1993). They have thus far proved the European project to be a dynamic site of meaning making over which larger questions of sovereignty and identity are conveyed (*e.g.* Abélès 2000; Borneman & Fowler 1997; Darian-Smith 1999; Holmes 2000; Wilson 1996).

12   Anthropological studies of Turkish state formation and national identifications have shown the 'state' to serve the primary term of belonging for Turks (Alexander 2002; Hann 1990; Kaplan 2006; Meeker 2002; Navaro-Yashin 2002; Özyürek 2006). From the politicians, to the educated publics, to 'common people on the street', common perspectives on Turkey's struggle for European integration refer to the opening up of this most dear conduit of identification for Turks, whose collective existence, like many others in Europe (Wilson 2000) and elsewhere, has been enmeshed with the 'nation-state' for most of the twentieth century.

Today, constructions of Turkish national identity and state sovereignty have increasingly become transnational phenomena emanating from places outside of the administrative boundaries of the Turkish nation-state (Argün 2003; Çağlar 2004; Kastoryano 2004, 2006; Mandel 1989; Navaro-Yashin 2003a, 2003b, 2005; Østergaard-Nielsen 2003; Turam 2004). Particularly relevant for our discussion is Brussels, the administrative capital of 'Europe' and a location where public and private Turkish interests are increasingly articulated. It is also in Brussels where Turkish international, national, regional and local identities and state sovereignty are in constant production and reproduction.

13   Anthropological studies of European integration and Europeanization have been conducted from three vantage points: 'the EU at its centers,' 'to examine "Eurocrats" and the administrative and political cultures of European institutions,' 'Europe from below,' 'to examine national symbols and everyday experiences in interaction with the EU,' and a point through which scholars have observed 'interactions where peoples of Europe engage in face-to-face encounters with each other' (Borneman & Fowler 1997: 497). Lobbying and the lives of lobbyists crosscut these three identified sites of scholarly analysis. People who lobby for Turkey's European integration are at the center of European institutions and communicate various understandings of Europeanness/Turkishness by using familiar and novel symbols of national/transnational identity; such communicative engagement takes place in their face-to-face encounters with Eurocrats[4] from other European countries, with Turkish-Belgian communities in Brussels, and with Belgian-Europeans in their everyday lives.

14   Policy studies add a further dimension by providing us the technique of 'studying through,' *i.e.* 'trac[ing] policy connections between different organizational and everyday worlds even if actors do not know each other or share a moral universe' (Shore & Wright 1997:14 ; Wedel 2001). Anthropological studies of policy-making, from local levels of city and province, to policy arenas of agriculture and fisheries, to the cultural and regional policies of European integration (Donnan & McFarlane 1989, 1997; Goodman 2002; Harper 2000; McDonald 2000, 2005; Prattis 1980; Shore 1997; Shore & Wright 1997; Smith 1996; Wedel & Feldman 2005; Wedel *et. al.* 2005; Wilson 2000) have attested to the fact that policy-makers act within a cultural interpretative framework which is most accessible to an ethnographic eye that enables the ethnographer to document the process rather than simply the product of policy-making. But a study of politicking and policy-making cannot be properly conducted without attending to the role informality plays –a factor that makes such politicking possible in the first place.

15   That policy-making usually occurs in an informal manner, *i.e.* 'informal governance', a fact already well understood by anthropologists, has been accounted by political scientists and sociologists (Christiansen & Piattoni 2003). In the informal mode of governance, exchanges between actors occur regularly, non-codified, but in ways which are often not publicly sanctioned or transparent (Christiansen *et. al.* 2003). Up-and-coming anthropological studies of sovereignty (Chalfin 2004, 2006; Hansen & Stepputat 2005, 2006; Nordstrom 2000, 2001; Ong 2000; Roitman 2001; Smith 2006) and state-formation (Feldman 2005a, 2005b; Hansen & Stepputat 2001; Krohn-Hansen & Nustad 2005; Shore 2006) have already documented the significance of informal governance for today's advanced, neoliberal capitalisms (Gledhill 2004 ; Harvey 2005; Ong 2006), among which Europe is not an exception. The informal character of European governance plays out in lobbying of government institutions by interest representatives (Andersen & Eliassen 2001; Atan 2004; Bellier 2000b; Earnshaw & Judge 2003; Greenwood 2003; Hayward 1995; Mazey & Richardson 1993, 2003; Peters & Barker 1993; Rucht 2001; Van Schendelen 2002).

16   Brussels hosts a remarkable lobbying presence of over 20,000 people (European Public Affairs Directory 2007) with 5000 on active service, of which Turkish official and interest representation remains a small but significant fraction that affects the present and future of Turkish-European relations. With the increasing concentration of Turkish lobbying efforts

since the mid-1980s, Brussels has become the primary arena in which politicking among Eurocrats from both sides occur on a daily basis (Atan 2004). Individuals and corporate entities that lobby for Turkish business and public interests at the EU level are engaged in trafficking information and advice among Eurocratic circles from both sides, through which they communicate their understandings of Europeanness/Turkishness. As European integration unfolds, the increasing lobbying activities curb governments' and states' monopolies over national representation within 'a multicultural platform with rules in which national officials are not necessarily well trained' (Bellier 2000b: 56).

17 Turkish public and private lobbying groups' growing presence in Brussels and their cultural brokering between Europe and Turkey are crucial to 'keep the negotiations ongoing.' Public and private interest representatives recast Turkey's image of 'too-poor/too-large/too-Muslim' into a set of hitherto uncharted potentialities to be galvanized according to a 'common European interest,' whose terms are currently under negotiation. Lobbying is thus a cultural practice whereby individuals from different interest groups, 'Europeans by interest' (Bellier 2000b: 60) and 'for whom Europe is already a social space' (Laffan 1996: 99), are in the constant business of constructing Europeanness/Turkishness for their respective clientele, and those interests are in turn defined within the cultures of EU lobbying. Lobbying is a process of extreme importance in EU-building but one little understood by social scientists, which is surprising given the fact that it is a form of practice that is produced by European integration itself, a study of which can help us to understand the present and future of democratic accountability in Europe and in Turkey.

II. An ethnography of lobbying

18 With the objective of investigating how competing visions of a new Europe that would allow Turkish membership are produced, communicated and advanced within the EU and Turkish policy frameworks, and how emerging politico-cultural forms of belonging that 'Europe' promises when Turkey's prospective membership in the EU comes close to a reality, I focused on relationships among and within multiple groups of people such as Turkish private, corporate and governmental interest representatives; officials from European Union institutions; people from European civil society domains, where Turks are also active; Europeans of Turkish origin; Turkish journalists covering Turkey-EU relations; trainees and other students, etc. These groups of people are characteristically transnational. They live simultaneous lives in the city of Brussels –a transnational space of business, politics and culture both for the EU and for the wider Europe and beyond. I thus took their transnational encounters as my object of analysis. These transnational encounters, as suggested above, play out in producing a vast repository of both discursive and material artifacts.

All in all, I have conducted 171 interviews with public and private individuals who are in charge of facilitating Turkey's European integration in Brussels during three phases of field research between 2005 and 2009. The first 9 interviews took place during the month of July of 2005 in Brussels as part of a preliminary fieldwork. 23 of them were conducted mostly in Istanbul, but also in Ankara between July 2007 and January 2008. Upon being granted a short-term internship opportunity by the European Economic and Social Committee, an advisory body to the EU institutions, I then moved to my main fieldsite in early 2008 stayed there until late June of 2009. During the last phase of my research I conducted 139 interviews with officials and other public figures from EU institutions (20 interviews with Members of the European Parliament [MEPs], their assistants, EP political group and parliamentary committee secretariats; 40 interviews with officials from 17 Directorate Generals [DGs] of the European Commission who specifically deal with Turkey; 2 interviews with officials from the European Council secretariat), including 13 out of 24 with diplomats from 27 permanent representations of EU member states that make up the Council structure, and from non-

member states (including 7 with officials from Turkish official representation) in Brussels. The rest of the interviews were conducted with European (the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions, Eurofederations, other European private interest representatives) and Turkish civil society representatives (representatives of private interests and of political parties), as well as with people from representation offices of trade unions, NGOs, people working at think-tanks and professional lobbying companies, Turkish and non-Turkish *stagiaires* from EU institutions and associations, and from Turkish NGOs, and with members of the Turkish media reporting on Turkish-EU matters on a daily basis. Over fifteen months of fieldwork I have observed 92 events ranging from meetings, conferences, seminars and debates organized by Turkish and other European constituencies taking place in rooms in EU institutions and organizations or in Turkish representation offices; press conferences, artistic events, receptions, and lunch, cocktail and dinner events, and study visits with groups from Brussels and Turkey to major Turkish and other European institutions. Apart from interviewing people who are in charge of Turkish integration with the EU and attending numerous events in Brussels, I have worked at a Turkish NGO for a short while and acquired an insider's point of view by participant observation. Each and every one of these individuals were part of the network of policy-making to facilitate Turkey's European integration, hence agents and actors of Turkish Europeanization. Not only were many of these actors being lobbied by others who were part of the same policy-network, but some of them were also themselves lobbying agents. This is not because of some conspiracy, but because of the fact that lobbying is at the heart of European Union policy-making.

19   Without a priori positing that these groups of people form a 'community' in the anthropological sense, I took interest in interest representatives figuring a 'policy community' or a 'para-bureaucratic community of policy specialists' (Walker 1989: 2; Peters, Barker 1993). To understand the daily work of this policy community, particular attention had to be paid to the extensive construction and great exchange of information and policy perspectives that exists between European and Turkish governments through lobbying groups. That exchange takes both material and non-material/verbal forms, and is sustained through formal and informal modes/channels of policy-making. Anthropologists who study expert cultures have already demanded that attention be given to material artifacts as alternative or complementary to participant observation (Gusterson 1997; Harper 2000; Riles 2000, 2004), especially in policy analysis (Apthorpe & Gasper 1996; Marshall 1984; Shore 1999, 2000; Wilson 2000). Besides daily observation of politics, culture and society in Brussels, for instance, I was able to monitor the production process of policy-advice and later its textual embedding within policy documents. Another rich source of ethnographic observation came from an understanding that the professional and public lives of lobbyists are not readily construable, group boundaries do not follow sharp institutional demarcations, and the distinction between public/private lives gets increasingly blurred –a reason for why private and family lives of the lobbyists constitute a significant site of ethnographic observation, but also because many individuals who represent interests do so as full-time activists (Atan 2004; Bellier 2000b).

20   To compare and contrast the lobbyists' practicing of 'Europe/Turkey' during accession negotiations and beyond, I turned to another group of people, internally differentiated by class, ethnicity, religion, gender, age, occupation, and political ideology and behavior. Brussels hosts a population of over a million people, of which 265,000 are non-nationals, including approximately 42,000 of Turkish origin (including non-naturalization figures of close to a 11,000); almost half of the Turkish presence in Belgium is located in Brussels, which in 2003 constituted the second largest non-EU population after Moroccans and the fifth largest immigrant population (after French, Dutch, and Spaniards) in Belgium at large (ECODATA 2005 http://ecodata.mineco.fgov.be; EMZ 2003 http://www.emz-berlin.de; ZfT 2003 http://

www.zft-online.de; Jacobs *et. al* 2006; Wets 2006)[5]. I have found evidence for that some of the prominent figures who lobby for Turkey's integration into the EU have close contact with the Turkish migrant communities in Brussels. There are a few more reasons to include the Turkish communities in Brussels and their perspectives on European integration into a project of this framework.

21   In order to demonstrate some of the arguments outlined above, I know turn to a brief sketch of how transnational interactions between people who present public and private interests from Turkey and their counterparts from the European-levels play out in the city of Brussels. I present two out of many such ethnographic cases. The first one alludes to the dynamics played out in one of the many convenings of the Committee for Foreign Affairs (AFET Committee) of the European Parliament (EP) –the single most important venuewhere relations with Turkey are discussed. Here we see the intricate details of daily work of EU politics. The vignette outlines the policy procedure and everyday interactions between Turkish public interest representatives and their counterparts from EU institutions, in particular from the EP. The second case illuminates how significant 'civil society' is to EU and Turkish governance frameworks both as a term and as a field of action. The vignette also refers to some common features the Turkish interest representatives have with their counterparts from other nationalities, such as their use of civil society and their making of classifications among different kinds of group of Turks in Europe at large.

Vignette 1: Politicking from within and from without

> On an ordinary spring day with a gloomy sky in Brussels, I walked a couple of blocks from where I was doing an internship at one of the EU institutions. Between the European Parliament on the one end and the famous business district of Brussels on the other, there lies an avenue along which are located the offices representing those nations and states that make up the Union in its current shape. As one passes many identical buildings along the way, one notices among these high buildings not only the colorful national flags of many of the 27 EU member states, but also of others. My eye followed building numbers, yet also sought the white star and crescent on red. I found it towards the end of the street (or the beginning, depending on one's orientation).

> I was going to meet one of my first interlocutors from a particular office, in front of the building marked by the white-on-red flag. And there he was wearing a dark-blue suit with occasional thin stripes, a uniform-like outfit for Turkish men in bureaucracies and state jobs. He was part of a relatively small group of people who were charged to represent the 'public interests' of Turks at the European Union level. I could see him and others rushing from one office to the other to channel official correspondence, information notes, and position papers that come from relevant ministries and other public and private bodies in Ankara and Istanbul, and passing them on to their colleagues from other European offices and to various other concerned parties in Brussels.

> Many national, but also regional and local offices from the 27 EU member states, applicant countries and others make up the distinctly bureaucratic charisma of Brussels, the heart of the 'Europe of the EU'. Unlike many other national representations that stand on the two sides of the same road, the Turkish representation is often mistakenly called a 'representation' when its official status is a 'delegation'. Rumor has it that the name games are to mark the curious life of Turkey's quest for membership in the Union for over four decades. To call it a delegation is perhaps to signify its difference from those others that recently joined the Union. Those ten Central and Eastern European countries had their 'missions' before, which later became 'permanent representations' like those of the 'older' members.

> My interlocutor and I began chatting as we entered into another building across the street where his office is located, to get our lunches. He introduced me to the large hall of a canteen that lies on the first floor of a building that hosts a big insurance company. Filled with many eaters, some of whom, it turned out, were his colleagues and friends from his workplace, while others were from other national representations with whom he was in daily contact, or simply acquaintances from eating at the same place, the environment was a bit intimidating for me, which I took as part of the job of fieldworking. Right from the beginning of our conversation, my lunch companion inadvertently, or perhaps knowingly, communicated his deep frustration with the ways in which Turkey's 'EU business' is managed by officials from both sides.

Later I had a chance to observe my interlocutor, along with some of his colleagues and other public and private interest representatives, interact with his European counterparts at one of the many parliamentary committee meetings held in the EP. As being only one of the venues for lobbying for Turkish integration to the EU, the parliamentary committee meetings held in the Parliament are open to the public, and many times various Turkish and European public and private interest representatives, journalists, lawyers, and other interested observers (like myself) crowd the meeting hall. For these committee meetings, people assemble especially when issues and reports on Turkey's overall yearly performances are discussed. These issues and reports almost always steer hot debates and controversies. In one of these committee meetings which I attended as an observer, for instance, the debate was about the involvement of the military in civilian politics in the country –and beyond, i.e. in the northern part of the Cypriot island. This and other controversies would be taken up by many different groups of people. Sometimes those Members of the European Parliament who represent governments with which Turkey gets into occasional troubles over political/economic matters take the floor. At other times some other MEPs who represent certain European countries with a considerable number of Europeans of Turkish background/origin and/or who themselves have a background in Turkey, turn their microphones on. It is interesting to note that not all of those members of the European Parliament from Turkey-skeptic countries act contrary to Turkish interests, as not all of those from a Turkey-background or Turkish origin act in the interests of the Turkish state outlined in Ankara.

Many others listen to these hot debates and try to form an opinion, unless they already have one. This happens when they check back with their information at hand that they received from their parliamentary assistants who turned these information gathered from various sources into parliamentary questions, speeches, motions, or into reports. Information of a specific issue regarding Turkey can come from newspaper articles and opinions communicated in English, French, and German or sometimes even in other national languages, and/or from weekly bulletins that include information about current events and agenda in Turkey and are electronically distributed by various NGOs and civil society organizations, as well as by think-tanks, or by professional lobbying groups and companies.

The Turkish official representation is invited to all of these meetings, and the country is usually represented at the ambassadorial level –that is most commonly, but not always. The Turkish delegation usually sits where the seats are reserved for them in these committee meetings. Attendance to these meeting at the EP is part of the daily work for Turkish public and private interest representatives. But why would they bother, when Turkey is not a member state of the EU and has no voice in those meetings? The Turks' problem, or better stated, the problem of those who are either interested in or in charge of facilitating the country's European integration, is with Turkey's political integration in the Union, because political integration for Turkish Eurocrats means something different: it refers to equal access to power and politics. And having a voice in the Union's political and policy-making arena, for example, in those parliamentary committee meetings I just mentioned, where the Turkish members could sit in as full-fledged Members of the EP and could enjoy a chance to voice their concerns and discontents with a particular policy theme which already affects Turkish people along with the 500 million European citizens, could spare the Turks from constantly looking for intermediaries.

But why would then many lobbying efforts still being made upon economic arguments in favor of deepening and widening economic relations with the EU member states, when in fact since the mid-1980s the country has been moving more and more to a market-economy, and economic integration with the EU is under full sway; when, an OECD official in Paris prompted by my question on the topic confirmed that there is nothing more to be done in terms of economic integration between Turkey and the EU, because it has already reached its optimum; when in fact confirmed by Commission officials, their numbers, and their charts, all of which indicate that economically Turkey is compatible with European Union econom(ies)? Because economy is the only language Turks can speak of so far in communicating with Europe, or so they appear to believe. But it is also because so far a legitimate, formal democratic political channel is closed to the Turks.

It would be quite naïve to assume that because Turkey is not a member state of the EU, Turkish Eurocrats are passive listeners as they sit in these meetings and report back to their capital. In fact it is quite the opposite, they actively participate in ways which are only accessible to them and their colleagues, and to an ethnographic eye that just happens to be observing the European political scene: the last time I looked over the seats occupied by Turkish public interest representatives

who usually sit far from other Turkish representatives whose mandate is related to private interest representation that in a way reinstates the public/private distinction, my interlocutor from that day was handing a note to one of the assistants of the then EP rapporteur in charge of the Turkey report.

Vignette 2: Politicking on and of the stage: the curious case of 'Civil Society'

Organizing receptions to mark the end of the European legislative year is a common activity for Turkish Eurocrats in Brussels. These receptions usually have a front event where guest speakers would engage in an interactive debate on various topics of Turkey-EU agenda, followed by more informal networking activity where friendly chatting occurs among journalists, Turkish and European officials and private interest representatives, and renowned figures of Turkish-Belgian society in Brussels over drinks. I was also invited to one such event that took place in one of the offices of Turkish private interest representation –not far from where the Turkish Delegation to the EU was located. The guest of honor also happened to be a senior figure in Turkey-EU relations from the official circles. As the gathering was more informal and of a civil society nature, the speaker went on talking about how civil society could engage in a more sustaining dialogue between the EU and Turkey. He explained that there were three types of lobbying activities that can be/are undertaken to help the Turkish quest: he counted indirect, direct and subterranean activities. First, there are the indirect activities that are subtle and of everyday type that can be carried out by anyone who could, for instance, wear a watch with an image of the Turkish flag on it. The speaker described other ways in which the media or popular culture indirectly supported the cause of Turkish lobbying, such as the showing of scenic footage of Istanbul in the backgrounds of movies, the national football team's success in becoming a semi-finalist in the UEFA European Football Championship in 2008, and Istanbul's designation as the European Culture of Capital for 2010. There are also those direct activities such as the hosting of folklore shows and traditional dancing, and of exhibitions of Turkish art and crafts works by Turkish official offices and cultural centers.

The third type of lobbying is of subterranean nature. It includes all the work done in the EP and other EU institutions, as well as efforts by Turkish Eurocracts in establishing friendships with their European colleagues. Before issues and reports ever reach parliamentary committee meetings to be debated and voted by the MEPs, there are ways in which influence is exerted beginning with putting much effort in getting a hold of the draft version of the yearly 'Turkey Report,' which is prepared by the European Commission since 1998 for each and every candidate country outlining progress made on specific negotiation themes, and in drafting amendment suggestions. These 'subterranean activities' constitute the majority of lobbying activities, which are usually not made open to public.

At another level, these 'subterranean' lobbying activities has a curious public face: a third party, that is, 'civil society'. As a term believed to solve many problems at the national and supranational/international levels associated with, to name a few, non-transparent governance and democratic deficit, 'civil society' enjoys an esteemed position in both Turkish and European circles. Believed to serve as a panacea between the 'public' and the 'private,' it is introduced to negotiations and asked for its contribution and assistance to solve pressing difficulties in EU-Turkey relations. To begin with, that some of the individuals who currently lobby Brussels for Turkish interests have served as public officials in the Turkish state bureaucracy in the past –also a common feature to many non-Turks working in Brussels– complicates the state/society and the public/private distinction. The constant blurring of the public-private distinction as a result of this and other factors is rendered into a dynamic when there is a compromise to be made, and both European and Turkish officials turn to 'civil society' for their service, as a European Commission official from one of the DGs explained to me one day over coffee in his office: 'Sometimes it's better for certain things to be said by others.' But as an invented category to fill up the space allegedly carved out between 'public' and 'private', it easily blurs the public-private distinction, so much so that the Weberian differentiation between 'living "for" politics' and 'living "from" politics' (Weber 1994: 318) increasingly becomes obsolete in the European governance framework.

Despite the fact that Turkey is not a member state of the Union, life-long professional (and academic) careers are built, and a certain Turkish-Eurocratic manner is adopted in due course. And despite these sometimes life-long endeavors, enthusiasm among people who work for Turkey's EU business/industry waxes and wanes over time. Many people I talked to whose position was more governmental-bureaucratic were extremely disenchanted with the European integration project and shared many questions and concerns related to the future of the Union. Some were also unspeakably frustrated and uneasy with the uncompromising attitudes of Turks and their

European colleagues due to the ways in which politics, politicking, and business are carried out. It is one of many results of my fieldwork that those individuals from the 'European' governance frameworks who might have been disinterested in or not at all supportive of Turkey's accession to the EU become less so when they take a Turkey-related job. The opposite seems to be true for their Turkish counterparts. Despite prevalent cynicism from both sides, the business still continues.

Turkish Eurocracts and their counterparts of other nationalities share unexpectedly common attitudes when they frequently introduce a distinction between 'Turkish Turks' and 'European Turks' manifested in diverse discursive ways. For instance, one of the Commission officials once related me a conversation he had had with his Turkish colleagues when he visited the country. He had then remarked that there were more women with headscarves in Brussels than in Ankara.

Some of those European citizens coded by their Turkish origin and referred to as 'European Turks' have also begun to benefit from the open field of civil society and to own the term by way of putting their own definitions of the etiquette in circulation. For doing so, they might or might not collaborate with Turkish public and private interest representatives. Recently, some of the organizations run by groups whose existence in Europe has long been a social fact have established their own contacts with the EU. They are doing this by opening their own representation offices, distributing their views via weekly press releases, hosting exhibitions under the roof of the EP, organizing public awareness events, and by registering with the accredited lobbyists' register held by the EP. Their support to Turkey's application to membership in the EU is however conditional upon their first and foremost getting a legitimate and recognized place in the European public domain. But since lobbying is an extremely costly enterprise, how far they could carry their influence is yet to be seen.

III. By way of concluding

22   Throughout this paper I have argued and tried to demonstrate anthropology's contribution to study Turkish Europeanization and European integration at its center as practiced by its primary actors and agents. As political anthropologists, anthropologists of the European integration and Europeanization, and social scientists in general we cannot afford to remain simple witnesses to the ongoing developments in Europe when we are qualified to engage such transformations, especially in terms of the convergence of culture, politics and policy (Hoffman *et. al.* 2006). This is a call to unravel the present theoretical relevance and indispensableness of anthropology for European politics and culture (Ahmed & Shore 1995).

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Notes

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2 In the larger social and political scientific literature scholars have defined 'Europeanization' as 'the emergence of new forms of European governance', 'national adaptation', 'policy isomorphism', 'a problem and opportunity for domestic political management', 'modernization', 'joining Europe', 'the reconstruction of identities', and as 'transnationalism and cultural integration' (Harmsen & Wilson 2000: 14-18). Diez, Agnantopoulos and Kaliber (2005: 1-7) have discussed four uses of Europeanization in relation to Turkey, which are Europeanization of policies ('policy-Europeanization'), of political processes ('political Europeanization'), of identities ('societal Europeanization'), and of public discourses ('discursive Europeanization'), all of which 'refer either to different ways in which Europe becomes a common reference point increasingly referred to in domestic debates, or to alignment policies, political processes or social identities within Europe.' My take on Europeanization comes from an anthropologically informed perspective that sees it as a recasting of peoples' relationships to territory and identity in Europe (Borneman & Fowler 1992).

3 As of 1 January 2007, the EU has 27 member states. This number is expected to rise in the near future first and foremost with the accession of Croatia, a country that began accession negotiations at the same time as Turkey did, and Iceland, whose application generated by the recent financial crisis and is yet to be submitted to the European Council.

4 'Eurocrat,' is a short term used to identify officials who work at European Union institutions such as at the European Commission, but became a catchword to refer to those who work in Brussels in EU-related jobs in or outside of European Civil Service. A contested term by EU officials, it maintains its widespread use in academia and in other European public domains.

5 Turkish official sources estimate the number of people of Turkish origin living in Belgium to be 200,000 (95,000 of which to reside in Brussels Capital Region and 90,000 living in Antwerp area, as well as a few thousand not appearing on Turkish records). These figures are not published; therefore I refrained from using them as my primary source.

References

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Abstract

How do the individuals, groups and institutions of Turkey's European interest representation frame the country's European integration as a project writ by discrepancies between a vision that envisages a 'political economic' and that of a 'cultural' Europe? Which discourses, practices and actions do Turkish EU lobbying and other representative groups undertake to facilitate Turkish membership in the EU? Which strategies and tactics do they design and implement to thwart potential public frustration regarding Turkey's European integration? This paper calls for an anthropological approach in order to better understand Turkish aspirations to become part of the EU by problematizing transnational encounters of those agents and actors who contribute from within and from without to the making of this particular techno-bureaucratic European community in Brussels. It thus seeks to demonstrate how using an anthropological approach to Turkish attempts to shape Europeanization offers insights into new forms of culture and power at work in the continent-wide polity that will have constitutive effects on the emerging norms and forms of identifications, belonging, and governance in Turkey and in the wider Europe.