Titel: Discursive Construction of European Identity in the EU's Relations with Turkey

Senem Aydin Düzgit

Promotor: Prof. Dr. Patricia Van den Eeckhout, co-promotor: Prof. Dr. Gustaaf Geeraerts

Thesis Summary:

This thesis attempts to analyse and interpret EU discourses on Turkey/Europe within the scope of a theoretical framework that espouses the post-structuralist theorising of identity in international relations, arguing that identity is relationally and discursively constructed through foreign policy and lies upon a variety of differentiations with the ‘Other’s that surround states or other international collectivities. From that perspective it is argued that EU enlargement policy can be taken as a form of foreign policy tool that discursively constructs the ‘insiders’ and the ‘outsiders’ through varying relationships with them, mainly via constructing the tenets of ‘Europeanness’.

The thesis employs the methodological tools of critical discourse analysis (CDA). The specific focus here is on the discourse in three major settings of EU decision making; namely the European Commission, the European Parliament and three selected member states (France, Germany and the UK). The selected discourses are those of the elites, covering 1999-2005, a period of intense debate on Turkish accession. The utterances that are analysed cover EP debates, EP reports on Turkey, Commission reports on Turkey, Commissioner speeches and utterances on Turkey and parliamentary debates on Turkey in the selected. The empirical work also includes interviews with from these three spheres, in order to mainly double-check the data and to better trace the intertextualities present in identity constructions.

The study finds that in all the three discursive settings analysed, 'Europeanness' as equated with EU membership constitutes a key tenet of the discourse on EU enlargement in Turkey. The analysis helps discern five main discourse topics/contents over which a variety of 'Europe's are constructed. These correspond to the conceptualisation of 'Europe' as a security community, as an upholder of democratic values, as a political project, as a national body and as a cultural/historical/geographical space. The analysis finds that the occurrence of each discourse topic and the way in which they are constructed with respect to the discussions on Turkish accession display significant differences both within and between the institutional spaces analysed, in conjunction with national, political/ideological and institutional identity constructs. Despite these variations, the analysis points at the existence of, in Stuart Hall's words, a high degree of ideological closure in discourse, where the discursive constructions of 'Europe' are highly bound by the repertoires of nationalism and the modern nation-state bound by the paradigm of modernisation.

Biography:

Senem Aydýn Düzgit is currently a Lecturer in the Department of International Relations at Istanbul Bilgi University and an Associate Research Fellow at the Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS) in Brussels. She received an MSc in European