

Obs

Observatori de Política Exterior Europea



Working Paper n. 57
March 2004

The decision on Turkish EU accession in December 2002: The logic of anarchy, collective action problems and rhetorical action

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Abstract

Studies of the EU accession of the East and Central European Countries have stressed the importance of neo-liberal institutionalism as an explanation for Member State preferences. In this paper it is argued that Member States' preferences over Turkish EU accession are better explained by power politics and neo-realism. It seems therefore that Turkey's way to the EU follows another path than the East and Central Countries. Turkish accession raises the question of the EU's role in a uni-polar world order – whether the EU should develop into an independent actor on the world stage or not. However, when it comes to the interaction among the Member States in order to decide on when to open accession negotiations with Turkey the constitutive values of the EU seriously modify the outcome that pure power politics would have let to.

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Introduction

1 May 2004 the so-called reunification of Europe takes place. 10 new Member States will be integrated in the institutional structures constructed by the 15 current Member States. However, the decision in December 2002 to enlarge the EU with 10 more states was not the end of the debate on enlargement. Two of the Central and East European states (Bulgaria and Romania) were not let in together with the other ten. And as regards Turkey, a final decision was postponed two years to December 2004. If the European Council in December 2004 decides that Turkey complies with the Copenhagen political criteria, the EU will open accession negotiations with Turkey without delay. The European Council recalled the 1999 decision in Helsinki that Turkey is a candidate state destined to join the EU on the basis of the same criteria as applied to the other candidate states.

This paper will focus on the European Council's decision from December 2002 as regards Turkey's application. What kind of images of world order did the different Member States' positions represent? And why did the Member States end up deciding that a final decision on Turkey's accession should be taken in December 2004? In other words, we will try to interpret the world views behind the different preferences for outcomes as regards Turkey's application for membership and we will try to find out what kind of logics dominate the interaction between the Member States.

But why is the question of Turkish accession interesting and why focus on the December 2002 decision? To start with the last part of the question: Until December 2002 no date had been given to Turkey for the initiation of accession negotiations though Turkey had applied for accession before the Central and East European states did.¹ Furthermore, the European Council decision is clear: If the European Council in December 2004, on the basis of a European Commission report, decides that Turkey complies with the Copenhagen political criteria, accession negotiations will be initiated immediately. The importance of the decision was clearly illustrated by one of the strongest supporters of Turkish accession, UK prime minister, Tony Blair who answered Turkish critics by saying that Turkey had waited 40 years for a clear date, and now Turkey had a clear date.²

In addition, the question of Turkish accession has been one of the more complicated ones to deal with in the EU. In addition to the characteristics of the enlargement with the Central and East European states, Turkey raises a number of other questions: Questions as regards culture – is the EU a Christian club? Questions as regards geography – where does Europe end? For example did Valéry Giscard d'Estaing express his opinion very clearly by saying that “la Turquie n'est pas un pays européen”³ and that accession of Turkey would mean “la fin de l'Union européenne”.⁴ Questions as regards power – what would be the internal effects of a new member state with 63,7 mio. inhabitants? These questions have to be added to the questions well-known from the enlargement from EU15 to EU25 (structure of national economies, political and economic reforms, etc). The discussion of Turkish accession could therefore follow a different path than the discussions leading to the enlargement with 10 new Member States in May 2004.

In the following I will try to identify the dynamics behind the different Member States' preferences over the outcome of the Copenhagen European Council meeting in December 2002 as regards Turkish accession and the dynamics in the interaction process between the Member States before the decision was taken. Three different dynamics will be analyzed: First, the role of power politics or a logic of anarchy dynamic will be studied. Do Member States' preferences and interactions reflect the security and power considerations as the realist school tells us? Do the states see the question of enlargement – and the EU – in terms of (relative) power? Secondly, the role of institutions – or a neo-liberal institutional logic. Do the states see the question of enlargement as a problem of solving collective action problems? And thirdly and finally, the role of identity and interest formation. What is the role of collective identity in the construction of Member State identities and interest? And how does the collective identity (though the identity may be weakly internalized) affect the outcome?

¹ European Commission 1991, 10

² Berlingske Tidende, 13 December 2002, “EU holder døren på klem for Tyrkiet” available at www.berlingske.dk/popup:print=239328?&

³ Le Figaro, «Les députés français partagés sur l'adhésion turque», 27 November 2002.

⁴ Libération, «La classe politique française divisée», 27 November 2002.

The next section will be a short summary of the historic development in the EU-Turkey relations. The section serves to set the stage. The following sections will try to identify the different roles played on that stage by the three dynamics mentioned starting with the logic of anarchy dynamic, followed by the logic of collective action dynamic and finishing with the identity and interest formation dynamic. In the last chapter, I will conclude on the role played by the different dynamics as regards the different Member States' position on Turkish accession and as regards the outcome of the interstate interactions leading to the December 2002 decision.

I. Setting the stage – the short version of the long way to the December 2002 decision

The European Union, including the EEC, has been enlarged several times already. A first round in 1973 made the United Kingdom, Ireland and Denmark members. A second round in 1981 made Greece a member. Spain and Portugal became members in the third round 1986. In 1990 the Union was enlarged again following the German unification (this however, did not mean an increase in the number of Member States). The last enlargement took place in 1995 when Sweden, Finland and Austria entered the European Union. The next enlargement round in May 2004 will include Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia, Malta and Cyprus. A further enlargement is foreseen which will include Bulgaria and Romania.

The fall of the Berlin Wall and re-configuration of the European security order was followed by discussions of (re)uniting Europe within the institutional framework of the European Union. The process became institutionalized and the criteria for accession were made explicit. The treaty of the European Union, article 49 says that any European state, which respects the principles of liberty, democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law may apply to become a member of the Union.⁵

The so-called "Copenhagen criteria" were adopted at the European Council meeting in Copenhagen in 1993. The criteria specify a number of political and economic conditions associated countries have to meet in order to access the European Union.⁶ The Copenhagen criteria were followed by criteria as regards administrative structures to make sure that EU legislation was not just transposed into national legislation but also effectively implemented. These were decided at the Madrid European Council meeting in 1995. Finally, at the European Council meeting in Helsinki in 1999 it was repeated that the candidate states must share the values and objectives of the European Union as set out in the Treaties. The compliance with the criteria is monitored by the European Commission, which prepares regular progress reports which are submitted to the European Council meetings.

Apparently, the enlargement process has become highly institutionalized. A number of general requirements are set out in the Treaty (being a European country and sharing some basic values). A number of more specific requirements has been decided by the European Council. Progress is monitored by the Commission. And associated states may expect to become members once the Commission and the European Council assess that the candidate state complies with the requirements.

Turkey's way to the possible opening of accession negotiations has been longer than most other candidate states. In 1963 an association agreement between the EEC and Turkey was signed. This was followed by an application to join the EEC in 1987. In 1998 – at the same time as accession negotiations are opened with six Central and East European candidates – a European strategy for Turkey is launched. The following year, in 1999, at the Helsinki European Council meeting it was decided to open accession negotiations with a further six Central and East European candidates. At the same time it is confirmed that Turkey is a candidate destined to join the European Union. Finally on 12-13 December 2002 the European Council recalled its decision from 1999 that Turkey is a candidate state destined to join the European Union on the basis of the same criteria as applied to other candidate states. The Copenhagen criteria are recalled and it is stated that if the European Council in December 2004, on the basis of the report and recommendation from the Commission,

⁵ European Commission, 1991, 3.

⁶ European Commission, 1991, 8.

decides that Turkey fulfils the criteria, the European Union will open accession negotiations with Turkey without delay.

Therefore, a political promise has now been made to Turkey saying that if Turkey complies with the Copenhagen criteria in autumn 2004 accession negotiations can be opened as soon as possible after the December 2004 European Council meeting.

II. The role of the logic of anarchy dynamics

According to (neo-)realism the role of international institutions is very limited. International institutions do not have any independent role. They will always reflect the deeper structural causes in the international system, especially relative state power.⁷

Neo-realism is a structural theory of international politics. The structure of the international system puts pressure on states to act in certain ways. It is important however, to stress that neo-realism is not a theory of foreign policy. Neo-realism's claim is that the structure of the international system rewards some actions and punishes others. However, what states actually do is caused by a complex mixture of factors at different levels.⁸ This notwithstanding, through socialization and competition states are expected to act according to the logic of the structure of the international system.⁹ It is this mechanism, which makes it possible to generate expectations about foreign policy based on neo-realist theory.

The structure of the international system is, according to neo-realism, made up of three defining characteristics: It is anarchic (in contrast to domestic, intra-state hierarchical orders), it is composed of like units (i.e. all units follow the same objectives, power,¹⁰ which must be the key objective in an anarchic system where states can only rely on themselves for their own survival) and a distribution of power among the units.¹¹

The only possible transformation of the system would be the replacement of the anarchical order by a hierarchical order and the subsequent possibility for differentiation of units. However, this possibility is not considered realistic. Therefore, the only possible change in the international system is a change within the system via a changed distribution of power (capabilities) among the units, which are defined as the great powers, i.e. the states with most capabilities.¹²

As it is clear from this short presentation, international institutions are not considered as important independent variables in neo-realist accounts of international politics. The international order is created and maintained by state power, and change in the distribution of power is what causes change in international order.¹³ International institutions – to the extent that they exist – will therefore reflect the distribution of power. And states will defend their own relative power position when it comes to choosing different organizational options for international institutions. This is not to say that international institutions do not matter. According to Waltz, "(s)trong states use institutions, as they interpret laws, in ways that suit them".¹⁴ Therefore, international institutions are a tool for the strong state to dominate the weak state.

Two variants of neo-realist theory can be identified.¹⁵ One variant would expect states to act according to a balance of power logic. States will try to balance against power concentrations. International

⁷ An issue which I am not going to discuss here, is whether it is possible to imagine the existence of the EU within a neo-realist framework.

⁸ Waltz 1986c, 342-343.

⁹ Waltz 1986a, 63-66.

¹⁰ A discussion within neo-realism is whether states seek to maximize power or whether they seek to have enough power, see Mearsheimer 2001.

¹¹ Waltz 1986b, 81-94.

¹² Waltz 1986b, 89.

¹³ Ikenberry 2001, 11.

¹⁴ Waltz 2000, 24

¹⁵ Ikenberry 2001, 11-12

institutional outcomes will therefore reflect the intent to reach a balance of power. A second variant argues that international order is created and maintained by a hegemonic state which uses its power to structure the relations among states.

The current world order is uni-polar with the U.S. as a candidate for potential hegemony.¹⁶ On the basis of neo-realist theory of hegemony we would therefore expect the U.S. to try to influence the development of the E.U. in a way favourable to its own national interest. This has certainly been the case. Around the December 2002 summit, Turkey was of particular strategic importance to the U.S. in its preparation for a possible war with Iraq.¹⁷ And U.S. deputy Defence Secretary, Paul Wolfowitz travelled around Europe to make the U.S. point of view clear: It would be to all's benefit if a date was agreed for the initiation of Turkey's accession negotiations.¹⁸ Turkey should be pleased due to its key strategic importance in Middle East politics.

Turkey also has long-term strategic importance for the U.S. If Russia should move to challenge U.S. security interests it may very well choose to do so in the European periphery. Turkey may therefore emerge as a leading partner in the longer-term security relationship with Russia.¹⁹ To avoid this, it is of interest to the U.S. to make sure that Turkey's security needs are met in a Western alliance. In addition to NATO this would imply becoming member of the EU. Furthermore, Turkish accession would mean the presence of long-time NATO allied in the EU which may dampen the development of a strong European common foreign and security policy and keep the EU within the U.S. influence.²⁰ And very importantly, the presence of state deeply integrated in NATO would make it more difficult to succeed for those forces in Europe, which want to balance U.S. power.

In conclusion, a neo-realist hegemonic interpretation of the December 2002 decision would stress that the hegemon, the U.S., used international institutions to organize the international order in accordance with its national interest. Its interest was on the one hand to guarantee that Turkey would be kept within its influence and on the other hand to avoid that a potential threat to its hegemony developed, the development of the EU as a strong international actor which in coalition with other great powers might try to balance U.S. power.

This however, tells us very little about the EU Member States. Did EU Member States act according to a balance of power logic or as the theory of hegemony would predict? To see whether the Member States acted according to a balance of power logic the concepts of buck-passing and balancing are useful.²¹ Balancing is what we might expect from balance of power theory, i.e. that other great powers will try to balance against a hegemon. Buck-passing is different. It is a strategy where one tries to avoid paying the costs of being in conflict with the hegemon by passing the buck to others, the buck-catchers. Buck-passing may include creating good diplomatic relations with the hegemon. However, in the current uni-polar world order we should not expect to see buck-passing behaviour. This behaviour makes sense when it is possible that another great power will balance the (potential) hegemon. This is not the case in the current world order. It is not realistic that buck-catcher will be able to balance the U.S. Therefore, the strategy of the European major states should be balancing in the current international system according to a balance of power logic.

As Waltz argues, if the world is to take Europe serious in international politics, a strong joint and united foreign and security policy is needed.²² Integrating Turkey in the EU with its 63,6 mio. inhabitants and the fact that Turkey has the second largest military establishment in NATO would certainly add to the EU Member States' relative power in the world in numerical terms.²³ However, this seems not to have been the reason behind Member States' positions.

¹⁶ Waltz 2000, 28

¹⁷ BBC, 13 December 2002, "Thorny issues for the E.U.", available at news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/2572531.htm

¹⁸ CNN, 17 December 2002, "Turkey cloud over EU enlargement", available at www.cnn.com/2002/WORLD/europe/12/11/summit.oakley/

¹⁹ Lesser 2000, 3.

²⁰ Lesser 2000, 4.

²¹ Mearsheimer 2000, 155-159.

²² Waltz 2000, 32.

²³ Lesser 2000, 8-9.

Among the five big EU Member States the United Kingdom and France had the clearest opinions on Turkish accession. In a speech given by Secretary of State, Jack Straw in the House of Commons on 11 December 2002, the U.K. position was presented.²⁴ It was made clear that the United Kingdom had long been in favour of Turkey's accession. And the Prime Minister's call for a firm date for accession negotiations was repeated. Jack Straw stressed that Turkey had been a key NATO ally during the cold war, a close ally in the war on terrorism and that the West had a firm interest in western-looking Turkey.

Italy, Spain and to a lesser extent Germany were supporting the U.K. position. It is reported that Italy and Spain until the last minute supported the U.K. in giving a better offer to Turkey.²⁵ Germany was locked during the December 2002 summit due to its agreement with France. Before the summit, Chancellor Gerhard Schröder and President Jacques Chirac had met and agreed that accession negotiations could start in mid-2005 if Turkey complied with the Copenhagen criteria. France was reluctant to accept a date as early as 2005 but gave in.²⁶ Germany had before the German-French agreement supported Turkish accession.²⁷ The French-German agreement also became the outcome of the Copenhagen summit.

France was leading the opposition to Turkey's accession. According to press reports it was French President, Jacques Chirac who opposed giving Turkey a date for opening accession negotiation already in 2003 or 2004.²⁸ Furthermore, it is reported that the pressure from some Member States to open accession talks earlier was regarded as a tacit submission to the U.S. in the French government.²⁹

It seems not to be viable to argue that the integration of Turkey in the EU will contribute to efforts to counterbalance U.S. power. First of all, the hegemon, the U.S., strongly supported Turkish accession. The hegemon would have no interest in strengthening a potential rival. Secondly, it was the U.S.' strongest European allies, the U.K., Spain and Italy which supported an early opening of accession talks. If Turkish accession would increase the chances for balancing the U.S. this should not have been the case. And thirdly, it was the key proponent of an independent European foreign and security policy, France, who opposed an early opening of accession talks.

This however, does not refute that balance of power logics were in force. As indicated it may make more sense to argue that Turkey's accession would not contribute to – but rather weaken – efforts to balance U.S. dominance. For France, wanting to construct an independent European foreign and security policy on the way to multi-polar world it is not desirable to let another state enter the EU – a major state which security primarily depends on NATO (and the U.S.) and which therefore is not likely to support French balancing efforts. Letting Turkey in would reduce France to the 3rd state in the EU and would make the future of the Paris-Berlin axis highly questionable. France therefore seems to have followed a balance of power logic.

But the behaviour of the U.K., Italy, Spain and partly Germany does not fit with the balance of power logic. In a uni-polar world order like the current one, balancing should be the dominant strategy. Buck-passing does not make sense and band-wagoning should not take place in international politics according to balance of power theory.³⁰ We may therefore turn to the other neo-realist option: The theory of hegemony.

²⁴ The speech is available here: www.britischebotschaft.de/en/news/items/021211.htm

²⁵ Berlingske Tidende 13 December 2002, "EU holder døren på klem for Tyrkiet" available at www.berlingske.dk/popup:print=239328?& and El Mundo, 13 December 2002, "Los Quince mantienen su postura frente a Turquía" available at www.elmundodinero.elmundo.es/mundodinero/2002/12/13/Noti20021213204208.htm

²⁶ Time Magazine, 16 December 2002, "A happy marriage of convenience".

²⁷ BBC, 14 November 2002, "The changing face of the EU" available at news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/2471789.stm

²⁸ Berlingske Tidende 13 December 2002, "EU holder døren på klem for Tyrkiet" available at www.berlingske.dk/popup:print=239328?& and Time Magazine, 16 December 2002, "A happy marriage of convenience".

²⁹ El Mundo, 13 December 2002, "Los Quince mantienen su postura frente a Turquía" available at www.elmundodinero.elmundo.es/mundodinero/2002/12/13/Noti20021213204208.htm

³⁰ Mearsheimer 2001, 162-164 and 271.

According to Waltz, NATO did not disappear with the end of the cold war and the withering away of its purpose. Instead, NATO got a new purpose. It became a tool for the U.S. to maintain U.S. influence on European foreign and defence policies.³¹ In other words the hegemon uses its power to structure the relations among states to serve its own interests. Secondary states accept the order created by the hegemon because of the asymmetry in power and because the hegemon provides valued goods. In the case of NATO, the closest European allies are provided security.

The theory of hegemony allows us to cope with the fact that some EU Member States are band-wagoning with the hegemon while other states try to balance the hegemon. If the power distribution is highly asymmetrical, secondary powers may have an incentive to bandwagon.³² Balancing the hegemon may seem unrealistic and an unnecessary risky strategy. In these cases band-wagoning becomes rational. As the US in military terms is much more powerful than the EU Member States, balancing is not always a rational strategy.

In Europe the two positions have been represented by the U.K. which has followed a band-wagoning strategy since the end of World War II while France since 1958 has followed a balancing strategy. Among the five major EU Member States, France is the state which is least integrated in NATO and which most clearly has followed a balancing logic. This difference is also reflected in national defence spending. France spends more compared to national GDP than any of the other major Member States.³³ This is in accordance with the theory of hegemony according to which the hegemon pays an un-proportional share of the costs of maintaining the mutually beneficial order for the states involved.³⁴ The theory of hegemony therefore seems to offer a reasonable explanation of the Member States' positions as regards Turkish accession. The states which are closely allied with the U.S. and which security is provided by the U.S. were the states supporting early Turkish accession. The state least integrated in the security order established by the hegemon, France, was the state opposing early opening of accession talks.

Concluding the neo-realist analysis of dynamics leading to the December 2002 decision on Turkish accession we can say that balance of power dynamics do not seem to have been dominant. Instead, Member States seem to have acted according to how integrated they were in the security order provided by the hegemon. The hegemon defended its interests which were on the one hand to keep control over Turkey and on the other hand to avoid the development of a strong joint European foreign and security policy and identity. The behaviour of the U.K., Italy and Spain fits with a band-wagoning strategy – which is an option in the theory of hegemony but not in balance of power theory. France, less dependent on the hegemon, followed a balancing strategy.

Balance of power theory has another problem: One may ask why, if Turkish accession does not add to balancing U.S. power, Germany is prepared to give Turkey access to the European Union. Germany is a potential European regional hegemon. It should therefore not be in the interest of Germany to allow a potential rival for regional hegemony in. If it should be in anybody's interest, it should be secondary states, i.e. France and the U.K., in order to balance potential German dominance. However, only the U.K. supported Turkey's accession. Therefore, the regional power game does not fit very good with balance of power expectations either. All in all, the theory of hegemony seems more relevant than balance of power theory if we want to understand Member States' positions on Turkish accession.

However, when it comes to explaining the outcome of the interactions among the Member States, neo-realism seems to be weaker. With the hegemon and four of the five major Member States supporting an early date for opening accession talks, it seems difficult to understand the outcome on the basis of a distribution of capabilities. It is not obvious why France should be able to resist the pressure from the U.S., the U.K., Italy and Spain. To understand this we need other theories.

³¹ Waltz 2000, 20.

³² Sodupe 2002, 194.

³³ The Royal Norwegian Ministry of Defence, "Norwegian Defence Facts and Figures 2002", available at <http://odin.dep.no/fd/engelsk/publ/veiledninger/010011-120027/>

³⁴ Gilpin 1987, 78

III. The role of neo-liberal institutional dynamics

The neo-liberal institutionalism agrees with neo-realism on central points: States are the key actors, the international system is basically anarchic, states bring predefined identities and interests with them when they interact with other states. However, neo-liberal institutionalists disagree with neo-realists when it comes to the importance of institutions.³⁵

Neo-liberalists hold that states under certain conditions are concerned about absolute gains – and not relative gains as neo-realists argue.³⁶ This opens up the possibility for more and deeper international cooperation than a neo-realist analysis would predict. States still follow their own interest. But sometimes the anarchical nature of the international system results in sub-optimal outcomes for all parties. Cooperation between states to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes is difficult due to uncertainty, transaction costs and lack of information which create strong incentives to defect from cooperation in order to achieve higher absolute gains. In other words collective action problems are common due the strong incentive to free-ride.

International institutions help overcoming these collective action problems by lowering transaction costs and provide information on compliance.³⁷ However, international institutions do not change state identities or interests. The role of institutions is to channel and constrain state choices and affect state behaviour by changing what is the optimal strategy. Strong institutions can make it rational for states to cooperate instead of cheating.

Therefore, if states form their positions on Turkish accession in accordance with the institutional logic, we would expect the positions to reflect the solution of collective action problems between Turkey and the different Member States.

The neo-liberal institutionalism leads us to focus on the economic aspects of enlargement. One key aspect of EU is the single market. International institutions have traditionally been seen as useful to limit the incentive to defect from trade agreements. We could therefore expect, that states with much to gain from an institutionalised trade arrangement with Turkey would be the states most in favour of Turkish accession. This however would have to be balanced against the budgetary consequences of Turkish accession.³⁸

If we first look at the trade argument the key figures can be found in table 1. I have only included the major states as it may be expected that these are the decisive states for the outcome. If Member States were to position themselves according to a collective action dynamic, we would expect the U.K. to be the Member State least positive to Turkish accession. This was not the case as we saw in the previous section. In fact, the Member State which blocked giving Turkey an earlier and definitive date for opening accession negotiations was France, which is placed in the middle of the five as regards export/GDP ratio.

Table 1. Exports to Turkey and GDP for selected EU Member States

	Exports to Turkey (1998) in mio. ECU	GDP (1998) in mio. ECU	Export/GDP ratio (multiplied with 1000)
Germany	6919	1916370	3,61047188
United Kingdom	2408	1270539,6	1,89525773
Spain	1085	525454,2	2,06488025
Italy	3654	1068947,3	3,41831632
France	2947	1297575,1	2,27115949

³⁵ Ikenberry 2001, 13-15.

³⁶ Grieco 1993, 117.

³⁷ Keohane 1993, 273-274 and Ikenberry 2001, 13-15.

³⁸ The theoretical argument here is basically taken from Schimmelfennig 2001, 50-53.

Source: Data as regards exports from Eurostat, "Statistics in focus. External Trade. Theme 6 – 5/2000" and data as regards GDP from Eurostat website.³⁹

However, if a Member State's gains from institutionalised trade arrangements are outweighed by other costs, there would be no collective action problem to solve. It therefore makes sense to look at the budgetary consequences of Turkish accession. GDP per inhabitant in Turkey is only 29 per cent of the EU15 average and lower than any of the states becoming Member States 1 May 2004.⁴⁰ Furthermore, the agricultural sector is relatively bigger than in any of the 10 states becoming members 1 May 2004.⁴¹ It can therefore be expected that Turkish accession would mean that EU structural and agricultural funds would be redirected towards Turkey at the expense of Greece, Spain, Ireland and Portugal – the current main beneficiaries. This however fits badly with Spain's position.

In conclusion, it seems difficult to explain the U.K., the Spanish and the Italian support for Turkish accession as an intent to solve a collective action problem in the economic area. Basically, there seems not to have been an economic collective action problem to solve. The strongest supporter of Turkish accession, the U.K., is in fact the one of the five major Member States which seems to have less to gain from Turkish accession. And it is not clear, that France should have less to gain than strong supporters of Turkish accession as Italy and especially Spain.

Now, though the solution to collective action problems was not what motivated states, institutional dynamics may still be important in other areas. A key function of institutions is to change state calculations of rational behaviour. The presence of an institution may make certain actions beneficial which in the absence of an institution would not have been beneficial.

This second institutional dynamic could lead to the following expectation: The integration of Turkey in the institutional structures of the EU would strengthen the incentives for Turkey to follow a development emphasizing democracy, human rights and market economy. Deviating from this path would make Turkey lose the other benefits associated with membership of the European Union.

This second line of argument is reflected in the statements by e.g. Gerhard Schröder who argued that "(w)e must strengthen the pro-Western forces in Turkey. And that can only happen if they are being given a perspective. That perspective is called Europe".⁴² The other states in favour of early Turkish accession presented similar arguments.

However, whether this was the real motive behind state positions is more blurred. The interest in a democratic Turkey may be of two different kinds. It may be an idealistic interest in promoting democracy. But in this case we are closer to a constructivist argument. Or it may be because states suppose that a democratic Turkey is an advantage to EU states, especially in terms of security, as one may suppose that a democratic state defines its foreign and security policy differently than a non-democratic state does – the so-called democratic peace argument. For this argument to be valid however, it would have to be shown that the U.K. has a stronger interest than France in a Western-looking Turkey in terms of security. This seems difficult. A stronger case can be made for Italy and Spain. Both may have an interest in a democratic Turkey to show to their North-African neighbours that democracy is a possibility in a Muslim society. But then again, why should not France have the same interest.

We cannot exclude that institutional dynamics in the security area have played a role for especially Italy and Spain. But as a general explanation, the institutional dynamics do not seem to suffice. State positions are not consistent with the expectation we can derive from neo-liberal institutionalism.

³⁹ The GDP data are available here: http://europa.eu.int/comm/eurostat/newcronos/queen/isplay.do?creen=detail&language=en&product=YES&root=YES_copy_539019591709/yearlies_copy_221546607827/d_copy_874392991452/da_copy_1012695314039/daa_copy_48420190082/daa10000_copy_42926345359

⁴⁰ Eurostat, "Structural indicators of economic structure in 2000" available at www.europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/turkey/pdf/economic.pdf

⁴¹ Eurostat, "Structural indicators of economic structure in 2000" available at www.europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/turkey/pdf/economic.pdf

⁴² BBC, 14 November 2002, "The changing face of Europe" available at news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/471789.stm

IV. The role of discursive dynamics

While neo-realists and neo-liberal institutionalists assume identities and interests to be pre-defined, constructivists insist that both are constructed in the interaction with other states. International institutions are important in the process of state identity and interest formation as they are normative and cognitive maps.⁴³ Constructivists agree with rationalistic theories that structures exist. These structures however, are not material structures but socially constructed inter-subjective structures.⁴⁴ The socially constructed structure puts pressure on the states to follow a logic of appropriateness.

Schimmelfennig argues that one implication of the constructivist argument about internalised collective identities is that a state, which adheres to the constitutive norms and values of an institution also has a legitimate claim to become member of that institution.⁴⁵

In the case of the European Union, we would expect that a state adhering to the constitutive values of the Union such as being European, liberal, democratic, based on market economy, etc. as specified in the Copenhagen criteria would be granted accession to the Union.

However, if this was the case there should not be much discussion among the Member States about the timing of opening accession negotiations with Turkey. If the Member States had internalised the constitutive values of the community (the European Union) completely, they would not discuss the timing issue. What could be discussed would be whether Turkey is a European state. But once that question is resolved, Member States should agree on letting Turkey in when Turkey complies with the Copenhagen criteria. This was not the case. The U.K., Italy and Spain promoted an early opening of accession negotiations while France was against an early opening. The constitutive values are therefore not completely internalised.⁴⁶

Schimmelfennig argues that the Member States are weakly socialised actors.⁴⁷ The Member States are committed to the community which values they share. But the collective identity is not sufficiently internalised to shape concrete preferences. This does not give the game away. Values and norms may still be important in the interaction among Member States. Based on the collective identity standards of legitimacy and legitimate behaviour are created. These standards define who belong to the community and which rights and duties members have. Furthermore, the standards define rightful and improper ways of acquiring and exercising power and which political purposes are desirable. In the interaction between states these standards are seen as an external institutional resource and constraint. Political goals must be justified with a reference to the collective identity and the constitutive values of the community.

This opens up for the strategic use of norm-based arguments, what Schimmelfennig calls "rhetorical action".⁴⁸ In other words the rhetorical action is a power resource in a community like the European Union. For a Member State it is important to gain legitimacy which depends on credibility and reputation. A Member State therefore has to be consistent and argue in accordance with the collective identity and the constitutive values of the European Union if it wants to maintain legitimacy.

The rhetorical action argument seems to have quite some value. At least in public, none of the leaders of the governments of the major EU states has stated that a democratic Turkey complying with the Copenhagen criteria should not become member of the European Union. Two European Council meetings (Helsinki 1999 and Copenhagen 2002) have stated that Turkey was a candidate on the same conditions as other candidates, and these conditions are the Copenhagen criteria. The most explicit opposition to Turkish accession has come from political forces not in government. One example is the German CDU/CSU which in the German parliament before the December 2002 European Council meeting suggested that Turkey should not be offered membership due to

⁴³ Ikenberry 2001, 15.

⁴⁴ Schimmelfennig 2001, 58.

⁴⁵ Schimmelfennig 2001, 59.

⁴⁶ A possibility not explored here is that the collective identity is internalised asymmetrically, i.e. some states may have internalised the collective identity more than other states.

⁴⁷ Schimmelfennig 2001, 62.

⁴⁸ Schimmelfennig 2001, 63.

considerations about the European identity and the fact that Turkey is not a fully European state.⁴⁹ It is remarkable that the arguments follow the rhetorical action logic. Two constitutive values are in play as regards Turkey: Being European and complying with the Copenhagen criteria. The second value is not constant over time – Turkey may comply with the criteria one day. However, by basing their argument on the other constitutive value, being European or not, the CDU argument brings in play a competitive constitutive value and this way tries to balance the argument about Turkey's right to accession if it complies with the Copenhagen criteria.

The positions of the U.K., Spain, Italy and Germany are not difficult to understand in a constructivist framework. German Chancellor, Gerhard Schröder argued that "(w)e must strengthen the pro-Western forces in Turkey. And that can only happen if they are being given a perspective. That perspective is called Europe".⁵⁰ Secretary of State, Jack Straw argued in a speech in the House of Commons that Turkish membership was now a matter of obligation to previous EU decisions and that Turkey must be treated as any other candidate.⁵¹ These arguments are in perfect harmony with the constitutive values of the European Union.

It is more interesting to analyze the French case. The first thing to observe is that the French president, Jacques Chirac has been remarkably silent in public on the motivations for French hesitation to initiate accession negotiations with Turkey. One constructivist interpretation would be that this is because the French position cannot be defended with reference to the constitutive values of the community and the collective identity. In this case it is better to be silent and not try to argue. The second observation, which the rhetorical action logic helps us understand is why France in the end accepted to give Turkey a date. As already mentioned, legitimacy is a key asset in a highly integrated community as the European Union. This implies a requirement of consistency. Analyzing previous statements by French governments on the issue of Turkish accession helps us understand both why France does not argue in public about its position and why it did not veto the decision to give Turkey what de facto is a date for opening accession negotiations. Francois Mitterand said: «Sur un plan strictement politique, la France n'a pas d'objection à l'adhésion de la Turquie». Jacques Chirac said in 1995: «La Turquie a vocation à s'associer à l'Union européenne». French Foreign Ministers have gone even further. Jean-Bernard Raimond said in 1988: «La France ne fera pas d'obstacle à la candidature turque».⁵² France would therefore lose considerable legitimacy if it would veto giving Turkey a de facto date for opening accession negotiations at the European Council meeting in December 2002. It would simply be inconsistent with previous announcements.

The leader of the Turkish government party, Recep Tayyip Erdogan also used rhetorical action as a power resource. The Turkish government has repeatedly argued that the EU Member States must act in accordance with the community's constitutive rules. Mr Erdogan argued that the EU was applying double standards. One kind of standards when judging Turkey, another kind of standards when judging other candidate states.⁵³ According to Mr Erdogan some of the countries that will become members in May 2004 had worse human rights records than Turkey. Using this kind of argument, Mr Erdogan refers directly to the constitutive values of the European Union. The principle of the rule of the law, i.e. in this case that Turkey's application for accession should be judged objectively in accordance with the criteria set and not according to ad hoc standards.

In conclusion, it seems that the constitutive values set limits on legitimate state behaviour in the European Union. Rhetorical action is a power resource and a constraint. Supporters of actions which do not conform with the constitutive values do not argue about their actions in public – and may eventually be pressed to accept a solution which they formally had the possibility to veto. However, the states' preferences as regards Turkish accession do not seem to be shaped by the constitutive values of the community. The strength of the constructivist logic in this case is in explaining the interaction among the Member States.

⁴⁹ CDU/CSU, 4 December 2002, «Für ein glaubwürdiges Angebot der EU an die Türkei» available at www.cdu.de/presse/archiv-2002/12_04_02_antrag_tuerkei.pds

⁵⁰ BBC, 14 November 2002, "The changing face of Europe" available at news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/2471789.stm

⁵¹ The speech is available here: www.britischebotschaft.de/en/news/items/021211.htm

⁵² All quoted in Le Point, 20 December 2002, "Le dilemme français".

⁵³ BBC, 9 December 2002, "Turkey attacks EU "double-standards" available at news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/2558707.stm

Conclusion

In this paper I have tried to analyze the different EU Member States positions as regards Turkish accession up to the December 2002 European Council decision. Furthermore, I have tried to analyze why the European Council adopted the decision it did.

In public discourse enlargement of the EU is often presented in liberal terms as increasing the zone of democratic peace, promoting of human rights, increased prosperity, etc. It seems however, that the question of Turkish accession brings back on stage traditional security concerns. The positions as regards Turkish accession have a lot to do with the different Member States' strategies for a future security arrangement in Europe. In short, states which rely very much on NATO and the U.S. are generally in favour of opening accession talks with Turkey soon while states following a balancing strategy aiming at creating a multi-polar world in the long-term are more reluctant to open accession talks with Turkey. Turkish accession would limit France's possibility to create a common European foreign and security policy to balance U.S. power as the Turkish accession would strengthen the group of EU states, which via NATO depends on the U.S. for their security – the band-wagoning states. Therefore, while the theory of hegemony helps us understand the Member States positions, balance of power logics do not seem to have dominated state positions. In the current world order strongly dominated by the U.S., balance of power theory would predict European states to follow a balancing strategy – this is not the case for the U.K., Italy, Spain and to some extent Germany. Furthermore, in the regional power game, France should welcome the accession of a state which would be able to balance potential German regional hegemony – as we saw, French behaviour did not follow this logic.

To understand the interaction between the Member States leading to the December 2002 decision we have to turn to constructivist theories. It seems plausible that the socially constructed structure of the community containing a set of constitutive values (democracy, human rights, market economy, etc) was important for the outcome. French action and arguing were limited by the constitutive values. It was simply not considered legitimate to veto a decision saying that if Turkey complies with the Copenhagen criteria, accession negotiations will be opened without delay. No legitimate argument could be put forward to defend that action.

Neo-liberal institutionalism does not seem to have played a prominent role in the process leading up to the December 2002 decision. Basically, there seems not to have been major (economic) collective action problems to solve between Turkey and EU Member States. In fact, the state most favourable to Turkish accession, the U.K., is the one of the five major Member States with less relative export to Turkey. Furthermore, the argument that Member States would use institutions to change Turkish calculations in favour of democracy, human rights, etc. is difficult to confirm. This is not to say that institutions do not matter – they do, but in this particular case it seems that they are seen as an instrument for the exercise of state power.

In conclusion, state positions seem to have a lot to do with the explanations offered by the neo-realist theory of hegemony. And the interaction between the Member States seem to be heavily influenced by what is considered as legitimate behaviour.

This conclusion is somewhat surprising. Studies of EU enlargement with the Central and East European states have stressed the importance of liberal institutionalism in explaining the Member States' positions as regards enlargement.⁵⁴ There may however, be good reasons for the difference in the importance of explanatory factors. Turkey is a much bigger country with an impressive military capability – and a key strategic partner for the international system's hegemon, the U.S. The ten Central and East European states were all smaller (except for Poland all are very small) and they do not have the same strategic importance for the U.S. This may explain why power and security consideration play a more important role when it comes to Turkey.

If this conclusion is correct it will be interesting to see the outcome of the December 2004 European Council. Following the Iraq war we may expect that Germany will move closer towards the French position and be less keen on opening accession talks with Turkey. However, whether a German-

⁵⁴ See e.g. Schimmelfennig 2001.

French alliance can stop the opening of accession talks is doubtful – rhetorical action may again limit what is acceptable behaviour.

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