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**IN SEARCH OF LEGITIMACY: EU CULTURAL POLICIES AS A GROUND FOR
COLLECTIVE IDENTITY.**

The EU enlargement process and the case of Turkey's candidacy

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‘Do you recognize perhaps, also you, now, that a minute ago you were another?’

Luigi Pirandello (1990), *One, No One and One Hundred Thousand*

Note to the readers

This research project comes after more than a decade in which the only stable drive leading my academic and professional path has been the desire to be (knowingly) close to art and artists. After a BSc in Cultural Management and working experiences in contemporary art institutions in New Delhi and Cape Town, an MA in Anthropology helped me to properly shape the questions raised by the direct experience with booming and ‘exotic’ art markets. The main lesson I have learned from this restless discipline is being uncomfortable with categories normally taken for granted. This is a mind-set that, once embraced, can hardly be abandoned and that became both a blessing and a curse in my professional and academic experiences to come, especially in contexts I have been used to perceive as ‘other’, ‘primitive’ or ‘traditional’. Turkey has been one of them.

Being born and raised in a small town in Northern Italy, surrounded by what locals love to describe as a ‘culturally homogenous’ territory, where identity clashes have not caused noteworthy turmoil for decades (I am not sure about what the future holds for us...), I belong to a generation that has rarely developed a critical gaze towards concepts such as culture and identity. We did not bother to ask ourselves who we are: the ‘antiquity’ of our land protected us from this quest (Risse & Engelmann-Martin, 2002). I have never thought of not introducing myself as Italian, for example, or to think of the terms ‘Italian identity’ or ‘Italian culture’ as carriers of conflicting claims.

Visiting Istanbul for the first time in 2010, on occasion of the European Capital of Culture programme, I was caught by surprise hearing about the opposition of some artists with Turkish citizenship to be labelled as ‘Turkish’ (*Türk*), preferring instead the formula ‘from Turkey’ (*Türkiyeli*), marking a clear distance from a specific idea of the nation. This episode made me think very differently about the proliferating blockbuster exhibitions on Chinese art, Iranian art, Indian art and so on, to which I have been exposed during my work as an art professional (Belting *et al.*, 2013). It triggered the curiosity to reflect broadly on the use of identity-defining adjectives, in combination with the terms ‘art’ and ‘culture’. It was a first step to deconstruct an idealised

vision of the art world, thinking more wittingly about artistic production's engagement with social and political issues and its potential as perpetrator of uncontested narratives on cultural alterity. Hence, I started to unmask a terrain I had been (naively) used to consider free *par excellence*, gradually discovering its very mundane dimension, replicated in its grammar.¹

During the Venice Art Biennial 2015, as the coordinator for the contemporary art exhibition 'Armenity', hosted by the Pavilion of the Armenian Republic, my theoretical interest found further first-hand nourishment.² After this work experience and few more activities as independent art curator in Greece, an MA in Southeast European Studies at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens was a natural landing to deepen the knowledge of the geography that adopted me – on and off – for the previous seven years. A personal paradigm shift (Kuhn, 1962) took place in this context. I divested my contemporary art-blinkered vision and I started thinking of the region not only in terms of an up-and-coming hub of cultural production, but also as an *in fieri* political project: through the teachings of my professors³ and the daily exchanges with colleagues, I had the chance to familiarise (in theory and in practice) with the EU Enlargement dynamic towards Southeast Europe and with the complicated construction of a feeling of political and cultural belonging, in both old and new member states.

¹ Throughout the years, several debate platforms helped me to rethink critically about the global contemporary art world's structure. Among those, I would like to mention the group of academicians, artists and curators behind the hypertext *Decolonize!*, an interdisciplinary reflection on artistic and cultural production in post/de-colonial contexts, especially Ilze Petroni's contribution (2018).

² "Armenity" questions the concept of Armenian identity as being the result of the historical connections characterising Armenian culture through the millennia from the lands of Anatolia, the Caucasus and throughout the diaspora since its inception. The richness of the exhibition finds expression in the diversity of creative ideas and narrations: the vision of each of the artist and intellectual involved is a direct reflection of a continuous process of preservation and enrichment that has allowed the Armenian culture to be integrated, but not assimilated in even the most adverse conditions.' (From the curatorial text, available at <https://www.armenity.net/>). The exhibition coincided with the centenary of the *Medz Yeghern*, the Armenian expression defining the genocide that took place in the last years of the Ottoman Empire. The anniversary created a very sensitive context (emotionally and politically), in which I experienced the collective and individual traumas caused by a grief that has yet to be cried. Despite all the difficulties, I am grateful to the project's curator, Adelina Cüberyán von Fürstenberg, for giving me the opportunity to be part of the team and to all the nineteen artists for generously sharing their life stories.

³ I am particularly thankful to my PhD supervisor, Associate Professor Susannah Verney, for the course on European Enlargement in Southeast Europe, and to Professor Pantelis Lekkas for his lessons on theories of nationalism that jointly have been the spark to develop this research project.

At first, the intellectual and social environment of the master's programme pushed me to approach – at least in my wildest theoretical fantasies – the expanding nature of the Union through an anthropological perspective: namely as an encounter with unfamiliar realities, requiring a re-definition of consolidated interpretative categories to be deciphered. In a second phase, from more structured political science readings, I began to interpret the Enlargement as an ambivalent site of negotiation for Europe's construction: on the one side, a possible strategy to 'rejuvenate a flagging political project' (Bickerton, 2012: 212), showcasing the EU's normative (Manners, 2002) and transformative power (Börzel & Risse, 2009; Grabbe, 2006); on the other, a risk in terms of cohesion for its people: with its borders in constant motion – enacting a dynamic of inclusion/exclusion – the European polity has made 'its *meaning* contested' (Bottici & Challand, 2013: 16) not only for academics, but for its citizens too. In this context, I could not help but notice the increasing EU's interest in cultural policies as tools to 'raise awareness of European history and values and to strengthen a sense of European identity'.⁴ Thus, a new domain to cultivate my reflection on the concepts of culture and identity began to take shape, adding, this time, a further element: political legitimacy.

Starting from these premises, I have embarked on a research endeavour focused on the cultural policies of European organisations; in particular, on their employment in the EC/EU identity building discourse in the Enlargement context. Turkey is the selected field of observation, scrutinised with the support of the interdisciplinary social science background that led me here, with a strong emphasis on political science literature.

The words and experiences of art practitioners – often excluded by the current European studies research on cultural policy in favour of European officials' voices – will be a central element of the coming pages. I am aware that thoughts and ideas developed in the past decade in different *milieus* and geographies might colour what follows with unconventional tones for an audience of

⁴ This is the statement accompanying '2018 European Year of Cultural Heritage', one of the most recent cultural initiatives organised by the EU. Available at: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2017/02/15/first-european-year-cultural-heritage-2018/>.

political scientists and European studies scholars. Nevertheless, I hope this initial uneasiness will turn out to be the project's strength.

My wish is to offer a contribution to the study of European integration through a so far underrated perspective. I am glad to have found the group of fellow academicians of DIMES sharing this endeavour. DIMES is a Jean Monnet Project 2019-2021, organised by UACES (University Association for European Studies) and ESA-SSA (European Studies Association of Sub-Saharan Africa), that seeks to explore 'Diversity, Inclusion and Multidisciplinarity' in European studies.⁵ I am grateful for the lively discussions that animated our meetings at the University of Leiden, in March 2020, and continued remotely in the following months, giving me the opportunity to frame my work within a broader and collective attempt at enriching the disciplinary and geographic focus of contemporary European studies (in addition, of course, to making the early pandemic days less alienating).

⁵ 'This project seeks to explore ways to increase diversity within the field of European studies, in particular with regards to the ethnicity, disciplinary focus, and geographical location of its participants. Through a series of events, research collaborations, and publications, the project aims to:

- Improve the representation of BIPOC (black, indigenous, people of colour) academics within UACES and European studies more generally
- Move away from the emphasis on Western European and North American academics towards greater inclusion for scholars from under-represented, even marginalised, geographies
- Broaden the disciplinary focus of contemporary European Studies to include adjacent/related disciplines such as anthropology, human geography, cultural studies, and sociology'.

(From: <https://www.uaces.org/dimes>).

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Introducing the research

This research investigates European organisations’⁶ attempt at ‘constructing’ and uniting Europe and Europeans by means of cultural policies. Looking at six initiatives related to the checkered relation between Turkey and the European Union,⁷ the analysis outlines the evolving role of cultural policies in the European institutional structure.⁸ In particular, it points out and problematises their increasing employment as creators of mythopoietic narratives on identity, coping with the Union’s ‘symbolic deficit’ (Passerini, 2003: 23), that results from years of *doux commerce* (ibid.). As Jean Monnet never said: ‘If we were to do it all over again, we would start with culture’.⁹

The EU’s peculiarity, which unfolds in an expanding ‘supranational polity’ – that is ‘less than a state but more than an international organisation’ (Smismans, 2016: 340) – complicates the creation of an overall sense of inclusion among various pre-existing and solid national entities. This condition implies possible repercussions on its legitimacy, understood as the capacity to ‘engender and maintain the belief that the existing political institutions are the most appropriate ones for society’ (Lipset, 1963: 77) and have, consequently, the right to rule. European institutions

⁶ In the coming pages, the term ‘European organisations’ will refer to both European Union bodies (European Parliament, European Council of Ministers, European Commission, European Court of Justice...) and the Council of Europe (CoE). ‘EU institutions’, instead, will address the plurality of EU political authorities, without the CoE.

⁷ To be more accurate: the European Communities and the European Union. It is important to clarify, in this initial stage, the difference between these terms: the European Union has been established by the Maastricht Treaty (1992), entering into force on 1 November 1993; the Treaty added extra competences to the three European Communities, established in the 1950s: the European Coal and Steel Community, Euratom, and the European Economic Community (focused mainly on the creation of a Common Market).

⁸ Included in the European institutional agenda with the Maastricht Treaty, thus taking on a new role in integration matters, culture started to become the object of specialised social sciences analyses. Nevertheless, the main focus has been on cultural policies *in* Europe – nationally or locally – and not *of* Europe as a whole (Sassatelli, 2009): holding a focus on major economic and security policies, democratic deficit and citizenship’s issues, the study of European integration and identity from the perspective of cultural policy is still a scarcely explored territory, with few remarkable exceptions, among which I would mention the work of Orianna Calligaro (2013a), Kiran Klaus Patel (2013), Monica Sassatelli (2009), and Cris Shore (2000).

⁹ In 1996, commenting about this now mythical statement, Jack Lang confessed: ‘It was 1982, I was trying to gather a meeting of the member countries’ Culture Ministers, but there was no way: agriculture yes, culture no... So, to be more convincing I quoted Monnet in the conditional. I said: ‘I think that if he questioned himself today maybe he would start with culture.’ Since then, the notion has undoubtedly been attributed to him. I’ve tried to correct it in vain. I apologise.’ (Mammarella & Cacace, 1999: 95).

deal with the necessity (and not simply the ambition) to create ‘a stronger union between the peoples of Europe’:¹⁰ the feeling of belonging to a cohesive community, sharing memories from the past, living the reality of present times and projecting intentions into the future is an essential component of political legitimacy (Beetham & Lord, 1998; Herz, 1978; Melich, 1986; Obradovic, 1996).

Now that the old objectives of ‘peace and prosperity’ have lost their appeal for European citizens, the Union is undoubtedly facing the need to define new narratives and symbols (Passerini, 2003) ‘in creating normative and cognitive foundations for governing’ (Della Sala, 2010: 2). Cultural policies can play a decisive role in developing this common ground: acting as technologies of subjectivation (Foucault, 1991), namely processes impacting individual self-understanding through the interiorisation and reproduction of institutional narratives (Berger & Luckmann, 1966), they contribute to the creation of fully socialised citizens (Miller & Yúdice, 2002; Shore & Wright, 1997). Whether and how the myths of shared European culture and identity are at all meaningful terms in the creation of these narrative foundations will be the objective of my investigation.

I use the term ‘myth’ to underline the special nature of these narratives: political myths are not simple stories; they are ‘told for a purpose and not simply to amuse’ (Tudor, 1972: 16, cited in Della Sala, 2010: 3). Myths are strategic tools in the hands of political actors to gain specific objectives: political legitimacy, in this case. In other words, myths ‘make sense of why political authority is being used’ (Della Sala, 2010: 5). They can provide the symbolic values required by a legitimate polity ‘within which people share an idea of origin, continuity, historical memories, collective remembrance, common heritage and tradition, as well as a common destiny’ (Obradovic, 1996: 196, cited in Della Sala, 2010: 5).¹¹

¹⁰ This expression has been used for the first time in the preambles of the Treaty of Paris, founding the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), in 1951. Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:11951K/TXT>.

¹¹ In the research, I will talk about myths and mythologies without giving them abruptly a ‘weak and negative’ (Passerini, 2003: 13) connotation, as it has often been done in discussions about a united Europe

The research deals with this vast topic answering a specific question: **can EU cultural policies, with their underlying identitarian mythology, act as a valuable tool of integration for an expanding political entity and, consequently, have an impact on its legitimacy?** In other words: **did the EU cultural events here described succeed in their attempt at ‘constructing’ and uniting Europe and Europeans?**

This question triggers a debate touching the very bases of the European political project and leads to the analysis of European institutions’ dominant narrative.¹² The *in fieri* nature of the Union, where crystallised national myths struggle to coexist with newly shaped narratives aspiring to embrace the fresh members of a multinational polity, represents a telling case to problematise the very concept of collective identity (Eder, 2009) and its assumed value as a vehicle of political legitimacy.

I acknowledge the research’s point of view nurtures one of the critiques about Enlargement, namely that it is the mere result of ‘the EU’s own anxieties and doubts about the vitality of its political project’ (Bickerton, 2012: 216) and a consequence of ‘European narcissism’ (ibid.: 213) – i.e., driven exclusively by EU’s concerns, without care of the candidates’ needs. I also admit the thesis’ perspective can be held as suggesting the presence of an idealised Other, functioning as the ‘touchstone for the level of progress reached by Europe’ (Passerini, 2012: 2). Nevertheless, I claim that in this moment of soul-searching (Moisi, 1999), when ‘the EU itself is in agony and increasingly challenged by its own citizens’ (Walldén, 2016: 3), a debate about the path the European project intends to tread is of crucial importance for its survival, especially if it tackles unquestioned ‘mythological’ assumptions. Triggering the discussion from the borders of Europe wants to be an attempt at embracing wider and critical perspectives on the issue.

(see for example Lewis, 2002). Instead, following Passerini’s suggestion (2003), I try to consider also their strong and positive sense as vehicles of intersubjectivity.

¹² Narrative analysis (Patterson & Renwick Monroe, 1998) belongs to the so called ‘argumentative turn’ in social sciences, underlying the role of language and meaning in policy making (Fischer & Forester, 1993).

Basic premises of the research

Kohli (2000) suggests four possible layers of analysis when talking about European identity:

1. the understanding of the concept by political actors of European integration;
2. the ‘idea of Europe’ – namely what Europe is or should be – as presented in texts and discourses by intellectuals and politicians;¹³
3. the cultural practices through which these meanings are created and maintained (as celebrations, myths, and cultural events, for example);¹⁴
4. the individual identity or, more precisely, collective identity as experienced and expressed by the individual citizens.

The current research involves mainly the first three levels, being focused on EU integration’s political actors and on the implementation of their narratives about Europe – as expressed in official documents – through cultural policies.

Analysing the Turkish case, the project looks at the symbolic dimension of EU cultural policy, trying not to overlook ‘the wider negotiations’ taking place in ‘its implementation, as well as the transformations in local contexts’ (Patel, 2013: 5). Thus, if, on one side, the research focuses on the work and words of European elites in Brussels, on the other, it includes the particular experience of Turkey, with its perception, reception, and translation of the central narrative on Europeanness. In this way, the project scrutinises the interplay between EU official discourses and political programmes on one side, and material practices and local meanings on the other (ibid.).

In doing so, I follow the approach of authors such as Patel (2013) and Sassatelli (2009).¹⁵

¹³ There is a large historical literature on how this idea has developed, see for example Girault (1994), Kaelble (1998) and Pomian (1990). Sociologists have also contributed with important studies, such as Delanty (1995) and Swedberg (1994). For a general overview on the concept of European cultural identity see Sassatelli (2009: 25-39).

¹⁴ According to Kohli (2000), this broad field started to be explored more systematically in academia since Nora’s edited work *Lieux de memoire* (1984). For further references see Bottici & Challand (2013), Henry (2001), Passerini (2002, 2003), and the special issue of the *Journal of Common Market Studies* on ‘Political myth, mythology, and the European Union’, including the already mentioned article by Della Sala (2010).

¹⁵ I understand Europeanisation – the very broad phenomenon of ‘becoming more European like’ (Tovias, 2007: 485) – as a ‘complex interactive ‘top-down’ and ‘bottom-up’ process in which not only domestic politics, politics, and public policies are shaped by European integration, but also domestic actors take

The research does not make normative claims about the definition of ideal European identity and culture: identity and culture are not conceived as primordial entities to be discovered (Smith, 1995), but as contested notions, the meaning of which is not monolithic. The project focuses on how these concepts emerged in the European political agenda, and how some of their different understandings have become meaningful to social actors, while others have been forgotten or obliterated. Thus, ‘identity’ and ‘culture’ are not approached as *explanans*, namely instruments of analysis actively explaining events (Remotti, 2010), but as *explanandum* (ibid.), that is objects to be explained, deconstructed and even contested (Kohli, 2000; Remotti, 2010). As the Italian anthropologist Francesco Remotti (2010) suggests, what is meaningful for social scientists is understanding the reason why individuals and groups resort so often to certain notions, in its roots and implications (ibid.). There are two layers in the analysis that do not have to be confused: one is the operative level – namely what social actors do; the other is the analytical one, implying the agency of researchers using certain categories to interpret phenomena (ibid.).

This project refers to constructivist approaches in social sciences, understanding identity of individuals and/or entities as constantly (re)constructed by the recognition of other individuals

advantage of the process to shape the domestic arena’ (Dyson & Goetz, 2003: 20). A classic ‘top-down’ definition of Europeanisation would be inappropriate to encompass both the EU and local agencies. An example of this approach could be the one of Radaelli (2003: 30):

The concept of Europeanisation refers to processes of a) construction, b) diffusion and c) institutionalisation of formal and informal rules, procedures, policy paradigms, styles, ‘ways of doing things’, and shared beliefs and norms which are first defined and consolidated in the making of EU public policy and politics and then incorporated in the logic of domestic discourse, identities, political structures and public policies.

Several studies, especially since the Eastern Enlargement of 2004 (Alpan, 2021), tend to underline the reductionism and essentialism of this kind of definitions, in which the regime of EU conditionality is understood as homogeneous, unilinear and ‘applicable to [...] all societies engaged in Europeanisation in similar modalities’ (Aydın-Düzgit & Kaliber, 2016: 6). There are also approaches conceiving Europeanisation as ‘an interactive process between actors, domestic and European’ (Featherstone & Kazamias, 2001: 12), with peculiar characteristics, changing according to the context (Schimmelfennig *et al.*, 2006): this is the so called ‘Enlargement-led Europeanisation’ (Moga, 2010: 6, cited in Alpan, 2021: 110), in which conditionality (Schimmelfennig *et al.*, 2002, cited in Alpan, 2021: 110) and the Copenhagen criteria function as triggers for domestic change. For an insight into Europeanisation and EU-Turkey relations in general see Alpan (2021). In particular: for changes in identities, see Nas (2012) and Rumelili (2008); in discourses, see Alpan (2014), Aydın-Düzgit (2016); in public debates, Kaliber (2016) (cited in Alpan, 2021:111).

and/or entities, within a structure of shared meanings (Cederman, 2001; Stråth, 2016). Thus, being relational, identities can only be articulated through the interaction with their constitutive other(s) (Aydın-Düzgüt & Rumelili, 2021).¹⁶ Taking a cue from Rumelili (2016a), I clarify the concept with an example: my identity as PhD student exists only if I am recognised by others as such – by the professors at the University of Athens, for instance. This recognition results from a certain behaviour: attending departmental seminars, writing papers etc. etc. In other terms, there is a script to be followed to be a PhD candidate and its content is determined by the performance of the PhD students' community. 'In essence identity is nothing but what we make it. As a result, it [...] is never fixed and it is continuously changing' (Rumelili, 2016a: 5).

Applying the social constructivist approach to the European identity concept means to underline

¹⁶ Rumelili (2016: 2-6) identifies four prevalent approaches to the study of identity in social sciences:

- the social constructivist approach, as just described;
- the primordialist or essentialist approach: it considers identity as an immutable essence rooted in a common and fixed history (Smith, 1995). The social constructivist approach does not deny the perceived existence of such shared characteristics; however, it underlines that these common elements are not natural and immutable, but alterable according to attitudes and understandings;
- the critical approach: it does not focus on how identity is shaped, but on the power structures implied by specific identitarian constructions and the consequent marginalisation of other possible ones (Campbell, 1998). The main focus is on how current processes of European identity formation are privileging certain ideas of Europe marginalising others: for example, some authors see in the discourse on peace and democracy a reproduction of European colonial legacy (Behr, 2007);
- the instrumentalist approach: it underlines the nature of identity as a strategic tool for political elites to give legitimacy to their actions, fostering political allegiance with cultural symbols (Fearon & Laitin, 2000). This perspective is also pertinent to the analysis, as it will be clear in chapter 1.2;
- I add a fifth category mentioning authors as Brubaker and Cooper (2000): they suggest going beyond the category of identity, considering it too ambiguous. The last works by the anthropologist Francesco Remotti (2010) – who will be mentioned in the following pages with reference to his work on the 'identitarian obsession' (2010) – shares this vision too.

Despite the points of contact with other approaches, I prefer to stress the proximity to the social constructive one: that is because it situates political elites' role in the construction of identity at the intersection with existing and shared myths and symbols – a crucial element for the project – and do not reduce it to the mere regulation of political interests and balances, happening in a cultural vacuum (Rumelili, 2016a).

For a detailed analysis of constructivist approaches in the study of EU-Turkey relations and their focus on the identitarian aspect see Aydın-Düzgüt & Rumelili (2021). The authors present the differentiation between 'thin' and 'thick' constructivism: the former characterised by an explanatory attitude; the latter focused on the 'how possible' question (Checkel, 2007: 58, cited in Aydın-Düzgüt & Rumelili, 2021: 67). According to thin constructivist theories, states' actions are heavily influenced by norms and ideas (i.e., the inclusion of Turkey in the Enlargement process is a consequence of the rhetorical entrapment (Schimmelfennig, 2001) caused by the duty to open the European club to democratizing countries). Thick constructivist theories understand foreign policy, including Enlargement, 'as a discursive practice that constructs particular subject identities for states, positioning them vis-à-vis one another' (Aydın-Düzgüt & Rumelili, 2021: 67). For its focus on language as a vehicle for social reality's construction and the role of the 'Other' in identity building, the current research can be considered close to thick constructivist analysis.

that:

European identity exists as a continuously evolving set of shared meanings. The identity of Europe is changing depending on who identifies with Europe, in what ways and to what extent, and what meanings and understandings relevant actors ascribe to Europe (Rumelili, 2016a: 5).

Through the involvement of new actors conforming/confronting the central script on Europeanness and, at the same time, performing their own understanding of it, the EU Enlargement process, as will be discussed in detail in chapter 5, is a privileged context to observe the negotiation of these shared meanings and the actual ‘construction’ of Europe. Furthermore, it shows to what extent candidate countries contribute to the redefinition of this frontier, testing the actual limits of the European ‘unity in diversity’. Turkey, depicted for centuries as the eternal Other of Europe, proves to be a case in point to conduct this observation.

Turkey: the eternal Other of Europe

The construction of the Ottoman Empire and Turkey as the ‘European Other’ has historical roots dating back to the barbaric representations of the XV and XVI centuries’ Balkans, evolving until the more recent idea of the ‘Sick Man’ of Europe and the contemporary association between Islam and terrorism, violation of minorities’ rights and gender roles disparities (e.g., Levin, 2011; Neumann, 1999; Neumann & Welsh, 1991). The ‘clash of civilisations’ anxiety (Huntington, 1997), paired with the general worry of rising Islamic fundamentalism in Central Asia, the Middle East and North Africa (Choueiri, 1990; Esposito, 1992, cited in Verney, 2009b: 4), had repercussions on the perception of Muslim societies inside and outside of Europe (Wrench & Solomos, 1993), all reflected in public opinion polls (Gerhards & Hans, 2011) and European Parliament’s debates of the early years of the 21st century (Yilmaz, 2009). Turkey epitomises the ‘very antithesis of European modernity’ (Yilmaz, 2009: 87) embodied in symbols such as the headscarf, emblematic of what has been problematically defined by Western intellectuals as

‘gender apartheid’¹⁷ and ‘corresponding to the European understanding of the difference between civilisation and barbarism’ (ibid.) – or, I would add, between normal and perverse, natural and alien (Hosking & Schopflin, 1997).

For centuries, ideas on Europe have been constructed through oppositions (Baudet, 1965; Mayne, 1972), generating various forms of Orientalism and Occidentalism (Passerini, 2012: 2):

Europe's Other changed from being an image of Asia, to one of Africa, and then to one of America – or of some peoples of these continents, such as in various epochs Turks, Russians and Chinese. The European ambivalence towards its Others manifested itself in two different but indivisible relations: the area of concrete relations with non-European peoples (political, military, socio-economic and missionary) through colonial expansion, and that of the imagination, which created images not deriving from observation or experience but from psychological projections.

Turkey is perceived as a sort of ‘diluent’ of Europeanness¹⁸ or – as in the understanding of both opponents and supporters of Turkey’s EU accession – an ‘accident’ of Europe, extraneous to European integrity and able to join the club only after a process of transformation (Çakmaklı & Rumelili, 2011). Turkey lies exactly on the border of that ‘unity’ within which ‘diversity’ must be celebrated, according to the European motto: half in Asia, half in Europe, with the city of Istanbul embodying this divide.¹⁹ As Asad (2002: 219) points out, determining the boundaries of that unity continues to be an urgent problem for anyone concerned with the EU’s civilisational and normative basis:

Where Europe’s borders are to be drawn is also a matter of representing what European civilisation is. These borders involve more than a confused geography. They

¹⁷ As a main reference, see the work of Phyllis Chesler, in particular the debate triggered after the presentation of her report ‘Gender Apartheid in Iran and the Muslim World’ at the USA Senate in 2005.

¹⁸ Talal Asad (2002: 211) reports an anecdote from a 1992 *Time* magazine cover story, on Turkey’s road to the European Union. He quotes a German diplomat commenting on it:

‘However, it may be expressed, there is a feeling in Western Europe, rarely stated explicitly, that Muslims whose roots lie in Asia do not belong in the Western family, some of whose members spent centuries trying to drive the Turks out of a Europe they threatened to overwhelm. Turkish membership would dilute the EC’s Europeanness’.

¹⁹ As the case studies will show – especially the contemporary art exhibition ‘Urban Realities: Focus Istanbul’ and ‘Istanbul 2010 European Capital of Culture’ – the depiction of Istanbul as the bridge between East and West is a central element in the construction of Turkey as an EU candidate state for both sides.

reflect a history whose unconfused purpose is to separate Europe from alien times ('communism', 'Islam') as well as from alien places ('Islam', 'Russia').

Conforming to the political criteria of Copenhagen is only a first step in European integration for Turkey; a broader issue of stereotypical representation is there to be faced as well (Verney, 2009b) in order to fully 'construct' Turkey's Europeanness and, thus, set off its inclusion in the European club.

As Aydın-Düzgit and Rumelili (2021) point out, after the end of the Cold War, the rising interest of the EC/EU for Central and Eastern European countries (CEECs), at the expenses of Turkey, triggered a new series of academic studies focused on the role of identity in EC/EU-Turkey relations. This interest intensified in the 1999-2005 period, when eventually Turkey progressed in its path towards accession, while a debate on Turkey's Europeanness raged all over the Union:

It was explicitly and increasingly voiced, most prominently by former French President Nicolas Sarkozy and German Chancellor Angela Merkel, among others, that Turkey's democracy, geography, history, culture, and the mindset of its politicians as well as its people qualify it as a non-European state unfit to become a member of the EU (Aydın-Düzgit and Rumelili, 2021: 63).

Identities are not a given, as contended in the previous section. Yet, their re-construction, their re-imagination does not take place easily (ibid.). In this framework, what role does European institutions' cultural policy play?

Cultural policies can function as identity building engines, actively defining the border between 'European Self' and 'European Other'. Analysing the case studies, I will illustrate both what has been attempted and what actually happened in the public presentation of identities, paying attention to the agency of both European institutions and domestic actors. Cultural events, indeed, in particular visual art exhibitions, play a key role in the construction of narratives and imaginaries (and stereotypes too). In the following section, I will explain why and how.

Art exhibitions as rituals of legitimacy

In her contribution to the edited volume *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museums Display*, the art historian Carol Duncan (1991) describes museums as rituals. Following the same line of reasoning, I claim exhibitions can be approached as rituals too. By rituals, I mean those symbolic actions that transmit and represent values and regulations, constituting and supporting a community (Han, 2020). Rituals ‘construct’ and unite communities through symbolic perception: symbols act as tools of recognition, as techniques of ‘making one-self at home’, transforming the condition of being-in-the-world into being-at-home (ibid.).

Duncan (1991: 90) talks about museums as ‘ceremonial monuments’, in order to

emphasise the museum experience as a monumental creation in its own right, a cultural artefact that [...] by fulfilling its declared purposes as a museum (preserving and displaying art objects) also carries out broad, sometimes less obvious, political and ideological tasks.

Through the act of selecting and showcasing specific artefacts and art works, museums build a symbolic language. Exhibitions carry the same potential.

Duncan explains how Western societies, since the Enlightenment, have been used to distinguish between religious and secular realms and their own specific spatial domains: churches and temples on one side – where subjective religious beliefs are expressed and addressed to voluntary believers; museums, courts, and universities on the other – the places of objective and universal truths, that keep civic communities together through the identification of their ‘highest values, proudest memories and truest truths’ (Duncan, 1991: 91). Museums belong to this last category, being the ‘preservers of the community’s cultural heritage’ (ibid.). The exhibitions they host function accordingly.

Recognising the ‘ideological character of our Enlightened vocabulary’ (Duncan, 1991: 91) and referring to the work of the anthropologists Benamou and Caramello (1977), Duncan dismantles this dichotomy and asserts that rituals belong to the secular realm too, including museums. Once

we

question the claims made for the secular – that its truths are lucid, rationally demonstrable, and objective – we may begin to conceptualise the hidden (or perhaps the better word is *disguised*) ritual content of secular ceremonies (Duncan, 1991: 91).

The alleged moral, social, and political neutrality of museums, exhibitions, and their content represent ‘the very quality that enables them to become instruments of power as well as instruments of education and experience’ (Karp, 1991: 13).

Duncan focuses on the ‘particular state of receptivity’ characterising the ‘performance’ of museums’ visitors: exhibition spaces, as ritual sites, have a special connotation as places for contemplation and learning, where devotion and attention are requested. Institutional narratives represent a *static* objectivisation of collective identity; exhibitions involve the *active* and *dialectic* dimension of it, through the display of its constitutive symbols. Going to an exhibition, performing the ritual of the visit, has the potential of building that solidarity which, as Kertzer (1988) points out drawing on Durkheim (1912), comes from *acting* together and not *thinking* together. The route followed by visitors in museums and exhibitions acquires the value of a ritual, ‘often regarded as transformative’ (Duncan, 1991: 91). The content of this route constitutes a ‘programmed narrative’ (ibid.), resulting from the selection of the responsible curators.

Museums and exhibitions

can be powerful identity building machines. To control a museum means precisely to control the representation of a community and some of the highest most authoritative truths. It also means the power to define and rank people, to declare some having a greater share than others in the community’s common heritage – in its very identity (Duncan, 1991: 91).

For this reason, the analysis of each case study will be a revealing factor of Turkey’s perceived level of Europeanness, during its uneven path of integration: to rephrase Duncan, each event will offer the opportunity to measure the ‘share’ of this – (first) potential and (later) actual – candidate in the European common heritage.

In this research, exhibitions will be treated as spaces in which political narratives are ritualised: this is a crucial part in the creation of myths (Bouchard, 2007). I clarify this point in the coming paragraphs.

Social identities are generally based on large group differences and single-aspect categorisations – for example gender, age, or ethnicity – holding a strong potential for political mobilisation (Kohli, 2000). They are connected to the way in which collective actors – and the individuals they are constituted by – position themselves (and vice versa) in relation to others and the past, often through narrative forms, creating a meaningful and shared order in space and time (Kohli, 2000).²⁰ Referring to David Hume (2017) and his *A Treatise of Human Nature*, Remotti (2010) mentions *memory* and *imagination* as the elements supporting the creation of this meaningful narrative, resulting from forgetfulness, selections, and additions. Talking about political systems, as already seen in the previous sections, Della Sala (2010) refers to these significant accounts as ‘myths’ and underlines their role in the construction of political legitimacy.

Bottici and Challand (2013: 18) suggest that

to produce a narrative, one needs only a more or less coherent series of events; more is needed to make a myth. In a nutshell, political myths are narratives that set dramas on the stage.

According to Bouchard (2007), there are three stages for a successful construction of myths:

- 1) diffusion 2) ritualisation 3) sacralisation.

In the first phase, a specific narrative must be spread by a group of social actors – EU institutions in our case, acting through official documents (as it will be described in chapter 2). Subsequently, this narrative must be transformed into a ritual, becoming part of the political discourse and practice: this is the phase in which exhibitions can play a role, in particular events such as the

²⁰ In social psychology, interaction is considered a key element in the definition of social identities (Abrams & Hogg, 1990). The social identity theory defines an interperson-intergroup continuum of relations: on one extreme there are the idiosyncratic connections of primary networks – such as families – where *individuals* matter; on the other, *types* are more relevant (i.e., belonging to a specific social category). Collective identities are related to this end of the continuum (Kohli, 2000).

European Capitals of Culture, occurring on a regular basis. With time, when (and if) the myth is finally sacralised, it becomes impossible to question it, as it would be a challenge to the entire political community. The second part of the thesis, focused on the analysis of the case studies, will elaborate upon these last two points.

Looking at the research question from this perspective, each case study can be tested in its contribution to the ‘construction’ of European citizens and their collective identity, according to the actual ‘implementation’ of these three phases. So, the main question driving the research can be further articulated: did the *static* representation of collective identity by institutional narratives transform successfully into its *active* and *dialectic* dimension? Was the event able to spread, ritualise and sacralise the official narrative, making it a political myth able to foster political legitimacy? The conclusions of each case study will answer these questions.

The study of EU cultural policy’s structure and content, as Patel (2013) points out and these last paragraphs have shown, encourages new approaches to the study of Europeanisation that can ‘transcend the boundaries of polity and policy making’, encompassing ‘wider processes of societal and economic change or identity formation’ (ibid.: 1). Furthermore, it ‘offers a unique chance to challenge established disciplinary and methodological divides and to search for new synergies among them’ (ibid.). That’s why, as declared in its premises, this project embraces an interdisciplinary perspective.

Interdisciplinarity in the study of cultural policy

Despite my main affiliation to a department of Political Science and Public Administration, this research refers to theories and methodologies from other disciplines, in particular anthropology and sociology. Furthermore, my writings have been enriched by the exchange with the historians of the European University Institute of Fiesole, where I have spent a semester as visiting PhD student at the beginning of my work, under the mentorship of Professor Federico Romero. It was during one of his seminars that I started thinking in depth about the value of interdisciplinarity for

my research, especially after reading an article by the historian William Hamilton Sewell (2005), encouraging a dialogue among disciplines for the analysis of the functioning, reproduction, and transformation of social relations.

The focus of this inquiry inevitably led me, since its inception, to approach various academic perspectives: cultural policy is an articulated object of study and, for this reason, hardly placeable in relation to a specific discipline. Clive Gray (2000: 222) defines cultural policy as ‘the range of activities that governments undertake – or do not undertake – in the arena of culture’; in other terms ‘a regularised set of actions based on overarching principles’ (Durrer *et al.*, 2018: 3) concerning the broad fields of arts, heritage, and communications. As the coming chapters will show in detail, ‘how culture is articulated and operationalised within policy is historically loaded with socio-political and economic meanings, beliefs, traditions, and values’ (ibid.). Culture is indeed ‘more than textual signs or everyday practices [...] it offers important resources to markets and nations’ (ibid.), being therefore the object of attention of both public and private actors.²¹

Cultural policy is a field of inquiry that deals with the interactions of ‘political, economic, and socio-cultural dynamics at all levels of society’ (Durrer *et al.*, 2018: 3). It is interdisciplinary by nature, with scholars active mainly in the fields of political science, economics, arts management (Paquette & Radaelli, 2015), cultural studies (Cunningham, 1992; McRobbie, 1996), and in their more recent turn: the ‘creative industry’ realm (Florida, 2002; Hartley, 2005). It can be considered a relatively marginal subfield of political science, part of the research agendas of international relations, public policy, and public administration scholars (Durrer *et al.*, 2018; Eling, 1999; Gray

²¹ According to Paquette and Beauregard (2018), there are three main understandings of culture in political science:

- the aesthetic or anthropological approach, looking at art productions as a foundation for the construction of collective identity (Miller & Yúdice, 2002);
- political culture, namely a conceptual umbrella (Dittmer, 1977) used to describe the ways in which a political system has been ‘internalised in the cognitions, feelings and evaluations of its population’ (Almond & Verba, 1966, cited in Paquette & Beauregard, 2018: 21);
- culture as both art and heritage: Paquette and Beauregard (2018) consider political philosophy, starting from Plato’s *Republic* as the first contribution to the study of arts and politics, continuing until today in the critical work of authors as Jacques Rancière (2001, 2008, 2011).

The current research belongs mainly to the first category.

& Wingfield, 2011).²² Political scientists working on cultural policy find broader resonance especially in interdisciplinary spaces, such as *The Journal of Arts Management, Law and Society*, the *European Journal of Cultural Policy* (eventually the *International Journal of Cultural Policy*), and *Cultural Trends*, all born in the 1990s (ibid.).

The 1990s were a key moment in which the ‘policy science’, that characterised political science research in the 1950s and 1960s, gave its main input to the study of cultural policy: the policy cycle.²³ The policy cycle is the foundation of policy research (Brewer & DeLeon, 1983; Lerner & Lasswell, 1951) often aimed at explaining policy transformation. Usually, this cycle is considered as constituted by four basic phases (ibid.):

1. the emergence or recognition of an issue
2. the formulation of a policy to address the issue
3. the implementation of the policy
4. the evaluation of the policy

This research deals with the last phase, not in technical terms, but from the perspective of the policy’s reception – in particular by the community of art practitioners – testing and problematising EU’s narrative framework. The project ‘addresses some of the core concerns that political scientists and lawyers have been discussing in EU studies for years’ (Patel, 2013: 1) related to the European integration’s trajectory. It will do so through the prismatic approach offered by different disciplines, including aspects of the ‘becoming European’ process that go beyond the political sphere (ibid.): as anticipated in the first pages, indeed, looking at the academic literature on European cultural policy, it is possible to notice a general tendency to avoid dialogue with cultural operators, artists in particular, privileging instead European officials. This work

²² Durrer *et al.* (2018), acknowledging minor variations in different national contexts and various ‘secessionist ambitions’, identify the following broad subfields of political science: political philosophy, political sociology and electoral behaviors, comparative politics, international relations, and public administration.

²³ For a detailed analysis of the different stages in the study of cultural policy by political scientists see Paquette & Beauregard (2018).

would like to address this lacuna.

The analysis unfolds chronologically: the cases are described one after the other, in the awareness of their nature as historical events, resulting from diverse social dynamics taking place in heterogeneous temporalities (Sewell, 2005). Following this reasoning, as it will be clarified in the next section, I have distinguished two different temporal phases in the analysis, reflecting Turkey's status in regard to the Enlargement process.

Case studies

The six case studies are selected among cultural events organised in Turkey (with one exception), throughout the years of interaction with the European political project. As explained in the following pages, there are mainly two criteria behind their selection: the coincidence with different phases in the EC/EU-Turkey's history; the diverse nature in terms of organisers and content. The selected events are not the only ones supported by European institutions' funds in the years under scrutiny:²⁴ what determined the decision was the relevance of their content and the public resonance in the construction of European institutions' identitarian narratives. For this reason, small scale cultural initiatives (as the audiovisual projects supported by Creative Europe – the European Commission's framework programme joined by Turkey in 2015 and 2016)²⁵ or projects addressing other issues (as the special tours for seeing and hearing-impaired children organised in the Anatolian Civilisations Museums of Istanbul during '2018 European Year of

²⁴ For general information about EC/EU funded events, it is possible to consult:

- https://ec.europa.eu/budget/fts/index_en.htm, for IPA (Instruments of Pre-Accession) under direct management. The database offers details on contractors/beneficiaries and contracts signed each year by the Commission, since 2007.
- <https://euaidexplorer.ec.europa.eu/> DG DEVCO (Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development website, in the EU aid explorer: this also includes data from DG NEAR (Directorate General for European Neighborhood and Enlargement Negotiations).

<https://iatistandard.org/en/iati-tools-and-resources>, the international transparency website (IATI).

²⁵ Chapter 8, about '2018 European Year of Cultural Heritage', will offer details on Turkey's abrupt exit from Creative Europe. Projects supported by Creative Europe are available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/creative-europe/projects/>.

Cultural Heritage')²⁶ were not considered as objects of analysis.

Two of the selected events belong to the 'pre-history' of Turkish Enlargement, namely a time, during the Cold War, when Turkey was a so called 'potential candidate', that is a country with a recognised European perspective, taking part into Euro-Atlantic institutions (such as the Council of Europe), but not participating in the Enlargement process as such. The events are:

- the 'European Architectural Heritage Year' (1975)
- 'The Anatolian Civilisations' exhibition (1983)

Four of them took place during the years of Turkey's actual involvement in the Enlargement process:

- 'Europe, a Common Heritage' campaign (2000)
- 'Urban Realities: Focus Istanbul' contemporary art exhibition (2005)
- 'Istanbul 2010 European Capital of Culture'
- 'European Year of Cultural Heritage' (2018)

This watershed explains the big chronological gap between the second and the third case, during which no other major exhibitions suitable for the current study took place. As it will be further clarified at the end of this section, the change of status of Turkey from potential to actual candidate also justifies the inclusion in the research of events organised by the Council of Europe. As Dağı (1996: 131) underlines talking about the Council of Europe, the participation in organisations with a Euro-Atlantic vocation has a strong symbolic-identitarian meaning:

Turkey's view of the Council of Europe can be best understood within the context of its two-hundred-year-old history of Westernization. Membership of the Council of Europe was a significant step taken in this direction and came when Turkey's institutional integration into the Western world began just after the Second World War. Membership in the Council has had great symbolic importance for Turkey. It signified the

²⁶ https://www.eecas.europa.eu/delegations/türkiye/2018-european-year-cultural-heritage-tours-anatolian-civilization-museum-seeing_en

Europeanness of Turkey through political and institutional integration into Europe and somehow proved that Turkey's long held desire to be European had been approved by the Europeans themselves. Therefore this symbolic, even psychological, significance which Turkey attached to the Council of Europe was a means of influence for the Council of Europe.

If in the the Cold War era the CoE was an important Euro-Atlantic institution (that Turkey had belonged to since 1949), after the fall of the Berlin Wall, it has often been seen as an antechamber for EU membership. For this reason, the relationship between Turkey and the Council of Europe can be considered as a litmus test for Turkish Europeanness.

EVENT	ORGANISER(S)	DECLARED GOAL
European Architectural Heritage Year <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Date: 1975 • Location: all over Turkey (special focus on Istanbul) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council of Europe • Local organisations • ICOMOS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘to awaken the interest of the European peoples in their common architectural heritage and make them take a pride in it’; • ‘to warn against the dangers threatening this heritage and instigate the action necessary to safeguard it’; • ‘to protect architectural monuments and sites of historical or artistic value and ensure a living role for ancient buildings in contemporary society’; • ‘to conserve the character of old towns and villages and to restore them’ (CoE, 1972: 1)
The Anatolian Civilisations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Date: 1983 • Location: Istanbul 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council of Europe • Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism 	<p>‘The first urban settlements in Anatolia date back some 9000 years and already prefigure the region’s later bridge function between East and West. [...] The Council exhibition traced the civilisations which succeeded one another in Anatolia as the millennia passed, from paleolithic and Neolithic all the way to the Ottomans.’</p> <p>From: https://www.coe.int/en/web/culture-and-heritage/past-exhibitions#%2219677990%22:[13]}</p>

<p>Europe, a Common Heritage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Date: 2000 • Location: all over Turkey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council of Europe 	<p>‘...a means of bringing Greater Europe together and to promote cultural diversity.’ (CoE, 2000)</p> <p>‘This campaign has been appropriately timed to mark a quarter of a century since European Architectural Heritage Year of 1975. It responds to the Assembly’s call for an event to recognise the common heritage of Europe as a whole following Enlargement.’ (CoE, 2000)</p>
<p>Urban Realities: Focus Istanbul</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Date: 2005 • Location: Berlin 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • European Commission • Berlin Municipality • Kunstlerhaus Bethanien GmbH • Hauptstadtkulturfonds • IKS 	<p>“‘Urban Realities: Focus Istanbul’ is not an exhibition to document or illustrate regional developments by and with artists from a certain region, nor an exhibition to present contemporary Turkish art, but a classic thematic exhibition. It strives for a change of viewpoint, an intersection of glimpses of the city from the outside with those from within the city itself. In the face of the problem of ‘mental mapping’, it does not seek to merely describe findings, but also to reflect intentions and designs that shift with one’s site.’</p> <p>From: https://www.bethanien.de/en/exhibitions/urban-e-realitaten/</p>
<p>European Capital of Culture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Date: 2010 • Location: Istanbul 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Istanbul Foundation (civil society initiative) • European Commission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Highlight the richness and diversity of cultures in Europe’ • ‘Celebrate the cultural features Europeans share’ • ‘Increase European citizens’ sense of belonging to a common cultural area’ • ‘Foster the contribution of culture to the development of cities’ <p>From: https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/creative-europe/actions/capitals-culture_en</p>

European Year of Cultural Heritage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Date: 2018 • Location: Istanbul 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • European Union • Europa Nostra • Council of Europe • ICCROM • UNESCO • ICOMOS • Europeana 	<p>‘To raise awareness of European history and values and to strengthen a sense of European identity.’</p> <p>From: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2017/02/15/first-european-year-cultural-heritage-2018/</p>
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Each case will be useful to emphasise key aspects characterising EC/EU cultural policy. In detail:

PRE-HISTORY OF TURKISH ENLARGEMENT

- the ‘European Architectural Heritage Year’ of 1975 took place just one year after the Sampson coup and the subsequent Turkish military intervention in Cyprus. Turkey at this point was integrated into Euro-Atlantic institutions, including the Council of Europe, and had an Association Agreement with the EC that envisaged eventual full membership. The event happened also in the aftermath of the Declaration on European Identity’s promulgation (CEC, 1973), marking the beginning of the institutional discourse about European identity as a legitimising tool for European institutions. The document celebrated the ‘cherished values’ of a common civilisation and promoted a collective-corporativist idea of identity (Sassatelli, 2009). On this occasion, Turkey started a patrimonialisation process for its Ottoman-Turkish wooden houses, that, in some cases (as in the Black Sea city of Safranbolu), were later included in the UNESCO Heritage Sites list, thanks to their recognised ‘universal value’. This case will offer the possibility to investigate the concept of heritage and reflect upon the domestic re-appropriation of universal/European narratives for particularistic stances.

- ‘The Anatolian Civilisations’ exhibition of 1983 has been organised in Istanbul as the XVIII ‘exhibition of European art’ by the Council of Europe. It took place in the same year as the signature of the Solemn Declaration on the European Union (CEC, 1983). Differently from the Declaration of 1973, this document did not refer to a ‘European civilisation’ but made a call to individual awareness of local dimensions as constitutive of European identity (Sassatelli, 2009). The focus went from ‘unity’ to ‘diversity’ and from a collective to an individual (liberal) identity, as it happened in the narrative shaping the Council of Europe’ cultural initiatives. The event took place under Kenan Evren’s military junta, that caused the freezing of the Turkish Association Agreement to the EC in 1982, but also brought about Turkey’s opening to transnational markets: the exhibition became an occasion to show to Western guests the good side of the regime and the attractiveness of Istanbul as a global city (Sassen, 1991).

TURKEY IN THE ENLARGEMENT ERA

- ‘Europe, a Common Heritage’ campaign of 2000 by the Council of Europe marked a quarter of a century since the ‘European Architectural Heritage Year’, with cultural activities taking place in various part of the country. The big chronological leap from the previous case study has two main reasons: the shift of status for Turkey from potential to actual candidate to the EU; the lack of big European cultural initiatives with characteristics suitable for this study. This is the post-Maastricht era of ‘unity in diversity’, moving from the individual-liberal identity of the 1980s to an approach integrating elements of equality and social justice (Stråth, 2002). The event took place a few months after Turkey became a candidate to the EU, thirteen years after the application for full membership: this case will offer the possibility to think further about the Enlargement process’ meaning, especially in the post-Cold War era, and to

discuss about the change of perspective in the narrative on heritage and identity shaping European cultural policy.

- Under the Patronage of the President of the European Commission and the Governing Mayor of Berlin's patronage, the contemporary art exhibition 'Urban Realities: Focus Istanbul' took place in Berlin in 2005 – the opening year of accession negotiation for Turkey – with the aim to cover the faces and perspectives of an EU candidate's capital city. The curatorial framework caused harsh criticisms in the art community of Turkey, resulting in the withdrawal of many of the invited artists, accusing the project's curator of exploiting artists as 'good will ambassadors in the EU process of Turkey' and to refer to superficial 'clichés about East and West, Islam and Christianity'. This is the only event taking place outside of Turkey: compared to the others – having the dual purpose of raising awareness in Turkey about European issues and encouraging foreigners to visit Turkey – 'Focus Istanbul' was an attempt at increasing familiarity with Turkey for a European audience in a key European country, at a time when EU policy was to bring Turkey into Europe, making this former Other part of the Self. The case study will offer the opportunity to broadly reflect on the problematic implications intrinsic in art events based on geographical specifications and on their underlying understanding of the concept of culture.
- Initiated by the former Greek minister of culture Melina Mercouri, the European Capital of Culture Programme designates, each year since 1985, one or more cities to host cultural events connoted by an overt European dimension. With its declared aim 'to highlight the richness and diversity of European cultures' (Frisoni *et al.*, 2006: 2, cited in Iğsız, 2015: 334), the programme represents the emblematic embodiment of the EU motto 'unity in diversity'. Taking place in an already troubled phase of the accession negotiation for Turkey, 'Istanbul 2010 European Capital of Culture' offers the opportunity to problematise this narrative: the looseness of the formula, indeed, if on one side can be considered a reflection of the supposed

Union's openness, on the other can result in paradoxical implications. In this case, both the neo-Ottoman agenda of the Turkish government and the EU liberal-multiculturalist rhetoric (İğsız, 2015) found the perfect occasion to unfold, manifesting their limits in the incapacity to implement an actual inclusive programme, in favour of marketing objectives. The chapter will discuss the implications behind the employment of cultural policies as tools for economic development.

- Taking place two years after the attempted coup of 2016 and the following major repression from the government, the 'European Year of Cultural Heritage' has been organised by the EU in partnership with heritage organisations 'to raise awareness of European history and values and to strengthen a sense of European identity'.²⁷ Turkey, after exiting the Creative Europe Programme in January 2017 and having consequent difficulties in collecting funds, had a marginal participation to the event. This is an emblematic example of a contingency defined by Aydın-Düzgit and Kaliber (2016: 5) as 'de-Europeanisation', namely 'the loss or weakening of the EU/Europe as a normative/political context and as a reference point in domestic settings and national public debates'. The case study will be analysed through one of the few planned events, the contemporary art exhibition 'The Silence of 206 Rooms: Studies on the Büyükada Greek Orphanage'. The interviews to the participant artists and the content of the show will offer the possibility to think about the European cultural events as a potential 'engine of differentiation', to use the words of the artist Ali Kazma.

As already mentioned, the rationale behind the case study selection relies mainly on two elements:

1. The coincidence with different phases in the EC/EU-Turkey's history
 2. The diverse nature in terms of organisers and content
1. The coincidence with key phases in the EC/EU – Turkey's history

²⁷ <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2017/02/09-cultural-heritage/>

The EU and Turkey share a long history of ups and downs, proximity and distance. Covering more than four decades, the case studies' allows us to analyse key chapters of this relationship, in light of the more general trajectory of European integration. In addition to the already defined distinction pre-history/history of Enlargement, it is possible to employ a further periodisation: the events belong, indeed, to six different stages of the EU-Turkey history, defined by Hauge *et al.* (2016) and outlined in the following chart.²⁸

Phase	Dates	Characteristics	Cultural Event
1	1959 – 1975	The Ankara Agreement: economy and security as main drivers	European Architectural Heritage Year (1975)
2	1975 – 1989	Growing conflict: the political dimension gains ground	The Anatolian Civilisations (1983)
3	1989 – 2002	Post-Cold War Europe: a marginalised Turkish application	Europe, a Common Heritage (2000)
4	2002 – 2005	Turkey becomes accession candidate: a positive turn with geopolitical motivations?	Urban Realities: Focus Istanbul (2005)
5	2005 – 2013	Between stagnation and growing tensions	Istanbul European Capital of Culture (2010)
6	2013 – ...	Migration as a driver forward and political change in Turkey	European Year of Cultural Heritage (2018)

A clarification is needed about this periodisation: section 3 – ‘Post-Cold War Europe: a marginalised Turkish application’ ends in 2002, when Turkey became already a candidate in December 1999. This choice has been made because, despite the official designation, in December 1999 Turkey was still outside the negotiation process (in which all the other candidates had been invited to take part), waiting 2002 for a final resolution about its opening. Hence the application, although making progress, was arguably still marginalised in comparison to the others.

²⁸ For the current analysis, I keep the original periodisation defined in the paper, with only one exception: the first phase was originally ending in 1970, in conjunction with the Additional Protocol and the second Financial Protocol to the Association Agreement. I decided, instead, to conclude it in the aftermath of the Turkish intervention in Cyprus, considering it the climax of a situation of ‘growing conflict.’ The ‘European Year of Architectural Heritage’, taking place just one year after the intervention will be analysed considering the characteristics of phase 1 and the elements of change that led to phase 2.

In December 2002, Turkey was told that, if all went well, in 2004 a decision would be taken on the opening of accession negotiations (Council of the European Union, 2002). As it will be described in the relevant chapter, the previous month had seen the election of the single-party AKP (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*, Justice and Development Party) government, with a parliamentary majority which would allow it to push forward with reforms. The 2002 decision indicated that Turkey was eventually on the path to the opening of negotiations, pushed also by considerable pressure from the US, underlining how geopolitics and security concerns became the key and urgent priority for the Western world, especially after 9/11. ‘Europe: a Common Heritage’, taking place in 2000, was planned before all this happened. For this reason, this event can be considered representative of this phase and not of the following one (4 – ‘Turkey becomes accession candidate: a positive turn with geopolitical motivations?’), better described by the exhibition ‘Urban Realities: Focus Istanbul’, as chapter 6 will show.

As explained in the previous sections, cultural events are here conceived as engines in the construction of political discourses on integration. Compared to other studies,²⁹ the periodisation by Hauge *et al.* (2016) proves to be particularly relevant for its references to different political narratives on ‘the evolution, nature and/or *finalité* of EU-Turkey relations’ (ibid.: 8),³⁰ emerging from official documents since 1959, year of the Turkish application for associate membership to the European Economic Community.

2. The diverse nature in terms of organisers and content

In addition to the temporal element, the case study selection has been motivated by the relevance of the exhibitions in the construction of European institutions’ identitarian narratives; in other

²⁹ See e.g.: Aydın-Düzgit & Tocci (2015), Eralp (2009), Eralp & Şenyuva (2011), Eralp & Torun (2013), Hauge & Wessels (2015), Müftüler-Baç (1997), Müftüler-Baç (2016), Narbone & Tocci (2007), Öniş (2001, 2008); Turhan (2011); Yılmaz (2008). Other authors focused on the elite discourse (Aydın-Düzgit, 2012, 2013; Macmillan, 2013; Şenyuva, Akşit & Gürleyen, 2011) or public opinion narratives (Gerhards & Hans, 2011; Ruiz-Jiménez & Torreblanca, 2007; Tocci, 2007; Yuvachi, 2012) in EU about Turkey and vice versa (cited in Hauge *et al.* 2016: 6).

³⁰ The authors identify eight main narratives that will emerge in the discussion of the case studies: Westernisation; neo-Ottomanism; Enlargement; Europeanisation; partnership; economic cooperation; Turkey as a geostrategic partner; Turkey as a bridge; Turkey as Other.

words, by their ‘ritualistic’ and symbolic nature. For this reason, I have privileged big scale events with a declared ‘European’ framework (i.e., the ‘European Architectural Heritage Year’, ‘Istanbul 2010 European Capital of Culture’, ‘Europe, a Common Heritage’ campaign, the ‘European Year of Cultural Heritage’) and a recurrent character (i.e., the European Capital of Culture, ‘Europe, a Common Heritage’ campaign, and the art exhibitions of the Council of Europe, such as ‘The Anatolian Civilisations’). Because of its broad visibility and the relevance of the debate it triggered, I have also included a thematic exhibition (‘Urban realities: Focus Istanbul’), that does not openly mention a European dimension in its title but involves it in its content.

The first three events are supported by the Council of Europe and the following three by the European Union (with the involvement of the CoE for the ‘European Year of Cultural Heritage’). This reflects, first of all, Turkey’s status towards European organisations and the EU Enlargement, as described in the previous pages, initially as a potential candidate (joining Euro-Atlantic institutions), then as an actual one. Furthermore, as the chronological analysis of European documents will show, the first decades of the Council of Europe’s activity are essential to understand policies later implemented by EU institutions in the field of culture. As will be analysed in chapter 2, culture represented a sensitive issue at the beginning of the European political project (Patel, 2013), touching the exposed nerve of national legacies; acting in the fields of democracy, human rights, and culture and having mainly a consultative nature, the Council of Europe played a crucial role in developing, in a more neutral context, narratives aimed at the creation of a war-free Europe subsequently adopted by the Europe Union (Brossat, 1999; Sassatelli, 2009).³¹

However, not only European organisations write narratives about European identity, despite the fact they appropriated its terms (Sassatelli, 2009).³² For this reason, the events analysed are of

³¹ As Sassatelli (2009: 44) underlines, ‘the more encompassing Europe of the CoE, both conceptually and geographically’ can help to understand why this institution developed earlier a discourse later adopted by the European Union in a phase of deepening and widening.

³² Sassatelli (2009) suggests that, since the Communities have dropped the adjective ‘Economic’, European organisations appropriated the term ‘Europe’ completely. The Maastricht Treaty was responsible for this

diverse nature (art exhibitions, festivals...) and promoted by different actors, part of both civil society and the European institutional structure.³³ Shore (2000) uses the term ‘agents of European consciousness’ to define all the

forces and objects through which knowledge of the European Union is embodied and communicated as a socio-cultural phenomenon: in other words, *all* those actors, actions, artefacts, bodies, institutions, policies, and representations which, singularly or collectively, help to engender awareness and promote acceptance of the ‘European idea’. These agents of consciousness range from the abstract and intangible to the concrete and the mundane: from EU institutions and civil servants, the single market, the euro, the metric system for weights and measures, and the proliferation of EC laws and regulations, to educational exchanges, town-twinning, invented Euro-symbols and traditions, European Union historiography, and the harmonisation of European statistics by the Eurostat office (*ibid.*: 26).

As Mattocks (2018: 397) points out, ‘much of the EU cultural policy is based on voluntary cooperation, restricted by the principle of subsidiarity’,³⁴ as, in legal terms, the EU is not allowed to supervise and administer in this field (Sandell, 1996). For this reason, there are plenty of non-institutional subjects taking advantage of the ‘European’ label, both symbolically and financially, hence playing an active role in interpreting European narratives. EU cultural policy can be appropriately described as a

‘functional’ policy, i.e., as a domain in which the Union has very specific and rather narrow competences, in comparison to the sectorial approach that characterises, for instance, agricultural, transport or energy policies, or the even more encompassing quality of the Single Market (Patel, 2013: 4).³⁵

symbolic move in thinking about the nature of European integration (Shore, 2000): from that moment on, Europe-as-an-idea and Europe-as-a-political-project tended to be studied as part of the same discourse. For this reason, it is important to bear in mind the strong connection between the two terms, but at the same time not to use them as synonyms.

³³ For an overview of the role played by different European institutions in the cultural field see Mattocks (2018).

³⁴ ‘Subsidiarity outlined in Article 5(3) of the Maastricht Treaty is a principle of EU law. It says that the EU will only become involved in a policy area if it is deemed the best ‘level’ of government to do so, i.e., member states acting on their own is insufficient’ (Mattocks, 2018: 409).

³⁵ Other areas of functional policies are, for example, public health or research and innovation. As Patel (2013: 2) suggests, for the role of cultural policy within the EU’s policy domain see Versluis *et al.* (2011: 63-71); on the role of cultural policy in the EU see Craufurd-Smith (2011) and Staiger (2009).

The role of domestic actors – such as politicians, journalists, intellectuals, and activists – and their interpretation and use of the ‘Europe’ concept are of crucial importance in defining the impact of Europeanisation on European societies (Kaliber, 2013). For this reason, in each case study, power relationships will be pointed out, showing the degree of agency by the different actors involved: European institutions, national and/or local government, organisers, and participants in the events. In this way, it will be possible to look at the actual dynamics enacted when a European policy goal is implemented by specific individuals in specific contexts.

Sources of the research

The project took shape thanks to a combination of:

- a) an extensive reading of secondary sources
- b) a collection of primary sources. In particular:
 - documents of European institutions
 - documents related to the case studies
- c) interviews

a) the access to the library of Koç University in Istanbul and the visiting periods at L’Orientale University (Naples) and the European University Institute (Fiesole) gave me the possibility to find the proper secondary sources among the existing interdisciplinary literature on European integration, culture, and identity, partially presented in the previous pages and further examined in chapter 1. The lessons on the history of European integration by Professor Federico Romero in Fiesole and the courses ‘Postcolonial studies and interethnic relations’ by Professor Miguel Mellino and ‘Cultural and Postcolonial Studies of the Mediterranean’ by Professor Ian Chambers, in Naples, contributed to the definition of my bibliography, together with the participation in the seminars organised in the context of DIMES, at Koç University and EUI (including a conference by the historian Luisa Passerini).

b) For the collection of primary sources, I consulted mainly three archives:

- the online archives of the Council of Europe and the European Union; the Historical Archive of the European Union at EUI (Fiesole), established in 1983.

They were the reference for finding European institutional documents on culture and identity (that will be displayed in chapter 2), through which I depicted the evolving narratives on the meaning of ‘Europe’ and ‘being European’, crafted by European organisation from the end of the Second World War.

- the archive of SALT Research Centre (Istanbul).

‘With a focus on visual practices, the built environment, social life and economic history [...] from the late 19th century to the present day with an emphasis on Turkey and the geographies of the Southeast Mediterranean and Southeast Europe’,³⁶ this archive was a valuable source for catalogues, magazines, pamphlets, and other material about the case studies.

- the Istanbul personal archive of the curator Beral Madra.

Mrs Madra is a key figure in the recent art history of Turkey, who was involved in first person in two of the case studies: ‘The Anatolian Civilisations’ exhibition of 1983 (as assistant of the curator Dr. Muçin Asgari) and ‘Istanbul 2010 European Capital of Culture’ (as director of the visual art events). Her collection of catalogues and documents was important especially for the projects just mentioned.

Overall, the primary sources related to the exhibitions consisted of :

- press releases available either online (on the websites of the Council of Europe and the EU Delegation to Turkey in the majority of cases), or in the physical archives of Mrs. Madra, SALT or EUI

³⁶ From: https://saltresearch.org/primo_library/libweb/static_htmls/salt/info_about.jsp

- promotional videos (in particular for ‘Istanbul 2010 European Capital of Culture’: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m-lh6zH74nQ>; and ‘2018 European year of Cultural Heritage’: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RcNwEBrS5oY>)
- official publications, as the application proposal for ‘Istanbul 2010 European Capital of Culture’, found at Mrs. Madra’s archive
- interviews on online or paper magazines (as Lind & Minichbauer, 2005 for the late artist Hüseyin Bahri Alptekin (1957-2007); or Vivarelli, 2016 for the Turkish exit form Creative Europe)
- articles about the events: reviews on international press (Bernier, 1983; Lapp, 2005); local press (Sol,2020)
- newspaper articles about Istanbul, helpful to understand the international perspective on the city (Foroohar, 2005)
- material collected during previous researches, as the workshop ‘A Book for Songs and Places’ run by the architect Maxime Hourani during the Istanbul Biennial 2013
- catalogues, as listed in the chart below:

EVENT	OFFICIAL CATALOGUES
The Anatolian Civilisations (1983)	Council of Europe (1983c), <i>The Anatolian Civilisations</i>
Urban Realities: Focus Istanbul (2005)	Tannert C. (ed.) (2005), <i>Urbane Realitäten: Fokus Istanbul</i> , Künstlerhaus Bethanien GmbH, Berlin
Istanbul European Capital of Culture (2010)	AA.VV. (2012), ‘365 Days 459 Projects’, Istanbul 2010 ECOC Agency, Istanbul
European Year of Cultural Heritage (2018)	Büyüктаşçıyan H., M. Germen, A. Kazma & D. Winchester (2018), <i>The Silence of 206 Rooms: Studies on the Büyükkada Greek Orphanage</i> , Galata Rum Okulu, Istanbul

C) Interviews

Supported partially by a UACES scholarship, my fieldwork took place in Istanbul and Berlin, consisting also of in-depth interviews with the events' organisers and participants, facilitated by the network I built during my previous experiences in the art world. Almost a decade of work in this milieu smoothed the interaction with my interlocutors: having a shared language and a common knowledge of places, people, and events allowed me to clearly communicate the roots of my enquiry and establish a certain degree of trust.

NAME AND IDENTITY	CASE STUDY	DATE AND MODALITY
Beral Madra <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistant curator for 'The Anatolian Civilisations' • director of the visual art events for 'Istanbul 2010 European Capital of Culture' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'The Anatolian Civilisations' (1983) • Istanbul 2010 European Capital of Culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 September 2020. • Zoom
Gülsün Karamustafa <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Artist 'Urban Realities: Focus Istanbul' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Europe a Common Heritage (2000) • 'Urban Realities: Focus Istanbul' (2010) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7 December 2019 • Meeting in Istanbul
Christoph Tannert <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • managing director of Künstlerhaus Bethanien GmbH • curator of 'Urban Realities: Focus Istanbul' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Urban Realities: Focus Istanbul' (2010) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 October 2020. • email
Leyla Gediz <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Artist 'Urban Realities: Focus Istanbul' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Urban Realities: Focus Istanbul' (2010) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7 November 2019 • email

Silvina der Meguerditchian <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Artist ‘Urban Realities: Focus Istanbul’ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Urban Realities: Focus Istanbul’ (2010) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 17 July 2019 • Meeting in Berlin
Ali Kazma <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Artist ‘The Silence of 206 Rooms: Studies on the Büyükada Greek Orphanage’ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Urban Realities: Focus Istanbul’ (2010) • ‘The Silence of 206 Rooms: Studies on the Büyükada Greek Orphanage’ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 27 July 2020 • Zoom
Deniz Gül <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Artist ‘Istanbul 2010 European Capital of Culture’ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Istanbul 2010 European Capital of Culture’ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 May 2020 • Zoom
Barış Altan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secretary General of Europa Nostra Turkey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘2018 European Year of Cultural Heritage’ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • September 2017, 20 July 2020 • email
Murat Germen <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Artist ‘The Silence of 206 Rooms: Studies on the Büyükada Greek Orphanage’ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘The Silence of 206 Rooms: Studies on the Büyükada Greek Orphanage’ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 23 July 2020 • email
Hera Büyüктаşçıyan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Artist and curator ‘The Silence of 206 Rooms: Studies on the Büyükada Greek Orphanage’ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘The Silence of 206 Rooms: Studies on the Büyükada Greek Orphanage’ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20-24 July 2020 • email and phone

As already anticipated, the dialogue with my interviewees from the art world has the aim to bring to the fore voices rarely heard in the debate about EU cultural policies, thus opening new perspectives on the understanding of the events under scrutiny. The choice of in-depth interviews was motivated by the will to articulate issues usually measured through questionnaires (see for example Sassatelli 2009), delivered mainly to European officials, without the involvement of the actual content creators of the initiatives. I acknowledge the limitations in terms of number of people reached through this methodology, but the research relies on other sources (like the Eurobarometer) to cover broader samples, when needed .

The interviews have always been the result of a long process of communication. I knew some of my interlocutors since 2013 (Mrs. Madra, Ali Kazma, Hera Büyüктаşçıyan, Silvina der Meguerditchian) and I also worked with some of them (Hera Büyüктаşçıyan, Silvina der Meguerditchian). These are the people I decided to contact in the first place, then following their personal recommendations to identify other interlocutors. This is how I got in touch with Barış Altan, Murat Germen, Mrs. Karamustafa, Leyla Gediz, and Christoph Tannert. I also conducted other interviews that I eventually decided not to include in the project because of their lack of relevance: these interlocutors declared they have no memories about the events object of my analysis. There was one more artist I wanted to interview for the case ‘Urban Realities: Focus Istanbul’, but he never replied to my emails.

The interviews took place after at least a preliminary contact, in which I asked the interlocutors if they preferred to receive written questions via email or being interviewed in person. For those who decided to have a meeting in person, I kept the conversation open, starting with a general question about their experience being part of a specific event. For those that wanted a list of questions, I prepared them according to their role in the initiative, keeping a basic fix structure of three questions (i.e.: how they got involved; how they related to the European framework of the exhibit; if their understanding of the idea of ‘being European’ changed after the event).

For obvious reasons, it has been impossible to hear directly from some of the contributors to the most chronologically distant initiatives (especially ‘1975 European Architectural Heritage Year’): therefore, I decided to employ these cases to untangle critical theoretical issues. Furthermore, especially in the case of ‘Istanbul 2010 European Capital of Culture’, the research has been enriched by the material I have collected during my previous period of residence in Turkey, carrying out research on the urban transformation processes.

Research structure and project goals

The analysis starts by introducing the social theory vocabulary that orients the research and shapes the argument. In part I, chapter 1.1 presents a reflection on the current use (and abuse) of the identity and culture concepts, framing it in the context of what Francesco Remotti (2010) described as ‘impoverishment of culture’ and Ernesto De Martino (2002), another Italian anthropologist, depicted as ‘crisis of the presence’. Chapter 1.2 points out the connection of these concepts with political legitimacy, in the context of European Enlargement. Chapter 2 keeps the focus on these notions, in particular on their employment by European institutions in official documents, building the narrative on the meaning of ‘Europe’ and ‘being European’.

In part II and III, the project concentrates on the case studies, each one of them interpreted according to different theoretical contributions, showing various nuances of cultural policies. The selected events are observed in their potential as creators of a common symbolic dimension, capable to foster political allegiance, as openly declared by European institutions, and thus ‘construct’ and unite the citizens of Europe, building the polity’s legitimacy. Each case will start with a detailed description of the political and institutional context, with a focus on the development of the Union’s deepening and enlarging in relation with Turkey and an assessment of Turkey’s perceived ‘Europeanness’ at that particular time: as Alpan points out (2021: 128), what is relevant ‘is not whether Europe matters for Turkey, but how it matters, to what degree, in what direction, at what point in time’. Following Bouchard (2007), all the chapters will look at the

spreading, ritualisation, and sacralisation of the narrative employed by the agents of European consciousness involved in the events and will offer a conclusion in which the question(s) guiding the research will be answered.

The final remarks will collect all the findings. Reflecting on the Turkish case, this research wants to question the role of cultural policy and artistic production in the European integration process, challenging and repositioning the categories of European identity and culture. Conceptualising cultural policies as rituals of political legitimacy based on monolithic narratives, the project aims at showing the limits of this overarching framework of action. In doing so, it hopes to contribute to the ongoing academic debate on European integration, shaping new questions through different methodological perspectives and from the precious point of view of the Enlargement process.

PART I:
BUILDING LEGITIMACY THROUGH IDENTITY AND CULTURE

Chapter 1 – Identity and culture: indispensable concepts for an enlarging Europe?

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Chapter 1 – Identity and culture: indispensable concepts for an enlarging Europe?

1.1 Identity in times of impoverishment of culture

In the posthumous book *La Fine del Mondo. Contributo all'Analisi delle Apocalissi Culturali*,³⁷ the Italian anthropologist Ernesto De Martino (1908-1965) tells the story of his fieldwork encounter with a shepherd in the Calabrese village of Marcellinara. Seated in De Martino's car to guide him around local roads, the man showed increasing anxiety the more the Marcellinara's clock tower was going out of his sight. Promptly brought back to the village, the man started to calm himself moving closer to his familiar space. De Martino explains the shepherd's distressed reaction as the result of a temporary eradication from his existential homeland, 'the culturalised horizon beyond which he could not go' (De Martino, 2002: 479, my translation).³⁸

The shepherd's experience resembles at points the Enlargement process for the European Union, but with a relevant difference: the lack of the Marcellinara's clock tower. Indeed 'while there is substantial agreement amongst informed observers that there *is* a Europe *and* even Europeans, there is less agreement on who they are and in what they believe' (Buonanno & Deakin, 2004: 85).³⁹

The preamble of the Treaty of Rome (1957), where the founding members of the European Economic Community were 'calling upon the other peoples of Europe who share their ideal to join in their efforts', shows how the European project has been constituted as an 'open invitation to all the European countries to participate in the integration process' (Verney, 2006: 34). This overt

³⁷ *The End of the World. A Contribution to the Analysis of Cultural Apocalypse*, my translation

³⁸ 'l'orizzonte culturalizzato oltre il quale non può andare'.

³⁹ For an overview of the debate about the EU's nature from a political science perspective see the CIDEL project, in particular Eriksen *et al.* (2004). According to their analysis, there are three main interpretations of the European political project: 1) right-based community, with integration based on democratic procedures and legally defined rights; 2) problem-solving entity, with the EU resembling an international organisation in support of the market; 3) value based-community, according to which the EU should base integration on common European identity and values. Other political scientists have focused their studies on the EU's 'essence', suggesting several hypotheses: a civilian power (Duchene 1973; Orbie, 2006, 2008); an experiment of transnational democracy (Schmitter, 2006); an empire (Zielonka, 2006); a normative power (Manners, 2002); an ethical power (Aggestam, 2008); a Kantian power (Kagan, 2003; Nikolaïdis, 2004); a quiet superpower (Moravcsik, 2002).

encouragement set forth the so-called rhetorical entrapment (Schimmelfennig, 2001, 2021)⁴⁰ that made morally impossible for the EU the refusal of new member states, carrying with them the inevitable interrogation about what the Union is or should be: ‘facing new members willing to join the European club raises questions such as who the Europeans are and what kind of values characterise Europe’ (Sjursen, 2008: 11). The European political project has since its inception looked beyond ‘its culturalised horizon’. Actually, it is still in search of it.

In the current age of crisis (Dinan *et al.*, 2017), questions about the meaning of the Union are not only provoked by the encounter with new candidates, but also rise strongly from within member states. Brexit is the most vocal expression of this agitated disenchantment; the popularity of leaders such as Matteo Salvini in Italy and Viktor Orban in Hungary, with their muscular blackmailing of EU institutions constitute another manifestation of the same agitation. The increasing institutional, academic, and popular references to a European identity mirror the urgency of an issue that, I suggest following Remotti’s work (2010), can be framed within a broader context of ‘identitarian obsession’ expanding beyond the Union.

The identitarian obsession: an antidote to complexity

According to Asad (2002), social sciences started to be more concerned with the idea of identity in the aftermath of the Second World War, dealing with ‘the individual’s social locations and psychological crises in an increasingly uncertain world’ (ibid.: 210). The contemporary omnipresence of the identity concept, labelled by Remotti as ‘obsession’, can be understood as an antidote to the complexity⁴¹ of human existence and relations (Remotti, 2010; Tajfel & Turner,

⁴⁰ The rhetorical entrapment is a causal mechanism that induces self-interested and strategic actors to behave in line with the norms of their community. International communities define common standards of appropriate behavior to which their member states commit themselves. When member states violate the community standards, they can be shamed into compliance by exposing the inconsistency between normative commitment and actual behavior (Schimmelfennig, 2021: 139).

⁴¹ Remotti (2010) mentions as main reference for the theory of complexity the work of Gandolfi (1999), *Formicai, imperi, cervelli. Introduzione alla scienza della complessità* (Anthills, empires, brains. Introduction to the science of complexity, my translation). Gandolfi considers human cultures as complex phenomena; Remotti, instead, conceives them as attempts at reducing complexity, sometimes through the creation of *complicated* technological systems.

1986). It is a possible way out to what De Martino called in 1930s the ‘crisis of the presence’ (*la crisi della presenza*) in a bitterly poetic analysis of human precariousness (Saunders, 1995), and Remotti (2010), more recently, has labelled as ‘impoverishment of culture’ (*impoverimento della cultura*), namely the human inability of creating tools-for and relations-with the complexity surrounding them and the collectivities they are part of. The identity concept, indeed, resembles the Marcellinara’s clock tower: a stable and solid anchor of permanence and recognition. The identitarian obsession is both a product and a constitutive element of this desertification of relations (ibid.), where individuals and collectivities are stuck in the inability to establish relations with their environment, be it human, physical or natural.

Culture

Culture can be considered a series of material, social, intellectual, and symbolic tools, created by human beings to deal with the world and the tangle of relations that constitute its complexity (Remotti, 2010). Societies are able to construct these tools; in the same way, we assume they are also ‘capable of destroying, altering, neglecting, forgetting or radically reconstructing them, either purposely or unintentionally’ (Sewell, 2005: 8).

In general, human cultures operate identifying problems and their specificities, in order to implement possible solutions. As Geertz (1987) puts it, cultures are constituted by ‘models of’ (aimed at understanding phenomena through symbolic parallels) and ‘models for’ (offering practical instructions and symbolic structures to orientate human activity in the world). So, if a flow chart to model the functioning of a dam can be considered a ‘model of’, then the actual construction of a dam, by following the flow chart, is an example of a ‘model for’ (ibid.). When these aspects are balanced and ‘models of’ and ‘models for’ allow a meaningful interaction with the environment, a society experiences ‘cultural density’ (Remotti, 2010). Otherwise, when these models are not capable any longer of creating significant connections with their surroundings, societies face an inevitable condition of ‘impoverishment’ (Remotti, 2010).

The crisis of the presence

De Martino's work (2002, 2007)⁴² offers another point of view to understand the meaning of cultural impoverishment. Observing the magical rural world of Southern Italy in the 1950s, he elaborated his thoughts on the 'crisis of the presence'. De Martino considered the 'presence' as the individuals' ability to give a cultural configuration to the world they inhabit: this means being conscious of the necessary tools to cope with a specific historical context, having the consequent possibility to play an active role in it, within a horizon of meaning – a 'culturalised horizon'.

The 'presence', as the cultural density described by Remotti, is an *in fieri* condition, constantly at risk of falling apart, jolted by 'critical moments' (*momenti critici*) (De Martino, 2002). The crisis of the presence goes beyond the realms of magic and religion; it pertains to all kinds of societies, including secular ones. We are currently facing one of these critical moments, where one crisis follows the other: the economic crisis, the refugee crisis, the legitimacy crisis, the environmental crisis, the pandemic crisis. We wait for the next one. Critical moments are a structural element of humankind: all societies are exposed to the possibility of the unexpected and, equally, their existence is an *in fieri* process.

The crisis of the presence is a permanent condition, symbolically and macroscopically expressed in the fear of 'the end of the world' (De Martino, 2002). 'The end' relates to the risk of not being present in any possible cultural world, of being unable to act *in* and *for* the community according to its values. It is the fear of a 'cultural apocalypse', namely the end of an existing worldly order. It is what the Marcellinara's shepherd experienced leaving his culturalised horizon; it is what the European Union experiences each time a new member become part of the 'family'. It is the end of *a* world. The European Union is indeed an entity *in fieri*; the crisis of the presence is a constantly visible condition, and Enlargement is one of the most evident aspects of it: the encounter with a

⁴² Unfortunately, very little of De Martino's work has been translated into English. For the topics I am concerned with in this chapter, I can only make a reference to the article 'Crisis of the presence and religious reintegration' translated by Tobia Farnetti and Charles Stewart for the HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory 2 (2): 434–50 (<https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/pdfplus/10.14318/hau2.2.024>).

stranger candidate state can be conceived as a ‘critical moment’ and as such, it requires a process of collective cultural reconstruction.

Critical moments can be faced, and the presence reintegrated, shaping new ‘models of’ and new ‘models for’: rituals – such as funeral lamentations and possession cults – are some of the strategies employed by the inhabitants of the magical realm to ‘act in the world’ and not ‘be acted’ by it (De Martino, 2007). During the performance, the community goes until the verge of chaos in order to face and handle it: in this context, critical moments are not unexpected, but they are voluntarily performed by mankind that, in this way, plays an active role in its existential drama, controlling and overcoming it. Magic generates that ‘culturalised horizon’ that allows the reshaping of the world on the verge of chaos. It is a necessary process for the redemption of the presence.⁴³

In the rituals of cultural apocalypse, the end of the world is perceived as a risk that is about to happen and not as a *de facto* reality: the crisis is not hidden in the ritual, but instead it is faced in all its phases, and it is exactly through re-enacting these stages that it can change its direction. The risk of loss becomes an opportunity of recovery: the presence is reintegrated in the world system. This means that a cultural apocalypse is not the end of *the* world, but the end of *a* world, and human cultures have (or should have) the instruments to deal with it.

The impoverishment of culture

The alternative to the reintegration of the presence is the impoverishment of culture. In an impoverished culture analyses are univocal, and the complexity of relations is controlled by a classificatory order, substituting reciprocity with a logic of division and separation (Remotti,

⁴³ According to De Martino, all the cultural mechanisms enacted to face the crisis of the presence are historical: this means they stop being meaningful at a certain point. He depicted the society he lived in as unable to find cultural density: writing in the 1950s, he described a cultural system facing its crisis outside a religious-magical dimension, in a general discomfort about existence. According to his view, the apocalyptic temptation permeating his time, without possibility of recovery and reintegration, was well described in the work of Jean Paul Sartre, *Nausea* (2000): the book evokes a crisis that pertains not only to critical moments, but invests permanently all aspects of existence, every time and everywhere. According to De Martino, this crisis came from the loss of Western cultural identity, and he perceived Marxist Humanism, with its new civic symbolism, as a possible way out, offering a solid contemporary connotation to the lost values.

2010), aiming at simplistic and straightforward solutions. Divisions and separations facilitate the definition of targets, easily culpable of the critical moments: the ‘overdose’ of the identity concept follows this line of reasoning, opposing ‘us’ to ‘them’.

When human beings feel unrooted, they try to reassure themselves by identifying enemies and dangers and by declaring their loyalty to collective organisms. Frequently, then, these identifications are of a regressive nature and express the need for self-protection against the unknown. Indeed, I believe the growing debate about European ‘identity’ and the use of the term in appropriate and inappropriate contexts [...] are a sign of uncertainty and discomfort on the one hand and regressive operations to protect old values on the other (Passerini, 2002: 193).

As will emerge from the case studies, the rituals enacted by the Union are not built to face the crisis. They do exactly the opposite: they are framed in the narrative of solid foundational myths in order to hide it. ‘European identity’, ‘European culture’: conceived as the embodiment of a solid civilisation, these are the formulas used to distance the crisis. Their vague content makes them act more as signals than signs, struggling to give a meaning to the world they belong to (De Martino, 2002).

In the post 9.11 era, permeated by the clash of civilisations’ narrative (Huntington, 1997), the Muslim Other represents the first enemy Western societies must protect from, while rediscovering the old Judeo-Christian roots of Europe.⁴⁴ In this context, it is not surprising to see a peak in the opposition to Turkey’s access to the EU, based on a cultural ground:

A dream starts. Europe for some of us had turn into a nightmare: let’s think of Greece for example, let’s think of what happens in Paris, let’s think of unemployment in Italy. Job, family environment, safety, rights. In Europe, luckily, Communism, Fascism, extremism, Nazism, horrors from the past will not come back. Islamic extremism and Islamic fanaticism are the real danger: protecting our borders means protecting the identity, the history, the culture, and the Judeo-

⁴⁴ As Passerini (2012: 2) points out, the concept of the West, broadly constituted by Europe and the USA, is a conflictual and ambiguous one, and ‘exposes the *aporiae* and contradictions which have historically been at the basis of the European identity’. The USA, indeed, have been also object of ‘othering’ by Europe, embodying the model of modernity and progress to be followed by the Old Continent. ‘This projection was so strong that it created in Europe persistent trends of anti-Americanism, which were often ways to either claim *ex negativo* forms of European identity or to express the crisis of this idea.’ (ibid.). Bearing in mind these problematic aspects, the concept is here used to generally refer to the Western Christian countries and cultures, as suggested by Huntington (1997).

Christian traditions of Europe that have been denied by those who have governed Europe so far. In brief, with League and this family in power, Turkey will never be in Europe (Il Sole 24 Ore, 2019, my translation from Italian).

This is how Matteo Salvini, former Italian Minister of Interior and leader of the League Party, welcomed in Milan ‘the sovereignist family’, few weeks before the 2019 European elections: Jorg Meuthen, spokesman of Alternative for Germany; Olli Kotro of the Finnis Party, and Anders Vistisen of the Danish People’s Party. European sovereignist movements suggest a new restoration project, based on the primacy of solid words such as identity, family, and nation, presented as the key to re-establish an economic, patriarchal, and racial lost order (Mellino, 2019).⁴⁵

Thinking about identity in social and collective terms implies the definition of a ‘collective we’. Identity is employed by social actors as a reflective notion formed by two elements: the ‘elevation of the ontological quality of the subject from the individual to the collective’ (Balibar, 2009: 4) – in other words, the possibility of referring to ‘we Europeans’, ‘we Italians’ and so on, as a collective entity; and the distinction between ‘Self’ and ‘Other’ in terms of Europeans versus non-Europeans, Italians versus non-Italians. Talking in general terms about a collectivity’s identity does not imply the denial of changes and transformations pertaining to that entity; it means that beyond these mutations, there is a *substance*, which remains identical to itself, making the entity what it is and different from something else (Remotti, 2010).

When identity becomes an obsession, it transforms ideologically the impoverishment of culture into a metaphysical condition (Remotti, 2010). Identity is a ‘limpid, elegant, and clean word’ (ibid.: 5, my translation) capable to create an illusion of protection for a vacillating cultural

⁴⁵ Mellino refers to *Policing the Crisis. Mugging, the State, and Law and Order* (Hall et al., 1978) as the first and most relevant volume showing how, in a historical context characterised by the nation-states’ decline and economic stagnation, ‘policing the crisis’ becomes synonym with ‘policing migration’. The book describes the rise of neoliberalism/Thatcherism as the new ‘world reason’ (Dardot & Laval, 2019), associating it with an authoritarian turn in the post-war state, but most of all with a post-colonial re-establishment of racial hierarchies. The authors refer in particular to the ‘construction’ of the black population that migrated to Britain in post-WWII as criminal and alien to cultural homogeneity and social order, linking this practice to the British/European colonial past.

horizon; it is often through the crystallisation of this cultural horizon that the identity's substance conquers its materiality. Cultural references are a cognitive-epistemic orientation for identity (Kohli, 2000): to talk about Europe as an identity, it is indispensable to structure its corresponding idea as a meaningful category, functioning as a reference point (Delanty, 2010). This can be practically implemented through the emphasis on shared cultural heritage and traditions, for example (ibid.) – as chapter 3 will illustrate – or on the idea of a European civilisation. In this sense, European identity refers to the cultural identity of Europe, assuming that there must be something called a 'European cultural model' (ibid.).

When culture is approached through the lens of identity, it undertakes a process of 'entity-fication' (*entificazione*, Remotti, 2010, my translation), consisting in the crystallisation of the multiple experiences of a specific community in a historical entity. The result is the definition of homogenous and coherent cultures (Abu-Lughod, 1991), carrying the potential for opposition and confrontation with alterity (ibid.), as the case studies will point out.

1.2 The identitarian obsession in the Enlargement process: a question of legitimacy

The contemporary identitarian obsession described by Remotti can be also observed in much of the current political science literature, underlining the importance of 'identity' as a criterion for political integration and legitimacy (Kohli, 2000). According to this view, legitimacy crises of modern political systems are often interpreted as crises of political identity (ibid.).

As for identity and culture, also the concept of legitimacy requires a clarification to oppose its vagueness. The very peculiar nature of the European Union makes very difficult to face the issue of its legitimacy through traditional categories of political theory (Bottici & Challand, 2013). It is important clarifying what is the content of this 'peculiar nature', before proceeding with the analysis.

The history of European integration has been marked by compromises between two divergent forces: the sovereign interests of member states, on one side; functionalist pushes for deeper

integration, on the other. The establishment of clearly defined supranational institutions, that could support a common European polity, is still a mirage; on the contrary, there have been several international treaties working as a ‘growing kernel, always spilling over into new sectors’ (Bottici & Challand, 2013: 30), starting from the Treaty of Paris of 1951, founding the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC). Six years later it was the turn of the Treaty of Rome, founding the European Economic Community (EEC), alongside the EURATOM Treaty constituting the European Atomic Energy Community.⁴⁶ Later on, in 1992, the Maastricht Treaty laid the foundations of the European Union, a new European structure based on three distinct pillars:⁴⁷ the European Community (previously known as the European Economic Community (EEC)), the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), and the Justice and Home Affairs Policy (JHA); the first one, the Community pillar, with a supranational character (with institutions such as the Commission, the Parliament, and the European Court of Justice); the other two with an intergovernmental nature.

Throughout these years, the European Parliament moved from a consultative assembly into a representative one: direct elections started in 1979 and its legislative powers as well as its control on the EU executive bodies expanded with the Treaties of Maastricht, Amsterdam, Niece, and Lisbon.⁴⁸ Despite these formal improvements, the Parliament’s popularity did not increase, as shown by the low turnout in European elections, as described in the coming sections.

In this context, issues of legitimacy gain a new complexity:

Are the member states the sources of legitimacy of the European integration process?
or is such legitimacy ultimately rooted in the will of the European citizens? How can

⁴⁶ The 1967 Merger Treaty merged the institutions of the three communities, resulting in the general usage of the term European Community to cover all three.

⁴⁷ EURATOM has remained separate, outside the EU. The ECSC ceased to exist when its treaty expired in 2002.

⁴⁸ The EP a) has the right to approve or reject the new European Commission as a whole, b) it holds public hearings of Commissioners-designate (which, on several occasions, have resulted in the withdrawal of the candidacies of national Commissioners in order to ensure that the EP will approve the new Commission); c) it has to approve the European Council’s proposal for the President of the European Commission; d) it can pass a motion of censure against the Commission – if this passes with 2/3 of the votes cast, the result is for the Commission to resign.

one measure the legitimacy of the whole project, then, if so many Europeans declare themselves to be sceptical of or even indifferent to the Brussels institutions? (Bottici & Challand, 2013: 33)

Among the various theories on political legitimacy, I deem particularly helpful for the current analysis the one elaborated by Beetham and Lord (1998).⁴⁹ According to the two authors, a political system can be considered legitimate when citizens are persuaded by three interconnected elements:

1. democracy (or procedural criterion)
2. performance (or substantive criterion)
3. identity (or congruence criterion)

The analysis of these three aspects will offer a possible interpretation of European institutions' increasing attention to cultural policies and their explicit link to European identity.

1. Democracy or procedural criterion

According to Bobbio (1987: 19, cited in Smismans, 2016: 340), a democratic regime is constituted by 'a set of procedural rules arriving at collective decisions in a way which accommodates and facilitates the fullest possible participation of interested parties'. A political regime is democratic when its institutions respect the criteria of legality, fairness, and accountability, guaranteeing the involvement of the governed in decision making processes (Dobson & Weale, 2004) and gaining consequently 'input legitimacy' (Scharpf, 1997, 1999).

The EU is often depicted as suffering from a democratic deficit (Follesdall, 1998; Follesdall & Hix, 2006; Hix, 2002). 'The transfer of policymaking power from the national level to the EU has not been accompanied by sufficient democratic control at the European level' (Smismans, 2016: 340), and there is no EU government or opposition directly accountable for the EU's actions

⁴⁹ For the importance of political collective identification for the democratic legitimacy of a polity see also Gora *et al.* (2012).

(Dobson & Weale, 2004: 157):⁵⁰ the EU can hardly be described as a ‘government by the people’, using Scharpf words (1999:188). Despite the attempts at strengthening the European Parliament, there is a persistent lack of a cohesive European public sphere, where a collective and informed debate about European politics could take place, an essential requirement for the existence of a European *demos* (Smismans, 2016).

2. Performance or substantive criterion

A political regime gains legitimacy through its performance, when citizens are satisfied by the delivered results (Dobson & Weale, 2004). This is the so-called ‘output legitimacy’ (Scharpf 1997, 1999) that characterised the European political project at the beginning of its integration, in the name of peace and prosperity: a government *for* the people (Scharpf, 1999). The Community started as an elite-driven project, where the substantive criterion had major importance than the procedural one: the Parliamentary Assembly had mere consultative powers and was not directly elected, in contrast with a strong technical European Commission – the executive body – and a Council of Minister in charge of final decisions (Smismans, 2016).

This mode of evaluation of the EU’s conduct has proven to be inadequate especially since the entry into force of the Maastricht Treaty, when the EU acquired broader competences and started to intervene more extensively in the daily life of its newly created citizens. In this phase, the debate about the European polity’s legitimacy gained momentum, focusing on a stronger need of accountability (Smismans, 2016) and reaching its peak with the economic crisis of 2008 and the consequent major transfer of sovereignty to the EU for the implementation of austerity measures.

3. Identity (or congruence criterion)

According to Dobson and Weale (2004), a political system possesses a sense of identity when citizens perceive themselves as a cohesive united group and feel that institutions belong to them. This is an EU’s unsettled aspect for several reasons: first, the articulated European decision-

⁵⁰ The procedural criterion is very much open to debate. In opposition to authors as Hix and Follesdall supporting the idea of an actual democratic deficit, there is a school of thought that considers the EU legitimated by the participation of elected governments. Majone (1998, 1996) and Moravscik (2002, 1998) have long been adherents of this idea. See also van Middelaar (2019).

making system creates a fracture between citizens and elected politicians; moreover, as already mentioned, the creation of a feeling of belonging is a difficult endeavour due to the peculiar nature of the EU, a project superimposed on pre-existing national entities. Europe is, in fact, often presented as a postnational and meta-historical system, born from the awareness that ‘the sovereign nation state was the enemy of peace and prosperity and that it had therefore to be superseded by supranational structures’ (Heywood, 2002: 147).

Furthermore, ‘the enlarged and enlarging European Union is a novel political project in motion’ (Gora *et al.*, 2012: 9): its borders’ fluidity complicates the building of an ‘ever closer union’ for the European peoples, causing constant ‘crises of the presence’, to use De Martino’s words, calling for a permanent self-definition inquiry. The Union’s expansion puts a strain on both the *vertical* and *horizontal* dimensions of collective identification (Kaina & Karolewski, 2013, cited in Rumelili, 2016a: 2), that is, respectively, the possibility for citizens to identify ‘vertically’ with ‘Europe’ as a social category and ‘horizontally’ with peers belonging to the same group.

Identity, the congruence criterion, is the one the next pages will be concerned with.

The EU in search of legitimacy: when identity and culture became an issue

At the initial stage of the European political project, the ‘legitimacy obsession’ was not an issue. The first three rounds of Enlargement, during the 1970s and the 1980s, have been accompanied by a ‘permissive consensus’ (Lindberg & Scheingold, 1970: 41): integration was approved by public opinion, or at least not actively disapproved. An opposite trend started in the post-Maastricht period, with a serious decline in EU’s popularity and increasing indifference from the citizens. The necessity of getting the EU closer to its people emerged in the Reflection Group which prepared the 1996 Intergovernmental Conference. It pointed out how ‘the Union’s principle internal challenge is to [...] ensure that European construction becomes a venture to which its citizens can relate’ (Reflection Group, 1995: 2, cited in Shore, 2000), without perceiving it as a technocratic system in the hands of a few politicians. The Reflection Group also reported that the

general disappointment towards the Union emerged from

a high level of unemployment...social rejection and exclusion, the crisis in relations between representatives and those represented...the European Union's growing complexity and the lack of information on, and understanding of, its *raison d'être*... [problems which] are receiving no satisfactory response from the Union because of the gaps or shortcomings in its mechanisms (ibid.)

The decreasing popular support for European integration and the high rate of abstention at the 1999 European elections⁵¹ confirmed this trend, explained by the Eurobarometer of the same year in the following terms:

The mid-nineties clearly represent the period when public support for the European Union was at its weakest. The Gulf War, the economic crisis and the high unemployment levels that followed, the debate on the Maastricht Treaty, the war in Yugoslavia, the inclusion of three relatively euro-sceptic nations and the BSE crisis are but some of the reasons which help explain why support dropped (European Commission, 1999a: 24).

This phase of vacillating legitimacy was accompanied by a demand for increased accountability, clearly shown by the result of several referenda: the French '*petit oui*' and the initial Danish rejection of the Maastricht Treaty in 1992, the French and Dutch negative responses to the Constitutional Treaty in 2005, and the Irish refusal of the Lisbon Treaty in 2008. These cases demonstrated the growing importance of mass public in the integration process (Guerra & McLaren, 2015), an aspect already pointed out by Pascal Lamy (the lieutenant of the then President of the European Commission Jacques Delors) in the aftermath of the Maastricht Treaty ratification:

Europe was built in a St. Simonian [i.e., technocratic] way from the beginning, this was Monnet's approach: the people weren't ready to agree to integration, so you had to get on without telling them too much about what was happening. Now St. Simonianism is

⁵¹ The Standard Eurobarometer 51 (European Commission, 1999a: 24), showed that the support towards the European Communities and the European Union has decreased from the 72% of 1991 to the 49% of spring 1999 (dropping to a low of 46% in the spring of 1997). It also pointed out that 'although around 7 in 10 respondents said they intended to vote in the June 1999 elections, actual turnout rates were far lower, ranging from 24% in the UK to 90% in Belgium where voting is compulsory' (ibid.: iv).

finished. It can't work when you have to face democratic opinion (cited in Ross, 1995: 194)

Thus, the necessity of a new appealing vision for the young generation of Europeans started to take shape: until the 1990s, the debate about the EU democratic deficit was mainly focused on the issue of representative democracy (Smismans, 2016); by 2000, the scarce success of policies aimed at legitimising the European supranational institutions and the increasing opposition by the public opinion led the debate beyond parliamentarisation. This involved a major emphasis on the creation of 'the people of Europe' sharing a common European identity, with the focus on policies grounded in the principles of transparency and participation by multiple actors and civil society (ibid). As the case studies will show, these principles shaped also European cultural policies, especially the European Capitals of Culture's programme: since their development in the 1970s and 1980s cultural policies became an important element in the EU's attempt 'to win the hearts and minds – and not just the hands and muscle – of European citizens' (Patel, 2013: 2), thus reconstituting its legitimacy and adjusting its democratic deficit (Çakmaklı & Rumelili, 2011).

The people of Europe: *ethnos*, *demos* or *laos*?

Balibar (2009: 4) suggests that the 'idealisation of Europe' – namely 'knitting the name with its references through the definition of an idea' – mirrors three different understandings of a 'people':

- *ethnos*, an imaginary genealogical community established by inherited cultural affiliations
- *demos*, a political community defined by public negotiation of interests and conflicts, grounded in a liberal political culture
- *laos*, the 'elected community' as theorised by monotheistic religions and appropriated by nationalist ideologies

Starting from the literature on nationalism, some authors have referred to the distinction between *cultural* and *civic* forms of political affiliation, claiming that European identity cannot exist if

based on cultural assumptions (namely on shared traditions and origins), as it happens within an *ethnos*. A solid ground for European identity can instead be found in civic values and instrumental political allegiances (Delanty, 1995; Habermas, 1996; Weiler, 1997), that could be applied to a European supranational level, supporting the creation of a European *demos*. Particularly relevant for this trend is the work of Jürgen Habermas (2016), theorising a postnational and civic community, united by the shared political values and legal procedures of constitutional patriotism, and recognising, at the same time, the plurality and specificity of European cultures. This theorisation understands cosmopolitan order as the ground for international law and sees Europe as a possible example of peaceful integration: Delanty and Rumford (2005) have defined this form of postnational self-understanding as a cosmopolitan collective identity that manifests itself both within and beyond national identities (Beck & Grande, 2007). This approach is based on the idea of European identity as a liberal one, ‘universalistic, acquirable, and changeable’, meaning that it ‘can be taught and learned, adopted and rejected’ (Schimmelfennig, 2001: 174).

As chapter 2 will describe, this approach emerges often in European documents, starting from the Treaty of Rome (1957) ‘calling upon the other peoples of Europe who share their ideal to join in their efforts’, going to the Lisbon Treaty (European Council, 2007), where Articles 2 and 49 state:

Article 2: The Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law, and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities.

[...]

Article 49: Any European State that respects the values referred to in Article 2 and is committed to promoting them may apply to become a member of the Union.

This ideal implies problematic aspects: an understanding of collectivities focused on the universal principle of state citizenship and cosmopolitan democracy underestimates the importance of differentiation in the definition of identities (Schlesinger, 1992) and the ‘solidarity of singularity that nationhood offers’ (Buonanno & Deakin, 2004: 92). These allegedly neutral

approaches to identity, closer to the idea of a *demos* not biased by cultural elements, find their limits when faced by the question of what has to be defined as characteristic of a civic community and a common political tradition (Sassatelli, 2009). Furthermore, it can run the risk of constituting an ‘educated and emancipated mankind’ (Balibar, 2009: 15) in charge of a civilising mission.

The absence of a European *demos* can be clearly observed in the perception of the EU by its citizens as ‘either too distant or too interfering in their day-to-day lives’ (European Commission, 2017: 6), in what can be viewed as a growing lack of input legitimacy (Scharpf 1997, 1999). In this context, national ethnic identifications easily take up space, manifesting their strength against the project of a unified Europe. Civic values are rarely enough to keep communities together (Smith, 1996a): among the multiplicity of possible collective identifications, the national one preserves a special role and ‘will continue to provide humanity with its fundamental cultural and political identities’ (Smith, 1991: 177).

National identifications are vivid, accessible [...] and still widely believed [...]. In each of these respects, ‘Europe’ is deficient both as idea and as process. Above all, it lacks a pre-modern past – a prehistory that can provide it with emotional sustenance and historical depth (Smith, 1992: 62).

[European identity is] a patchwork, memoryless scientific ‘culture’ held together solely by the political will and economic interests (ibid.: 78).

As Smith (1996b) underlines, even in political entities that present themselves as civic – such as the Swiss Federation – at least a vague reference to a common mythology appears, as part of a persuasive argument for a shared identity (Schlesinger, 1992). I interpret the EU’s effort to foster political allegiance with common cultural symbols and narratives as an attempt at creating the pre-modern emotional bond mentioned by Smith. As Balibar (2009: 15) argues:

Representations of Europe as a ‘quasi-ethnic’ community (deriving from one cultural or racial origin) or an ‘elected civilisation’ [...] triumph above all because the definitions of the ‘European people’ as a political community remain aporetic. *Ethnos* and *laos*, in the case of the construction of Europe, are mainly substitutes for a missing *demos*.

I acknowledge this interpretation can be labelled as influenced by ‘methodological nationalism’, however, as the case studies will point out, I believe the nation-state mind-set is still dominant in EU institutions (Delanty, 1995; Shore, 2000; Smith, 1992), manifesting the difficulty of overcoming the ‘nationalist *impasse*’ of soil and blood in the making of a collective European consciousness.

The risk of methodological nationalism

According to Gellner (1983: 1), modern nationalism is

a political principle that holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent. [...] Nationalism is a theory of political legitimacy that requires that ethnic boundaries should not cut across political ones, and in particular that ethnic boundaries within a given state [...] should not separate the power holders from the rest.

In other words, nationalism aspires to legitimise politics in cultural terms, through congruence between the ‘state’ (the autonomous institution holding the monopoly of coercion on a given territory) and the ‘nation’ (the cultural community of shared myths and symbols) (Smith, 1992).

As the case studies will display, European identity is still often institutionally conceived as a set of characteristics constituting the ‘substance’ (Remotti, 2010) of Europe, differentiating it from other identities and positioning it as hierarchically superior. Following this approach, I am aware of the risk of falling in what has been called ‘methodological nationalism’.⁵² Sassatelli (2009: 4-5) states:

What was a useful heuristic device among others has tended to become a normative comparison with the nation-state that has, more generally, haunted Europeanisation, in practice as well as theory. [...] However, it is precisely in this normative comparison that such an approach can be criticised for that ‘methodological nationalism’ that recent sociological approaches to Europe have started to dismantle on the basis of theories of reflexive modernisation and social constructivism, shifting the interest to cultural identities and having progressively redefined them in equally reflexive,

⁵² Wimmer and Schiller (2003) used this term to describe the ‘primacy of the nation-state’ in academia: they talk about ‘methodological nationalism’ in social sciences to describe a conceptual tendency that, at the time of their writing, dominated research, naturalising at a theoretical level the global regime of nation-states, despite the emergence of transnational approaches.

constructivist terms.

Patel (2013: 6) makes a similar point about the ‘haunting of methodological nationalism’. Referring to the pioneering work of Cris Shore (2000, 2006), he underlines how the comparison between the EU cultural strategies and the model of the XIX century nation-states results from an analysis that mainly ‘stresses the interventionist, top-down, dirigiste, and content driven approach of EU cultural policies’ (2013: 6). Patel continues (ibid.):

We propose a new interpretation: by combining the perspectives of EU officials and many other actors, we argue that, in promoting Europeanness, EU institutions have left open a large room for other stake holders to manoeuvre. European cultural policy is much more than a sterile mockery of the identity politics of a certain image of modern nation-state building. This plurality, so we claim, has been an important ingredient in the European Capital of Culture programme’s success. Whereas some other European cultural initiatives were more heavy handed and dirigiste at a procedural level, or insisted upon a clearly defined content of European culture, the ECoC programme has always taken a different path.

As stated in the introduction, I have embraced the approach of Patel and Sassatelli, including in my analysis various local ‘agents of European consciousness’ (Shore, 2000). Nonetheless, whether the ‘European cultural policy is much more than a sterile mockery of modern nation-state identity politics’ is very much open to debate. The rhetoric employed by European institutions, as it will be clearly illustrated in chapter 2, is already a case in point to contest this statement. With a social constructivist perspective, as mentioned by Sassatelli, the analysis of the case studies will help to give a connotation to the ‘plurality’ Patel refers to and to wonder if the motto ‘unity in diversity’ really mirrors a cultural space where conflicting views and debates can interact, or whether it represents a new master narrative for the EU, or even for local actors acting in their ‘large room for manoeuvre’. The case of Turkey is an ultimate test in this sense.

Trying not to fall in a mere ‘normative comparison with the nation-state’ (Sassatelli, 2009: 4), I will make references to theories of nationalism to frame part of my analysis in the awareness that ‘the ‘European cultural space’ [...] require(s) new ways to think of spatiality in its connection to

culture and identity formation' (Sassatelli, 2009: 5; McNeill, 2004).

Imagined Europe: the quest for common symbols in a context of anonymity

Shore (2000) identifies interesting similarities between the EU's building process and the one pertaining to modern nation-states: referring to Benedict Anderson's work *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (1983), he explores the cultural roots of nationalism. Among the elements examined by Shore, I consider particularly relevant the one of 'anonymity' (Anderson, 1983), as the following paragraphs will clarify.

Anderson claims the nation-state arose only after certain cultural conditions had taken place, in particular the emergence of a new intellectual and administrative elite, composed by an educated middle class acting as pioneer of national consciousness.⁵³ These cultural conditions are necessary requirements to face the anonymity characterising the nation-states and their imagined communities. According to Anderson (1983: 6-7), communities are imagined because:

the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow members, meet them or even hear of them, yet in the mind of each lives the image of their communion.

Members of these imagined communities, probably, will never meet in person but will perceive themselves as part of the same nation on specific occasions – as public holidays for example – or in front of shared symbols – as flags, for instance (ibid). Mass education, conscription, and modern 'print capitalism'⁵⁴ all contributed to the emergence of this feeling of belonging (ibid.).

⁵³ On this subject see also Hobsbawm (1986).

Looking beyond the first Minister of Culture's official designation in France in 1959, some authors see the origin of modern cultural policy in conjunction with the creation of the modern nation-state and its citizens (Lewis & Miller, 2003; cited in Sassatelli, 2009). Referring to Michel Foucault's work on governmentality (1991), other authors suggest that the modern concepts of 'culture' and 'police' have developed at the same time, connecting institutions and individuals in a continuous monitoring-shaping dynamic (Barnett, 2001; Bennett, 1992; cited in Sassatelli, 2009: 201). The imagined community of the nation described by Benedict Anderson (1983) results from the crystallisation of this 'collective and institutional breeding' (Sassatelli, 2009: 2).

⁵⁴ In particular, the printing press, that experienced a remarkable growth with the capitalist marketplace, contributed to 'fixate' spoken vernacular languages, making them 'national print-languages', the 'actual language of modern state, via public education and other administrative mechanisms' (Hobsbawm, 1990:

Anderson's work clearly suggests a connection between culture, communication, and the creation of a community consciousness: according to Shore (2000), many are the elements taking part in the construction of collective identification for the nations – as economic and linguistic factors, history, and law – however, it is through culture and communication technologies that the consciousness of this identification takes place. Symbols hold a significant agency in the creation of patterns of consciousness (ibid.); this is valid not only for the nation-state, but for the European political project too, in which, due to its expanding size, anonymity is even more present (in conjunction with the lack of common historical experiences, shared memories, a vernacular common language, and mass-communication technologies). As Shore (2000: 360) puts it:

It is only through symbols that the meanings and 'reality' of ideas such as 'state', 'nation', 'citizenship' and 'Europe' itself can be rendered tangible and comprehensible. There is still a common tendency in much of the thinking and writing on European integration to dismiss symbols as 'cosmetic' and to argue that they are of secondary importance – or worse, simply window-dressing – in contrast to the eradication of those 'real' barriers to integration which involve legal and economic restrictions on the free movement of capital, goods, and labour.

Museums, and the exhibitions they host, have been crucial instruments in the construction and consolidation of nation states' master narratives (Porciani, 2012): the exhibition of cultures (Karp & Lavine, 1991) is revealed as being very effective, offering the possibility to reach a wide audience with a visual and tangible representation of national past and mythologies (Aronsson, 2011). According to this logic, it is not surprising to observe how the EU resorts increasingly to cultural events in times of legitimacy crisis, despite being a polity officially presented as 'based on rationality and functional interests, not emotional appeals' (Della Sala, 2010: 2).

Symbols are crucial elements in mobilising public opinion and in shaping political reality, as many anthropological studies have shown (Cohen, 1974; Kertzer, 1988; Lukes, 1975; Turner,

62, cited in Shore 2000), in opposition to exclusive script languages, such as Latin (ibid.: 224). As Habermas (1992: 3 cited in Shore, 2000) argues, nationalism is a 'modern phenomenon of cultural integration' created through historiography and transmitted through 'the channels of modern mass communications'.

1967; cited in Shore, 2000). They are not a simple representation of political reality, but an actual contribution to its construction: through symbols, citizens become familiar with the systems uniting and dividing them (Shore, 2000). The establishment of the Europe Day, the designation of a European flag and anthem, the organisation of cultural initiatives (as those that will be analysed in the following chapters) are all to be interpreted as symbolic acts enacted by EU organisations ‘for reconfiguring the way Europe is conceptualised and for forging a European political reality at the level of public consciousness’ (ibid.: 35). In other words: they are engines for political legitimacy.

1.3 Summary

Chapter 1 has offered a possible theoretical interpretation to the three key concepts shaping this research endeavour: culture, identity, and political legitimacy. Considering culture as the set of human ‘models of’ and ‘models for’ to establish meaningful connections with reality (Geertz, 1987), I have outlined a current condition of ‘cultural impoverishment’ (Remotti, 2010), characterised by a permanent ‘crisis of the presence’ (De Martino, 2002), where these models are not anymore able to construct a horizon of meaning.

The current identitarian obsession (namely the tendency to reduce every crisis to identitarian terms) has been interpreted as an easy way out for a cultural world at its end, entrenching behind the crystallisation of a supposed immutable substance to be protected and reasserted, instead of being questioned and problematised by new and meaningful ‘models of’ and ‘models for’. Within this context, culture is often employed as a cognitive-epistemic orientation giving shape to the identity’s substance (Kohli, 2000): the definitions of ‘heritage’ and ‘civilisation’ are an example of a process establishing a clear and limpid series of ‘models of’ and ‘for’ pertaining to a specific culture, being them philosophical, architectural, artistic, scientific, and so on. This way of reasoning suggests a monolithic and essentialised vision of culture, based on oppositions: Self-Other, Us-Them, Normal-Alien.

Identity has been a key concept also in the political science literature of the past decades, often interpreting the crises of political legitimacy in modern democracies through the employment of this category (Kohli, 2000). I referred to Beetham and Lord's theory (1998) to read the increasing European institutions' emphasis on cultural policy as a celebratory vehicle for a shared identity, aimed at filling a democratic deficit and, thus, restoring legitimacy. Despite the work of several authors (Patel 2013; Sassatelli, 2009) emphasising a non-dirigiste approach in EU cultural policies, I claim that a strong and monolithic identitarian myth still inform them. It can be true that cultural operators participating in European events have free agency concerning their specific events; however, it is crucial to bear in mind that their work falls into a larger context. Independently from the intentions behind each project, there is a bigger picture that cannot be forgotten: it is very important to look at the broader dynamics and the general narratives framing these events, as the cases studies will reveal. For this reason, theories on nationalism, as the one of Anderson (1983) informing the valuable work of Cris Shore (2000) on EU cultural policy, represent a relevant instrument to understand why and how European institutions still refer extensively to this narrative. The following chapter, analysing the employment of the culture and identity concepts by European institutions, will demonstrate it clearly.

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Chapter 2— Identity and culture in European documents: an evolving role

This chapter analyses European institutions' key documents that, from the end of the Second World War, have progressively defined what 'being European' means, determining, consequently, the borders of Europe. In particular, the analysis outlines the evolving role of culture in constructing this definition.

I suggest looking at these documents identifying three consecutive phases. As all models, also the current one works as a reduction of complexity, aimed at underlying relevant aspects for the research. In this case, I would like to emphasise major shifts that constituted symbolic turning points in the institutional narratives about European culture and identity.⁵⁵ The three phases are:

- The functionalist myth and the Council of Europe (1950s – 1973)

The first period follows the end of World War II and is characterised by a general avoidance of the identity and culture categories at the institutional level.

- First steps towards the institutionalisation of culture (1973 –1992)

In the second phase, following the Declaration on European Identity of 1973, identity and culture started to be part of the European institutional discourse.

- Post-western Europe (1992 – ongoing)

In the third phase, inaugurated by the Maastricht Treaty, culture became officially part of the institutional competences of the European Union.

⁵⁵ European institutions' narratives do not take shape in a theoretical vacuum, but in specific cultural contexts. For this reason, references to coeval academic trends on the topic will be present too. Kaelble (1998) identifies three main interdisciplinary tendencies in the studies on European identity: a first one stressing continuity and unity in the history of Europe; a second one emphasising plurality; a third one focusing on the integration process. Sassatelli (2009) suggests a similar classification, describing approaches focused respectively on: 'unity', close to the federalist idea of Europe (Brugmans, 1969; Spinelli, 1957); 'diversity', akin to neofunctionalist theories on integration (Bekemans, 1990; George, 1985; Haas 1958); 'unity in diversity' – the official motto of current EU cultural policies. This third approach is constituted by a new theoretical body working as a synthesis and critique of the first two, considering the cultural dimension underestimated by neofunctionalism, but avoiding the essentialist approach of federalism (Featherstone, 1993; Scott, 1998; Spohn, 2005). Another reference for an overview on academic debates is the work of Aydın-Düzgit and Rumelili (2021), focusing on constructivist approaches to the role of identity in the EC/EU-Turkey relations from 1997 and 2020.

As the following chart of our case study exhibitions illustrates, no events belong to the first phase, two pertain to the second period, and the remaining four are taking place in the third stage. This trend mirrors the institutional developments that will be described in the next pages.

Phase	Dates	Characteristics	Cultural Event	‘Culture and Identity’ phases
1	1959 – 1975	The Ankara Agreement: economy and security as main drivers	European Architectural Heritage Year (1975)	Phase 2
2	1975 – 1989	Growing conflict: the political dimension gains ground	The Anatolian Civilisations (1983)	Phase 2
3	1989 – 2002	Post-Cold War Europe: a marginalised Turkish application	Europe, a Common Heritage (2000)	Phase 3
4	2002 – 2005	Turkey becomes accession candidate: a positive turn with geopolitical motivations?	Urban Realities: Focus Istanbul (2005)	Phase 3
5	2005– 2013	Between stagnation and growing tensions	Istanbul European Capital of Culture (2010)	Phase 3
6	2013 – ...	Migration as a driver forward and political change in Turkey	European Year of Cultural Heritage (2018)	Phase 3

First phase (1950s –1973): the functionalist myth and the Council of Europe

Key documents: Ventotene Manifesto (Rossi & Spinelli, 1941); European Cultural Convention (Council of Europe, 1954); Treaty of Rome (1957).

Neofunctionalism and federalism

The ideology of national independence was a powerful stimulus to progress. [...] But with this ideology came the seeds of capitalist imperialism, which our own generation has seen mushroomed to the point where totalitarian states have grown up and world wars have been unleashed. [...] The nation has become a divine entity, an organism that must only consider its own existence, its own development, without the least regard for the damage that others may suffer from this.

This extract from the Ventotene Manifesto (Rossi & Spinelli, 1941: 2)⁵⁶ condenses in a few lines the atrocity against which the European project has been initiated: the uncontrolled development of nationalist stances.⁵⁷ Drafted by Rossi and Spinelli while prisoners on the Ventotene island during WWII, the treatise theorised the creation of a federal European structure built on peace and prosperity, beyond the ideological conception of the modern nation-state, strongly grounded in an inside/outside mode of differentiation (Buzan & Diez, 1999).

A series of traumatic events vividly remembered by a generation subjected to integration may launch and then spur the process. The role of two world wars of unprecedented destructiveness and the threat of the victory of a revolutionary totalitarian movement at the end of the second of these wars were undoubtedly primary among the specific stimuli which in Western Europe made people receptive to the historical-cultural arguments of the mythmakers. This combination of circumstances does not easily permit repletion elsewhere (Haas, 1961: 367).⁵⁸

The establishment of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) in 1951 and the founding of the European Economic Community (EEC) and the European Community of Atomic Energy (EURATOM) in 1957 were conceived as ‘an antinational construction, a-national at best, sometimes even as supranational’ (Chebel d’Appollonia, 2002: 171), to suppress nationalism and keep far away the Eastern Bloc’s threat, through the transferral of sovereignty from the national to the supranational level for key sectors – as the economic and the military one.

Altiero Spinelli, leader of the Italian European Movement (*Movimento Europeo*), and Jean Monnet, the first President of the ECSC, are often depicted as the embodiment of two different approaches to European integration: federalism and neofunctionalism.

⁵⁶ The official title of the political statement written by Alterio Spinelli and Ernesto Rossi, in June 1941, was *For a Free and United Europe. A Draft Manifesto*.

⁵⁷ For an analysis of the European polity’s construction as a postmodern collectivity based on a historical practice of differentiation see Diez (2005), Habermas (1992), and Waeber (1998) (cited in Rumelili, 2016b: 202).

⁵⁸ This is an extract from an article by Ernst Haas, the father of neofunctionalism. It is interesting to read it now also as an historical source, perceiving the enthusiastic faith in integration as an irreversible process for the future of Europe.

Federalism, a form of integration and a political ideal (Nugent, 2006), proposed a ‘democratic radicalism’ to integrate Europe through the creation of European political institutions that would lead to a European constitution (Wiener & Diez, 2004: 32).

Neofunctionalism, in its European studies connotation, is a theory conceiving of European integration as a step-by-step process, harmonising first economic and legal aspects, ‘avoiding issues which might conceivably call national sovereignty directly into question [...] adding institutional pieces to a larger jigsaw in incremental fashion’ (Wiener & Diez, 2004: 35). Social and cultural integration are expected to follow automatically, through a spillover effect (Haas, 1958): an instrumental public loyalty to European institutions is expected to result from successive steps in the creation of the European Economic Community and the Single Market. The economic benefits of integration would generate a ‘permissive consensus’ towards an ever-closer union (Shore, 2000).

According to neofunctionalist approaches, Europe is constituted by many cultures and identities (Gowland *et al.*, 1995; Macdonald, 1993; Shelley & Winck 1995; cited in Sassatelli, 2009: 30), making thus impossible the definition of a distinctive and unitary European culture. The strength and persistence of multiple national identities (Lepsius, 2001; Smith, 1992), with a heavy emotional charge (Anderson, 1983; Delanty, 1995), is also pointed out as an element in support of these theories. For this reason, culture is not conceived as an element to support integration, but either as a danger for the diversity characterising Europe or as a weak tool, unable to overcome national traditions in their sentimental dimension (*ibid.*).

Recovering from the catastrophic consequences of ‘a series of frightful nationalistic quarrels’ (Churchill, 1946),⁵⁹ European institutions initially took distance from potentially controversial

⁵⁹ From the speech delivered by Winston Churchill at the University of Zurich on 19 September 1946: ‘I wish to speak about the tragedy of Europe, this noble continent, the home of all the great parent races of the Western world, the foundation of Christian faith and ethics, the origin of most of the culture, arts, philosophy and science both of ancient and modern times. If Europe were once united in the sharing of its common inheritance there would be no limit to the happiness, prosperity and glory, which its 300 million or 400 million people would enjoy. Yet it is from Europe that has sprung that series of frightful nationalistic quarrels, originated by the Teutonic nations in their rise to power, which we have seen in this

elements concerning national sovereignty and the recent past; culture was one of them (Staiger, 2013). Thus, it is not surprising to not find culture involved in the very first stage of the institutional conception of Europe, both in federalist and neofunctionalist approaches (Patel, 2013): no reference to culture or identity is made in the Ventotene Manifesto, for example. There is instead the idea of a ‘European destiny’, that will take place with the construction of a federal political structure.

The collapse of the majority of the States on the continent under the German steamroller has already given the people of Europe a common destiny: either they will all submit to Hitler's dominion, or, after his fall, they will all enter a revolutionary crisis and will not find themselves separated by, and entrenched in, solid State structures. Feelings today are already far more disposed than they were in the past to accept a federal reorganisation of Europe (Rossi & Spinelli, 1941: 7).

Neofunctionalism has been the main institutional approach guiding this first ‘pragmatic’ phase of the European political project. In the first treaties establishing the seeds of today’s EU, culture and identity are absent, whereas the focus is on the reconstruction of peace and prosperity. The Preamble of the Treaty of Rome (1957), founding the European Economic Community (EEC), declares that the six founding members,⁶⁰

determined to lay the foundations of an ever-closer union⁶¹ among the peoples of Europe, resolved to ensure the economic and social progress of their countries by common action to eliminate the barriers which divide Europe, [...] intending to confirm the solidarity which binds Europe and the overseas countries and desiring to ensure the development of their prosperity, in accordance with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, resolved by thus pooling their resources to preserve and strengthen peace and liberty, and calling upon the other peoples of Europe who share their ideal to join in their efforts, have decided to create a European Economic Community.⁶²

20th century and in our own lifetime wreck the peace and mar the prospects of all mankind.’ (Churchill, 1946).

⁶⁰ Belgium, Germany, France, Italy, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands.

⁶¹ According to Shore (2000: 15), the creation of ‘an ever-closer union among the people of Europe has been embodied from the outset in a supranational and federalist vision, despite the disappointment of some member states; the attempts at removing an ‘emotive federalism’ in subsequent Treaties, such as the Maastricht one, have been anyways paired with implicit federalist visions in the *ethos* and organisational structure of the EU.’

⁶² The only mention of culture in the Treaty of Rome was in Article 36 (introducing an exemption in free movements of cultural goods for exceptional cases) and caused big discussions during the GATT debate on

This is the birth of the European ‘neofunctionalist mythology’, as Della Sala (2010: 12) calls it, strongly based on the role of rational market forces in the establishment of a novel and rational polity, beyond the principles of the nation state (ibid.). This is a foundational myth that, in the name of freedom, liberty, and shared ideals, clearly set Western Europe and the allies from overseas apart from the communist satellite states.

The Council of Europe and the definition of a common European heritage

At this stage, the sensitive cultural issue was channelled through the activity of the Council of Europe – not involving the transfer of powers from member states. Founded in 1949 with the Treaty of London by Belgium, Denmark, France, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, and the United Kingdom, the Council embodied ‘the culmination of the post-war federalist movements’ (Staiger, 2013: 35).⁶³ The Council of Europe has been involved since its inception in the fields of democracy, human rights, and culture, ‘supplemented by representatives of academia, NGOs and other non-governmental institutions, in other words of civil society’ (Terrillon-Mackay, 2000: 5). Superseded as an instrument of political integration by the European Communities (Staiger, 2013), it had a crucial role in developing solutions and narratives in the cultural field later embraced by the Europe Union (Brossat, 1999; Sassatelli, 2009) and aimed at the creation of a war-free Europe, as stated in two of its most important documents: the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (1950) and the European Cultural Convention (1954).

The European Cultural Convention has been the first official document mentioning culture and cultural heritage at a European level (Calligaro, 2013a), developing a supra-national heritage narrative implemented in the coming decades also by the European Union.

audio-visual policy. See Schlesinger (1997).

⁶³ A detailed analysis of the role, activities, and vision of the Council of Europe in the cultural field will be provided through the case studies.

The governments signatory [...] considering that the aim of the Council of Europe is to achieve a greater unity between its members for the purpose, among others, of safeguarding and realising the ideals and principles, which are their common heritage;

considering that the achievement of this aim would be furthered by a greater understanding of one another among the peoples of Europe;

considering that for this purpose it is desirable not only to conclude bilateral cultural conventions between Members of the Council but also to pursue a policy of common action designed to safeguard and encourage the development of European culture,

having resolved to conclude a general European Cultural Convention designed to foster among the nationals of all members, and of such other European States as may accede thereto, the study of the languages, history and civilisation of the others and of the civilisation which is common to them all,

have agreed as follows:

Article 1: each Contracting Party shall take appropriate measures to safeguard and to encourage the development of its national contribution to the common cultural heritage of Europe (CoE, 1954: 1). [...]

Article 5: each Contracting Party shall regard the objects of European cultural value placed under its control as integral parts of the common cultural heritage of Europe, shall take appropriate measures to safeguard them and shall ensure reasonable access thereto (ibid.: 2).

Even without an explicit reference to European identity, cultural heritage is here rhetorically conceived as a ‘transcendental historical given’ (Shore, 2006: 20) unifying a European people. It is also important to point out that European heritage is understood, in this case, as constituted not only by ‘material elements as artefacts and monuments’, but also by ‘ideals and principles’, a tendency that still characterises EU institutions’ narratives.

A linear narrative for a united Europe

According to the historian Hartmut Kaelble (1998), the 1950s and the 1960s constitute the first of two phases in the studies on the idea of Europe for social and human sciences. In this period, emotional historical narratives took shape, very much different from the critical theoretical approaches elaborated from the 1980s, encompassing sociology and anthropology too and, often, aimed at dismantling the imaginative constructions of Europe, with its institutions and consciousness (ibid.).

In the 1950s and 1960s, the academic endeavour has been mainly focused on legitimising the emerging European political effort, which, in that stage, was an ideal more than a reality: through the development of a common linear narrative, connecting Ancient Greece – the cradle of European civilisation – to the European Communities, various scholars have looked at the different meanings assumed by ‘Europe’ throughout the centuries and in different fields of knowledge (Sassatelli, 2009).⁶⁴ In general, these approaches are based on the idea of a shared European spirit (Jaspers, 1947) consisting of Hellenic rationality and beauty, Judeo-Christian ethics and Roman law and institutions (De Rougemont, 1966), subsequently rediscovered and enriched by the Renaissance and the Enlightenment and, finally, expressed in ‘organised science, institutionalised protection of human rights and democratic political institutions’ (Wilterdink, 1993: 121).⁶⁵ This linear narrative is often criticised, because based on the marginalisation of its Other (Stråth, 2000) and on a certain degree of historical amnesia (Delanty, 1995; Said, 1978). Shaped mainly by classical sociology and the work of Max Weber and Emile Durkheim on the origins of the fundamental European forms of social organisations, this spirit of unity and linearity has been alive throughout the years of European integration, sometimes taking the connotation of an aspiration more than an actual strategy for integration (Rijksbaron *et al.*, 1987, cited in Sassatelli, 2009).

⁶⁴ Meaningful examples of this attempt are the books *Storia dell’Idea di Europa (A History of the idea of Europe, my translation)* by Federico Chabod (1961), outlining a history of ‘European consciousness’ – a recurring formula in this first wave of studies – and *Europa, Storia di un’Idea (Europe, History of an Idea, my translation)* by Carlo Curcio (1958). Swedberg (1994) has identified fourteen recurrent elements in these classic studies, presented as the shared pillars of European history: the history of the word Europe; Europe as a geographical concept; mythologies on Europe; Europe and medieval Christianity; Charlemagne as father of Europe; Europe and the peace plans in seventeenth and eighteenth-century; the cosmopolitan Europe of Enlightenment; Napoleon’s attempt at unifying Europe; the European Concert and balance of power; European nationalism; attempted interwar unification; Hitler’s New Europe; federal ideas of Europe in WWII resistance; contemporary institution-building. This kind of studies proves that the idea of Europe’s history goes further back than the modern institutional one, but, at the same time, shows how the very idea of Europe flourishes in parallel with the attempt to build an institutional project, making it very difficult to dissociate the two aspects (Sassatelli, 2009). For a collection of historical documents about European cultural identity see Drace-Francis (2013).

⁶⁵ On this topic see also Couloubaritsis *et al.* (1993) and Mikkeli (1998), cited in Sassatelli (2009: 28).

Second phase (1973–1992): first steps towards the institutionalisation of culture

Key documents: Declaration on European Identity (CEC, 1973); Resolution on the safeguarding of European cultural heritage (EP, 1974); Report on the European Union by the Belgian Prime Minister Leo Tindemans (1976); communication 'Community Action in the Cultural Sector' (CEC, 1977); communication 'Strengthening of Community Action in the Cultural Sector' (CEC, 1982); Solemn Declaration on the European Union (CEC, 1983); Adonnino Report (CEC, 1985); Resolution on European Cultural Identity (CoE, 1985); communication 'On the People's Europe' (CEC, 1988).

The 1970s and the Declaration on European Identity: a collective civilisational project

The first communitarian initiatives in the field of culture and policy making started in the early 1970s (Staiger, 2013). This was a period of dualisms, reflecting different ideas about integration: on one side, the supranational law making (with the European Court of Justice and the Commission); on the other, the intergovernmental policy making (with the Council – and its national ministers – and the European Council) where heads of state and governments started to gather since 1974 (ibid.).

The integration process lost momentum in this decade: the difficult situation, characterised by an unfavourable economic contingency,⁶⁶ an increasing democratic deficit (Smismans, 2016) and the accession of new members difficult to 'digest' (Denmark, Ireland, and the United Kingdom) led European institutions to start a discourse on identity as a legitimising tool for their activity (Dinan, 2005). The definition of a new rationale for European integration, beyond economic elements, became necessary, as expressed by the Six at the Paris Summit of 1972:

Economic expansion which is not an end in itself... must emerge in an improved quality as well as an improved standard of life. In the European spirit special attention will be paid to non-material values and wealth and to protection of the environment (CEC, 1972: 15).

However, no specification was given to the content of these 'non-material values'; signed in Copenhagen the following year, the Declaration on European Identity (CEC, 1973) filled this gap. The Declaration did not define European identity in terms of common bonds of blood and soil, as

⁶⁶ It was the time of the collapse of the Bretton Woods agreements (1971), the World Oil Crisis (1973), and in general of the end of the post-war economic boom (Stråth, 2002), which led also to the failure of the Snake, the EC's first experiment in European monetary cooperation.

usually done within a national *ethnos*; the main reference was instead to the ‘cherished values of a common civilisation’, notably the principles of representative democracy, the rule of law, social justice, and human rights (Verney, 2006). The European Communities proposed in a new form what started to be outlined in the Council of Europe’s European Cultural Convention (CoE, 1954): the perception of democratic principles as the constitutive and characterising elements of European culture. This document clearly connotes the European polity as a ‘civilisational project’, adding, for the first time, an explicit normative dimension to integration and thus, marking a paradigm shift in the official discourse of European institutions (Staiger, 2013: 24):

The Nine European States [...] have overcome their past enmities and have decided that unity is a basic European necessity to ensure the survival of the civilisation which they have in common.

The Nine wish to ensure that the cherished values of their legal, political, and moral order are respected, and to preserve the rich variety of their national cultures. Sharing as they do the same attitudes to life, based on a determination to build a society which measures up to the needs of the individual, they are determined to defend the principles of representative democracy, of the rule of law, of social justice – which is the ultimate goal of economic progress – and of respect for human rights. All of these are fundamental elements of the European Identity [...].

The diversity of cultures within the framework of a common European civilisation, the attachment to common values and principles, the increasing convergence of attitudes to life, the awareness of having specific interests in common and the determination to take part in the construction of a United Europe, all give the European Identity its originality and its own dynamism (CEC, 1973: 2).

This document has different characteristics compared to the more recent ones on the same issue. First of all, it talks unreflexively about a ‘civilisational identity’, stressing the element of unity over the diversity of national cultures: democratic principles and respect of human rights are here treated as a common European heritage, that goes beyond national differentiations, in ‘a simplistic appeal to a singular notion of civilisation, based on common values that have somehow survived the divisions of history’ (Delanty, 2010: 7).

The Declaration depicts a collective identity shaped in a similar fashion to the national ones, useful to ‘achieve a better definition of their relations with other countries and of their

responsibilities and the place that they occupy in world affairs' (CEC, 1973: 2). With the idea of a Eurocentric civilising mission (Passerini, 2012), it establishes competitive and hierarchical relations with other countries, stressing above all the importance of intensifying the friendly ones already existing; then underlying the relevance of strengthening the 'historic connection' with the Mediterranean and African countries, and the Middle East.⁶⁷ The relationship with the United States, with whom Europe shares a common heritage of values and aspirations, has to be preserved as 'mutually beneficial', 'on the basis of equality and in a spirit of friendship' (CEC, 1973: 3). Japan and Canada have to be engaged in a 'close cooperation and constructive dialogue' and friendly relations are encouraged with China, other Asian countries, and Latin America. On the other hand, the USSR and the Eastern Bloc are object of a policy of *détente*. The Declaration addresses also the generic category of 'less favoured peoples' that must be supported by the Nine through financial aid, in their 'struggle against under-development'.

Other documents on culture in the 1970s

The Declaration has been the only document with such an open reference to identity, in this phase. The cultural element, instead, started to appear more often. As Calligaro (2014) points out, also the European Parliament had an active role in the promotion of European values: in 1974 it was responsible for a resolution on the 'safeguarding of European cultural heritage' (EP, 1974), depicted as an instrument to foster a European identity and tackle a crisis that was 'not only economic and material but also cultural' (ibid.: 7):

In view of the intention expressed of the Heads of State or government in the Declaration of Copenhagen in December 1973 to create a European identity, there can be no firmer foundation than the wealth that transcends all political parties, all national frontiers and all centuries, a cultural heritage which brings a deeper value and meaning to our daily lives beyond the economic, financial, and material considerations which so beset us (ibid.: 9).

⁶⁷ Many are the critics about the hierarchical nature of the Declaration and the vocabulary used in the document, avoiding references to the colonial past of Europe and power relations. See, for instance, Pasture (2015a, 2015b).

In this case too, the identification of the European heritage's constitutive elements is characterised by vagueness, as well as the content of a possible solution to cope with European cultural diversity.

1976 was the year of the 'Report on the European Union', drafted by the Belgian Prime Minister Leo Tindemans (CEC, 1976). Aimed at laying the basis for the creation of a European Union by the end of the decade (as the Declaration on European Identity), the report described culture as an important part of this project, with its potential of polity building and promotion of the European Communities' image. Furthermore, it suggested fostering the creation of a European people through a direct action, without conceiving it only as a consequence of technocratic measures.

European institutions continued to prepare the ground to operate in the sensitive cultural field acting, in the first stage, through Communications – that is European Commission public documents aimed at generating debates on specific topics (Pollack, 2000). The rhetoric generally implemented in these Communications made the 'tactical mistake' of addressing too openly the reawakening of a European ideal through European cultural institutions and initiatives, in a sort of 'nation building process' (Theiler, 2005: 59, cited in Sassatelli, 2009: 51), thus causing opposition among governments in general favourable to integration. For example, the first communication, 'Community Action in the Cultural Sector' (CEC, 1977), presented the Community's role in cultural matters as merely economic, without employing the term 'cultural policy': it expressed the will to train cultural operators and create initiatives for the distribution of cultural goods and the preservation of cultural heritage. However, in its introduction, after listing some European Parliament resolutions as an encouragement to act in the cultural field, it continued with a strong emphasis on the role of culture:

At the Hague, the Heads of State or Government declared that they regarded Europe as an 'exceptional seat of development, culture and progress', and that it was 'indispensable to preserve' it. [...] The Communiqué on European identity, which was adopted at the Copenhagen Summit, shows that culture is recognised at the highest political level as being one of the fundamental elements of this identity. The

Commission has also noted that, in the report by the Prime Minister of Belgium on European Union, culture is referred to several times as a means of arousing a greater feeling of belonging and solidarity amongst Europeans (CEC, 1977:1).

The second communication, ‘Strengthening of Community Action in the Cultural Sector’ (CEC, 1982: 14), tried to present the Community’s involvement in cultural matters as merely economic, avoiding also in this case the term cultural policy:

There is no pretension to exert a direct influence on culture itself or to launch a European cultural policy; what stronger Community action in the cultural sector means in effect is linking its four constituents – free trade in cultural goods, improving the living and working conditions of cultural workers, widening the audience and conserving the architectural heritage – more closely to the economic and social roles which the treaty assigns to the community to the resources – mainly legislative – that it provides, and to various community policies (vocational training, social and regional policies).

Despite this attempt, the document was not successful due to the member countries’ suspicious attitude, especially those with a weak tradition of public support for culture, such as UK and Denmark (Sassatelli, 2009).

The early 1980s and the Solemn Declaration on European Union: an individual cultural identity

Starting from the 1980s, the European Communities had to face a new context: the bellicose past was not anymore perceived as the main issue; at stake there was the maintenance of political and economic relevance in the globalised world. The objective of ‘peace and prosperity’ was replaced by the deepening and widening of the existing Communities: after the ‘Eurosclerosis’ of the 1970s, the EC tried to expand both in terms of competences (dealing with culture, for example) and geographically, including new member states (Greece in 1981, Spain and Portugal in 1986). By this time, neofunctionalist dreams have vanished (Hansen, 1969; Moravcsik, 1993): De Gaulle’s empty chair crisis of 1965, the Luxembourg compromise of 1966 – which saw a move towards intergovernmental decision making (Hoffman & Keohane, 1991) – and the failure of ambitious integration plans in the early 1970s showed the limits of neofunctionalism: the

expectation that economic and monetary integration would proceed steadily, bringing about cohesion among the people of Europe. Thinking of individuals as rational actors, neofunctionalist theories had underestimated the identity issue as capable of generating interests itself (Pizzorno, 1983).

New institutional ambitions started to be expressed in the Solemn Declaration on European Union (CEC, 1983), involving explicitly culture and identity. Learning from the mistakes of the previous communications, the Declaration promoted initiatives in support of cultural heritage and cooperation in education to foster a European identity:

The Heads of State or Government, on the basis of an awareness of a common destiny and the wish to affirm the European identity, confirm their commitment to progress towards an ever closer union among the peoples and Member States of the European Community. [...]

Desiring to consolidate the progress already made towards European Union in both the economic and political fields, the Heads of State or Government reaffirm the following objectives: [...]

to promote [...] cultural matters, in order to affirm the awareness of a common cultural heritage as an element of the European identity [...] and a joint action to protect, promote and safeguard the cultural heritage (CEC, 1983).

Concerning this document, it is important to notice the shift away from the idea of a *civilisational* collective identity, with an outward-facing perspective situating Europe in relation to the rest of the world, as depicted in the Declaration on European Identity. The new emphasis was on an individual *cultural* identity with an inward-facing perspective (local - national - European), subsequently articulated in the Maastricht Treaty (Sassatelli, 2009). In this case, the element of unity appears only in combination with diversity (ibid.), in the attempt at connecting local and European level (Stråth, 2002). The change from the collective ‘corporatist’ identity (ibid.) of the 1970s to the individual/liberal one of the 1980s has to be considered in the framework of broader changes in theories and politics of identity developed at that time (Sassatelli, 2009).

1983 was also the year in which the EP worked on a new resolution, aimed at enhancing protective measures for architectural heritage, emphasising its link with a European identity:

In becoming aware of its architectural heritage, society discovers the constituent parts of its cultural and other identity. Today this cultural identity constitutes one of the essential focal points for the perception and even definition of European identity. [...] This is why we insist that awareness of European culture is essential if we are to define and to give substance to a European identity (EP, 1983a: 12-13).

Despite the vagueness of its official definition and the scarce agency of European institutions in the cultural field during these decades, the content of European heritage started to take shape through the distribution of subsidies by the European Fund for Regional Development, the European Social Fund and the European Historical Sites and Monuments Fund born in 1984: the selected funds' recipients were mainly symbols of Christianity, followed by Ancient Greek and Roman sites (Ruel, 2001, cited in Calligaro 2014: 67). The Acropolis was the first monument to receive relevant support in 1983, described by the EP as 'the cradle of European democracy' (EP, 1981), embodying the Community's values (EP, 1982).

In these years, two EP resolutions contested such centralised narratives on heritage, focused on dominant high culture, suggesting the inclusion of particular groups' memories: the resolution on the protection of Europe's social heritage (EP, 1983a: 256), namely 'all the activities contributing to the progressive liberation of man through work'; and the resolution on the integration of minority cultures, languages and traditions in the field of heritage (EP, 1983b). Thus a debate shaped around the rhetoric of 'unity in diversity' was triggered, in order to promote a wider understanding of heritage, encompassing also the subnational level (Calligaro, 2014).

The mid 1980s: towards 'unity in diversity'

The mid 1980s saw a new phase for European integration, marked by the Single European Act (1986), which represented the first major revision of the Treaty of Rome (1957). The main aim of this document was to give shape to a full single market by the end of 1992. It was a crucial turning point in supporting a deeper level of integration, through the strengthening of the European Parliament and the continuation of the debate about European foreign policy, started back in 1961 with the unsuccessful Fouchet Plan.

This is the context to bear in mind when looking at the Adonnino Report (CEC, 1985), drawn up by an ‘*ad hoc* committee on a People’s Europe’:⁶⁸ the report had the objective to strengthen and promote the Community’s identity and image both for its citizens and for the rest of the world, also through action in the educational and cultural fields. The newly established Commission, under the leadership of Jacques Delors since 1985, supported a series of initiatives, such as the establishment of a Commissioner and a Directorate General for Culture and the introduction of ‘banal agents of Europeanism’ – to paraphrase Billig (1995) – as suggested by the Adonnino Report (CEC, 1985): a common design for national passports, 9 May ‘Day of Europe’, a European flag and anthem (created respectively in 1955 and 1972 by the CoE).⁶⁹

The European Capital of Culture event started to take place in these years. The European City of Culture action (as the project was originally called) began in Athens in 1985, on initiative of Melina Mercouri, former Greek Minister of Culture.

The Ministers responsible for Cultural Affairs consider that the 'European City of Culture' event should be the expression of a culture that, in its historical emergence and contemporary development, is characterized by having both common elements and a richness born of diversity (European Council, 1985).

The event was inaugurated by a ceremony at the Acropolis, where European leaders traced the genealogy of the European Communities, going back to their Greek roots (Calligaro, 2014).⁷⁰ With the aim of celebrating the variety of European cultures, the ECoC can be considered the embodiment of the European institutional vision about culture, condensed in the concept of ‘unity in diversity’, that will take shape more systematically after the Treaty of Maastricht.

⁶⁸ The ‘People’s Europe’ formula, already common in the 1970s, gained momentum in the 1980s, in reaction to the ‘Traders’ Europe’ of the Common Market. Following the Fontainebleau European Council meeting of 25–26 June 1984, the Heads of State or Government declared their will to strengthen Europe’s identity, locally and internationally, and established an *ad hoc* working party on a People’s Europe, supervised by the former Italian MEP Pietro Adonnino, with the task to promote the Community’s identity and abolish internal frontiers (from: www.cvce.eu/en/recherche/unit-content/-/unit/02bb76df-d066-4c08-a58a-d4686a3e68ff/95a065c6-38e9-45da-8bbe-66f958a8b005).

⁶⁹ The third communication, ‘A Fresh Boost for Culture in the European Community’ (CEC, 1987) described the impact of these initiatives and promoted them further (Bekemans, 1990).

⁷⁰ The second European City of Culture was Florence, celebrated as the cradle of Humanism, civil liberties, and mercantile capitalism, all values shared by the EC (Calligaro, 2013b).

‘Diversity’ is conceived as the bonding principle for the new citizens of Europe (Sassatelli, 2009) and is treated as the paramount European cultural feature (Derrida, 1991; Habermas, 1996): synonym of liberty, diversity is presented as deeply linked to democracy, in sharp contrast to authoritarianism and its inherently intolerant attitude towards differences (Leerssen, 1993). In the first Committee of Ministers’ Declaration of the same year, 1985, the Council of Europe elaborated the same concept:

The Committee of Ministers, conscious of a European cultural identity...is convinced that unity in diversity is what produces the richness of the common European cultural heritage; notes that common traditions and European identity as the product of a common cultural history are not delimited by the frontiers separating different political systems in Europe (CoE, 1985).

1985 saw also the release of the first Council of Europe’s document mentioning ‘identity’: the ‘Resolution on European Cultural Identity’ (CoE, 1985). Aimed at fostering cultural cooperation with Eastern Europe, it reflected the beginning of a new phase in the definition of Europe’s geographical borders.

The Committee of Ministers,
Conscious of a European cultural identity; [...]

4. Expresses the conviction that a strengthening of cultural co-operation will contribute to greater mutual rapprochement of the peoples and states of Europe and thus promote lasting understanding;
5. Firmly believes that this gives rise to a common interest of all European states in maintaining and developing this heritage and in expanding cultural relations;
6. Holds the view that Council of Europe member states should take account of this fact and express to Eastern European countries their continued readiness for cultural co-operation.

The 1980s ended with the ‘Communication on the People’s Europe’ by the European Commission, stressing that Europeans are not sufficiently aware of their shared heritage and are not properly informed about what the Community is doing for them. For this reason, ‘action is needed in the cultural sector to make people more aware of their European identity in anticipation of the creation of a European cultural area’ (CEC, 1988: 37). ‘Stimulating public interest in the

European venture’ was officially recognised as a necessary step to foster ‘the direct involvement of the people in their own destiny’ (CEC, 1988: 36).

Third phase (1992 – ongoing): post-western Europe

Key documents: Maastricht Treaty (CEC, 1992); Laeken Declaration (European Council, 2001); Declaration on Intercultural Dialogue and Conflict Prevention (CoE, 2003); European Agenda for Culture in a Globalising World (European Commission, 2007); Regulation establishing the Creative Europe Programme (European Parliament and the Council, 2013); Communication ‘Towards an integrated approach to cultural heritage for Europe’ (European Commission, 2014); Communication on ‘Strengthening European identity through education and culture’ (European Commission, 2017); A New European Agenda for Culture (European Commission, 2018).

After the end of the USSR and the beginning of the European Enlargement towards east in the so-called ‘reuniting of Europe’ (Graubard, 1991), the European identity issue acquired a more articulated and problematic dimension. These are the years of what Delanty (2013) has defined as ‘post-western Europe’: a Europe surrounded by multiple rising powers, that could no more be defined only by its core founding states and by its participation in a ‘diffuse’ notion of the West (ibid.).

The Maastricht Treaty

With the Maastricht Treaty (CEC, 1992) the effort of ‘making people more aware of their European identity’ (CEC, 1988: 37) became increasingly systematic. The Treaty inaugurated a new phase for European integration, advancing significantly the plans conceived by the Single European Act of 1986. It established the European Union as ‘a new stage in the process of creating an ever-closer union among the peoples of Europe’ (CEC, 1992, Article 1), which implied a shift from integration as a mere consequence of legal and economic harmonisation to the perception of culture and identity as political instruments to unify Europe (Shore, 2000): from market building to polity building, in other words.

The Treaty on European Union formally introduced the concept of European citizenship, adding another step to the European identity-building process; a step that required further efforts to become substantial. ‘We have made citizenship. Now we have to make the citizens’, to paraphrase

the Italian pioneer of unification Massimo D'Azeglio (1798-1866). As Della Sala (2010: 5) stresses, 'the collectivity is formed not just by the content of the story [...] but in telling it as well'. A crucial element in making a political myth relevant is the presence of storytellers reproducing, transmitting and keeping it alive: 'If myths are left only to institutional actors to survive, then they are likely to atrophy' (ibid.).

Signed in Maastricht in 1992, in the climate of growing 'constraining dissensus' (Hooghe & Marks, 2009), the TEU is the first document treating culture as an area of competence of the newly founded European Union. Despite the very narrow range of practical possibilities offered to the Union,⁷¹ the Treaty had an important role for the legitimization of EU's action in the cultural field.

The TEU relates the idea of a common cultural heritage to national and subnational diversity, as stated in Article 128.

1. The Community shall contribute to the flowering of the cultures of the Member States, while respecting their national and regional diversity and at the same time bringing the common cultural heritage to the fore.
2. Action by the Community shall be aimed at encouraging cooperation between Member States and, if necessary, supporting and supplementing their action in the following areas: improvement of the knowledge and dissemination of the culture and history of the European peoples; conservation and safeguarding of cultural heritage of European significance; non-commercial cultural exchanges; artistic and literary creation, including in the audiovisual sector.
3. The Community and the Member States shall foster cooperation with third countries and the competent international organisations in the sphere of culture, in particular the Council of Europe.⁷²

The TEU represents simultaneously the peak and the end of the neofunctionalist agenda for integration: it celebrates the plurality of cultures, but at the same time fosters unity, institutionalising the 'unity in diversity' approach. Following Stråth's analysis (2002), it can be said that, after the collective-corporativist approach to identity of the 1970s – focused on 'unity' –

⁷¹ It is important to point out that the member states' role is still strong: the Union has only complementary competences (such as coordination and support), limited communitarian funds (0.033 per cent of EU budget) and is in need of unanimity for decision-making.

⁷² The Treaty of Lisbon (2007) – which amends the Treaty of Rome (1957) and the Treaty of Maastricht (CEC, 1992) – sustains that 'member states shall respect rich cultural and linguistic diversity and shall ensure that Europe's cultural heritage is safeguarded and enhanced' (Art. 3.3) and does not modify Art. 128, with the only exception of the term Community, changed into Union.

and the individual liberal one of the 1980s – emphasising ‘diversity’ – the institutional discourse of the 1990s started to implement a combination of the two, focusing on ‘unity in diversity’, thus stressing individual aspects, but giving also attention to the social dimension and perceiving European unity as built by the aggregation of diverse local levels (Sassatelli, 2009).⁷³

This new understanding of European heritage did not correspond to the inclusion of new values, but to a different modality in the promotion of the core ones (Calligaro, 2014), that encompassed also negative elements of European history (Calligaro & Foret, 2012): the end of the Cold War saw a general peak in debates on memory and repentance that, in the case of EU, led to the designation of new European Historical Monuments (such as former concentration camps in 1993) and the establishment of a European Holocaust Remembrance Day in 1995 (*ibid.*). It is important to notice, however, that the proliferating of EU funded projects on war and authoritarianism did not imply a halt in honouring European positive values or a contradiction of European unity (*ibid.*): the conflicts that had torn the continent apart are interpreted as a shared experience, resulting from criminal regimes, thus becoming a further element of a common past, constituting the roots of the EU founding values: democracy, rule of law, and protection of human rights (*ibid.*).

In this challenging context and despite the limitations in terms of budget and agency, several cultural programmes have been launched: Raphael for cultural heritage, Ariane for publishing, and Kaleidoscope for cultural cooperation. Later, it was the turn of Culture 2000 (active from 2000 until 2006), followed by the more encompassing Culture Programme (active until 2013), and Creative Europe (started in 2014 and ended in 2020). With their commitment to protect and share the ‘common heritage’ and the ‘cultures’ of Europe, these programmes implement the TEU’s ‘unity in diversity’ approach through financial support to cross border projects and direct grants to cultural actors, creating at the same time a broad source of legitimisation for European integration.

⁷³ Institutional changes too have taken place in the direction of the multi-level governance approach to European integration, based on the recognition of diversity and constant negotiations with no attempt at homogenisation (Sassatelli, 2009).

Unity in diversity

The motto ‘unity in diversity’, officially adopted by the European Parliament in 2000,⁷⁴ has been institutionally reiterated in different documents, as for example the Laeken Declaration (European Council, 2001):

At long last, Europe is on its way to becoming one big family, without bloodshed, a real transformation clearly calling for a different approach from fifty years ago, when six countries first took the lead.

Europe as the continent of humane values, the Magna Carta, the Bill of Rights, the French Revolution, and the fall of the Berlin Wall; the continent of liberty, solidarity and above all diversity, meaning respect for others’ languages, culture, and traditions. The European Union’s one boundary is democracy and human rights. [...] National and regional differences frequently stem from history or tradition. They can be enriching.

Several analysts have pointed out the ambiguity characterising the formula of ‘unity in diversity’: while enhancing diversity, it promotes simultaneously unity in the cultural field to a point that ‘at times either interpretation could be applied to the same sentence’ (Theiler, 2005: 69, cited in Sassatelli, 2009: 53).

The motto stresses the main characteristics of recent theoretical visions on the idea of Europe, trying to mediate between global and local stances (Lenoble & Dewandre, 1992):⁷⁵ the pragmatic recognition of European ‘diversity’, typical of neofunctionalism, is combined with the utopic nature of European ‘unity’ characterising federalism, resulting in the definition of ‘diversity’ as the distinctive characteristic of Europe. As it will be analysed in the case of ‘Istanbul 2010

⁷⁴ The motto has been chosen via the 1999-2000 ‘European-motto contest’ among secondary education students of the back then 15 EU members (https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/symbols/motto_en).

⁷⁵ In recent years, with European integration facing at the same time the phenomenon of globalisation and the emergence of new localisms (Scott, 1998), past theories on the idea of Europe manifested their limits: for approaches stressing the unity of Europe, a new formulation took place around the cultural globalization theory and the unification brought about by advanced capitalism, through new procedural ‘third cultures’ (Featherstone, 1993). The European culture’s unity, in this case, is not conceived as an immutable element inherited from the past – as in the case of an *ethnos* – but as the consequence of a social process carried out by Europe as a singular subject (Duroselle, 1990). In this recent formulation, federalist approaches to European identity get closer to neofunctionalist theories, with their idea of ‘evolutionary social processes underlying collective identity formation in Europe’ (Spohn, 2005: 2) (cited in Sassatelli, 2009: 29).

European Capital of Culture’, at times the formulation of ‘unity in diversity’ celebrates problematically the rhetoric of intercultural coexistence, based on a rediscovered Eurocentric triumphalism (Shore, 2000) ⁷⁶ and faces the risk of what has been defined as ‘liberal multiculturalism’ (İğsiz, 2015).

The post-Maastricht years: ‘intercultural dialogue’

The increasing need of accountability for EU institutions that followed the TEU led to a series of initiatives. The establishment of a European citizenship brought about the necessity of transparency regarding the EU’s role in the protection of human and individual rights (Alston & Weiler, 1998), fulfilled by the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights (2000), stressing, in Article 22, that the EU respects ‘cultural, religious and linguistic diversity’. The year 2000 saw also the establishment, by the Commission, of the Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence on Human Rights and Multi-level Governance in Padua, that became a crucial non-institutional interlocutor for the introduction of value-based concepts in EU policies ‘to convey legitimacy to the definitions eventually provided’ (Calligaro, 2014: 75). ‘Intercultural dialogue’ was one of these concepts, grounded in the idea that not cultural membership, but the dialogue on common values represents the main element of belonging to the European polity. This idea had its culmination with the designation of 2008 as the European Year of Intercultural dialogue, after the initiative of the Slovak Commissioner for Education and Culture, Jan Figél.

Intercultural dialogue is a concept that started to be employed by international organisations in the final years of the Cold War (Calligaro, 2014). The European Union adopted it following the experience of the CoE that, in 1995, in the wake of the Yugoslavian War, released the ‘Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities’ (CoE, 1995). The document wanted

to promote mutual respect and understanding and cooperation among all persons living on their territory, irrespective of those persons’ ethnic, cultural, linguistic, or religious

⁷⁶ Historians point out the similarities with the nineteenth century Romantic nationalism and Enlightenment’s pan-Europeanism and the implied civilising mission of humanity (Said, 1978; Stråth, 2002).

identity, in particular in the fields of education, culture and the media (CoE, 1995).

In 1995, the European Union mentioned intercultural dialogue too, but with a different interpretation: the Barcelona Declaration on the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership promoted cultural exchanges within the framework of ‘common values’ and ‘common heritage’ constituted by Greek, Roman, and Byzantine legacies (European Commission, 1995). As Calligaro (2014: 71) points out, such a definition of a shared Mediterranean heritage is surprising

if we consider how much these historical roots had been used in the previous decades in the EU’s official discourse to define a specific European identity. The intercultural dialogue seems to imply the existence of distinct cultures that, at the same time, share some common civilisational ground, which reveals the fogginess of the concepts of civilisation and culture used in EU discourse.

After 9.11, intercultural dialogue became a central concept in the political debate: the EU established a ‘Programme of Action for Dialogue between Cultures and Civilisations’, in the context of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, aimed at ‘a better understanding of the Other’ (European Commission, 2002b). An advisory group of geographically heterogeneous intellectuals asserted that a dialogue between the EU and Mediterranean countries should be engaged in order to construct ‘a common civilisation beyond the diversity of inherited cultures’ (High Level Advisory Group, 2003). As Calligaro (2014: 72) correctly stresses, this statement carries ambiguities: ‘does this common civilisation already exist, as previous official texts affirmed, or shall it be ‘constructed’?’. Furthermore, she points out the striking contrast of these declarations with the severe security and migration policies, stressed also by other authors (see for example Schäfer, 2007).

To this extent, the intercultural dialogue as defined in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership contributes to the definition of a European identity against a cultural Other while paradoxically referring to a common civilisation to be either re-discovered or openly ‘constructed’ (Calligaro, 2014: 72).

One year later, in 2003, the Council of Europe (2004) gave its definition of intercultural dialogue in the ‘Declaration on Intercultural Dialogue and Conflict Prevention’, understanding it both as a tool for international stability – in opposition to the clash of civilisation suggested by Huntington (1997) – and a vehicle to promote social cohesion within European societies. This is the vision later embraced by the EU to face the Big Bang Enlargement of 2004, re-defining its discourse on European identity (Calligaro, 2014): if in earlier years intercultural dialogue was perceived mainly as a necessity in relation to a non-European Other, from this moment on, it started to be understood also as an internal need (ibid.). The strong link between migration and intercultural dialogue in the official EU discourse of the time betrays an understanding of European culture as a homogenous entity, at risk with the presence of new and heterogenous traditions (Aman, 2012, cited in Calligaro, 2014: 78), thus reiterating the same polarisation of ‘Us-Them’, enacted by the discourse on identity.

Calligaro (2014) stresses that, in these narratives, no precise definition of culture is offered: a major emphasis is put instead on ‘shared values’, understood as universal and ‘open to the world’ (European Commission, 2009), thus not in need to be substantiated with specific cultural contents, moving to a value-framed dialogue. According to Staiger (2009), ‘EU citizenship’ started to be employed in institutional narratives instead of ‘European identity’ in association with European culture.

One can then wonder whether intercultural dialogue would be for European citizenship what European heritage was for European identity: a means to substantiate a foggy and debated notion (Calligaro, 2014: 74).

The case studies will point out the limits and the contradictions of this (apparently) more inclusive narrative.

Culture as an economic and soft power asset

By the late 1980s, the perspective on culture at the European level was commonly following two

lines: one symbolic; the other one economic (Littoz-Monnet, 2007; Psychogiopoulou, 2008; Sassatelli, 2009; Shore, 2000; Tsaliki, 2007).⁷⁷ This twofold nature of EU cultural policy is well expressed in the ‘European Agenda for Culture in a Globalising World’ (European Commission, 2007): this Commission’s communication was launched at the First European Cultural Forum in Lisbon in 2007, with the aim of overcoming the Maastricht limitations in the cultural field by opening an intergovernmental debate on the strategic global role of culture. The document employs the ‘unity in diversity’ narrative, accompanied by a focus on culture as an instrument of economic development and support for external relations:

Europe’s cultural richness and diversity is closely linked to its role and influence in the world. [...] The EU is, and must aspire to become even more, an example of a ‘soft power’⁷⁸ founded on norms and values such as human dignity, solidarity, tolerance, freedom of expression, respect for diversity and intercultural dialogue, values which, provided they are upheld and promoted, can be of inspiration for the world of tomorrow.

[...] The European cultural sector is already a very dynamic trigger of economic activities and jobs throughout the EU territory. Cultural activities also help promoting an inclusive society and contribute to preventing and reducing poverty and social exclusion (European Commission, 2007: 2-3).

The importance of culture as a soft power tool is expressed also in other recent documents, such as the ‘Joint Communication Towards an EU strategy for International Cultural Relations’ (European Commission, 2016) and the conclusions on ‘Culture in the European Union's External Relations’ (Council of the European Union, 2017). These documents define a strategic framework for cultural cooperation with EU partners, in relation to economic and social development, peace and stability, and the promotion of cultural diversity around the world. The latter document also

⁷⁷ As stated in the introduction, this project focuses mainly on the EU cultural policies’ symbolic aspects. However, in doing so, it also takes into consideration the economic nature of the initiatives under scrutiny – as in the analysis of ‘Istanbul 2010 European Capital of Culture’ – and their potential as soft power tools – as in the case of ‘The Anatolian Civilisations’ exhibition. For an analysis of the post-Maastricht period as a phase of increasing ‘governmentalisation’, explored in its ‘multiple instrumentalities’ (Barnett, 2001: 405), see Staiger (2009, 2013) and Barnett (2001).

⁷⁸ The concept of soft power was first coined by Joseph Nye (1990) to describe the ability of a country to pursue foreign policy objectives through persuasion and attraction, as opposed to force or financial payments (hard power).

introduces a generic definition of cultural diplomacy in European external engagement, understood as a broad conceptual instrument supporting development, dialogue, and rights, on one side, and the image of the EU, on the other.

Looking at the most recent EU documents on culture, both symbolic and economic aspects are present. The Regulation by the European Parliament and the Council (2013) establishing the Creative Europe Programme expresses this tendency in Article 3:

The general objectives of the Programme shall be:

- (a) to safeguard, develop and promote European cultural and linguistic diversity and to promote Europe's cultural heritage;
- (b) to strengthen the competitiveness of the European cultural and creative sectors, in particular of the audiovisual sector, with a view to promoting smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

The same approach is present also in the Communication 'Towards an Integrated Approach to Cultural Heritage for Europe' (European Commission, 2014: 3):

Europe's cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible, is our common wealth – our inheritance from previous generations of Europeans and our legacy for those to come. It is an irreplaceable repository of knowledge and a valuable resource for economic growth, employment and social cohesion.

Emblematic is also the statement by Federica Mogherini, then High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, at the Culture Forum of Brussels in 2016:

[...] culture can [...] be the place where people meet and make the most out of their diversity. [...] Culture in Europe is always plural – because so many different cultures belong in this continent. European culture is diversity. European culture is distinction, and it is at the same time common ground. [...]

This is not just about identities and mutual understanding. Culture matters to our economies and to our growth. The economic benefits of cultural exchanges are too often ignored, although the statistics are clear (Mogherini, 2016).

Identity comes back in its relation to culture in the Commission's Communication on 'Strengthening European Identity through Education and Culture' of 2017. The document is built around the narrative of 'unity in diversity' and emphasises the role of culture and education in

supporting a ‘resilient economy’, ‘social cohesion’, ‘active citizenship’, and a not specified concept of ‘identity’:

The reflection about the future of our Union also entails a reflection on the strength of our common identity. When our European values and democracies are tested by awakening populist forces [...] and the manipulation of our information networks, it is the moment when European Leaders and the EU institutions must react. They decided in Rome in March 2017 to keep the EU as a unique project where, following the motto of ‘unity in diversity’, the EU and its Member States have been able to draw on the unique strengths and richness of their nations to achieve unprecedented progress. Sixty years after the signing of the Treaties of Rome, strengthening our European identity remains essential and education and culture are the best vectors to ensure this. [...]

It is therefore in the shared interest of all Member States to harness the full potential of education and culture as drivers for jobs, social fairness, active citizenship as well as a means to experience European identity in all its diversity (European Commission, 2017: 2).

The message of the Communication is reiterated in ‘A New European Agenda for Culture’ of 2018 (following the one of 2007).

On the 60th anniversary of the Treaties of Rome, the Leaders of 27 Member States and EU institutions stated their ambition for a Union where citizens have new opportunities for cultural and social development and economic growth. [...] a Union which preserves our cultural heritage and promotes cultural diversity.

[...]

Europe's rich cultural heritage and dynamic cultural and creative sectors strengthen European identity, creating a sense of belonging. Culture promotes active citizenship, common values, inclusion and intercultural dialogue within Europe and across the globe. It brings people together, including newly arrived refugees and other migrants, and helps us feel part of communities. Culture and creative industries also have the power to improve lives, transform communities, generate jobs and growth, and create spill over effects in other economic sectors. The New European Agenda for Culture (the New Agenda) responds to the European Leaders' invitation to do more, through culture and education, to build cohesive societies and offer a vision of an attractive European Union (European Commission, 2018b)

The document also acknowledges the limitations of EU's action in the cultural field, stressing on the other hand the progress of the recent years:

The legal basis for action in the area of culture at EU level is Article 3 of the Treaty on European Union and Article 167 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. Member States have exclusive competence on cultural policy, while the Union's role is to encourage cooperation and support and supplement Member States'

actions. EU policy cooperation received a major boost through the 2007 Commission Communication, endorsed by the Council, on a ‘European Agenda for Culture in a Globalised World’. The European Parliament has also supported that Agenda through political resolutions and pilot projects. An impressive number of actions have been undertaken by Member States since then, inspired by EU policy collaboration through successive Council Work Plans for Culture, through projects funded by EU programmes, and through macro-regional strategies. The European Council has now tasked the EU to do more in this area and to examine further possible measures addressing, among others, the legal and financial framework conditions for the development of cultural and creative industries and the mobility of professionals of the cultural sector (European Commission, 2018b)

Summary

Chapter 2 outlined how European institutions dealt with culture and identity throughout the decades and in different phases of integration. It has described how, in the aftermath of World War II, the Communities avoided the sensitive identity and culture categories, employed instead by the Council of Europe. Academic and institutional narratives of the time were mainly shaping a historical linear narrative on the common roots and values of Europe, guiding it towards its common destiny of peace and prosperity.

In the 1970s, in a changing economic and geopolitical environment, characterised by increasing constraining dissensus (Hooghe & Marks, 2009), identity and culture started to be part of the European institutional discourse. In this decade, a collective-corporativist rhetoric on identity took shape, based on ‘unity’ and on a glorious discourse on the European genius, rooted in ancient Greece, Rome, and Christianity. The situation changed in the 1980s, in which a more individual liberal approach put emphasis on ‘diversity’ and on less centralised narratives, involving subnational levels as well, also under the stimuli of the EP.

In the third phase, inaugurated by the Maastricht Treaty of 1992, culture became officially part of the institutional competences of the European Union: the seeds of ‘unity in diversity’ sown in the previous decades transformed into the EU’s institutional motto and the discourse about culture as a tool of economic development, social cohesion, and soft power took shape more systematically.

This is also the time in which the concept of intercultural dialogue developed, emphasising values instead of cultural membership as the main element of cohesion for the European polity.

In the following part of the thesis, the analysis of the case studies will offer the opportunity to problematise the implementation of these narratives.

CASE STUDIES

A reminder

Before proceeding to the empirical material, it can be helpful to rephrase the questions behind the research, with the vocabulary employed in the first part of the thesis. The case studies' analysis will be conducted bearing in mind that each selected event represents the *active* and *dialectic* dimension of a *static* institutional narrative (Duncan, 1991); namely, it is the enactment of a European policy – in this case a 'ritual implementing legitimacy' – through the involvement of different agents of European consciousness (Shore, 2000).

Thinking about cultural events as rituals of legitimacy:

- What does each exhibition try to legitimate? Did it succeed in doing this?
- Was the exhibition able to *spread*, *ritualise*, and *sacralise* (Bouchard, 2007) its narrative, making it a political myth fostering political legitimacy?

In relation to Turkey and its status as potential and actual EU candidate:

- How does a country which is part of the EU Enlargement process adapt its identity to become part of the European family?
- What do the exhibitions tell us about the presentation of Turkish and European identity? Do they construct Turkey as part of a European identity or as alien? Did Turkey at the end of each event become part of the European Self or stay in the realm of European Other?
- What kind of values are being promoted? Are these seen as European values and is Turkey seen as having them?

Another set of questions concerns the power relationships involved in the exhibits:

- What happens when a European policy goal is implemented by specific individuals, in specific contexts?
- What was the role of European organisations? And the one of national/local government?
- Has the goal of European organisations been reached, or has it been subverted during the process?

The analysis of each case will be conducted bearing in mind these questions.

PART II: THE ‘PRE-HISTORY’ OF TURKISH ENLARGEMENT

Chapter 3 – 1975: The European Architectural Heritage Year

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Main features

European Architectural Heritage Year	
Location	All over Turkey (special focus on Istanbul)
Date	1975
Typology	CoE periodical events taking place all over Europe
Turkey – EC/EU relationship	Phase 1 (1959–1975) The Ankara Agreement: economy and security as main drivers
Culture and identity in EC/EU documents	Second phase (1973–1992) First steps towards the institutionalisation of culture <i>Key documents: Declaration on European Identity (CEC, 1973); Resolution on the safeguarding of European cultural heritage (EP, 1974)</i>
Institutions involved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council of Europe • local organisations • ICOMOS
Declared aim	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘to awaken the interest of the European peoples in their common architectural heritage and make them take a pride in it; • to warn against the dangers threatening this heritage and instigate the action necessary to safeguard it; • to protect architectural monuments and sites of historical or artistic value and ensure a living role for ancient buildings in contemporary society; • to conserve the character of old towns and villages and to restore them’ (Council of Europe, 1972)

Phase 1 (1959-1975) – The Ankara Agreement: economy and security as main drivers

In July 1959, two months after Greece, Turkey requested to become part of the European integration process, in a welcoming environment. In 1963, the Ankara Association Agreement (European Communities, 1963) was signed, putting into place the legal foundation of the relationship (Aydın-Düzgüt & Tocci, 2015). It established an institutional structure too, constituted by an Association Council, with top-level officials from both sides meeting on a regular base; an Association Committee, supporting the Council; and a Joint Parliamentary Committee, hosting Turkish and European parliamentarians (ibid.). The agreement envisioned the long-term creation

of a Custom Union through mutual tariff reductions and opened the door to Turkish eligibility for full membership. The Preamble of the document stated:

The support given by the European Economic Community to the efforts of the Turkish people to improve their standards of living will facilitate the accession of Turkey to the Community at a later date (European Communities, 1963).

This vision was reiterated in Article 28:

As soon as the operation of the Agreement has advanced far enough to justify envisaging full acceptance by Turkey of the obligations arising out of the Treaty establishing the Community, the Contracting Parties shall examine the possibility of the accession of Turkey to the Community (ibid.).

The primary nature of the agreement was economic, aiming to

ensure a continuous improvement in living conditions in Turkey and in the European Economic Community through accelerated economic progress and the harmonious expansion of trade, and to reduce the disparity between the Turkish economy and the economies of the Member States of the Community (ibid.).

EC membership was perceived by Turkish politicians, in the 1960s and 1970s, as ‘a logical extension of Turkey’s inclusion in other Western organizations, since it was seen as the economic dimension supplementing and cementing the Western alliances’ (Eralp, 1993: 26).

In the Cold War years, Turkey became a crucial ally for the Free World (Saatçioğlu, 2013), coupling its understanding of modernisation with the idea of ‘belonging to the emerging Western alliance’ (Eralp, 2009: 151). Together with the economic aspects, the security and geopolitical dimension occupied a central role: the Ankara Agreement’s Preamble refers, indeed, to the preservation and strengthening of peace and liberty, which at the time were endangered by the Soviet threat. In this perspective, the Turkish candidacy (and the Greek one too) was favorably welcomed: the Turkey-EC relationship started in a positive climate, due to a ‘remarkable convergence in the dynamics of European integration and developments in the Turkish context’ (Eralp, 2009: 151).

In this period, Turkey joined several Euro-Atlantic conventions and organisations: the United Nations (1945); the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (1948); the Council of Europe (1949); NATO (1952); the European Convention on Human Rights (1953-4). This was a way to legitimise its belonging to the West and the sharing of its values (Müftüler-Baç, 1997; Oğuzlu, 2012), as well as to foster cooperation with EC member states on relevant policy matters (Reiners & Turhan, 2021).

The Council of Europe

As anticipated in the previous chapters, the Council of Europe covers a very special role among these institutions: being one of the most prominent post-war European organisations aimed at ensuring peace on the continent, it represented for Turkey ‘one of the key goals [...] along with NATO membership to fully anchor with the West against the simmering Soviet threat’ (Aydın-Düzgit *et al.*, 2018: 2).⁷⁹

Analysing international and local media coverage of the event, Aydın-Düzgit *et al.* (2018) point out that Turkey’s accession to the Council of Europe was positively greeted by both sides, within a narrative clearly differentiating West and East as distinct cultural entities. Europe was characterised as belonging to the West – cradle of democracy and human rights – while Turkey to the East, but with a peculiarity: according to the domestic press, Turkey had a better connotation as an Eastern entity compared to fellow countries, because of its participation in institutions such as the CoE, perceived as an instrument of progress to align with Western values. Thus the two separate spheres were not presented as mutually exclusive. Turkey was perceived as Eastern, but this did not constitute a problem: communication was encouraged, and the two dimensions were co-existing one close to the other, without mutual exclusion.

⁷⁹ Aydın-Düzgit *et al.* (2018) focused on Turkish and European identity construction in the press, (Cumhuriyet and Milliyet dailies for Turkey; The Times, Guardian, Le Monde and Der Spiegel for international press) in the aftermath of specific events, among which Turkey’s accession to the Council of Europe. The articles they refer to in this specific case are Adivar (1949), Doğrul (1949), Marceau (1949), Millet (1949), The Times (1949).

The participation in the Council of Europe is particularly relevant also for another reason: as described in the previous chapter, this was the institution dealing with the sensitive cultural issue in the early stages of the European political project, defining narratives later on appropriated by the EC/EU and thus acquiring a remarkable symbolic power in the construction of Europeanness. With the ‘1975 European Year of Architectural Heritage’, we are in a phase in which the EC started to mention identity and culture in its official documents (such as the Declaration on European Identity of 1973 and the resolution on the safeguarding of cultural heritage in the following year), but in which the practical implementation of these discourses was still in the hands of the Council of Europe.

The ‘two blocs’ narrative

In this initial phase, cultural and religious oppositions were not significantly included in the discourses of either the European or the Turkish side (Eralp, 2009): the Cold War context was stronger than any other divide and the two blocs narrative dominant (ibid.). The Ankara Agreement was a confirmation of Turkey’s strategic belonging to the West ‘as a bulwark against Soviet expansionism’ (Tocci, 2012: 237) and of its cultural proximity to Europe, as confirmed by the Commission President Walter Hallstein’s speech at the Agreement’s signing:

Turkey is part of Europe. That is really the ultimate meaning of what we are doing today. It confirms in incomparably topical form a truth which is more than the summary expression of a geographical concept or of a historical fact that holds good for several countries. Turkey is part of Europe: and here we think first and foremost of the stupendous personality of Atatürk, whose work meets us at every turn in this country, and of the radical way in which he recast every aspect of life in Turkey on European lines. It is an event without parallel in the history of the influence exerted by the European culture and politics. I would even say that we sense in it a certain kinship with the most modern of European developments: the unification of Europe (Hallstein, 1963).

Even if Hallstein presented Turkey as a ‘part of Europe’, also in this case, as it was for the discourse on Turkey’s accession to the Council of Europe, the diversity of the country is expressed

through the ‘radical recast’ operated by Atatürk, that presupposes a different initial point of departure (i.e. not European).

The majority of Turkish political leaders of the time⁸⁰ as well as the main economic actors had a positive attitude towards the European project: while not very much was happening at the level of civil society, the Turkish political and economic elites supported the implementation of the Ankara Agreement, not only in economic but also civilisational terms, bringing Turkey a step further in its modernisation process, according to the republican ideals (Çalış, 2015; Eralp, 2009; Kaliber, 2013). ‘Europe’ was employed by Turkish leaders as an ‘identity marker’ (Alpan, 2021: 114), following the tradition of local politics since the eighteenth century, reinforced by Atatürk, and the will ‘to be a permanent member of the European society of states’ (ibid.).

The difficult 1970s

The 1970s started with the signing of the Additional Protocol to the Association Agreement and a Financial Protocol, setting a timetable for the Custom Union’s establishment. However, this positive environment would end soon, in conjunction with changes in the international context and in the European integration process. The global economic system faced a moment of instability, with the rise of oil prices, increasing competition in trade, and frictions in monetary relations (Eralp, 2009). This situation undermined the possibility of the USA keeping its hegemonic role in the Western Alliance (Karpat, 1975), with the EC trying to overcome the difficult conjunction through a policy of deepening⁸¹ and widening⁸² (Nugent, 2006).

⁸⁰ The prime ministers İsmet İnönü, followed by Süleyman Demirel, elected after the military coup of 1960, for example, but also the leaders of Republican People’s Party (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*, CHP) and the Justice Party (*Adalet Partisi*, AP). It is anyway relevant to mention the emergence of an opposition, in the late 1960s, in certain Islamist political movements (such as those related to the MSP - *Milli Selamet Partisi*, National Salvation Party founded in 1972 and chaired by Necmettin Erbakan since 1973) that depicted Turkey’s participation in the European integration process ‘as the last stage of the assimilation of Turkey’s Islamic identity into the Christian West’ (Günes-Ayata, 2003: 216, cited in Alpan, 2021: 114) and as a subjugation to Western imperialism (ibid.).

⁸¹ Reform attempts involved the European Political Cooperation, the European Monetary System, and the Global Mediterranean Policy, taking further shape with the Single European Act of 1987 (Dinan, 2005).

⁸² In 1973 UK, Ireland, and Denmark became EC members, followed by Greece in 1981 and Spain and Portugal in 1986.

Turkey, in a climate of political instability that led to the military memorandum of 1971, was in a challenging economic contingency too: being unable to face EC competition, the Turkish economic and political establishment started to express opposition to the Customs Union relationship. Furthermore, on the political side, tension started to increase between Turkey and the West after the 1974 Sampson Coup in Cyprus and the Turkish intervention on the island.⁸³

In brief: in the 1950s and the 1960s Turkey was what today we would call an EU ‘potential candidate’, with an officially recognised European vocation and depicted (both from the inside and the outside) as a modernising country, molded by western ideals, that, despite its belonging to the East, walks towards the West. However, as the following chapter will show, this privileged status, started to be increasingly questioned in the 1970s, following the Cyprus events and especially after the 1980 coup d’état that strongly challenged Turkey’s European vocation.

The European Architectural Heritage Year and the concept of heritage

The European Architectural Heritage Year took place in the immediate aftermath of the Cyprus events, on the initiative of the Council of Europe, involving member and non-member countries.⁸⁴

Under the slogan ‘A future for our past’, the initiative wanted:

- to awaken the interest of the European peoples in their common architectural heritage and make them take a pride in it;
- to warn against the dangers threatening this heritage and instigate the action necessary to safeguard it;

⁸³ The Cyprus issue is a crucial element for Turkey-EC/EU relations from 1974 onwards. As Verney (2009a) points out and the next chapters will show, the situation on the divided island, along with Turkey’s treatment of the Kurds, have been presented as clear markers of Turkey’s discord with European values and put forward by the detractors of its entry into the EU. The crises concerning the island were initially approached as a bilateral dispute between Greece and Turkey, but since Greece’s accession to the EC, the Community started to play a central role and the conflict became one of the main obstacles in the EC/EU-Turkey relationship (Reiners & Turhan, 2021). For an analysis of the events following the 1974 intervention see Hughes (2011: 88-108).

⁸⁴ The countries that participated in the 1973 launching conference, in Zurich, were, among the member countries of the Council of Europe: Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark, France, Federal Republic of Germany, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom. 12 ‘geographically European’ non-members were also present: Vatican, Spain, Portugal, Greece, San Marino, Monaco, Liechtenstein, Poland, Romania, Finland, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia; together with 3 non-European countries: United States, Lebanon, Israel (Council of Europe, 1973).

- to protect architectural monuments and sites of historical or artistic value and ensure a living role for ancient buildings in contemporary society;
- to conserve the character of old towns and villages and to restore them (Council of Europe, 1972)

The event took place two years after the Declaration on European Identity's publication (CEC, 1973) in a phase where, as described in chapter 2, the EC too – and not only the Council of Europe – started to be directly involved in the 'construction' of its people, to contrast the stalemate in integration. The focus on democratic principles as the ground of the European civilisation, that started to be presented by the Council of Europe's European Cultural Convention of 1954, was reasserted by the 1973 document: the Declaration on European Identity showed the normative character of integration, meant as a civilisational project (Staiger, 2013) and was followed by the European Parliament's resolution on the 'safeguarding of European cultural heritage' (EP, 1974), representing the embodiment of these values.

Against this backdrop, the 1975 celebration of heritage, launched by the Council of Europe, had the specific aim to 'civilise' the wild processes of urban development that were taking place in post-war Europe, that could have irreversibly harmed the continent legacy:

The problem is one that arises all over the world, but it constitutes a particularly burning topical issue in countries which boast an ancient civilisation, especially in the European countries whose architectural heritage suffered terrible ravages during the last war and is now threatened by a process of urban redevelopment, all too frequently carried out in a precipitate and haphazard manner and with no respect for the values of the past. Historic towns, as well as many old districts or characteristic villages, have thus been destroyed or disfigured beyond repair. For several decades, the general public, hypnotised by the prodigious advances of scientific and technological knowledge, stood resignedly by, while its architectural heritage was being obliterated, in the conviction that this sacrifice was the unavoidable price of social progress and that it would usher in a better world. This attitude of resignation has been radically transformed during the past few years and has been converted into increasingly energetic opposition (Council of Europe, 1975: 1).

Turkey's participation in the event – as in general its participation in Western organisations – reaffirmed its belonging (despite its different origin) to the Free World and to its values, in this case embodied in the restoration/conservation projects foreseen by the initiative that, as the next

pages will show, became synonymous with a modernity tamed by European values. In a few words, going back to Duncan (1991) and Bouchard (2007), the static identitarian narrative this event tried to ritualise was embodied in the European shared architectural heritage and was enacted through its dynamic practice of restoration and conservation.

However, the outcomes of European initiatives can hardly be predicted: the interpretation and implementation of European communitarian programmes by different agents of European consciousness (Shore, 2000) can end up with the promotion of opposite particularistic stances, thus obliterating their initial and declared objectives. As claimed in the introduction to the project, the employment of problematic categories with intrinsic oppositional nature – such as the one of heritage – can be identified as one of the causes of this ambivalence. The case of the Ottoman/Turkish timber houses helps to point out how an object of ‘outstanding universal value’,⁸⁵ supposedly able to construct unity and cohesion, can also assume contested connotations. Before going to the core of the case, few more clarifications about the concept of heritage will help to better frame the analysis.

Heritage: giving substance to the identity of Europe

As the first part of the thesis has shown, the European founding values are too abstract to build a European identity and ‘construct’ the citizens of Europe: the Community and Union’s efforts in

⁸⁵ UNESCO is the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation founded in 1945 for the promotion of world peace and security, through international cooperation in education, the sciences, and culture (<https://en.unesco.org/about-us/introducing-unesco>). UNESCO includes the vernacular timber houses among the elements contributing to the ‘outstanding universal value’ of Istanbul historical areas, that led to their inscription in the World Heritage List in 1985:

The Outstanding Universal Value of Istanbul resides in its unique integration of architectural masterpieces that reflect the meeting of Europe and Asia over many centuries, and in its incomparable skyline formed by the creative genius of Byzantine and Ottoman architects. [...] Istanbul bears unique testimony of the Byzantine and Ottoman civilisations through its large number of high-quality examples of a great range of building types, some with associated artworks. They include fortifications, churches and palaces with mosaics and frescos, monumental cisterns, tombs, mosques, religious schools and bath buildings. The vernacular housing around major religious monuments in the Süleymanie and Zeyrek quarters provide exceptional evidence of the late Ottoman urban pattern.
(From: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/356/>)

the cultural field can be interpreted as a way to give content to this vanishing substance and foster a feeling of identification for the polity in the making, drawing the community's boundaries. The 'cultural heritage' concept, which appeared systematically in the European agenda from the 1970s, plays a central role in this process, representing and connecting both tangible and intangible elements (Vecco, 2010): monuments and values, buildings and traditions, stones and principles.

Chapter 2, through the analysis of European documents, had offered an overview on the employment of the heritage notion, pointing out its dissonant nature (Ashworth & Tunbridge, 1996) and the vagueness of its definition, influenced by the mobile European political context. I approach heritage, following the work of Graham and Howard (2008) and Harrison (2013), as a performative, communicative, and discursive process, employing the past to forge the future, thus acquiring different meanings according to the cultural and historical values ascribed to it. As seen in the previous pages, the concept has been linked, in some cases, to the nation building process but has been also employed by minority groups to defend their rights at a subnational level (Ashworth *et al.*, 2007), and by international institutions – such as UNESCO (Hafstein, 2012) – to build a narrative of universal belonging (Harrison, 2013).

The semantic expansion of the concept (Vecco, 2010) – in use from the late 1700 in the French context as *patrimoine* with the meaning of individual inherited goods and, after the French Revolution, expanded to a collective idea (ibid.) – took place starting from the XX century, through the work of international organisations, adding a cultural and artistic value to it (ibid.).

The first document that offered a shared definition of heritage is the 1964 International Chart of Venice, drafted during the Second International Congress of Architects, in which the International Council of Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) was established as an adviser to UNESCO in the process.

Imbued with a message from the past, the historic monuments of generations of people remain to the present day as living witnesses of their age-old traditions. People are becoming more and more conscious of the unity of human values and regard ancient monuments as a common heritage. The common responsibility to safeguard them for

future generations is recognised. It is our duty to hand them on in the full richness of their authenticity (ICOMOS, 1964).

The universal nature attributed to heritage, shaped around the motionless concept of ‘authenticity’, started to be outlined in this context, motivated also by the need for physical and economic rehabilitation for European post-war societies (Vecco, 2010).

With the 1972 World Heritage Convention by UNESCO, the concept of cultural heritage spread globally (Harrison, 2013): understood as constituted by the monuments, the wholes, and sites, of exceptional universal value from the point of view of history, art or science, this theoretical construction was able to build a global ownership for symbols previously considered only as local. This is the vision embraced by European institutions when talking about a ‘common heritage’, seen as property of all the European citizens, with no national distinctions. European institutions have acted – and act – ambivalently towards this category, mixing contradictory stances, in which the boundaries of universalism and particularism are blurred (Calligaro, 2013a).⁸⁶ The case of the Ottoman/Turkish wooden houses will make this point clear.

⁸⁶ According to post-colonial critics, this tendency to vagueness allows to cover an essentially imperialistic plan. As the analysis of the European institutional documents showed, the narratives about the EU’s nature are supposedly grounded in ‘concrete universals’ (Munz, 1956: 3): for instance, the assumption that the creation of a common market could lead to democracy, peace, and prosperity in post-war Europe. The EC first and the EU later:

reinvented a new identity based on universal values deeply rooted in European history. From this transition the EU emerged as a ‘normative power’ defending these universal values at the international scene. But Europe’s colonial history is like a palimpsest in which the ‘after-image’ of empire nevertheless shines through, which can effectively be seen in some EU practices up to today (Pasture, 2018: 546).

The European experience after the Second World War has been characterised by a reflective attitude mainly towards domestic history (Pasture, 2015b) – the German Nazi past is the main example. Some authors (Beck & Grande, 2007; Forchtner & Kølvrå, 2012) have noticed how, in these speculative speeches by European politicians and academics, openly supportive to the European project, the self-criticism about the continent’s painful past is transformed into a civilising mission, manifesting a neo-imperialist will (Pasture, 2015b) that found in human rights the last refuge of Eurocentrism (Enzensberger, 2011; Porsdam, 2011). The words of Romano Prodi (1999, cited in Pasture, 2018: 564), former President of the European Commission, clearly exemplify this vision:

Partly because of the strength it derives from our civilisation, Europe can and must be a credible partner and mediator in these new worlds, which have finally returned to history. Over the centuries, we have contended with many new realities that appeared from beyond our seas, and

The European Charter of Architectural Heritage

In the rediscovered international attention to the heritage domain, the Council of Europe designated 1975 as the European Architectural Heritage Year and, in this context, the European Charter of Architectural Heritage was drafted. The document took shape during the 1975 Congress on European Architectural Heritage of Amsterdam, that introduced key concepts for future debates, such as the ‘integrated heritage conservation’ for heritage in danger:

Considering that the aim of the Council of Europe is to achieve a greater unity between its members for the purpose of safeguarding and realising the ideals and principles which are their common heritage; [...]

Recognising that the architectural heritage, an irreplaceable expression of the wealth and diversity of European culture, is shared by all people and that all the European States must show real solidarity in preserving that heritage;

[...] [The Council of Europe *ndr*] asserts its determination to promote a common European policy and concerted action to protect the architectural heritage based on the principles of integrated conservation (Council of Europe, 1975: 1).

The Charter emphasised the importance of heritage preservation as an element of greater unity. According to Delafons (1997), the European Architectural Heritage Year triggered heritage activities also in countries, such as Turkey, where this tradition was not present and fostered a vision of integrated projects, not only focused on single monuments, but on the conservation of broader environments. The increasing number of international symposia on the topic offered to local experts the possibility to be influenced by new trends and thus inform domestic policies (Çubuk, 1975; Özer, 1976; cited in Türeli, 2014: 16), as happened in Turkey in the case of the vernacular timber houses.

we have consistently forged new relationships with peoples and countries who differed from ourselves. The tradition that we have inherited has dominated history for this reason – this ability of ours to lead and to set an example to other peoples and races.

This perspective, emphasising the image of Europe as a benevolent civilisation, is in contradiction with the unresolved issue about Europe’s colonial past and its implications in the relationship with what is constructed as Other (Bhamra, 2010).

The issue of the Ottoman/Turkish Houses: whose heritage?

Following the work of Türeli (2014), I claim that a central element in the analysis of ‘1975 European Architectural Heritage Year’ in the Turkish context concerns the local interpretation and implementation of European narratives: although the initiative was conceived as a ritual to legitimise a ‘common property of the continent’ and thus ‘construct’ and unite its citizens, local actors reappropriated the discourse on preservation, with their major focus on the Ottoman/Turkish wooden houses, aiming at different goals.

The popular preservation movement in Europe was at least in part to be regarded as an expression for more social equity and the democratisation of heritage, even if there were counter tendencies, but in Turkey local calls remained paternalistic and somewhat elitist (Türeli, 2014: 27).



Vernacular timber houses of Istanbul
From: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/activities/782/>

As Türeli (2014) points out, the category ‘Ottoman/Turkish house’ was constructed, at first, in the context of the nation building process of the Turkish Republic (Akcan, 2012).

If, in the 1930s, academics were describing houses of the Ottoman period as Turkish (Eldem, 1984, cited in Türeli, 2014: 9), with a strong connection to the newly born Republic, from the 1970s onwards, scholars started to talk about Ottoman houses (or Turkish-Ottoman houses) reacting to the former Ottoman territories’ attempt at gaining national ownership of the buildings, through the identification, for instance, of ‘Greek houses’, ‘Bulgarian houses’ and so on (Mutlu, 1975a, 1975b, Sezgin, 1975, cited in Türeli, 2014: 9; Artan, 2006).

In this decade, vernacular timber houses became the melancholic object of speculation for a class of Istanbulite intellectuals, at a time in which the modern lifestyle was attracting most of the urban population to newly built apartment buildings. The feeling of this elite resonated with the concerns expressed by the Council of Europe (1975: 1) during the Amsterdam Congress, in the context of the European Architectural Heritage Year:

In all European countries, the political authorities at the national level and still more so at the local level, find themselves faced with two demands that are all too often represented as contradictory: on the one hand, the need to adapt urban structures to meet the economic, technological and social requirements of our civilisation; and, on the other, the no less imperatively felt concern to ensure preservation of the architectural heritage in the setting of present day human life, since this heritage constitutes a basic element in the quality of man’s environment and the only lasting and visible memorial that testifies to his history, his culture and his traditions. The search for formulas capable of reconciling these two apparently conflicting preoccupations and of allowing our European cities to be reshaped without losing their soul is one of the major problems of our times.

Starting from the 1950s, while citizens were relocating in new constructions, many historical buildings of Istanbul were demolished, with the aim of opening new spaces and roads around historical monuments. In 1959, the Council of Europe awarded the ‘Europe Prize’ to Istanbul, to celebrate its urban renewal, perceived as a symbol of the country’s westernisation. As Türeli (2014) stresses, at that time, urban renewal was understood as part of a more general modernisation process, bringing Turkey closer to Europe (that also involved the participation in

Western organisations, as described at the beginning of the chapter). Almost twenty years later, urban renewal was still presented as a symbol of European modernity, but this time with a major attention to preserve the ‘authenticity’ of its past, carrier of its founding values. To use again Duncan’s words (1991), in this case urban renewal worked as the enactment of a static narrative of modernisation/westernisation employed by the political elites of the time, describing Turkey’s position in relation to Europe.

In years of uncontrolled urban transformations at the expenses of historic centers, the aesthetic of the demolished wooden houses became a synonym for neighborhood sociality (Mills, 2010), to be protected for its heritage value and employed as a source of tourism income. A group of local professionals, inspired by the international climate concerning historic preservation, started to work for the safeguarding of old houses and neighborhoods. By the end of the 1970s, a structured process of inner-city revitalisation took place in Turkey, especially in Istanbul, following and re-elaborating international trends that led to local institutional and professional developments (Türeli, 2014). Sultanahmet, Süleymaniye, and Sulukule, three neighborhoods in the center of Istanbul, became preservation areas and sites of negotiations between local and European stances.⁸⁷

Local actors rearticulated international calls for heritage preservation, which to a degree were about democratising heritage in nationalist terms, and supported revenue-generating proposals, rather than those aimed at social sustainability that, for instance, would empower existing residents to take care of their homes (Türeli, 2014: 16).

This was the beginning of a global trend – that will be investigated also through the following two cases – coinciding with the deindustrialization of cities and with a shift to tourism-oriented activities in urban contexts (Harvey, 1989). In the specific case of Istanbul, this change happened

⁸⁷ The process of heritagisation of the Historical Peninsula of Istanbul was part of a broader idea about the creation of an open-air park. In place since 1930s with unsuccessful results (including a UNESCO application in 1949), the attempt gained momentum again in the 1970s, with the involvement of the Council of Europe and UNESCO, with its international role in the homogenisation of expert opinions (Ashworth & Tunbridge, 1990). For details about the process see Türeli (2014).

according to a neo-Ottoman narrative,⁸⁸ supported by what Keyder (2010) has defined as an ‘urban coalition’, namely a group of economic, political and cultural actors that, even if moved by different strategic goals and world views, converged in the promotion of Istanbul on the international scene.

Neo-Ottomanism

With the term neo-Ottomanism, I refer to the official historical discourse based on the ‘anachronistic reinterpretations and glorifications’ (İğsız, 2015: 327) of the Ottoman empire, depicted as ‘a multicultural, pious, just, and harmonious cradle of civilisation’ (Ergin & Karakaya, 2017: 34). This discourse shaped Turkish politics especially from the early 1980s, with the government of Turgut Özal (Çolak, 2006), and reached its peak with the AKP (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*, Justice and Development Party) conservative Muslim elite in more recent years, as the following chapters will show.⁸⁹ This narrative goes in a different direction from the national myth supported since the Republic of Turkey’s foundation in 1923, based on the idea of a pre-Islamic turcocratic world, rooted in Central Asia and materialised in a pre-religious Turkish folk culture (Çınar, 2005, 2015; Ergin, 2016). In this picture, the Ottoman imperial past was just a parenthesis of decline, embodied in the city of Istanbul, in opposition to the new national capital, Ankara, representing a secular and modern Turkey, looking West (Aytürk, 2004; Ersanlı, 2002; Quataert, 2008). In the discourse of neo-Ottomanism (or ‘inclusive ottomanism’, in the definition of Keyder,

⁸⁸ Further exemplifications of this notion will be offered in chapter 7, about ‘Istanbul 2010 European Capital of Culture’.

⁸⁹ According to other authors, such as Özyürek (2007) and White (2014), the neo-Ottoman discourse started to materialise in the 1990s with the Welfare Party (*Refah Partisi*, RP) and the Virtue Party (*Fazilet Partisi*, FP), that contributed to the rise of Islamic politics in Turkey, referring to ideas subsequently extended by AKP, like ‘Ottomanesque religious federalism (the *millet* system) and religiously inspired charity programs as an alternative to the welfare state’ (Ergin & Karakaya, 2017: 35). In recent years, the Turkish government put an increasing emphasis on symbolic anniversaries such as the conquest of Istanbul, celebrated in the Panorama 1453 History Museum. As already mentioned, urban projects are a central part in recreating the ‘authentic’ Ottoman spirit (Çelik, 1996), as happened in the Historical Peninsula – where iconic monuments such as Hagia Sophia and the Blue Mosque are located – or with the construction of new mosques, such as the one of Çamlıca overlooking Istanbul (Behrendt, 2017), or the one in Taksim square, ‘dwarfing the monument to the secular Turkish republic’s founder Mustafa Kemal Atatürk’ (Gall, 2019). Together with neo-Ottomanism, Ergin and Karakaya (2017) use the term ‘Ottomania’ to describe the widespread consumption of products with an Ottoman character – from hammam to television series – that in recent years started to affect (not only) Turkish citizens.

2010), Istanbul comes back in the global imaginary as the multicultural city, bridging East and West, embodying an idealised vision of the late Ottoman empire as a multicultural and welcoming reality, on one side close to European modernity, on the other a gate to the Orient. This is a new representation for the city, in which the peripheral modernity of the Empire becomes part of the global arena (Keyder, 2010).

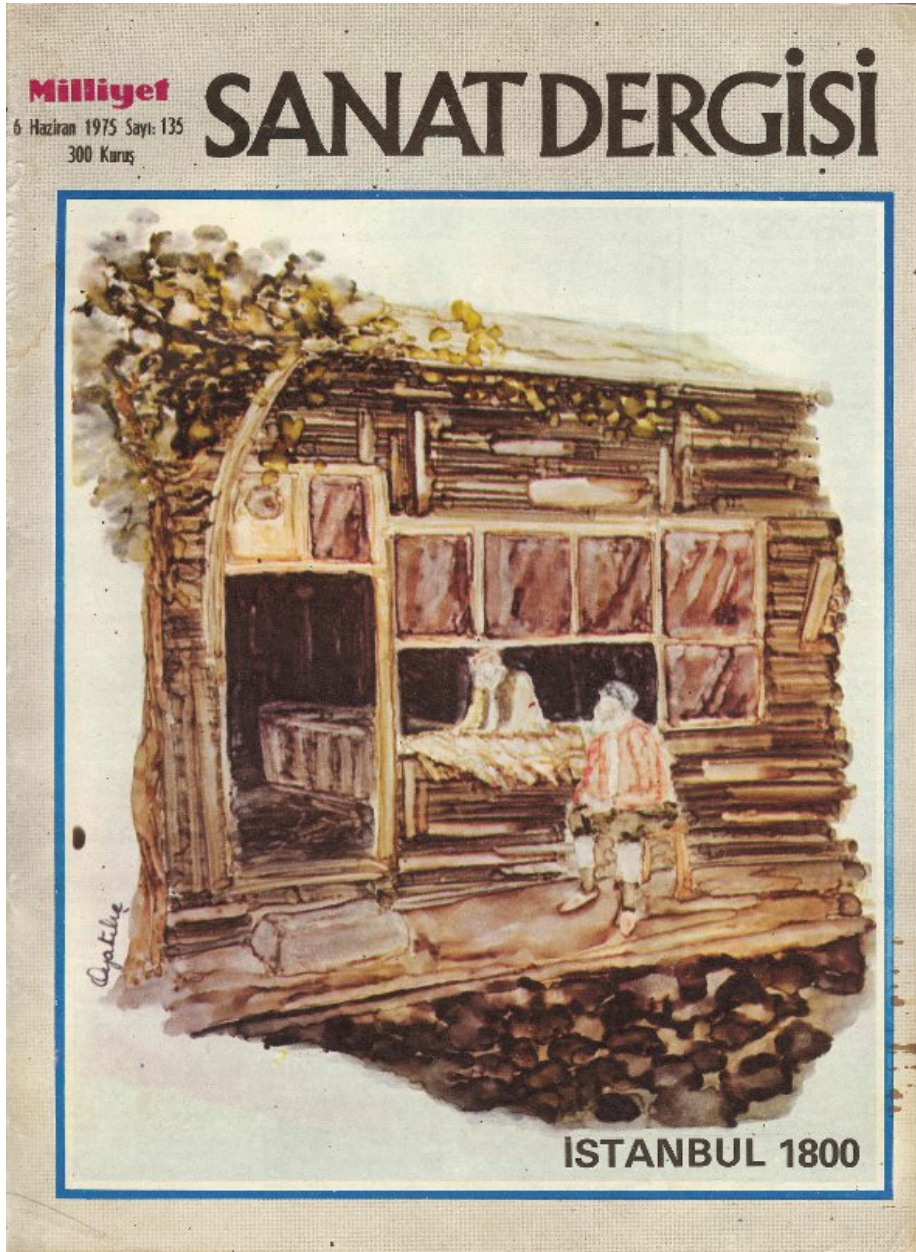
The commodification of urban imaginaries for consumption aims is the key to the new symbolic economy of the city (Zukin, 1995). In a metropolis like Istanbul, lost in self-idolatry and often captured by the work of writers and artists (Erzen, 2010), the construction of a promotional narrative is not a difficult endeavor:⁹⁰ choosing the narrative to privilege represents the real problem. As proved by the international press – that will be quoted in the next pages – and by the framework of many cultural events, the ‘inclusive ottomanism’ is an easily appropriable image for media and international trend setters that, in turn, play a crucial role in its enactment.

Istanbul 1800

The show ‘Istanbul 1800’, organised in the context of ‘1975 European Architectural Heritage Year’ by the art historian Oya Kılıç, is emblematic of the local rhetoric of the time on the timber vernacular houses and of the national reworking of universal myths.

The show took place in the central district of Galata, with the support of Yapı Kredi Bank, one of the actors involved also in urban regeneration projects. The exhibition promoted the idea of conservation of the ‘authentic’ part of the Historic Peninsula, preserving the atmosphere of 1800, ‘before [it lost *ndr*] characteristics with the impact of Europeanisation’ (Kılıç, 1975: 21, cited by Türeli, 2014: 18).

⁹⁰ Since Ottoman times, the celebration of the city of Istanbul became a very common topic in artistic and literary production. Between the XV and the XVIII centuries, the majority of poetry compositions honored the beauty of the garden city; between the XVI and the XIX century it was common to encounter photo albums with Bosphorus’ views, created by diplomats and travelers; in the XVIII century there was a group of European painters known as the ‘Bosphorus painters’; furthermore, the first Ottoman painters, educated in military academies, used parks and palaces as source of inspiration (Erzen, 2010).



'İstanbul 1800' exhibition on the cover of *Milliyet Sanat Dergisi*
From Türeli (2014: 17)

Inspired by the work of international organisations, Kılıç (ibid.) explained:

My aim is to create a historic and touristic open-air museum and cultural center that I named 'İstanbul 1800'. According to the information given by ICOM (International Council of Museums) that is under UNESCO, there are 152 open-air museums in 14 countries on the European continent alone. In all of them, the goal is to exhibit a culture that is disappearing.

According to Kılıç's vision, the vernacular timber houses of the Historical Peninsula were the proof of Turkish ownership of Istanbul, as they were built during the five centuries long Ottoman era. She ascribed the forgetting of these authentic objects to modernisation processes (equivalent

in her discourse to Europeanisation), included the construction of new buildings satisfying contemporary lifestyle needs, and to a general lack of attention to this part of the national heritage, that was always subordinated to Roman and Byzantine monuments (Türeli, 2014).

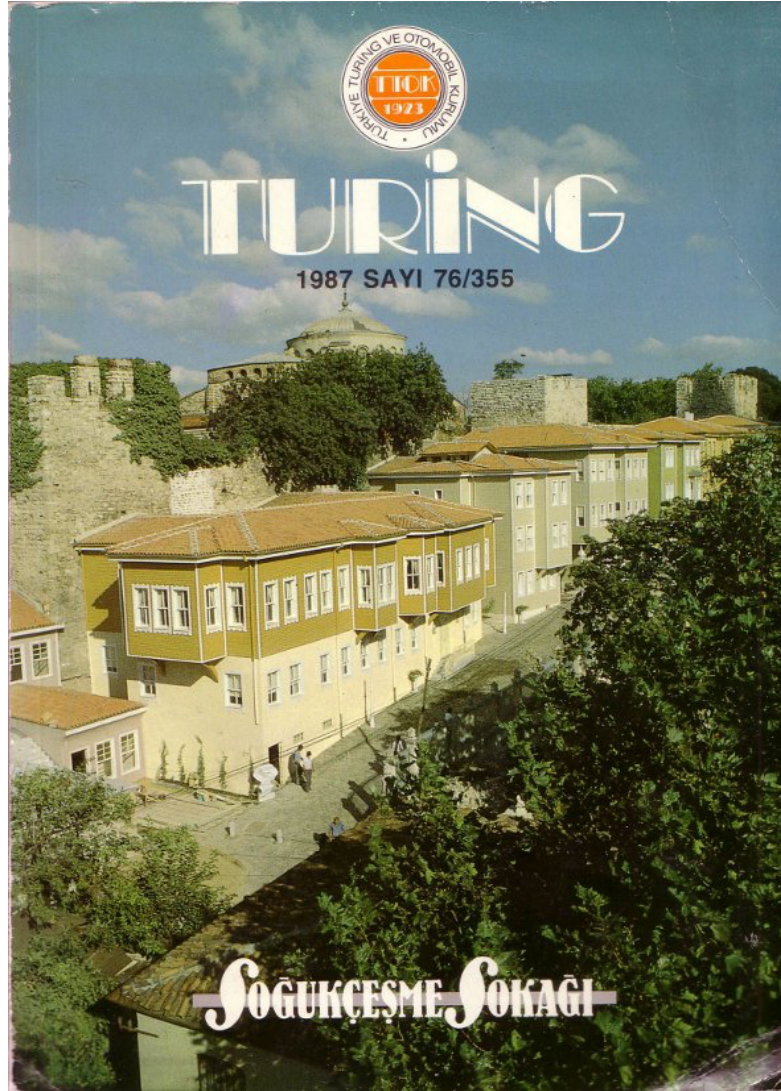
So, despite the general positive climate towards Turkey in Euro-Atlantic institutions in this phase, depicting Turkey as a part of the dynamic process of construction of a European identity (despite its origin in the East), there were anyway local contestations of this belonging. This episode shows how supposedly universal narratives – such as the one on heritage developed by the Council of Europe and subsequently adopted by the EC – can be reappropriated in local contexts and shaped for the ritualisation and sacralisation of other myths, such as, in this case, the Ottoman one. The following case studies, in particular ‘Istanbul 2010 European Capital of Culture’ will offer another example of this tendency.

The aftermath of the EAHY: neo-Ottomanism and the commodification of heritage

In the aftermath of ‘1975 European Architectural Heritage Year’, the local involvement with heritage increased and new actors came to the fore. The Council of Europe’s initiative encouraged the birth of local organisations for heritage, such as TÜRKEV (Association for the Protection of Historical Homes, in Turkish *Türkiye Tarihi Evleri Koruma Derneği*) and TAÇ (Foundation for Monuments, Environment and Tourism, in Turkish *Türkiye Anıt Çevre Turizm Değerleri Vakfı*) both born in 1976. Mainly constituted by academics, the associations took the timber houses as a symbol of their fight against violent urban regeneration projects and their attempt at educating the public, inspired by European movements. TÜRKEV, in particular, founded by the photographer Perihan Balcı – famous for its documentation of the disappearing houses of Istanbul (Balcı, 1975) – was responsible for a series of exhibitions in Istanbul, Ankara and, later on, France, about old Istanbul mansions (Türeli, 2014).

The European Architectural Heritage Year also played a role in shifting the agenda of already existing entities, such as the Turing Club Turkey: founded in 1923 with the aim of promoting

tourism and the automobile sector in the newly created Republic, in this period, the organisation started to invest in activities of historical preservation, such as the iconic Soğukçeşme Street in the Historic Peninsula.



Soğukçeşme Street official publication of the Turing Club (1987)
From Türeli (2014: 17)

Aimed at showing the ‘authentic’ historical life of Istanbul to tourists, this street, just two steps away from Topkapı Palace, was renovated as part of an Istanbul Technical University project, developed on invitation of the Minister of Tourism. The endeavour brought international recognition for the association and its chairman, Çelik Gülersoy, defined by the New York Times as a ‘latter day Prospero’ (Ster, 1986: 5, cited in Türeli, 2014: 26). The renewal of this street offers

an example of one of the two contrasting tendencies in restoration concerning the historical areas of Istanbul since the 1980s identified by the historian of architecture Zeynep Çelik (1996), namely the attempt at re-gaining Ottoman ‘authenticity’ (in line with the post-war preservation trends described in this chapter). The second one is demolition, and it will be described in chapter 7, with the case of the Sulukule neighborhood and the problematic eviction of the Roma community in the context of ‘Istanbul 2010 European Capital of Culture’.

Soğukçeşme street

The Turkish High Council of Monuments and Sites declared the historical value of Soğukçeşme Street in the 1970s, long before the Turing Club showed its interest in it. In 1975 a municipal decree expressed the will to demolish the houses in a state of disrepair and reconstruct the street in accordance with touristic standards. The Turing Club, after two years of negotiations, was able to buy all the properties in the area and, eventually, start the restoration process ten years later, in 1985. In conformity with municipal norms, the new buildings were in concrete, covered with wood panels, painted in pastel colors, inspired by the descriptions of XIX century European travelers. The Ottoman cistern present in the street was transformed into a tavern, with waiters wearing costumes of the time; a small center of ‘traditional’ crafts was also established, in order to offer to the visitors the possibility of admiring the art of carpet making and utensils forging. This setting is similar to XIX century universal Expos, predecessors of the contemporary theme parks, in which Islamic streets were built with particular attention to their ‘authenticity’ and were animated by representatives of local cultures, busy with traditional activities (Çelik, 1996).

As Said (1978) pointed out, the reduction of cultures to easily readable signs not only leads to the creation of long-lasting stereotypes, but also to the ‘construction’ of other cultures, as happened with the Orient in post-Enlightenment European culture. This hegemonic process nourishes the practices of those it constructs too: once stereotypes acquire the value of being ‘authentic’, they can also be employed by those who are its object. These are very problematic dynamics, as the

analysis of the following case studies will outline further and my interlocutors' words will clearly stress, in particular those of the artist Ali Kazma, observing a certain flattening of cultural production according to European expectations. The case of acts of preservation (like the Ottoman wooden houses and Soğukçeşme street) and the entire operation of Istanbul's international promotion can be read according to these lines, as Çelik (1996) suggests. Considering that these cultural events and operations are supposed to foster a common European cultural identity, how can they be affective if they operate reinforcing long lasting stereotypes (in this case the one of the Ottoman city), that can also be locally reappropriated for nationalist agendas?

Conclusions

The European Architectural Heritage Year of 1975 tried to build greater awareness around those European monuments and sites presented as belonging to a supranational (or, even better, universal) community and embodying European founding values. Turkey has been involved in this project as an active actor, engaged in its path of modernisation from the East (where it belongs) to the West, where it was favorably welcomed.

The integrated practice of urban restoration concerning these places worked as the dialectical dimension of a static rhetoric focused on the rediscovery and safeguarding of symbolic treasures, endangered by haphazard acts of renewal aimed at the brutal satisfaction of modern life's uncontrolled needs and greed for profit. It is interesting to notice how the concept of modernisation, generally presented with a positive connotation, here shows its ambivalence. As already discussed for heritage, identity, and culture, similarly in this case the limits of such generic formulations give ample room for interpretation and maneuver. On this occasion, for European institutions, modernity turned out to have negative outcomes only when pushed to its extreme; for some local actors instead, such as Oya Kılıç, modernisation (meant as a synonym of Europeanisation) was a negative phenomenon *per se*, cause of oblivion of the Ottoman past.

The Ottoman wooden houses were the center of attention of the initiative: their restoration acquired different meanings according to the subjects involved. For European and international institutions, they became an item of universal outstanding value and the local effort to preserve them was praised for its 'Europeanness', also recognised by the Council of Europe's 'Europe Prize' in 1959. For their Turkish counterparts, these houses were in some cases a point of contact with European practices and values, cementing what at the time was a still (almost) positive relationship. In some others, they became the object of nationalist stances (as in the case of 'Istanbul 1800'), or nostalgic academic studies on urban transformation. For other actors, such as the Turing Club these houses were potential tools of economic speculation, renewed very often according to stereotypical and essentialised visions on cultural alterity, based on a problematic idea of authenticity, however easily suitable for marketing purposes. The overarching European connotation of the event, with its emphasis on universal values, has been thus very often subverted in the process, showing the limits of narratives based on identitarian assumptions.

Chapter 4 – 1983: ‘The Anatolian Civilisations’ exhibition

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Main features

‘The Anatolian Civilisations’	
Location	Istanbul
Date	21 May – 31 December 1983
Typology	Council of Europe Art Exhibition
Turkey – EC/EU relationship	Phase 2 (1975–1989) Growing conflict: the political dimension gains ground
Culture and Identity in EC/EU documents	Second phase (1973–1992) First steps towards the institutionalisation of culture <i>Key documents: Report on the European Union by the Belgian Prime Minister Leo Tindemans (1976); communication ‘Community Action in the Cultural Sector’ (CEC, 1977); communication, ‘Strengthening of Community Action in the Cultural Sector’ (CEC, 1982); Solemn Declaration on European Union (CEC, 1983).</i>
Institutions involved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council of Europe • Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism
Declared aim	<p>‘The first urban settlements in Anatolia date back some 9000 years and already prefigure the region’s later bridge function between East and West. [...]’</p> <p>‘The Council exhibition traced the civilisations which succeeded one another in Anatolia as the millennia passed, from paleolithic and neolithic all the way to the Ottomans.’</p> <p>From: https://www.coe.int/en/web/culture-and-heritage/past-exhibitions#{%2219677990%22:[13]}</p>

Phase 2 (1975–1989) – Growing conflict: the political dimension gains ground

This second phase starts in the aftermath of the 1970s’ most critical moment for the Turkey-EC relations: the Sampson Coup and the Turkish intervention in the northern part of Cyprus in 1974. The event was followed by the unilateral declaration of independence of the ‘Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus’ in 1983 and the consequent UN Security Council resolution 541 (1983), that considered the secession invalid, requested its annulment, and called for the sole recognition of the Republic of Cyprus. The 12 September 1980 coup, orchestrated by General Kenan Evren, caused further repercussions to an already shaky relationship with Europe, in which The Association

Agreement had been unilaterally frozen by the Turkish government from 1978. The undemocratic nature of the event and the human rights' violations that followed were condemned by several institutions, in particular the Council of Europe, the European Community, Amnesty International, trade unions and human rights organisations (Dağı, 1996).

The EC had already decided that only democratic countries could join the Community: Turkey's European orientation was increasingly under threat. The civilisational mission that characterised Turkey-EC interaction in the 1950s and 1960s, based on the narratives of westernisation and economic development, lost its centrality, being replaced by political and also economic problems (Eralp, 1994, 2009; Hauge *et al.*, 2016). The Turkish authoritarian regime set the country on a different path compared to its Mediterranean neighbors – Greece, Spain and Portugal – that, overcame the dictatorships, started a democratisation process enabling them to join the European Community (Williams, 1993):⁹¹ these countries, unlike Turkey, have been able to capture the 'time factor' and work in order to meet EC's expectations (Eralp, 2009).

The 1980 Turkish coup came in a context of extreme political violence between far-right, far-left, and Islamist militant groups, fueled by the economic crisis and the massive movement of population from rural to urban settings that started in the 1950s (Yavuz, 2003).⁹² Compared to the coups of 1960 and 1971, the intentions of the 1980 military regime were broader: as declared by the National Security Council (1982) in its first public communique, there was a general attempt at de-politicizing Turkish citizens, in order to avoid the high polarisation of the 1970s (Dağı, 1996), thus restoring national union and state authority. The military junta of Kenan Evren fostered a policy of 'controlled Islam' (Baran, 2010; Yavuz, 2003), in which the Sunni tradition functioned as a catalyst of national unity and a deterrent for good and pious Turks to join international

⁹¹ Greece in 1981; Spain and Portugal in 1986.

⁹² The coup took place just one week after a symbolic parade, organised by the MSP, the Islamic National Salvation Party, in Konya, studded with religious symbols: the 1979 Iranian revolution caused growing fear in the secular Turkish elite that a similar scenario could take place in the country too (Baran, 2010; Yavuz, 2003). These are the years in which the narrative on the EC as a Christian Club started to take shape, promoted by the National Salvation Party (Hauge *et al.*, 2016). See Özbudun (2000) for an analysis of the party system of the time.

Islamist movements, as well as Marxist organisations (ibid.). With its first decree, the National Security Council dissolved the Parliament and the government, ordered the detention of the main parties' leaders, as well as trade union chiefs; the press was constantly monitored, and all political initiatives banned. Executions also started to take place again, after almost ten years, reaching the number of 48 by the end of the regime (Dağı, 1996; EP, 1985). In this *tabula rasa*, Evren used Islam as 'an element in the service of the nation and nationalism, rather than as an autonomous force to compete with either secularism or nationalism' (Yavuz, 2003: 71). Religious education became compulsory in primary and secondary schools, and, through the newly founded Department of Propagation in the Directorate of Religious Affairs, the military continued its fight against leftist ideology and Kurdish nationalism. Islam was not perceived as the main threat to the Republic: communism was a bigger danger and religion started to be employed by the regime as a glue for society (ibid.).

As Dağı (1996: 126) points out, in this difficult situation, Turkey's connection to the Western world worked as a 'factor constraining the military's option': the regime acted in the awareness it could not lose completely its link with the West. Thus, it is not surprising to read General Evren's statement in his first press conference, affirming that, in a reasonable time, a civilian government will be established: 'liberal, democratic, secular' and 'based on the rule of law, which would respect human rights and freedoms' (National Security Council, 1982: 224, 230 cited in Dağı, 1996: 126). The Commission reacted immediately after the coup (CEC, 1980: 52), expressing its concerns and the hope that democracy would be soon restored, as declared by the Generals. The European Parliament released a resolution few days later, reminding Turkey of the necessity to respect human rights in order to keep the dialogue with the Community open (European Communities, 1980). In general, the relations with the European Community and the Council of

Europe became problematic, due to Turkey's questionable stand towards European founding values.⁹³

In 1981 the Community again made its point clear and the Parliament did the same, with the April resolution on the initiative of the European socialists and liberals (European Communities, 1981). However, just a few months later, the Association Council agreed on the draft of the Fourth Financial Protocol and Turkish ambassadors, at the association meeting of the same year, expressed the government's will to accelerate reforms, aiming at a full membership application. This move showed Turkish will to stay in the Western orbit, but also offered the EC the opportunity to push more on the restoration of democracy through a conditional release of aid (Dağı, 1996).

The Council of Europe too was putting pressure on Turkey through rapporteurs' missions. Dağı (1996) talks about two main tendencies within the Council of Europe towards Turkey: on one side the socialists, the communists, and the Greeks supporting the idea of expelling the country, being worried also about the possibility of a return of authoritarian regimes in Southern Europe; on the opposite side, there were supporters of letting Turkey stay in the Council, in order to facilitate the transition to democracy through institutional pressure (Barchard, 1985). After a visit to the country in April 1981, the President of the Parliamentary Assembly reported that it was not necessary to activate Article 8 about the expulsion of a member, but that it was important to maintain the country under control (Dağı, 1996). Turkey, in the meanwhile, voluntarily suggested postponing chairing the Committee of the Foreign Ministers, that was supposed to take place in November of the same year (Günver, 1989, cited in Dağı, 1996: 134). The Prime Minister Uluşu even

⁹³ The EC members had also their own bilateral connection with Turkey. In particular, West Germany (the main economic and military partner for Turkey, after the USA) welcomed many asylum seekers. Fleeing from the dictatorship, these individuals played a big role in building European awareness on the deteriorating Turkish political situation, thus shaping Western public opinion on the issue. This caused increasing pressure on the German government, by different actors, to freeze its funding to Turkey, that in fact resulted in 1981 in the block on OECD aid consortium. France as well expressed its disappointment with a complaint to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights and through its diplomatic body; Great Britain and the Scandinavian countries did the same. The US, instead, did not interrupt its financial support to Turkey: concerns about the state of democracy were expressed, but Turkey's strategic role prevailed, thus avoiding any dramatic fracture (Dağı, 1996).

announced Turkey's will to leave the Council of Europe, if necessary. This would have been a dramatic change of direction for the Kemalist Republic of Turkey, that since its inception had made a commitment to Westernisation. It would also have been a dangerous move for Turkish credibility in other Western organisations.

The issue of Turkey's expulsion from the Council of Europe was taken by the Turks as a test of Turkey's Europeanness. It was a matter that determined Turkey's view of itself as a part of Europe (Dağı, 1996: 133).

Being part of the Council of Europe was 'as a matter of domestic as well as international prestige even more as the confirmation of its European credentials' (Dağı, 1996: 136).

However, despite warnings and declarations, no actual improvement happened: the ban of all the parties existing prior to 12 September 1980, mass trials, demands for death sentence, and increasing allegations of torture made Turkey irremediably distant from its European path. Due to the situation the European Community, in December of the same year, just one week before the arrival of the Council of Europe delegation, decided eventually to stop its economic support (Dağı, 1996).⁹⁴

European organisations and individual European governments pushed Turkey to adopt a timetable to return to democracy. In this climate, in late 1981, Evren announced a date for elections, to be held two years later, to ease the atmosphere and improve the regime's image in the international public opinion, giving a concrete proof of its will to restore democracy. Nonetheless, once again, this was not paired with actual change (Dağı, 1996). For this reason, in 1982, the European Parliament, under strong pressure from public opinion, decided eventually to freeze the Association Agreement, until democracy and human rights would be ensured. As a result, the work of the EC-Turkey Joint Parliamentary Committee was suspended, to be resumed only in 1986 (Hauge *et al.*, 2016). The same year, the Council of Foreign Ministers of the Ten sent a

⁹⁴ This happened only one week before the Council of Europe sent another delegation to Turkey to evaluate its permanence in the institution. In this case too, the Council of Europe's decision was to stay halfway: not pushing for expulsion, but continuing to monitor the situation, without being soft.

mission to Turkey, guided by the Belgian foreign minister Tindemans, who was reassured that democracy would be restored in maximum two years. In July 1982, France, the Netherlands, Denmark, Norway, and Sweden, using Article 24 of the European Human Rights Convention, presented inter-state complaints to verify violations of human rights, causing disappointment in Turkey on the one hand, but also increasing pressure on the other.

In that same year, after a referendum, a new constitution was introduced and the Council of Europe urgently appealed the Turkish government to implement it, despite the inherent ‘dangers and weaknesses’ of the document (CoE, 1983a).⁹⁵ In 1983, when the ‘The Anatolian Civilisations’ took place, civil authority was restored (Dodd, 1990; Hale, 1988; Karaosmanoglu, 1991): on 6 November, while the exhibition was still running, the Motherland Party (*Anavatan Partisi*) of Turgut Özal, which was openly criticised by the regime, won the elections over the Populist Party (*Halkçı Parti*), endorsed by the military.⁹⁶

The Özal government implemented important reforms leading to the liberalisation of the Turkish economy: one year after his election, Turkey opened its doors to the international market, abandoning the import-substitution policy in force since the foundation of the Republic.⁹⁷ Although Evren remained president until 1989, Turkey had again a civilian prime minister, opening up a prospect of democracy⁹⁸ and bringing again Turkey (at least potentially) closer to its European vocation. The inauguration of a show like ‘The European Civilisations’ in this same year, has to be interpreted in this framework.

⁹⁵ The Council of Europe expressed its concerns about the restriction on human rights, the role given to the President of the Republic and the independence of the judiciary system (Council of Europe, 1983a).

⁹⁶ Özal was Prime Minister from 1983 to 1989 and then President from 1989 to 1993.

⁹⁷ Özal’s government had a special attention for Anatolian small economic actors, marginalised by previous governments that instead fostered alliances mainly with the secular business elite (Filmflek, 2004). As they conformed to the *sharia* requirements, Özal’s reforms opened the doors to Islamic investors too, supporting new Islamic groups, that benefitted also from donations regulated by the new policies (Yavuz, 2003). Overall, the new free market measures adopted by Özal were appreciated by small and big, urban and rural, Islamic and secular business owners. In this period a new Islamic bourgeoisie started to emerge, fostering the birth of pro-Islamic corporations (ibid.).

⁹⁸ The 1983 general elections represented a first little step in the normalization of the situation, but it was with the local election of 1984 that a further step was made, thanks to the participation of previously banned political parties.

The art exhibitions of the Council of Europe

‘The Anatolian Civilisations’ show took place in Istanbul between 22 May and 31 December 1983 as the XVIII of the 30 ‘exhibitions of European art’ organised by the Council of Europe, between 1954 and 2014.⁹⁹

Rooted in the *ethos* of European integration after World War II and the desire for reconciliation, the Council of Europe Art Exhibitions since 1954 were intended to increase knowledge and appreciation of European art as one of the highest expressions of Europe's culture and common values. Indeed, the exhibitions contributed to advancing the awareness of European identity and unity by illustrating most of the great epochs or the contributions of great European personalities (Council of Europe, 2015).

Proposals for exhibition themes were submitted to the Council of Europe and then evaluated by a team of prominent European museums’ directors.¹⁰⁰

After the Council of Europe’s competent Steering Committee (Culture) had given its agreement, the exhibition was incorporated into the series of Council of Europe Art Exhibitions. [...] The Council of Europe would offer the Council of Europe Art Exhibition label and financial support to the best projects [...]. The financing of exhibitions was secured through the Council of Europe’s Ordinary Budget and substantial contributions by member states, i.e., the host countries and institutions presenting respective exhibitions (Council of Europe, 1991).

While the technical and scientific aspects of the projects were jointly managed by a European organising committee and the hosting institutions, their content was not object of scrutiny:

While making sure that the exhibition themes complied with its quality standards, the Council of Europe did not instigate specific exhibition projects on particular themes, or suggested priorities in order to extend the geographical scope of the projects and facilitate new partnerships (Council of Europe, 1991).

⁹⁹ The exhibition was supposed to end on 30 October, but it was extended by the Council for Cultural Cooperation due to its success (Council of Europe, 1983a). The Council for Cultural Cooperation at that time was constituted by the signatories of the European Cultural Convention of 1954, plus Finland and the Holy See.

¹⁰⁰ The British Museum (London), Museo del Prado (Madrid), Opificio delle Pietre Dure (Florence), Rijksmuseum (Amsterdam), Graphische Sammlung Albertina (Vienna), Hermitage Museum (Saint-Petersburg), Musée du Louvre (Paris), and Bundes und Ausstellungshalle (Bonn) (Council of Europe, 2015).

Despite this statement, looking at the exhibitions' themes,¹⁰¹ it is interesting to notice how they developed according to the geopolitical contingency shaping the Council of Europe's mission:¹⁰² the first shows focused on the idea of a common European culture and the promotion of an ever-closer union through its most important cultural features (Humanism, Mannerism, Realism, Classicism, and so on); in the 1960s, the attention was mainly on specific countries or movements in the European history and, from 1966 on, the narrative of 'unity in diversity', later appropriated by the EC/EU, started to take shape. As already mentioned, indeed, the discourses developed by the Council of Europe in its cultural activities were later adopted by the EC/EU as the red thread of its initiatives (Brossat, 1999; Sassatelli, 2009). In line with the evolution of the narrative about culture described in chapter 2, starting from the 1980s, increasing attention was put on the art projects' social impact and the importance of 'diversity' continued to be stressed. This is what happened in the case of 'The Anatolian Civilisations' exhibition:

Normally organised every three years, the exhibitions have succeeded in illustrating most of the great epochs: byzantine, romanesque, gothic, humanist, classical, baroque, rococo, neoclassical, romantic, modern, and contemporary. Some exhibitions have focused mainly on people who left an indelible mark on their time: for instance, Charlemagne, Queen Christina of Sweden, the Knights of Malta, the Medicis or

¹⁰¹ This is the list of the Council of Europe exhibitions: 1) 'Humanist Europe', Brussels, 1954; 2) 'The triumph of mannerism from Michelangelo to El Greco', Amsterdam, 1955; 3) 'The 17th century in Europe: Realism, classicism and baroque', Rome, 1956; 4) 'The Age of Rococo', Munich, 1958; 5) 'The Romantic Movement', London, 1959; 6) 'Sources of the 20th century: The Arts in Europe 1884-1914', Paris, 1960; 7) 'Romanesque Art', Barcelona and Santiago de Compostela, 1961; 8) 'European Art around 1400', Vienna, 1962; 9) 'Byzantine Art', Athens, 1964; 10) 'Charlemagne – His life and work', Aachen, 1965; 11) 'Queen Christina of Sweden', Stockholm, 1966; 12) 'Gothic Art', Paris, 1968; 13) 'The Order of St John in Malta', Valletta, 1970; 14) 'The Age of Neo-Classicism', London, 1972; 15) 'Trends in the 1920s', Berlin, 1977; 16) 'Florence and Tuscany under the Medici', Florence, 1980; 17) 'Portuguese discoveries and Renaissance Europe', Lisbon, 1983; 18) 'Anatolian Civilisations', Istanbul, 1983; 19) 'Christian IV and Europe', Denmark (10 venues), 1988; 20) 'The French Revolution and Europe', Paris, 1989; 21) 'Emblems of liberty – The image of the Republic in Art', Bern, 1991; 22) 'From Viking to Crusader – Scandinavia and Europe 800-1200', Paris, Berlin, Copenhagen, 1992; 23) 'Art and Power, Europe under dictators 1930 à 1945', London, Berlin, Barcelona, 1993; 24) 'The dream of happiness – The Art of Historicism in Europe', Vienna, 1996; 25) 'Gods and heroes of the Bronze Age', Copenhagen, Bonn, Paris, Athens, 1998; 26) 'War and Peace in Europe', Münster and Osnabrück, 1998; 27) 'Otto the Great, Magdeburg and Europe', Magdeburg, 2001; 28) 'Universal Leonardo', Florence, London, Oxford, Munich, Milan, 2006; 29) 'The Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation 962-1806', Magdeburg and Berlin, 2006; 30) 'The Desire for Freedom. Art in Europe since 1945', Berlin, Tallinn, Milan, Cracow, 2012-2014 (Council of Europe, 2015).

¹⁰² The analysis of the next case study, taking place in the post-Cold War context, will offer the chance to discuss about the following changes in the Council of Europe cultural activity.

Christian IV of Denmark. Two exhibitions, ‘The Anatolian Civilisations’ and ‘The Portuguese discoveries and Renaissance Europe’, extended the panorama deeper in the roots of Europe's history and further into Europe's contacts with other parts of the globe (Council of Europe, 1991).

The series [the Anatolian Civilisations *ndr*] was conceived as a tangible demonstration of the richness of European civilisation and the interdependence of cultures within it (Council of Europe, 1983c: 4).

The introductory text to the exhibition unfolds according to the same narrative (Council of Europe, 1983c: 2):

The first urban settlements in Anatolia date back some 9000 years and already prefigure the region's later bridge function between East and West. Spread through the sumptuous palaces and museums of Istanbul, the Council exhibition traced the civilisations which succeeded one another as the millennia passed, from paleolithic and Neolithic all the way to the Ottomans. [...] Drawn from all over Turkey and many other parts of Europe, the archaeological and artistic treasures on show in Istanbul bore witness to this rich, incessant commingling of civilisations [...].¹⁰³

The image of the bridge of civilisations, often employed for Istanbul, was in the context used to describe the entire Anatolia. This is a powerful metaphor that, as many of the conceptual categories object of this project, can be easily appropriated by diverse actors for the implementation of their own agendas. As already pointed out with the case of the Ottoman/Turkish timber houses and will be further analysed with ‘Istanbul 2010 European Capital of Culture’, an important aspect to bear in mind concerns the local appropriation of the European supranational narratives: in this case, the presentation of ‘The Anatolian Civilisations’ exhibition can be interpreted by the Council of Europe as a celebration of European diversity, but, at the same time, the Turkish national government, putting emphasis on specific aspects resonating with domestic narratives, could employ the project for its own agenda. As the next section will show, the image of the bridge connecting cultures also played an important role in promoting Istanbul on the international scene, in its construction as a global city.

¹⁰³ These are the different exhibition's sections and the professionals in charge of them: ‘Prehistoric to the end of Iron Age’, Edibe Uzunoglu and İçil Muslubaç; ‘Greek and Roman’, Muçin Asgari; ‘Byzantine’, Sümer Atasoy; ‘Seljuk’ Nazan Tapan and ‘Ottoman’, Filiz Çagman (Council of Europe, 1982).

‘The Anatolian Civilisations’ and the making of a global city

In addition to the broad Council of Europe’s narrative framing the exhibition, it is important to read ‘The Anatolian Civilisations’ considering the Europe-Turkey relations described in the previous section.

First of all, to understand the importance of ‘The Anatolian Civilisations’ exhibition, I think you have to concentrate on the political and economic relations between Europe and Turkey at that moment.

This is how the contemporary art curator and critic Beral Madra started her interview about the show.¹⁰⁴ With forty years of experience in the art world of Turkey, Mrs. Madra lived the different phases in the development of the local cultural scene. Her support and connections have been crucial for the entire project: her personal archive and memories of events in which she was directly involved were crucial to connect all the cases under scrutiny. Mrs Madra, then an archaeology student, was the assistant of Dr. Muçin Asgari, curating the Greek and Roman section of the project. Madra continued:

Turkey applied to the European integration project almost fifty years ago. The discussion was on the table in the 1980s, but after the military coup, there was no hope at all to enter the EC. However, the Council of Europe, probably on initiative of the European Parliament, started to communicate with Turkey on a cultural level. In this way, a rupture – I mean a radical rupture – could not take place: art and culture were employed as tools for further communication. This is my opinion.

The Generals in power were quite happy to have the opportunity to show an innocent face to Europe. Everything was hypocrisy. Art and culture were a tool for this hypocrisy.

Furthermore, the government used the exhibition to celebrate the Hegira, the departure of Mohammed from Mecca to Medina in 622 A.D.. You have to bear in mind that the military coup had also a religious character. It was the beginning of the conservative population’s reaction against the Republic. What we are living now started in a very clear way in 1980.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁴ Zoom interview, 4 September 2020.

¹⁰⁵ With the foundation of the secular Turkish Republic in 1923 by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, Islam was marginalised out of the political arena. With the first multiparty free elections in 1950, Islamic actors gathered around the Democratic Party (*Demokrat Parti*) of Adnan Menderes, the first democratically elected Prime Minister of the Republic, paving the way to the comeback of political Islam. The military coup of 1960 and the execution of Menderes the following year were a response by the secular establishment, aimed at restoring laicism (Baran, 2010; Yavuz, 2003). Despite repression, Islamic activism

Madra invited me to pay attention to Turkey's inclusion into transnational markets with the Özal's government:

In the mid-1980's Turkey opened its doors to liberal economy. Everybody was hopeless because of the military intervention: we were facing a hostile Europe that did not approve dictatorships. The private sector was prepared to open itself to the world and become an economic power, but the military regime was a wall between these dreams and the real situation. So, I think 'The Anatolian Civilisations' was shaped in a way that would make the international public more empathetic towards Turkey: after seeing the show and how well this heritage was preserved, a positive reaction would come. These are interesting crossroads of politics, economy, and culture. You see, culture is always used as a tool between politics and economy.

The exhibition took place exactly when Istanbul, opening its doors to liberal economy, started its path to become a 'global city' (Sassen, 1991), namely a financial and service hub able to attract international investors (Keyder, 1999, 2010): the city needed a re-branding strategy.¹⁰⁶ Madra told me:

At the beginning of the 1980s Istanbul had a low profile: there was no mass tourism or cultural tourism bringing relevant income to the city. Only people that were interested in seeing the Ottoman empire or the Bosphorus came to Istanbul; tourism was in its very beginning. Of course, the architectural infrastructure was very different from what you see now in the city. There were no skyscrapers; the city was quieter than now.

continued in the following decades. In the 1980s a key figure in this sense was Turgut Özal (ibid.). Özal was a practicing Muslim, the first president who went on pilgrimage to Mecca, able to gain space for Islamists' stands in Turkish politics (Roy, 2004), as promised during his electoral campaign (Baran, 2010). Even if he conformed to the framework imposed by the regime, Özal's political activity has been perceived as legitimising a completely new perspective on Islam and Ottoman heritage in the Turkish Republic (Yavuz, 2003). From this moment on, as Madra stresses, a new space was created for groups with Islamic orientation to gain political influence.

¹⁰⁶ The concept of global city has been elaborated by Sassen (1991) to outline the main characteristics of the contemporary metropolis. Sassen defines global cities as specialised command and coordination centers for international economy where, in a context of increasing social inequalities and urban poverty, a new global network of highly skilled professionals, with sophisticated international consumption habits, lives side by side with less privileged migrants looking for opportunities, often employed to satisfy the needs of the new elite. It is important to point out that the term 'global city' refers to the theoretical tool retrospectively elaborated by Sassen to describe a specific kind of political-economic agenda, as the one that took place in Istanbul in the aftermath of the economic liberalisation. As the chapter about 'Istanbul 2010 European Capital of Culture' will show, this status was fully gained – at a high price – in the first decade of 2000s (Keyder, 2010).

Thus, ‘The Anatolian Civilisations’ exhibition became also an opportunity to build an infrastructure for cultural events and international tourism. Beral Madra continued:

We had to find many venues to exhibit everything from the prehistoric era up to the Ottoman and Modern Turkey.

As explained in *Forum*, the quarterly publication by the Council of Europe (Council of Europe, 1983b: II)

the treasures of the earliest civilisations in the world, which flourished successively in Anatolia and influenced European culture [...] will be exhibited in various parts of Istanbul:

- Saint Irene Museum: this VI century Byzantine church, which stands in the first courtyard of Topkapı Palace, was used as a military museum in the XIX century and now serves as a concert hall for the summer music festival. Here visitors to the exhibition will see Byzantine objects and artifacts from about fifty Turkish museums and several museums in the member countries;
- Topkapı Palace: this palace [...] will house an exhibition of Seljuk and Ottoman ceramics, pottery, miniatures and carpets. Two educational exhibitions may also be visited there: writing and calligraphy through the ages [...]; coins and jewellery through the ages [...];
- Ibrahim Pasha Palace in Sultanahmet Square will house reconstructions of a coffee shop, a sweet shop and a traditional room as well as costumes, carpets and kilims [...];
- the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art (near Suleymaniye Square) will display funerary *stelae* (stone tablets) through the ages;
- the Galata Mevlevihane (House of the Whirling Dervishes) will exhibit musical instruments;
- the Harbiye Military Museum (residential area of the city) will exhibit [...] tents.

Madra explained to me how these locations got ready for the show:

Professor Asgari oversaw Saint Irene. At that time, the building was almost ready because it was already used for concerts, but many other locations were renovated specifically for this occasion, as the Archaeological Museum. The Museum had a huge annex that started to be built maybe ten years before the exhibition took place, but was never completed. The Generals invested a lot of money and in six months this modern annex was finished. The same happened with the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art, that was initially in the court of Suleymaniye Mosque. Later, the Generals made a significant investment to move all the museum’s content in a renewed building, across Sultanahmet Mosque, where you can still find it. Other smaller buildings were restored too. So, this means that this exhibition made an architectural restoration of the historical part of Istanbul possible. This was the main benefit of the event, in my view. The

money came partly from the Council of Europe, but also Turkish government put a big budget.

Madra put further emphasis on how the exhibition represented an occasion to display local professionalism in the cultural sector to the international community:

The exhibition was the first occasion for the art historical team of Turkey to show its knowledge and experience. The exhibition was very professional, it could have been a show taking place in any other important museum of Paris, Berlin, or London. It was also an opportunity to show to the international professionals of culture that there was a lot to see in Turkey. It was a big attraction. 1983 opened the doors to cultural tourism in Istanbul.

Madra's words resonates with one aspect that the European Year of Architectural heritage pointed out, namely that these European events can work as a showcase for local expertise – conservation and restoration practices, in the example of the 1975 initiative – and that this, in turn, can work as checker for proximity to European standards of modernity: the acknowledgment of Turkish knowhow in the cultural sector by foreign professional could trigger positive results in the global perception of Turkey.

The importance of the international audience is also testified by the decision to have texts in Turkish, English, French, and German available at the exhibition sites, a choice discussed and approved during the preparatory meetings of the show (Council of Europe, 1982). The event had indeed far-reaching cover, with articles published also in the New York Times, celebrating not only the exhibition, but also the city of Istanbul (Bernier, 1983):

A ferocious horde sweeping in from the deserts of Mongolia, only to become the most decadent and luxurious of civilisations. That, along with turbans, scimitars, harems and minarets, is the image most of us have of the Ottoman empire; and it is very far from being wrong. No sooner did the nomadic Turks reach the heartland of the Byzantine empire than they began to see the point of a more settled, more self-indulgent way of life. It was not, however, until they finally conquered Anatolia in the 15th century that they developed a culture of legendary splendor. Clearly it was no accident: Anatolia, the link between Europe and Asia, was more than just a geographical entity.

Such is the theme of the Council of Europe's latest exhibition, 'The Anatolian Civilisations' which can be seen in Istanbul [...]. And under a just-enacted Turkish law,

which for the first time permits the country's art treasures to travel abroad, it is possible that parts of this exhibition may at some future time be seen in the United States. [...]

The chief merit of the exhibition, however, may well be its site: after we have learned to understand the Ottomans, we can go on to the museums and monuments of Istanbul. There, under the soaring domes, amid the salaaming faithful, we can imagine ourselves back in the days illustrated in 'The Art of Anatolia'.

The article shows the exhibition had broad international resonance: as Beral Madra explained, this project marked a significant turning point also for the expansion of cultural activities supported by the private sector, another crucial component of the 'urban coalition' described by Keyder (2010). She told me:

What could private sector do after this moment? I think the decision to organise the contemporary art Biennial of Istanbul came through this experience, because it took place for the first time in 1987, just few years after 'The Anatolian Civilisations'. IKSŞ was already founded, but the Biennial was not part of its programme. The foundation was mainly focused on concerts taking place at Saint Irene. The first Biennial was called '1st International Contemporary Art Exhibition' and I was invited to be part of the organisational board.

The Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Art (IKSV) and the opening to international art circles

As Beral Madra mentioned, the Istanbul Biennial was founded by IKSŞ (*Istanbul K lt r Sanat Vakfı*), namely the Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Art. IKSŞ was born in 1973 from the initiative of seventeen businessmen and art lovers, under the leadership of the pharmaceutical entrepreneur Nejat F. Eczacıbaşı: the objective was the making of an international urban arts festival, that took place starting from 1973, on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Republic and the inauguration of the first Bosphorus Bridge. Throughout the years, IKSŞ expanded the number of its initiatives, including jazz, film, and theater festivals and its last endeavor, the Design Biennial, in 2012.¹⁰⁷

The Foundation had (and still has) the aim of

¹⁰⁷ <http://bienal.iksv.org/en/biennial/history>

introducing the world to Turkey's cultural and artistic assets and transforming Istanbul into a major international center for culture and the arts. The general objectives of the Foundation are: to make Istanbul one of the world's foremost capitals of culture and the arts; to create continuous interaction between national and universal values and traditional and contemporary values via culture and the arts; and to contribute actively to the development of cultural policies.¹⁰⁸

IKSV – and private actors in general, as it will be described further in the next chapter – was an important player in building cultural infrastructures in Turkey, especially for those sectors neglected by the Ministry of Culture (such as modern and contemporary visual art). The Istanbul Biennial, in particular, has been a central event for the international promotion of Istanbul as an appealing destination for business and leisure, connecting the city to the global art networks.¹⁰⁹

The aftermath of 1983

During the last weeks of the exhibition, after the elections of 6 November 1983, the prospect of democracy and the possibility of a rapprochement with European institutions came back for Turkey. The EC was aware that ‘keeping relations with Turkey functioning was important for [its, *ndr*] political, economic and security interests.’ (Nas & Özer, 2017: 28). For this reason, with due caution, the Association Council returned to be operational in 1986, focusing on the Fourth Financial Protocol and the normalisation of relations, including the reactivation of the Association Agreement (*ibid.*).

In 1987, with the relative political stabilisation and economic liberalisation, Turgut Özal submitted a formal request for full membership, without fulfilling all the steps foreseen in the Ankara Agreement: as the Association relationship had reach a deadlock, Turkish authorities thought that it turned into

¹⁰⁸ <http://www.iksv.org/en/aboutus/mainobjectives>

¹⁰⁹ This process took place especially from the early 2000s, in the middle of the so called ‘biennial decade’ (Olbrist, 2007) started in the mid 1990s, in parallel with the new transnational economic dynamics. The chapter about ‘Istanbul 2010 European Capital of Culture’ will offer the opportunity to discuss this point further, in the framework of what has been called a general process of ‘festivalisation’ of cultural events (Demos, 2009).

an inappropriate framework for becoming a member, and that applying directly for membership on the basis of Article 237 was the best way for Turkey, regarding its political, economic and security interests. In other words, the first path (association path) would be bypassed and a new path towards full membership would be opened. This led relations to proceed under two parallel tracks, with different starting points and legal bases but the same ultimate aim (Nas & Özer, 2017: 29).

The attempt was put on hold in 1989 by the European Commission, showing how ‘there was a problem in the timing of the Turkish application and a negative climate in the interaction between Turkey and the EC’ (Eralp, 2009: 157).

The reasons behind this decision are twofold: on one side, they can be related to the internal tasks of the Community, digesting the new members of the southern Enlargement (Greece, Spain and Portugal), committed to overcome a long period of ‘Eurosclerosis’ and complete the Single Market Programme, established by the Single European Act of 1986. On the other side, the causes can be traced back to the poor state of Turkish democracy and the aggravation of the Kurdish issue, with the escalation of violence in the southeast of the country (Tocci, 2012). The Commission made clear in its Opinion that Turkey was still eligible for membership, but that the timing was wrong.

The Community is unable to accept any new member before completing its internal integration. Although it is eligible to join the Community, Turkey should develop further in economic, social and political terms. Therefore, it is appropriate to continue the relations within the framework of the Association Agreement (European Commission, 1989).

It also pointed out that both the dispute with Greece and the Cyprus issue were further obstacles. Furthermore, it stressed that the completion of the internal market would have taken time up to 1993, thus making the EC unable to concentrate on the rest. The Commission therefore suggested to rebuild a connection based on the Association Agreement, declaring that it would continue to support political and economic modernisation in Turkey (European Commission, 1989). So, the EC did not express a clear opinion on membership, just postponed it, mirroring its ‘continued and critical indecisiveness regarding Turkey’s full membership’ (Nas & Özer, 2017: 30).

Towards the end of the Cold War and a new agenda for the Council of Europe

A final and central aspect to consider to better frame the aftermath of 1983 is the approaching end of the Cold War. Beral Madra touched upon this subject during our interview, making a final remark about the Council of Europe's action in the cultural field during the 1980s:

What happened next: European institutions moved through southeast Europe to the east of Turkey. This was a way to go out from the Cold War situation and the rupture between cultures. During the Cold War, for example, we didn't know what was happening artistically in our neighbours: Georgia, Azerbaijan, even Iran, Russia, Romania, Bulgaria. What was happening there in terms of culture and art? We didn't know. There were no exhibitions involving artists coming from these countries. So, it was a kind of strategic push from the Council of Europe towards a global cultural communication.

Beral Madra's words introduce the content of the next chapter in which, in light of the changes brought about by the fall of the Berlin Wall and the expansion of the borders of Europe, the cultural activities of European institutions will be described in this new connotation, with particular attention to the meaning of the Enlargement process.

Conclusion

'The Anatolian Civilisations' exhibition of 1983 has been organised in Istanbul three years after the military coup of General Kenan, at a time in which Turkey was restoring democracy with uneven results and transitioning to liberal economy: the event, that was part of the 'exhibitions of European art' by the Council of Europe, was the dynamic enactment (Bouchard, 2007; Duncan, 1991) of a static narrative that wanted to 'increase knowledge and appreciation of European art as one of the highest expressions of Europe's culture and common values' and 'advance the awareness of European identity and unity' (Council of Europe, 2015).

The show was an occasion for the military junta to show its commitment to return to its European vocation after years in which Turkey's belonging to Europe was increasingly questioned. The exhibition was also an opportunity to start building an infrastructure for the arts in the metropolis, thus paving the way to the construction of Istanbul as a global city (Sassen, 1991). The idea of the

multicultural cradle of civilisation has been central in the curatorial framework of the project, matching on one side the spirit of the Council of Europe initiatives, but on the other also supporting local agendas, increasingly embracing a neo-Ottoman vision. This chapter has started to point out the connection between European cultural initiatives and promotional/economic aspects that will be further analysed in the following cases, pointing out their problematic consequences. Furthermore, it has once again shown how a supposedly universal and supranational vision can be re-appropriated and diverted in local contexts, thus mining the original goal of constructing the citizens of a novel polity. In this case, it can be said the operation was successful in terms of international perception and local results. However, what emerges is again a narrative presenting Turkey as something different from Europe, at most ‘a bridge’ connecting the West to the East.

PART III: TURKEY IN THE ENLARGEMENT ERA

Chapter 5 – 2000: Europe, a Common Heritage

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Main features

	Europe, a Common Heritage
Location	Istanbul and other locations in Turkey
Date	2000
Typology	EU periodical events taking place all over Europe
Turkey – EC/EU relationship	Phase 3 (1989–2002) Post-Cold War Europe: a marginalised Turkish application
Culture and identity in EC/EU documents	Phase three Post-Western Europe <i>Key documents: Maastricht Treaty (CEC, 1992); Laeken Declaration (European Council, 2001); Declaration on Intercultural Dialogue and Conflict Prevention (CoE, 2003); European Agenda for Culture in a Globalising World (European Commission, 2007); Regulation establishing the Creative Europe Programme (European Parliament and the Council, 2013); Communication ‘Towards an integrated approach to cultural heritage for Europe’ (European Commission, 2014); Communication on ‘Strengthening European identity through education and culture’ (European Commission, 2017); A New European Agenda for Culture (European Commission, 2018).</i>
Institutions involved	Council of Europe
Declared aim	‘...a means of bringing Greater Europe together and to promote cultural diversity.’ ‘This campaign has been appropriately timed to mark a quarter of a century since European Architectural Heritage Year of 1975. It responds to the Assembly’s call for an event to recognise the common heritage of Europe as a whole following Enlargement’. (CoE, 2000)

Phase 3 (1989–2002) – Post-Cold War Europe: a marginalised Turkish application¹¹⁰

Phase 2, described in the previous chapter, ended with the Commission, having previously put the Turkish request for full membership on hold, promoting the idea of rebuilding a connection on the ground of the Association Agreement, thus keeping the door open for an eventual membership

¹¹⁰ As explained at pages 37–38, this phase ends in 2002, despite Turkey became a candidate in December 1999. This is because, in fact, in December 1999, Turkey was not involved in the negotiation process, but was instead waiting 2002 for a final resolution about its opening.

in better times. In this perspective, the Council asked the Commission to produce a series of measures. In 1990 the Matutes cooperation package was presented, foreseeing four spheres of actions to bring Turkey closer to Europe: the Custom Union's accomplishment by the end of 1995; the renewal and prolongation of financial cooperation with the fourth Financial Protocol (frozen since 1981); technical and industrial cooperation; and the development of political and cultural relations (European Commission, 1990).

Turkey accepted the path of the Custom Union, instead of persisting with the idea of full membership, in order to keep the communication with Europe alive in the changing post-Cold War international scenario (Nas & Özer, 2017). A crucial element that must be considered in this phase, as anticipated in the concluding remarks of the previous chapter, is indeed the end of the Cold War and the consequent termination of Turkey's role as a bulwark against the Soviet threat. This geopolitical change led to a shift of focus for the EC, which became interested in the integration of former Soviet satellites of Central and Eastern Europe (Graubard, 1991), reducing its attention on Turkey's membership (Sezer, 1996).

Because of the Greek veto, the Matutes Package could not be implemented. However, its guidelines were the same prescribed by the Working Programme, drafted by the Commission at the beginning of 1992: the Association Council eventually decided to conclude the Custom Union by 1 January 1996, confirming what was established by the Ankara Agreement and the Additional Protocol, and then reiterated by the Matutes Package. Despite the unsolved political issues, the economic aspect was central, especially since the international opening of Turkish markets, that made the country the most important partner for the EU in the Mediterranean region (Hauge *et al.*, 2016). 'Nothing was new in terms of relations between Turkey and the community' (Nas & Özer, 2017: 30).

With the Cold War's end and the growing instability in the Middle East, Caucasus and the Balkans (Larrabee & Lesser, 2001), Turkey 'underwent a period of intense soul searching, assessing alternative geostrategic options' (Tocci, 2012: 238). If the country lost its strategic role

towards the Soviet Union, it remained anyways an essential partner in dealing with emerging conflicts, as happened in the case of the Gulf War. Eventually, having assessed various possibilities, in the middle of the 1990s, Turkey returned to its focus on what had now – with the Treaty of Maastricht – become the European Union (Taşpınar, 2006).¹¹¹

The Customs Union's entry into force in 1996 was a positive and important moment in a difficult decade. Despite this step, the Turkish attempt at reactivating its existing membership application was put on hold again in 1997 at the Luxembourg European Council, while the applicants from Central and Eastern Europe (CEECs) were accepted. It was argued that full candidate status could not be granted because 'the political and economic conditions allowing accession negotiations to be envisaged are not satisfied' (European Council, 1997: para. 31). It is important to bear in mind that the Council took place in the aftermath of very dramatic events that compromised Turkey's adherence to European founding values, such as the growing violence on the Cyprus Green Line in 1996 (Eftý, 1996), the military dispute with Greece over the sovereignty of the Imia islets in the same year (Kokkinidis, 2022), the so-called postmodern coup of 1997 (Toprak *et al.*, 2020)¹¹² and the already mentioned exacerbation of the Kurdish question (Nigosian, 1996).¹¹³

At the Luxembourg Summit, Turkey obtained a special status with a long lead time to full membership; it was considered part of the Enlargement (thus being included in the annual monitoring process), but with no pre-accession strategy, differently from the other eleven countries that gained the status of candidates (Eralp, 2000).¹¹⁴ The Presidency conclusion offered a

¹¹¹ As explained in chapter 2, the Treaty established the Single Market, set out the route to a single currency, established a common foreign and security policy, as well as justice and home affairs cooperation. It also introduced the concept of European citizenship and made culture officially part of the Union competences, promoting the narratives of unity in diversity and intercultural dialogue, described in the third phase of 'post-Western Europe'.

¹¹² The event is known also as the '28 February process': on this day, in 1997, the National Security Council obliged the pro-Islamist Welfare Party (RP) to quit government because of its anti-secular agenda.

¹¹³ In 1994 the European Parliament harshly criticised the removal of parliamentary immunity for member of the pro-Kurdish Democratic Party DEP (*Demokrasi Partisi*), but with no results.

¹¹⁴ The Enlargement was opened to Cyprus, Poland, Estonia, Czech Republic, Hungary, and Slovenia, with negotiations starting the following year. For Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania and Slovakia, instead, special aid was granted in order to meet the entry conditions. 'The historic acceleration of the pace of European integration was the answer to the call of freedom and stability sounded by the end of the Cold

‘European Strategy’, based on the steps of integration established by the Association Agreement, deliberating as follow:

While the political and economic conditions allowing accession negotiations to be envisaged are not satisfied, the European Council considers that it is nevertheless important for a strategy to be drawn up to prepare Turkey for accession by bringing it closer to the European Union in every field (European Council, 1997).

EU Commission President Jacques Santer, at the end of the conference declared that interesting offers were made to Turkey, and that the Commission gave great importance to fostering the dialogue (Eryar, 1998).

Turkey reacted negatively, considering its treatment unfair: according to the government, Turkey was in a more advanced state of implementation of the *acquis communautaire* and the economic and political criteria, compared to other countries (Müftüler-Baç, 2000). Furthermore, the inclusion of the Republic of Cyprus among the candidates was perceived as a clear declaration of support to the latter from the European Union to the detriment of Turkey. All this again fueled anti-European feelings in both the opposition and the governing coalition parties. Also the minister of Foreign Affairs at that time, Ismail Cem, declared that ‘Turkey is European anyway. [...] We do not need anyone’s approval for this’ (Erdoğan *et al.*, 2008: 47, cited in Alpan, 2021: 115). The government wanted to make clear that the EU was not the only possible partner, but just one of the many foreign policy alternatives and eventually decided to stop the dialogue and not participate in the European Conference, where the new candidates were also invited. It also threatened to withdraw its application and integrate with the ‘Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus’ (Tocci, 2004).

Aydın-Düzgüt and Rumelili (2021) point out that many academic works of this period, following the constructivist approach, put their attention on the motivations behind the constant delay in Turkey’s joining the Enlargement, in contrast with the priority given to the CEECs. In particular

War, German unification and the breakup of the Soviet Union, giving way to new international cooperation’ (Eryar, 1998: 105).

Sjursen (2002, 2006), building on Habermas' ideas, identified three general arguments in support of Enlargement, respectively based on: utility, rights, and values. In her view, the inclusion of the CEECs was justified by all these reasons; Turkey, instead, was missing the value dimension, in her view related to the identitarian dimension and to kinship ties (Sjursen 2002).

From this moment, a two-sided approach towards the Union started to take shape in Turkey: the perspective of full membership was not set aside, but while the political establishment progressed in the campaign to gain candidacy, other voices in the domestic debate promoted the narrative of the EU as a Christian club, acting according to a double standard (Tocci, 2012). Due to the situation of distrust, even the implementation of the Custom Union was difficult, with members of the government claiming the deals were unfavorable for Turkey and that, as the Custom Union was always linked to full membership, it should be revised in the current situation of stalemate (Rittenberg, 1998)

According to Hauge *et al.* (2016), this moment could have been the beginning of a new narrative favoring a partnership with Turkey, instead of full membership, stressing further the perception of Turkey as the 'Other', alien to Europe. The words of the then German Chancellor Kohl followed this line:

It is out of the question that Turkey will be integrated into the EC and that one should not raise such hopes in Turkey. [...] However, Turkey will become one of the most important countries in the region, or even in the Muslim world. Therefore, one should have as many contacts as possible.¹¹⁵

The difficult situation in the Balkans, leading to the Kosovo war of 1999, reminded Europe of Turkey's geopolitical importance, as stressed in the 1999 Strategy and Progress Report (European Commission, 1999b). The decision to nominate Turkey as a candidate state at the Helsinki European Council in December 1999 shows how the member states understood the importance of keeping the connection alive after a difficult period (Öniş, 2003), while they were also under

¹¹⁵ In Schwarz (2012: 714), cited in Hauge *et al.* (2016: 16).

strong pressure from the United States (Öniş & Yılmaz, 2005). The changes in the German and Greek governments were crucial to foster the inclusion. In Germany the Christian Democrat government was succeeded by the Social Democrats and Green Party (the so called red-green coalition of Gerhard Schröder and Joschka Fischer). In Greece, instead, after the illegal arrival and transfer to Kenya of the PKK's leader Abdullah Öcalan, the anti-Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs Theodoros Pangolos was replaced by Georgios Papandreou, a strong supporter of Turkish accession to the EU, which he considered to be a better framework to solve the bilateral disputes, including Cyprus (Eralp, 2009).¹¹⁶

The waters smoothed in Turkey in the aftermath of this achievement, with Prime Minister Ecevit declaring: 'Europe cannot exist without Turkey, and Turkey cannot exist without Europe' (Demirtaş, 1999, cited in Alpan, 2021: 115). The Helsinki decision was a remarkable watershed, setting Turkey back on a European path. 'The goal of EU accession had never been so clearly set for Turkey' (Nas & Özer, 2017: 53). A process of reform started to take place, brought about by political actors as well as civil society; new programmes on EU studies opened at the universities, as well as EU-funded projects calling for reforms to fulfill the Copenhagen criteria.

The Helsinki Council made clear that negotiations could start only after Turkey met the Copenhagen political criteria. In the following section the process of transformation enacted by the EU candidacy will be analysed in detail.

The Enlargement process: becoming European

Over the years, the EU's encounter with new possible member states has been punctuated by different understandings of the idea of Europe: if with the Treaty of Rome (1957) the requirement to access the EC was an unspecified 'European' essence, as stated in Article 237, this was not the case in the decades to come. The changing international environment, the evolution of the EC/EU

¹¹⁶ The Presidency Conclusions also established a connection between Turkey's accession process and the resolution of the Cyprus issue (European Council, 1999). For the future possible Turkey-EU scenarios concerning the still unsolved Cyprus issue see Dokos *et al.*, 2018. For an insight on Turkey's Cyprus policy as 'a key marker of national identity and political change' see Ulusoy & Verney (2009b: 109).

institutional structure, and the inclusion of heterogeneous new countries¹¹⁷ led to a more detailed and comprehensive policy towards aspiring members, actively involving different EU bodies and requiring the fulfilment of specific criteria before accession (Keil & Arkan, 2014a, 2014b).

As the analysis of institutional documents showed in chapter 2, starting from the 1970s, the idea of shared civilisational values became increasingly relevant in the process of European integration, with a central focus on the ‘democratic tradition’ of Europe (Verney, 2002, 2009b). Throughout the years, the myth of devotion to democracy acquired a central role in the definition of European distinguishing features, mirrored by its embodiment in a criterion of membership. First proposed by the European Parliament in 1962, it was institutionalised with the Copenhagen criteria in 1993, of which it was the only one required to be fulfilled before the beginning of entry negotiations: this stresses its centrality as an imperative marker of European identity.

The accession criteria, or Copenhagen criteria (after the European Council in Copenhagen in 1993 which defined them), are the essential conditions all candidate countries must satisfy to become member states. These are:

- (a) political criteria: stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities;
- (b) economic criteria: a functioning market economy and the capacity to cope with competition and market forces;
- (c) administrative and institutional capacity to effectively implement the *acquis* and ability to take on the obligations of membership.¹¹⁸

As Verney (2009b) suggests, the achievement of economic and administrative standards is only a part of the ‘becoming European’ process in act with the Enlargement: there is a broader level of national identity change involved, that has to do with what is perceived as the ‘normal’ idea of Europe (Keil & Arkan, 2014a, 2014b). The case of Turkey, and the changing narratives about its relationship with the EU, shows it clearly. In different words: ‘becoming European’ does not simply imply EU-isation, namely the ‘formal process of alignment with the EU’s institutions,

¹¹⁷ 1973: Great Britain, Ireland, Denmark; 1981: Greece; 1986: Spain, Portugal; 1995: Austria, Finland, Sweden; 2004: Hungary, Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Malta, Cyprus; 2007: Romania, Bulgaria; 2013: Croatia.

¹¹⁸ Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/policy/glossary/terms/accession-criteria_en.

policies and legal structure' (Aydın-Düzgit & Kaliber, 2016: 4); 'becoming European' has to do with a broader dynamic of Europeanisation, also involving the reconstruction of systems of meaning and collective understanding within societies (Cowles *et al.*, 2001), conforming to this normality.

After the end of the Cold War, the EC/EU found itself in search of a 'new sense of collective purpose and legitimacy' (Aggestam, 2008: 1) and it looked for it also in the direction of foreign and security policy (*ibid.*). The EU foreign policy discourse, with its strong ethical connotation, was coupled with the Union's description as a *sui generis* polity, with a solid 'normative power' able to shape 'conceptions of 'normal' in international relations' (Manners 2002: 239), even for contested ideas such as democracy, rule of law, human rights, and free market (*ibid.*). Manners (2002, 2011) stresses the fact that the European political project represented a radical break with pre-existing polities: this very fact invests the EU of its normative power, despite its colonial and belligerent past.

As Verney (2009b) points out referring to the narrative about Europe as the land of democratic tradition, what is important to keep in mind is not the extent to which this image corresponds with the reality of recent European history, but the role it played in the construction of the idea of Europe and, consequently, in the process of EC/EU identity building. In other words, it is central to understand whether this narrative functions as a myth or not:

myths provide collective groups with a story about where they have come from and the values that set them apart from others. They are beliefs that are not necessarily rooted in refutable facts. [...]. [M]yth is about perceptions rather than historically validated truths (in so far as these exist at all), about the ways in which communities regard certain propositions as *normal* and *natural* and others as perverse and alien (Della Sala, 2010: 5) (my emphasis).

Enlargement can be seen as the foreign policy tool enabling the EU to bring to the 'alien' and 'perverse' world its 'normal' and 'natural' values (Manners, 2002), with the only act of existing as a novel kind of polity (*ibid.*). Contesting Manners' work and moving the analysis from an

ontological to a practical level, Diez (2005) stresses how the EU's representation as a normative power has to be considered in terms of its actual repercussions. Defining the EU as a normative power – thus fostering a *myth* of the EU as normative power – represents a

precondition for other actors to agree to the norms set out by the EU; it also constructs an identity of the EU against an image of others in the 'outside world'. [...] The discourse of the EU as a normative power constructs a particular Self of the EU (and it is indeed perhaps the only form of identity that most of the diverse set of actors within the EU can agree on), while it attempts to change others through the spread of particular norms (Diez, 2005: 614, cited in Keil & Arkan, 2014a: 26).

Rumelili (2016b) suggests interpreting the process of candidacy as a practice of differentiation: before membership, the applicant states are perceived as not fulfilling the European identity requirements as presented in the three Copenhagen Criteria, in opposition to member states 'as the natural possessors of these morally desirable qualities' (ibid.: 207) – or at least this was supposed to be the case before the recent rule of law crises, especially in Poland and Hungary. Looking at the Western Balkans Enlargement, Keil and Arkan (2014a, 2014b) suggests that the EU operates as an actual state builder, which construct not only 'efficient democratic states', but future 'EU member states' that resemble the 'normal' model of a European state, despite the problematic and vague nature of this definition (ibid.). Understood in these terms, the EU Enlargement is the site where the boundary between the European Self and Other, normal and alien, Us and Them is reshaped.

In the changing post-Cold War geopolitical environment, the understanding of sameness and alterity have been revised, having repercussions on the content of European cultural activities too, as the next section will clarify.

Heritage and culture in post-Cold War Europe

Before 1989, European unity was understood as a political concept encompassing Western Europe – excluding central and eastern regions – based on capitalism, liberal democracy, and Christianity. After 1989, this certainty started to vacillate: the possibility to expand to new

territories through the Enlargement process opened up a new scenario for integration, thus testing the solidity of this unity, and the values constituting it (Delanty, 2013).

As the document analysis in chapters 2 and 3 demonstrated in practice, very often the idea of a European heritage has been associated with universal values, transcending historical experiences and the diversity of cultures. This is a practice in place since the Enlightenment, that was crucial in shaping identity in the European polity since its inception: now very much contested, this approach was the main legitimating narrative for the first stages of the European political project (Delanty, 2010). From the early XX century until 1989, for example, grand narratives based on an idea of unity were the main tendency in historiography, as described in chapter 2. This was a historical period in which

general visions of political order were commonplace as in programmatic ideologies for social and political reconstruction such as imperialism, socialism, communism, national socialism, and more generally nationalism. The grand narratives associated with the European heritage were largely modest, if not naive attempts to provide alternative approaches to history and politics (Delanty, 2010: 7).

Starting from the late 1980s, a new vision started to take place in the conception of cultural initiatives, as the changes in the Council of Europe's agenda show.

Council of Europe: new priorities from 1989

In this historic contingency, also the Council of Europe revisited its 'wider social and political aims' (Council of Europe, 2015), facing new demands brought about by a changing international environment and not necessarily met by the format of the European Art Exhibitions described in the previous chapter.¹¹⁹

Starting from the 1990s the Council of Europe put increasing emphasis on 'influential civil societies and on inclusive societies' (Council of Europe, 2015) as a way to reach democratic security:

¹¹⁹ We have to bear in mind that we are still in a phase in which the Council of Europe is the main actor in the field of culture and that only from 1992, with the Maastricht Treaty, the newly founded European Union will be officially in charge of this domain, often drawing on the work done by CoE.

Culture and the arts are indeed great connectors between people, if accessible and meaningful to them [...]. The potential outreach of an art activity could be huge given the use of new technologies, social media and co-operation agreements with leading media outlets (Council of Europe, 2015)

In this decade, the Council of Europe started to review its cultural program, ‘retaining the excellence, integrity and power of the previous exhibitions’ (ibid.), but with the awareness of the new post-Cold War global scenario, in which Europe was working for its reunion through the spreading of its values (Graubard, 1991).

Today, the Council of Europe priorities have shifted towards safeguarding European values. Democracy, human rights, a respect for difference and diversity may need to be embedded in public institutions and policies but their ultimate strength depends on how firmly they are rooted in people’s minds (Council of Europe, 2015).

In the 1990s the Council of Europe tried to meet these new priorities through its cultural events in three ways (Council of Europe, 2015):

- 1) a new thematic approach: culture as a vector of values and citizenship
- 2) a pro-active approach
- 3) reaching out to a wider public

The same report, titled ‘Rethinking Council of Europe Art Exhibitions: towards a revised concept’ (Council of Europe, 2015) offered an overview of the Council cultural initiatives throughout the decades, and presented ‘The Desire for Freedom’ (the 30th exhibition that took place between 2012 and 2015 including a series of workshops and parallel events) as an example of this approach: the project invited more than one hundred artists from twenty eight countries to present their view on topics such as democracy, freedom, and equality ‘thus transcending the usual separation of art from the East and West, North and South’ (ibid.). However, as the chapters on the exhibition ‘Urban Realities: Focus Istanbul’ and ‘Istanbul 2010 European Capital of Culture’ will help us to understand, the inclusion of artists from different regions does not necessarily mean the end of geographical divides.

Commenting on the implementation of these changes, the Committee for Culture, Heritage and Landscape (Council of Europe, 2015) declared that, even if the shift was initially welcomed, it did not bring significant leaps in the Council of Europe Art Exhibitions in the decade of the 1990s.¹²⁰ The initiative ‘Europe, a Common Heritage’ has to be framed within this evolving context.

A new art world: including the periphery

The international art system too started to be affected by the new geopolitical context, as the artist Gülsün Karamustafa clarified during our meeting in Istanbul, in December 2019. Karamustafa is one of the most prominent artists from Turkey, born in Ankara in 1946 and known internationally also for her political activity during the 1970s. To interpret the flaring atmosphere surrounding the events that will be narrated in the next pages – especially in the following chapter – it is important to understand what happened in the 1990s, observing how the narrative of inclusion and respect for differences and minorities started to influence the global art scene too – sometimes with the support of EU money – but with uneven results. Karamustafa’s awareness of the international political dynamics has been extremely helpful to frame the events of these phase. The aspect that emerges more strongly from Karamustafa’s words is the need, in this new international context, to sharply essentialise the geographic origin of artistic production, in order to fulfil the narrative of ‘the mosaic of cultures’. Karamustafa points this out clearly.

I may start with 1996, with a very important exhibition in which I participated: the ‘Inclusion Exclusion’ show in Gratz, curated by Peter Weibel. The show had to do with the idea of the ‘after Berlin Wall’s fall’ and ‘after change of regimes’. It was the first time a curator brought together artists from the periphery, not from the centre. Weibel was very clever in putting together all these artists, for the first time, for the international scene. It was a challenge: at that time nothing was stable, everything was on the move. There was no prediction about how large this art scene from the periphery could be. On the one hand, there was a resistance against the ‘periphery artists’ and the ‘central artists’ were continuing their work as usual. On the other, it was an interesting show. All the invited artists are still working, they are still there, from Asia, Africa...it was a starting point.

¹²⁰ The report continues mentioning that in more recent years – the report dates back to 2015 – there were no proposals for new art exhibitions, proving the general hesitation by member states in operating changes in the cultural field (Council of Europe, 2015).

Karamustafa continued with her account, describing further the essentialising and monolithic attitude guiding many of the artistic initiatives of this period:

There were several other exhibitions of this kind. For example, I had another important call from the curator Rene Bloc for 'Echolot', in Kassel, in 1998. It was a group show of nine women artists from peripheral countries. It came at a time when there were so many 'focuses' in exhibitions, especially on the Balkan wars, with the EU attention on the issue and the prediction on the region being part of the EU. There were all these 'Balkan shows' following each other, supported by European Union money. I did not feel anything in the Balkan shows. They were just putting together artists under a name: 'Croatian artists', 'Bosnian artists', 'Bulgarian artists', 'Turkish artists'.

From the beginning of this trend our main goal was only one: to exist as artists, not to exist as part of a nation, as the representatives of a nation. There were some cases in which artists could be treated really as artists, just artists and not as Turkish artists. However, in many shows, this representative attitude was present.

In these years, following the shift from state capitalism to liberal market economy, the Turkish cultural sector started to be privatised through the agency of economic actors, part of the 'coalition for urban development' described by Keyder (2010), providing the country with a more efficient infrastructure for the arts, which till that moment had comprised only two art institutes and a few art galleries.

In the 1990s, it was not uncommon to find art galleries in the basement of larger branches of some of the more important banks. Indeed, if you were to tour round exhibitions of current interest in Istanbul, you might well drop in at one of the two branches of SALT¹²¹ sponsored by Garanti Bank or Akbank's Aksanat Culture and Arts Center, or even descend to the basement gallery of Milli Reasürans, the national insurance fund founded in 1929, not long after the Wall Street Crash, to seek to secure the value of the currency, and administered by the once monopolistic state bank İş Bankası (Johnson, 2013: 550).¹²²

¹²¹ The author refers actually to Garanti Platform, which turned into the SALT research centre in 2011.

¹²² It was during the 2000s that private endeavors in the cultural sector experienced a boom: in 2002 the industrialist Sabancı family opened the Sakıp Sabancı Museum in a former family residence; two years later it was the turn of the Elgiz Museum of Contemporary art, inaugurated on initiative of the real estate tycoon Can Elgiz. At the end of 2004, the museum Istanbul Modern, funded by Eczacıbaşı family, started its activity along the Bosphorus, under the auspices of the then Prime Minister Erdoğan, who took advantage of the event to show the modernity of a candidate to the European Union (E-flux, 2004). In 2005, Koç, another industrialist family, opened Pera Museum and subsequently Arter in 2010. In 2007, Istanbul Bilgi University included in its new campus Santral Istanbul a space for contemporary art.

Having clarified the context, it is now possible to talk about the campaign for ‘Europe, a Common Heritage’.

‘Europe, a Common Heritage’ campaign

The changing geopolitical environment and the idea of a reuniting Europe led the Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe, during a meeting held in Vienna in 1993, to confirm in a Declaration the organisation’s pan-European vocation (Council of Europe, 1993) and to state its

new political priorities, including the protection of national minorities and the fight against all forms of racism, xenophobia and intolerance (Council of Europe, 1993).

The Declaration stressed the new frontier that opened up after the end of the Cold War as a possibility to create a new Europe.

The end of the division of Europe offers an historic opportunity to consolidate peace and stability on the continent. All our countries are committed to pluralist and parliamentary democracy, the indivisibility and universality of human rights, the rule of law and a common cultural heritage enriched by its diversity. Europe can thus become a vast area of democratic security. This Europe is a source of immense hope which must in no event be destroyed by territorial ambitions, the resurgence of aggressive nationalism, the perpetuation of spheres of influence, intolerance or totalitarian ideologies. We condemn all such aberrations. They are plunging peoples of former Yugoslavia into hatred and war and threatening other regions. We call upon the leaders of these peoples to put an end to their conflicts. We invite these peoples to join us in constructing and consolidating the new Europe (Council of Europe, 1993).

The ‘Europe, a Common Heritage’ campaign of 2000 is conceived as a brick in this novel process and

[...] it has therefore political goals. But it has also social, ethical, cultural, economic and natural aspects (Council of Europe, 2000).

Decided by the Council of Europe Heads of State and Government at their 2nd Summit (1997), ‘Europe, a Common Heritage’ was a public awareness campaign launched on 11 September 1999 in Romania and closed twelve months later in Latvia, twenty-five years after ‘1975 European

Architectural Heritage Year'. The title of the initiative then became the slogan of the European Heritage Days, an event jointly organised by the Council of Europe and the European Commission, taking place since then on an annual base.

The campaign had as an objective:

the extension from conservation of the physical heritage to the social dimension, recognition of the importance of diversity and tolerance (Council of Europe, 2000).

On the occasion of the campaign, the Council of Europe (2000) published a report in which it acknowledged the limits of the 1975 initiative European Architectural Heritage, pointing out that:

European Architectural Heritage Year of 1975 was the first occasion on which the Council of Europe brought the heritage to the attention of the general public. The main message of the campaign was that of integrated conservation, which essentially meant the inclusion of heritage considerations in planning. The notion of collective European responsibility was also evoked.

[...]

Though largely successful in getting its message 'A future for our past' across, the 1975 campaign was very much limited to the architectural heritage and did not include east European non-member states.¹²³ There were also problems in ensuring follow up – the national committees were not maintained and the future of intergovernmental co-operation in the Council of Europe was itself in question.

[...]

With the prospect of Enlargement of cultural co-operation to the whole of Europe, the Assembly joined in 1992 with Europa Nostra (at that time presided over by Mr. de Koster, former President of the Assembly) to call for a second Council of Europe heritage campaign to convey a broader message to the broader audience.

As this statement shows, the 2000 campaign was conceived with a more general and inclusive message compared to what happened in 1975. The initiative was framed as a 'proof of a united Europe, brought together through a common heritage enriched by its diversity', acknowledging at the same time the vagueness of concepts such as European identity and common heritage, shaped

¹²³ See p. 112 for the full list of participant countries.

by contrasting political agendas in the cultural field. The initiative wanted to expand the concept of integrated conservation:

Planning, funding, promoting and even thinking about the cultural heritage is linked to our approach to organising such policy areas as our social, economic and educational as well as physical environment (Council of Europe, 2000).

The event was shaped around the idea that heritage is not only constituted by physical elements, such as buildings and museums, but also by non-physical elements such as music, gastronomy, language and natural sites. Tolerance and diversity are, as well, key words in the debate that the initiative wants to trigger, in line with what has been described through the analysis of institutional documents: ‘heritage is our civilisation and its diversity essential to our identities’ (Council of Europe, 2000). Referring to the conflicts in Cyprus, former Yugoslavia and Israel, the report acknowledges the potential for conflict intrinsic in heritage, but also the possibility of solidarity as it happened in the case of the joint Greek-Turkish endeavor during the earthquakes of 1999 (Ker-Lindsay, 2007). The campaign claimed it

embraces the whole of Europe. It is based on the Europe of the 47 states signatory to the European Cultural Convention. Observer states such as Israel and Canada are also actively involved (Council of Europe, 2000).

Furthermore, it was keen to support the contribution of the non-governmental sector in heritage activities (with organisations such as Europa Nostra, that will be described in the next chapters, that played an important role in the 1975 campaign too).

The event was promoted by each country through the activities of a National Committee. In addition, a Committee of Honor was created ‘in order to enjoy high political patronage’ (Council of Europe, 2000), comprising ‘twelve members who are giving their moral support to the campaign and contributing to its promotion in the media and in specialised circles’ (ibid.), among them Mr. Sakıp Sabancı, Chairman of the Board of the Sabancı Holding, member of one of the

most prominent families of businessmen in Turkey, already mentioned for its role in the construction of a local infrastructure for the arts.¹²⁴

Turkey was also the host of two of the several transnational projects organised for the occasion: the first one 'Religious monuments and sites: towards a culture of religions' took place in Tarsus; the second one 'Wooden culture in Europe' held in Safranbolu, one of the cities hosting examples of the Ottoman/Turkish timber houses, that started a process of patrimonialisation in 1975, in the context of the European Architectural Heritage Year, and become part of the UNESCO Heritage list in 1994.¹²⁵

Conclusions

Starting from the campaign 'Europe, a Common Heritage', this chapter offered the opportunity to frame the new post-Cold War context and the changing priorities of European institutions: with the fall of the Berlin Wall, the EC – soon to be EU – had to re-position itself in the international arena, as well as Turkey had to do towards Euro-Atlantic institutions and the new global order. 'Europe, a Common Heritage', reflecting upon the past initiatives of the Council of Europe, especially '1975 European Architectural Heritage Year' set a new agenda for European cultural policies, in the context of the reuniting of Europe (Graubard, 1991). These pages offered the opportunity to rethink about the idea of Europe's changing borders and the negotiations on Europeanness enacted in the process of candidacy, finally granted to Turkey in 1999, thus re-

¹²⁴ The other members of the Committee were: Emil Constantinescu, President of Romania, President of the Committee of Honor; Vaclav Havel, President of the Czech Republic; Edward Shevardnadze, President of Georgia; Carlo Azeglio Ciampi, President of Italy; Mario Soares, former President of Portugal; Ugo Mifsud Bonnici, former President of Malta; HRH the Prince of Asturias; HRH the Prince Consort of Denmark, President of Europa Nostra; Baroness Gloria Hooper, President of the European Foundation for Heritage Skills; Ambassador Adrien Meisch, President of the European Institute of Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe; Jacques Rigaud, President of the Association for the Development of the Industrial and Commercial Sponsorship (ADMICAL) of France.

¹²⁵ On the occasion of the campaign, a series of transnational projects, consisting of seminars, colloquies, and international conferences were organised, attracting more than 2000 participants from 47 countries (Council of Europe, 2000). In addition to the two topics already mentioned in the main text, the others were: ancient universities route; decorative arts workshops; heritages of tourism and travel; traditional musical heritage in Europe; industrial heritage. In particular, the decorative arts workshops, traditional musical heritage in Europe, and ancient universities route were joint activities of the Council of Europe and the European Union.

setting eventually the country in its European path, after years of problematic interactions. The myth of a normative Europe, possessors of 'normal' values, that other countries aspires to and that can be gained through the transformative process of candidacy – or better the process of construction that takes place through candidacy in conformity with the Copenhagen criteria – can offer an interesting key to read the turn in European cultural initiatives taking place in this phase. Abandoning (at least partially) the universal grand narratives of the previous period for a more inclusive discourse on heritage and culture these events started to function as connectors between diverse peoples: values more than objects were at the center of a narrative that wanted to embrace new and diverse traditions, previously excluded by European cultural initiatives. Heritage and art became objects of attention in relation to their potential as vehicles of integration and solidarity. In this framework, the new myth of 'unity in diversity' started to take shape; cultural initiatives opened up to territories that were unexplored before the end of the Cold War, very often adopting the approach of the 'mosaic of cultures' where representatives of one tradition are required to perform their origins according to international expectations. The following case study well presents the problematic implications of this attitude.

Chapter 6 – Urban Realities: Focus Istanbul (2005)

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Main features

	‘Urban Realities: Focus Istanbul’
Location	Martin Gropius Bau Museum, Berlin
Dates	9 July – 3 October 2005
Typology	Contemporary art exhibition
Turkey – EU relationship	Phase 4 (2002-2005) Turkey becomes accession candidate: a positive turn with geopolitical motivations?
Culture and Identity in EC/EU documents	Third phase Post-Western Europe
Institutions involved	Under the patronage of the President of the European Commission Barroso and the Mayor of Berlin Wowereit Funded by the Hauptstadtkulturfonds Supported by IKS SV
Organisers	Künstlerhaus Bethanien GmbH Curated by Christoph Tannert, managing director of Künstlerhaus Bethanien GmbH
Declared aim	<p>‘‘Urban Realities: Focus Istanbul’ is not an exhibition to document or illustrate regional developments by and with artists from a certain region, nor an exhibition to present contemporary Turkish art, but a classic thematic exhibition. It strives for a change of viewpoint, an intersection of glimpses of the city from the outside with those from within the city itself. In the face of the problem of ‘mental mapping’, it does not seek to merely describe findings, but also to reflect intentions and designs that shift with one’s site’</p> <p>From the curatorial text: https://www.bethanien.de/en/exhibitions/urbane-realitaten/</p>

Phase 4 (2002–2005) – Turkey becomes accession candidate: a positive turn with geopolitical motivations?

‘Urban Realities: Focus Istanbul’ took place at the Martin Gropius Bau Museum (Berlin), from 9 July until 3 October 2005, both emblematic dates connoting the atmosphere surrounding the event: the first marked by the bombs on London’s transport network and the second by the opening of Turkish accession negotiations to the EU.

The show inaugurated two days after London was hit by Islamic terrorist attacks, resulting in the deaths of more than fifty people (Grierson, 2015). The London events were symptomatic of an international atmosphere – which peaked in the 9/11 events – that fostered Turkey’s perception by EU institutions as a key actor for geopolitical security (Eralp, 2009; Hauge *et al.*, 2016;). The idea of Turkey as a bridge to the Islamic world in the clash of civilisations era (Huntington, 1997) and as a stability actor for the Balkan and Eastern Mediterranean regions had been emphasized, as seen in the previous chapter, in the 1999 Strategy and Progress Report on Turkey (European Commission, 1999b). According to Parlar Dal and Erşen (2014), this was the second time in which a debate about a ‘Turkish model’ took place,¹²⁶

meant to demonstrate the compatibility of Islam with democracy at a time when the US was waging its ‘war against terror’ to fight against fundamentalist Islamic terrorist groups like Al Qaeda (ibid.: 267).

The granting of candidate status showed the EU’s commitment towards Turkey and boosted the Europeanisation process in the country (Müftüler-Baç, 2000, 2005), within a domestic climate in which support for accession reached a peak of 75% in 2002 (European Commission, 2002a). The reforms that took place between 1999 and 2004 were mainly focused on minority rights, the control of the military, and the penal code (Müftüler-Baç, 2005). Non-governmental interaction became as important as the governmental one in this process (Eralp, 2009): organisations dealing with women’s right, environmental issues, and human rights benefited from an increasing connection with European counterparts and were enthusiastically active in the local reform process (Göksel & Güneş, 2005). The support of big, small, and medium sized business actors was another important element (Eralp, 2009).

¹²⁶ The first time was after the Soviet Union’s collapse as a model for the Turkic Republics. There is also a third time, as will be explained in the following pages, in the aftermath of the so-called Arab Springs.

The reform process started to intensify especially from the end of 2001.¹²⁷ According to Müftüler-Baç (2005), this delay happened for two reasons: first, the economic crisis of 2000-2001; second, the divided coalition party government,¹²⁸ unable to agree on the priority of political reforms. The first two reform packages concerning crucial political issues – such as minority rights and the abolition of the death penalty – took place in August 2002, marking a major step in fulfilling the *acquis*. The economic crisis made clear to all the local business actors the importance of the IMF and the EU as anchors for stability (Eder, 2003; Ülgen, 2006). This awareness was shared also by the AKP, that replaced the coalition government in power in November 2002.

After the AKP victory, changes accelerated, ‘with the westernisation reform drive increasingly turning into a more concrete process of Europeanisation, focused on critical issues of democratisation’ (Eralp, 2005: 159). That seemed a necessary move for the government, in order to stay solidly on the EU path, especially in light of the European Council’s Copenhagen summit of December 2002, that welcomed the group of Eastern European countries, as well as Malta and Cyprus (with all the consequent frictions over the divided island) as the 10 new EU members, starting from 1 May 2004 (Council of the European Union, 2002: 1). As for Turkey, the situation was different: further progress had to be made, in order to

address swiftly all remaining shortcomings in the field of the political criteria, not only with regard to legislation but also in particular with regard to implementation. The Union recalls that, according to the political criteria decided in Copenhagen in 1993, membership requires that a candidate country has achieved stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities (Council of the European Union, 2002: 5).

The Heads of States praised

¹²⁷ In conformity with the pre-accession strategy, the Commission prepared an Accession Partnership Document for Turkey in November 2000, then adopted by the European Council in March 2001. In the same month, Turkey submitted its National Programme for the Adoption of the EU *acquis*, presenting a series of ambitious political and legal reforms necessary to fulfil the accession criteria and start accession negotiations (Müftüler-Baç, 2005).

¹²⁸ The coalition was composed of the Democratic Left Party (*Demokratik Sol Parti*, DSP), Motherland Party (*Anavatan Partisi*, ANAP), and Nationalist Action Party (*Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi*, MHP).

the important steps taken by Turkey towards meeting the Copenhagen criteria, in particular through the recent legislative packages [...]. The Union acknowledges the determination of the new Turkish government to take further steps on the path of reform and urges [...] to address swiftly all remaining shortcomings in the field of the political criteria, not only with regard to legislation but also in particular with regard to implementation. [...] If the European Council in December 2004, on the basis of a report and a recommendation from the Commission, decides that Turkey fulfils the Copenhagen political criteria, the European Union will open accession negotiations with Turkey without delay (Council of the European Union, 2002: 5).

The first AKP government was very supportive towards Turkey's EU membership in the attempt, on the one side, to gain greater domestic support towards the centre (Aydın-Düzgüt & Kaliber, 2016). On the other, it used the accession process to diminish the power of the military and the Kemalist establishment and to support the social and economic progress of its conservative supporters (Dağı, 2006), in order 'to preserve its core constituency, with the promise of extended religious freedoms, and to guarantee its survival vis-à-vis the secularist state establishment' (Aydın-Düzgüt & Kaliber, 2016: 2).

The implemented reforms gained the EU's approval. In January 2004, the second visit to Turkey by a Commission President took place: after Walter Hallstein in 1963, Romano Prodi went to Ankara and Istanbul praising the sweeping changes and the democratic credentials obtained through the work of the new government (European Commission, 2004a). In October of the same year, the Commission's Progress Report to the European Council recommended the opening negotiations (European Commission, 2004b). When the decision was officially taken in December 2004, several member states still had doubts, especially Germany, Austria, and the Netherlands.¹²⁹

This (almost) positive atmosphere started soon to deteriorate: 2005 marked a watershed. In May and June – while the Enlargement fatigue was already kicking in but had not yet severely influenced EU policy – referenda took place in France and the Netherlands, rejecting the Treaty

¹²⁹ Among others, a very hot topic was the already mentioned unsolved issue about Cyprus, in the aftermath of the referendum on the Annan Plan (Lippert, 2021). Furthermore, the role of Turkey as a key for security in the region lost credibility because of its ambivalent attitude – especially in relation to the Kurdish question – also beyond national borders (Barkey & Le Gloannec, 2005).

establishing a Constitution of Europe, with the opposition to Turkey's EU accession being one of the elements used to support the 'no' campaigns (Gentleman, 2004; Watt, 2005).

Until 2002–03, EU skepticism regarding Turkey's membership was rarely voiced in the open. With a few notable exceptions, European declarations normally focused on Turkey's shortcomings in the areas of democracy and human rights. However, as the prospects of Turkey's membership became more tangible with the approaching launch of accession negotiations in 2005, the underlying interests and positions of the member states came to the fore (Tocci, 2012: 40).

According to Hauge *et al.* (2016), in this phase there was a highly polarised debate between opponents and supporters of Turkish accession: on one side, those claiming that Turkey could become European through the fulfilment of the Copenhagen criteria – the so called 'Enlargement and Europeanisation' narrative (Hauge *et al.*, 2016); on the other, those refusing this hypothesis, such as the former French president Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, who openly claimed that 'Turkey is a country that is close to Europe, an important country ... but it is not a European country' (Black, 2002).

The exhibition ended exactly on the day on which the Council of the European Union, during the Intergovernmental Conference held in Luxembourg,

approved a framework for negotiations with Turkey on its accession to the EU, as mandated by the European Council last December, thus enabling the negotiations to begin immediately after the meeting (Council of the European Union, 2005: 7).

Turkey was allowed to start negotiations, even if it only 'sufficiently' (European Council, 2004: 6) fulfilled the political criteria: being aware of the structural problems of the country, the EU looked for special arrangements in order to support democratic and economic change. These provisions were defined during the Council of December 2004 and integrated into the Negotiating Framework Document, prepared by the Commission (European Commission, 2005). This document envisaged an open-ended process of negotiation that not only was dependent on Turkey's conduct, but also on the Union's institutional absorption capacity (*ibid.*), making in this

way membership not automatic. Furthermore, it prescribed a screening process and a suspension procedure by qualified majority in case of Turkey's violation of fundamental political criteria and a halt in the reforms. An implicit alternative to membership was included too, so in case the candidate

is not in a position to assume in full all the obligations of membership it must be ensured that [...] is fully anchored in the European structures through the strongest possible bond (European Commission, 2005: para. 2).

For some authors (see for example Tekin, 2021) this was not only an alternative option, but a strategy in line with the preference of some member-states, favoring the idea of a privileged partnership instead of full membership. If, on one side, these measures can be interpreted as a support for a candidate in a special position (for its size and peculiar economic, political, and cultural characteristics) some authors considered this framework a disincentive, as it set negotiations on the path of failure since their inception (Içener *et al.*, 2010).

The already cited Schimmelfennig (2021, 2009) used the formula of the 'rhetorical entrapment' to explain the complicated framework that was prepared for Turkey. He firstly developed his thesis talking about the accession of CEECs and then applied this reasoning to Turkey, arguing that the opening of negotiations was not due to an actual will, but to a normative constraint linked to the liberal-democratic identity that EU had constructed for itself: Enlargement is a matter of identity for the EU and its betrayal equals a denial of the founding principles of the Union. This is an argument that can hardly be rejected, without questioning the commitment to European fundamental values (*ibid.*)

So, forty-two years after the signing of the Ankara Agreement (1963) and while another nineteen states had already become full members of the Union, Turkey was finally starting its accession negotiations in a climate of mistrust. As the EU Enlargement commissioner Olli Rehn declared:

Turkey will not become a member of the union today or tomorrow...It will be a long, difficult, and tortuous journey.¹³⁰

Also difficult and tortuous was the making of Focus Istanbul.

Turkish migration in Germany changing stereotypes¹³¹

As stated in the introduction, ‘Focus Istanbul’ is the only one of the six exhibitions that took place outside of Turkey, thus offering a meaningful example of foreign gaze on the issue of Turkey’s Europeanness. A show about Istanbul, hosted by the EU country with the largest Turkish community, at such a crucial moment in the history of Turkey-EU relations, can be interpreted as a showcase to increase the familiarity of the local (and European in general) audience with a country on its path to the EU. It is important to analyse the exhibition considering the context, in particular the recent history of Turkish migration to Germany and the stereotypes associated with the community, developed throughout the decades. For this reason, before going to the heart of the show, this section will offer an insight on the changing waves of migration from Turkey to Germany and the stereotypes they brought about.

The perception of the Turkish community in Germany is an issue that came up several times during my fieldwork in Berlin, while discussing with both German and Turkish interlocutors: the new wave of migration, started in the aftermath of the failed coup of 2016 – composed among others by Gülenists (supporters of the supposed coup’s mastermind), persecuted intellectuals and political figures, highly skilled white collars, and students – challenged long lasting stereotypes about new comers from Anatolia. For decades, the common imaginary of Turks in Germany has been the one of the *Gastarbeiter*, namely the guest workers who arrived in West Germany during the economic miracle, following bilateral agreements with several countries – including Turkey –

¹³⁰ In Yárnoz (2005), cited in Casanova (2006: 246).

¹³¹ All data presented in the section are from Türkmen (2019). For further details on this topic, see Abadan-Unat (2011), Aydın (2016), Philip (1991).

lasting from 1961 until 1973. Initially, workers were obliged to move alone, without their families, for a period of maximum two years, but in 1964 these limitations were removed.

According to a State Planning Organisation's survey, the workers that arrived in the early 1960s were mainly from urban settlements and better educated compared to those of the 1970s, recruited especially from underdeveloped areas of Anatolia. In the 1980s and 1990s, after the military coup and the exacerbation of the Kurdish issue, mainly political dissidents looking for asylum moved to Germany. This group was generally more educated compared to the *Gastarbeiter*, but anyways doomed to marginality, in many cases, due to the lack of legal status. The last wave of migration post-2016 presents socio-economic characteristics drastically different from those of the previous years, thus often being welcomed by the exclamation: 'But you don't look Turkish!'. This is the title of a photographic series by the artist Işıl Eğrikavuk,¹³² started after she moved to Germany in 2017, in response to the comment – often considered to be a compliment by those who made that – she often got when introducing herself as Turkish.

Türkmen (2019) interviewed several migrants of this last wave, pointing out a general feeling of exhaustion since, not meeting the existing stereotypes on Turkishness in Germany, they constantly had to 'explain' how they too are from Turkey. An interesting element, that I noticed during my stay in Berlin and which was confirmed by Türkmen's work (2019), is the will of these recent migrants – especially those belonging to the academic and artistic circles – to clearly mark the difference from those that 'came before them', from the 'other' Turks. As one of Türkmen's interviewees, a marketing specialist, declared:

When I receive this comment, I immediately give details: 'I was not born here, I have come here for work, I am different from the Turkish people living here'. Yet, living in a country where I am not comfortable declaring 'I am Turkish' disturbs me in a weird way. I did not experience this in the United States. In Germany, I constantly have to clarify that 'I am not one of those Turks'.

¹³² Available at: <https://www.isilegrikavuk.work/butyoudont>.

Another interesting aspect is the one of self-orientalism, that appeared in another interview to an academic who has lived in Germany for five years:

I sometimes feel scared to ‘confess’ I do not eat pork thinking it might put me in the same category as the Turks living here’ [...]
When I was pregnant and I could not drink alcohol, I felt the urge to explain why, even if they did not ask. Come to think about it, it is self-orientalism (Türkmen, 2019).

These are relevant aspects to bear in mind while reading the next pages, in order to grasp the complexity of the context in which the exhibition took place and to have a few more elements to interpret the harsh reaction of the Istanbul artists to the framework of the exhibition.

The bone of contention and the release of the open letter from Istanbul ¹³³

‘Urban Realities: Focus Istanbul’ was curated by Christoph Tannert, the managing director of Künstlerhaus Bethanien GmbH, a private institution founded in 1974 and internationally known for its activity in the contemporary art field. I emailed him a list of questions that were answered mainly with references to the material published in the catalogue or in other official publications, denoting a certain caution in talking about the exhibition. He explained¹³⁴ that he personally worked on the idea and the concept, as well as on the selection of artists, without any direct influence, either politically or organisationally, either by the European Commission or by the Mayor of Berlin, Klaus Wowereit, both of whom were patrons of the event. As Tannert underlined, in accordance with Article 5 (3) of the German Constitution, artistic freedom is guaranteed in Germany.

I developed the exhibition idea on the basis of my contacts in Istanbul and my interest in the city of Istanbul and also on the basis of a previous exhibition entitled ‘Berlin - Istanbul. Vice versa’, which took place in 2004 at Künstlerhaus Bethanien in Berlin, initiated and supported by Istanbul Kültür ve Sanat Vakfı (IKSV).

¹³³ All the images in the following pages have been downloaded from the exhibition’s website: <https://www.bethanien.de/en/exhibitions/urbane-realitaten/>

¹³⁴ Email correspondence, 20 October 2020.

IKSV was also involved as a supporter in ‘Urban realities: Focus Istanbul’, while funds came from the Hauptstadt Kulturfonds – the Capital Cultural Fund.¹³⁵

‘Focus Istanbul’ inaugurated following disagreements between Tannert and some of the invited critics and artists from Turkey, including the designated co-curator Vasıf Kortun, at that time founding director of Platform Garanti Contemporary Art Center, an Istanbul contemporary art institution supported by Garanti Bank. The object of the dispute was the curatorial framework of the show, considered by some of the invited artists as full of stereotypes and based on a problematic national connotation.

Istanbul is the only city in the world to span two continents. It connects the Orient with the Occident and has built many bridges, some physical, some intellectual. The exhibition aims to present the cultural interrelationships between these regions of the world, as manifested in the city of Istanbul and its interaction with the cities of Europe. [...]. *We know that Europe is more than what it was in the past. Europe can be what Europeans are attempting to create in the active process of communication* [my emphasis]. Thus, the presentation of Istanbul’s role in these relationships throughout its history, the reflection of which can be seen in contemporary art and culture, should provide an important contribution to the public debate. [...] (Tannert, 2005: 12, 13).

The introductory text continues with a substantial list of key subtopics covered in the show, among which appears also the ‘Examination of clichés’(ibid.).

The debate led to the withdrawal of several of the expected ‘*Istanbullu*’ participants, after the release of a critical open letter, eventually published in the catalogue’s introduction (Tannert, 2005: 22):

Two extensive meetings with artists, writers, critics and students were held in Istanbul on 2 and 9 April 2005. The topic was the exhibitions that have been organised in the recent years, namely since the year 2000, around notions of the city, country and state. In particular, exhibitions about Istanbul, Turkey and the Balkans were put on the table and ‘Urban Realities: Focus Istanbul’ was scrutinised in detail. At the end of these two

¹³⁵ The Capital Cultural Fund is an initiative of the German Federal Government with the State of Berlin that promotes cultural initiatives of ‘high value content’ in the federal capital, with the aim of enhancing ‘the image of Germany as a whole’, as stated in the website: <https://hauptstadtkulturfonds.berlin.de/en/funding/funding-areas-and-criteria>

meetings the artists whose names are listed below have individually decided against participating in the Focus exhibition.¹³⁶

The following part of the letter enumerated nine reasons behind the decision to abandon the show: the first five points expressed practical aspects, namely an uneven distribution of funds to the detriment of artists from Turkey and the lack of clarity in the participants' selection. The last part of the letter focused instead on the conceptual flows of the project (ibid.):

6. Overall fatigue over exhibitions based on the national identity of artists. The artists from Turkey feel that there is no logic in showing in the same context other than the fact they come from the same place.
7. The utilisation of artists as illustrations in the EU integration progress. The artists do not believe they have to fulfil the role of good-will ambassadors in the EU process of Turkey. They also have problems with the sudden increase of demand on them that is solely due to the fact that funds are being allocated in their direction.
8. Categorisation of artists under confined groupings based on geographical, national or regional specifications. Representation-based über identity is not what their work is about.
9. The artists do not think it is funny to have a website of the exhibition in German and English, and not in Turkish. They believe that the text on the front page is full of clichés about East and West, Christianity and Islam.¹³⁷

Kortun¹³⁸ suggested to look at another exhibition, that took place in 2004, in order to understand the controversies surrounding international exhibitions on contemporary art in Turkey, which culminated in the open letter of April 2005. The exhibition in question is 'Call me ISTANBUL, ist mein Name', hosted by the ZKM Center for art and Media in Karlsruhe (Germany).¹³⁹

¹³⁶ The artists who decided to not participate are: Can Altay, Hüseyin Alptekin, Halil Altındere, Memed Erdener, Gülsün Karamustafa, Ahmet Ögüt, Neriman Polat, Canan Şenol, Hale Tenger, Vahit Tuna. Furthermore, an interview with Erden Kosova and Vasıf Kortun, and an article by the late Fulya Erdemci (1962-2022) has been withdrawn from the exhibition catalogue, following the will of the authors.

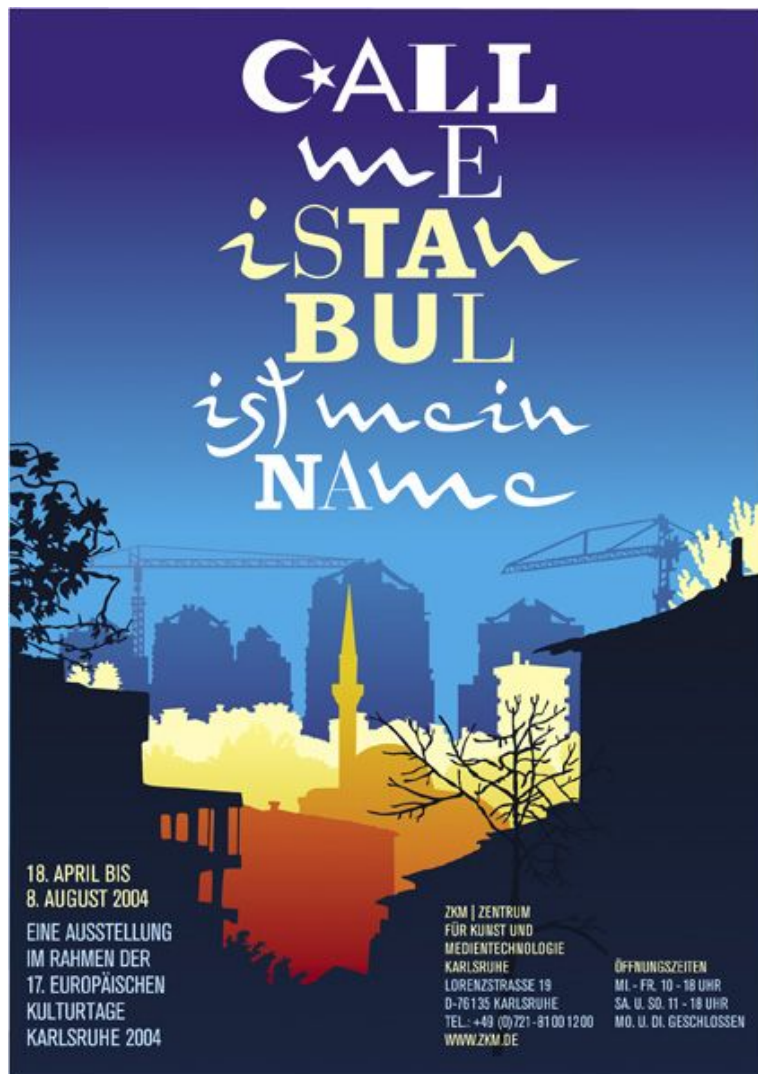
¹³⁷ Ironically enough, when I started the research about 'Focus Istanbul' in the summer of 2019, Tannert was for the second time the target of an open letter by a collective of artists 'for staging a show linking Elon Musk and Afrofuturism, with no black artists' (Furtado, 2019).

¹³⁸ I had an exchange of email with Mr. Kortun in May 2019. We did not have the chance to meet in person, but he gave me precious suggestions.

¹³⁹ The Istanbul and Ankara based art institution SALT – successor of Platform Garanti – offers an online mapping of international exhibitions on Turkey that took place since 1946, available at: <https://saltonline.org/en/international-exhibitions-on-turkey>. The database shows a clear increment in projects of this sort starting from the years 2000s. Just to quote few exhibitions about Istanbul: 'Springtime-new Art from Istanbul' (Denmark, 2000), 'Between the waterfronts. Istanbul – Rotterdam' (The Netherlands, 2002), 'Istanbul - Daydreaming in Quarantine' (Austria, 2003), 'URBANreVIEWS: Istanbul' (Germany, 2003).

The precedent: ‘Call me ISTANBUL, ist mein Name’

Gülsün Karamustafa was among the artists that withdrew from ‘Focus Istanbul’. As the previous chapter showed, our meeting in Istanbul in December 2019 was very helpful to frame the changes in the global art scene that took place after the end of the Cold War: in particular, Karamustafa offered an insight on the cultural initiatives with an identity focus that started to proliferate at that time. She also gave me a detailed explanation about her decision to not take part in the Berlin show, that has its roots in previous events, as the exhibition ‘Call me ISTANBUL, ist mein Name’:



‘Call me ISTANBUL, ist mein Name’ poster
From <http://arsiv.ntv.com.tr/news/273423.asp>

Before ‘Focus Istanbul’, there was another exhibition titled ‘Call me ISTANBUL, ist mein Name’, curated by Peter Wibel, Eda Cufer, and Roger Conover. They told to the invited artists it was a show about Istanbul. We were very happy about the concept. However, when the show opened, we found posters on the facade of the exhibition space... Imagine: you are part of a show, the day of the opening you are going to the venue and you see these posters: with a mosque, a crescent and stars...like the beautiful Orient! It was worse than any cheap touristic flyer. And it is not finished. The entrance hall was full of carpets and low seating places, like in a village coffee house, where you could have your tea. Crazy! Everything was designed as a way to enter a ‘Turkish’ space. After this hall, it was possible to go inside and finally see the works. So, we said to ourselves: we will never fall into this trap again We had to do something an act of resistance against this attitude. Then the ‘Focus’ proposal came and you know the story.

In addition to the ‘traditional’ Turkish elements that Gülsün Karamustafa described and stayed in her memory, the promotional poster presented in the previous page displays the massive urban transformation taking place in the city, where skyscrapers – symbols of modernity and progress *par excellence* – stand out against mosques and small-scale houses in a unique, chaotic, but at the same time charming mix:

Istanbul, a city which was an imperial capital for more than fifteen hundred years, but which never conformed to the Western ideal that urban form should have the precise elegance of a Euclidean theorem. No codified laws or perfect lines of a master plan could produce the vital neighborhood miracles of Kazumasa or Tarlabası. Istanbul flies in the face of all prescriptions, turning excess, accident and chaos into an art form.¹⁴⁰

The idea of Istanbul – and by extension of Turkey – conveyed by the poster is the one of a non-Western city on the path of progress; a city where tradition exists and holds a central role (exactly as the silhouette of the mosque), warm and seductive as the colours chosen for its representation, but that, at the same time, does not stop change and transformation. On the contrary, the processes taking place in Istanbul become an inspiring test even for the future of Europe:

We call you Istanbul, but what will you become?

¹⁴⁰ From the curatorial text.

Available at: <https://zkm.de/en/event/2004/04/call-me-istanbul-is-my-name>.

It is interesting to read this text bearing in mind the contrast with what emerged from ‘1975 European Year of Architectural Heritage’, where the Council of Europe celebrated the effort of Turkish urban planners to ‘modernise’ this chaos to create open-air museums. This change of narratives shows clearly the floating dynamics behind the construction of identitarian myths.

It is a question not only for the future of Istanbul, but for the future of Europe, as non-native citizens, class collisions, information technology, illegal aliens, black markets, real estate irregularities, housing shortages, labor challenges, suicide bombings, business ventures and market pressures increasingly define the way people organise and imagine urban landscapes. If Istanbul is a model for the future multi-cities of Europe, we need to understand the elastic and vibrant system that defines Istanbul now.¹⁴¹

This is a discourse in line with the Enlargement and Europeanisation narratives (Hauge *et al.*, 2016) presented at the beginning of the chapter, characterising these years, where, having clear the ‘otherness’ of the object in question, a possibility of approach exists and can even be beneficial.

The answer to the open letter and the opening of the show

Tannert presented his point of view on the dispute in the exhibition catalogue (Tannert, 2005: 23):¹⁴²

As the curator of the exhibition, I hereby take full responsibility for the situation that led to the ‘Open Letter’ of 15 April 2005. [...] Incidentally, I have never considered the invited artists from Istanbul as a group that represented Istanbul, nor have I treated them as such, always preferring the approach of individual discussions and a focus on specific works. [...]. During [...] meetings, I made clear the following:

1. The planned exhibition depends on the involvement of international artists acting on a highly individual basis; it is being put together for an international audience in Berlin [...].
2. The exhibition will feature artists of various origins and nationalities who are interested in focusing their works on the diversity and heterogeneity of cultures, religions, languages and ethnic groups in a megacity like Istanbul.
3. [...] It was made clear from the start that the reproduction of superficial exoticisms and orientalisms would have no place in the exhibition (although this certainly does not rule out work dealing with precisely these clichés). [...]
4. Of course, it is only natural that this exhibition was also to feature artists from the city of Istanbul itself. [...]
5. ‘Focus Istanbul’ aims for an exchange of glances, a crossing of views of the city from outside with those from the city itself, bearing in mind that today’s Istanbul unmistakably articulates itself through a polyphony of voices and opinions. [...]
6. ‘Focus Istanbul’ is not an exhibition designed to showcase Turkish contemporary art, but a thematic project that is being developed with international participation. [...]

It should be noted that ‘Focus Istanbul’ understands itself as an instrument of transmission – to orient international artists and the public towards the impressive and

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² I here present the letter’s most meaningful parts, omitting the details about funding for the show (i.e., name of artists and works), focusing instead on the answers to points 6,7,8, and 9 of the open letter.

sometimes complex changes that characterise Istanbul and Turkey in the current process of transformation. [...] *It is an art event based on in depth research that aims to involve interested international art producers and viewers, and which tries to explore the meaning of current (urban, social, political, aesthetic) developments in Istanbul in the context of globalised processes* [my emphasis]. [...] *The exhibition project wishes to present responses from artists from Istanbul and from other parts of the world, both to this question and to antipathetic prejudices* [my emphasis].

'Focus Istanbul' is not a short-lived 'appropriation' [my emphasis] of a theme that is loosely linked with the city of Istanbul: it is part of a trilogy of exhibitions planned for Berlin which in the coming years will carry out similar comparative studies with artistic means in the cities of Cairo and Mexico City.

With *Nine Reasons* (2005), a large-scale colourful reproduction of the open letter from Istanbul, the artist Richard Hoeck made the debate an integral part of the show, reminding the viewers of the 'peculiarities' of the contemporary art world: as suggested by several sociologists (Becker, 1983; Bourdieu 1983; Heinich, 2004), the contemporary visual art world can be understood as a complex system characterised by its own logics, enacted by multiple actors (gallerists, critics, collectors, directors of institutions...) that are involved in a process of construction of value (Vettese, 2005) and hierarchical reputation (Moulin, 2000; Thronton, 2012). The dispute between Istanbul and Berlin mirrors a power game between art communities at different stages of their structural development, between old members and newcomers, in a game that has seen Western Europe and North America as the lead actors for many years. In the last decades – especially since the fall of the Berlin Wall as described in the previous chapter – the Western understanding of art, with its specific organisational system, has been exported to so far unexplored geographies, as testified by the emergence of new international art events (such as Biennials and art fairs) at all latitudes (Bargna, 2011; Belting *et al.* 2013; Smiers, 2003).

Back in 2005, the Istanbul contemporary art scene was at an initial stage of its infrastructural development (Molho, 2015); despite all the controversies pointed out by Karamustafa in chapter 5, shows with a 'geographical specification' were a remarkable opportunity for artists from the region – especially those at the beginning of their careers – to climb the international art hierarchy. In the interview with Leyla Gediz, one of the artists from Istanbul who decided to stay in the

show, this aspect emerged clearly. It is important to point out that, although the contemporary art production from Turkey (especially Istanbul) has started to gain international attention since the early 1990s, local public support has been always low, implying, to a large extent, incentives from European cultural institutions, as national institute of cultures – the Goethe Institute and the British Council, for example – and EU funding (Karaca, 2013). Gediz, that in 2005 was in her early 30s, explained to me:

It's been too many years to remember everything in absolute detail. For example, I cannot remember if I met Mr Tannert personally, how he had approached me, if he had at all been to my studio... It must be that in the beginning the connection was made through Mr Kortun. I have a vague feeling also that I was set free to choose my own work, i.e., the work that went into the show, I must have selected it, probably because Mr Kortun trusted me to do well. This sense of freedom and the opportunity to show my paintings in a prestigious Berlin hall were enough reasons for a beginner like myself to agree to participate in this show.

She continued:

Regarding the debate, me and a few good friends of my generation (including Cevdet Erek and Serkan Özkaya) decided that we should largely stay outside of it – and we were allowed to do that. Nobody forced us to withdraw from the show, including Mr Kortun. He always had enough trust in all three of us, and he knew that we had to be in this show representing Istanbul. Not only because we were truly from Istanbul, but we represented a canon of art making that was not built on national identity. We were free flyers. You didn't get any more western or European than us in Istanbul, so we were crucial to the exhibit. We all agreed that national exhibitions were a bore and often a dire, but again, we were as far away from identity politics as it got at the time, so we felt that the debate had little to do with us. Besides, this was an international exhibition, so there was no reason why we'd feel stuck in a national context. The artists who withdrew were of an older generation and they were sharing a certain fatigue after participating in a series of similarly conceived shows, but this wasn't the case for us. We had to make our own path and at home no one criticised us for doing so.¹⁴³

As Leyla Gediz's words reiterate, the debate generated by 'Focus Istanbul' went beyond simple systemic art scene quarrels, highlighting relevant elements to re-think about the framework of many EU cultural initiatives. I am referring in particular to the geographical, national, regional specifications accompanying art exhibitions (Quemin, 2006, 2012, 2013a, 2013b; Velthuis & Baia

¹⁴³ Interview conducted by email, 7 November 2019.

Curioni, 2015) and their underlying understanding of the concept of culture: trying to take distance from the risk of a homogenising (Abu-Lughod, 1991) and ‘entity-fing’ (Remotti, 2010) curatorial approach, Tannert claimed to have conceived an international project resulting from ‘in depth research’ and against ‘antipathetic stereotypes’. The emphasis on the ‘thematic’ nature of the project and the diverse origins of its participants was a way to prevent the potentially essentialising showcase of the city of Istanbul, that, eventually, took place. Tannert addressed the issue of ‘incorrect perception’ in his answer to the open letter, intertwining the art system dispute with the general debate about Turkey’s EU membership:

Some artists and curators in Istanbul want to finally take command of the heteronomous regulations they are helping to constitute around the world (crucial question: who represents whom, when and how?) which is completely understandable, both as an aesthetic and political *a priori*, despite admittedly abetting competent participants. They understand plurality, rather as general diversity amongst groups separating themselves from each other – all of which are, however, united by the idea of having to arm themselves against ‘tendencies towards incorrect perception’ and against the ‘other’, which is generally from the direction of Europe or ‘the West’. Competitive jealousy towards Turks living abroad plays a considerable role in this. These circles are sceptical of the process towards full EU membership because they believe that although civil society in Istanbul has long been part of Europe, insufficient value, on an international scale, has been attached to what it has produced in the area of contemporary art, for example. Political observers, in contrast, have noted that if modern-day Turkey wants to become involved in the development of Europe it will have to shake off its current complacency as fast as possible and implement the agreed reforms (Tannert, 2005: 12-13).

I want to comment these lines starting from the words of the late Hüseyin Bahri Alptekin (1957-2007), one of the withdrawing artists and key figure of the recent history of art in Turkey:

Unfortunately, the project coordinators, curators and organisers took this situation [the withdrawals after the open letter, *ndr*] as a boycott and didn’t seek a dialogue to understand the motives for what happened. The reasons were not taken seriously and were viewed as a form of cultural rebellion. In fact, no collective decision was taken, it was more of a collective reflex. The withdrawing artists had different individual reasons for not participating in the project, conceptual, cultural, ideological, ethical, curatorial and financial. [...] None of them have received a personal e-mail but only general ones addressed to all or the same letter with the address and name changed. That was not really a collective act and it could happen to other similar projects with the same problems of a risky and slippery focus and a discriminatory structure. Unfortunately, this exploded the project. What was intended as a friendly project, a

hospitality for Istanbul, its culture and its artists, turned into a situation of cultural hostility, all because of the missing dialogue between two cultures and a hierarchical cultural policy. A show is just a show. A show is not just a show (Lind & Minichbauer, 2005: 80).

As Alptekin's words clearly explain, despite Tannert's good intentions, the entire debate turned out as a contraposition between two monolithic blocs: Berlin and Istanbul; Europe and Turkey; 'Us' and 'Them'; East and West; established and emerging art markets.

In the midst of this storm, the exhibition eventually opened, hosting works by seventy artists, spanning from video art to paintings. Many artists addressed the topic of religion, for example Nasan Tur, whose five-channel video installation 'Ritual' (2005), described the washings of a man before the prayer.



Nasan Tur, *Ritual*, 2005

<https://www.bethanien.de/en/exhibitions/urbane-realitaten/>

Christine de la Garenne, instead, focused on the prejudices surrounding Islam in the video installation 'ON-DIT' (2005), showing the beads of a prayer string, moving at an increasing speed that culminates in a gunfire salute. Migration was another debated theme, especially the

experience of second or third generation migrant families, as in Katinka Bock's video installation 'THERE is everywhere, and we are always HERE' (2005). The Kurdish issue has been touched upon by Rey Akdoğan's project to create a 'Formula-1 Race Track Grand Prix Kurdistan' (2005) and by Joulia Strauss' sculpture 'Founding of Kurdistan' (2005), depicting the busts of the human rights activist Leyla Zana and the PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan.



Joulia Strauss, *Founding of Kurdistan*, 2005
<https://www.bethanien.de/en/exhibitions/urbane-realitaten/>

The presence of several artists of Armenian origin, such as Silvina der Meguerditchian and Sarkis, also testified the attention to the issue of the Armenian genocide.¹⁴⁴ The relationship

¹⁴⁴ Turkey refuses to call genocide the massive slaughters of 1915 and 1916: the Armenian issue goes to the core of the Turkish nation-building project that, as all the processes of this kind, relies to a great extent on mechanisms of selective memory and amnesia. Forgetting and denial are often a central part of nation building, in the context of which threats to the state identity and the territorial unity are, indeed, systematically extirpated. The Armenians of Anatolia were among the first communities to be perceived as a threat for the integrity of the late Ottoman State (Aybak, 2016); the objective of creating a homogeneous imagined community (Anderson, 1983), that took place with the Republican project and based on the coincidence of territoriality and ethnicity, exacerbated even further the eradication of internal and external interferences and created a constant worry in the ruling elites, readable, until today, in the policies of successive governments (not only in regards to the Armenian community) (Aybak, 2016). As Akçam

between the EU, Turkey, and its Westernisation was present too, for example in the video by Marc Bijl's 'Free Trade' (2004), in which he tried to sell T-shirts with a special European flag, where stars were replaced by the Turkish crescent moon.



Marc Bijl's *Free Trade*, 2004

<https://www.bethanien.de/en/exhibitions/urbane-realitaten/>

(2009) points out, in this framework, an open debate about history is perceived as a security problem: since the late Ottoman times there has been a conflict between 'the state's concern for secure borders and society's need to come to terms with human rights abuses'. In this sense, the denial policy of the Armenian genocide – perpetrated by the Turkish Republic since its founding and reflected in its diplomatic and geopolitical statecraft – can be conceived as an 'extension of the official state ideology as a nation-building process' and a permanent mechanism of national defence (Aybak, 2016). In 2005, at the time of the beginning of accession negotiation this was a hot topic. The development of a Turkish civil society, also supported by the process of Europeanisation described at the beginning of the chapter, fostered a public discussion on the issue in the context of the European Union candidacy, embraced also by a growing number of non-Armenian Turkish intellectuals. Silvina der Meguerditchian, one of the artists of 'Focus Istanbul' I interviewed in Berlin on 17 July 2019, told me:

Back then, in 2005, the discussion on the Armenian issue was not welcomed in Turkey and many Armenian artists were hiding their identity in Istanbul, because they were afraid. Also, artists in the diaspora were not talking out loud, as the Armenian community in Turkey was saying that this would have consequences on them. Things changed in 2010-2012. They were more open in Turkey to do that.

There were also works dealing with stereotypes, like Robert Scheipner's orientalist 'Flying Carpet' (2005) and the iconic 'Turkish Mercedes' (1996) by Jens Haaning reflecting on the Berliners' imaginary about the Turkish communities in the city.



Jens Hanning, *Turkish Mercedes*, 1996
<https://www.bethanien.de/en/exhibitions/urbane-realitaten/>

The comment by Leyla Gediz well summarises the overall result of the project:

I may have found the content far too political, i.e., boring, lacking in inspiration and poetry. To be honest, I don't remember the show very well, which is what happens when you see too many pieces all at once.¹⁴⁵

I fully agree with this statement. Covering more than 2000 m², the exhibition resulted in a crowded attempt to comply with a checklist of hot political issues (Greenberg, 2005). Speaking from the perspective of a cultural operator, the project looks like the umpteenth announced different show with a careful and furthered analysis of a specific geographical context, ending up with the opposite results: a 'parasitizing operation' (Bargna, 2011) towards a culture (in this case a

¹⁴⁵ Interview conducted by email, 7 November 2019.

city). More than a critical exhibition, the project looked like a well-orchestrated ‘fund collector’.

As the art critic Alexander Lapp (2005: 21) pointed out:

The concept of this exhibition seems a perfect match to the German funding system of the arts. The discussions about the start of membership negotiations between Turkey and the European Union are still causing quite a stir and the fear of Islam and the Orient has multiplied in recent weeks. There is an enormous lack of knowledge and prejudice is still commonplace. Istanbul is, furthermore, one of the twin cities of Berlin and thus the Hauptstadt Kulturfonds – the Fund for Culture in the Capital – has provided a large part of the exhibition’s needs [...]. But this is also one of the main reasons why this exhibition does not succeed. For political reasons, funding is bound to the subject of Istanbul – and expects nothing less than an ethnological stocktaking in return – yet location can only be a point of reference for the art.

The allocation of funds according to specific themes and geographical areas comes with the risk of reinforcing a monolithic, inside/out understanding of the culture concept. This becomes true especially for countries as Turkey, where the local support for the arts is limited and foreign support (especially European) is – or at least was – crucial. Hüseyin Alptekin declared in the already quoted interview of 2005:

Co-operation between the EU and Turkey in the field of cultural policy and funding programs have developed quite rapidly in the last couple of years [...]. Probably there are similarities and a kind of *raison d’être* within the Balkan region. Mainly it goes along with the ideological and political strategies of the European cultural policy decision makers. They choose different regions at different times [...]. Actually, for the last ten years an abstract geographical area called the Southeast Europe has been invented, but frankly no high-level projects have been realised. The decision to invent this region is not only based on economic, geographical and political concerns, but is also due to a need for ‘otherness’ in relation to Europe. Thus, the need for the exotic, folkloric, ethnic, marginal, peripheral frames cultural policies too. The issue of the ‘other’ and ‘otherness’ has been discussed for the last fifteen years and become a cliché, but the problem still exists (Lind & Minichbauer, 2005: 75).

With Turkey, as well as Southeast Europe in general, considered at the margin of contemporary political imaginary in the discussion of many EU member states (Asad, 2002; Karaca, 2013;), the European support to the arts in the region has been distributed according to the idea of intercultural cooperation, as seen in chapter 2, supposed to foster dialogue in the framework of a European dimension (Karaca, 2013). The need to receive this funding has inevitably brought the

applicants to show the ‘Europeanness’ of their endeavours, without losing their ‘otherness’. In other words: if an intercultural dialogue has to be fostered, first of all cultures have to be visible. The hot political content – very often reduced to the representation of symbols, as in the case of ‘Focus Istanbul’ – is an easy way to get this characterisation. Ali Kazma, an internationally renowned video artist from Turkey, summarised this aspect in two lines:

I have never heard of a painter from Turkey working on the architectural negative space or somebody who is doing abstract sculpture getting funding from the EU! ¹⁴⁶

I interviewed Kazma as one of the participant artists in the exhibition ‘The Silence of 206 Rooms: Studies on the Büyükdada Greek Orphanage’, organised in the context of ‘2018 European Year of Cultural Heritage’, but our conversation covered also to the events of 2005, pointing out the necessity for artists from the region to be ‘authentic’ representatives of their cultures: an artist from Turkey has to be a ‘Turkish’ artist, working on the issues that, according to contemporary imaginary, characterise the country. Thus, it is much more common to get to know artists from the region focusing their endeavours on women and minorities rights, for example, or on the Kurdish issue. Maybe this aspect is not relevant for political actors, but from the perspective of a cultural operator targeting only specific kinds of creative productions is highly problematic and unhealthy. This is the same concern shared by the Istanbul artists in the open letter, showing their disappointment in being constantly employed as a ‘good will ambassador of European integration’.

I had the chance to discuss further with Kazma on this issue. He told me:

I am fine with getting European support, but I never got so much money from European projects; maybe plane tickets and few hundred euros for participation. I am never good in applying to funds: my work is not seen as overtly political, so I do not get invited to projects that have political edges, or even if I do, I get involved as a ‘spice’, not to make the exhibition overtly political.

All these funds go with a political agenda, which is not a bad one, normally. However, they do not go to a broad spectrum of projects. The support goes to certain kinds of works and it doesn’t go to other. Always.

¹⁴⁶ Interview conducted via Zoom, 27 July 2020.

There are artists who make a good living out of this. I mean, not a good one, but a kind of. They know how to apply; they know what to say to get the funds. It's just reality. If you are in another kind of way, it is not for you.

Whenever you get money from a rich person, it is always problematic. It is going to be problematic for Italy to get money from Sweden; it is problematic for a Turkish artist to get money from a European fund. There are always strings attached, because it goes through a political machine. These European funds are not there to be given freely just for certain artistic reasons. They always have a certain kind of political will that is connected to them.

Kazma's words resonate with those of Alptekin:

The structure of funding and supporting the projects is hierarchical. One side is applying, the other is offering; one is proposing, the other is answering; one is asking, the other is compromising; one is wishing, the other is negotiating. One is supposed to be such and such and therefore the applicant claims that he/she is such and such ... [...]. One is supposed to be 'the other'... That paradigm should be changed in favour of a critical perspective, which requires a dialogue on positioning and a discussion of the situation. As art is another kind of knowledge, the dialogue within cultures and cultural policies should be firstly based on 'sameness', rather than 'otherness'. This will avoid notions of a hierarchical function that leads to ignorance and conflict. Any art event deals with specific knowledge and the way to reach that knowledge is very important. It is critical and political, it is an act and that is also part of the knowledge. Therefore, all the perspectives (curatorial, financial, creative, post productive, etc.) that construct the work and knowledge require a vital dialogue. Otherwise, hospitality turns easily and suddenly into hostility and we miss the knowledge where art resides (Lind & Minichbauer, 2005: 76-7).

Conclusions

The case of 'Urban Realities: Focus Istanbul' offered the opportunity to analyse the role of stereotypes in shaping European cultural policies. Inaugurated in the aftermath of the London terrorist attacks of July 2005 and closed at the same time as accession negotiations' opening for Turkey, this contemporary art exhibition perfectly embodied the contingency in which it took place, mirroring the contrasting feelings surrounding the new status granted to Turkey: finally considered (at least sufficiently) ready to begin its European 'construction', this now candidate state found itself in a situation of growing scepticism, doomed to fail even before the start.

The show was supposed to be an attempt at making the country more familiar to the European audience – especially the German one, for years used to the workers reaching the country from

Anatolia – and thus take a step further in the construction of Turkey as European, especially in light of its recent achievement. The initiative turned out to have the opposite result, at least among the participants, triggering an implicitly identitarian dispute, resulting in the withdrawal of many invited artists from the Istanbul community: the perceived unspoken request of acting as the ‘ambassadors’ of Turkey’s integration into the European Union, in conformity with cultural clichés about the region that the show declared to problematise, was the breaking point. The exhibition turned out to be a well-structured fund collector – as were many others before it since the fall of the Berlin Wall – following the inclusive rhetoric of solidarity and intercultural dialogue, promoted by European institutions at that time. If the show was supposed to be the dynamic enactment of this static rhetoric, it was not successful in this attempt. What was ritualised in this case was the distance between a European Self and its Other, in this case underlined also by the disparity between two distant contemporary art systems at very different stages of their construction.

The analysis of ‘Istanbul 2010 European Capital of Culture’, in the following chapter, will offer the possibility to think further about the implication of simplification in the presentation of cultural alterity. A broader reflection on the commercial nature of cultural events and their use as triggers of economic and urban development will be also developed, adding a further element to speculate on the meaning and potentiality of European cultural policy.

Chapter 7: Istanbul 2010 European Capital of Culture

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Main features

	Istanbul 2010 European Capital of Culture
Location	Istanbul
Dates	2010
Typology	EU annual events
Turkey – EU relationship	Phase 5 (2005 – 2013) Between stagnation and growing tensions
Culture and Identity in EC/EU documents	Third phase Post-Western Europe
Institutions involved	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Istanbul Foundation (civil society initiative)• European Commission
Declared aim	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Highlight the richness and diversity of cultures in Europe• Celebrate the cultural features Europeans share• Increase European citizens' sense of belonging to a common cultural area• Foster the contribution of culture to the development of cities <p>From https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/creative-europe/actions/capitals-culture_en</p>

Fifth phase (2005 – 2013) – Between stagnation and growing tensions

In a climate of anti-Turkish feelings in Europe and anti-EU attitudes in Turkey (Aydin-Düzgıt & Tocci, 2015), accession negotiations entered a period of stagnation soon after their opening, putting an end to the conducive atmosphere that anticipated them.

As explained in the previous chapter, the opening of negotiations made clear that, at least on paper, the EU was getting closer for the most peculiar of its candidates (Tsoukalis, 2006): too big, too poor, too different and with too dangerous borders (Hughes, 2004; Schimmelfennig, 2021). In case of accession, Turkey would become the second largest member of the Union and therefore it would have had a significant voice in the EU's decision-making processes (Baldwin & Widgren, 2005). Its over 70 million population, combined with a very low GDP per capita was also a cause of worry for economic integration, in combination with its mainly agricultural nature (ibid.).

This hardly digestible candidate, had to face the EU at a time of institutional impasse, augmented by the results of the already mentioned 2005 failed referenda in France and the Netherlands that

had an impact not only on the Constitutional Treaty, but also on the Enlargement process. Those opposing Turkey's accession to the Union used these results as a proof that this policy had to be changed. The invasion of cheap labor in an already difficult economic contingency, the loss of *esprit Communautaire* and the risk to border with the 'dangerous' Middle East were cited as some of the deterrents for Turkey's full membership by political personalities, mainly in Germany, France, Netherlands, and Austria (Tocci, 2012). Turkey often became the object of rising anti-Islamic attitudes in national debates (Tocci, 2007), emphasising the importance of homogenous cultural and religious values in the construction of the European polity and stressing Turkey's extraneousness to this family. The defeat of the Social Democrat-Green government in Germany, just a few weeks after the opening of negotiations, constituted another unfavorable change: the Social Democrat stayed in power with the Christian Democrats, with Angela Merkel as chancellor, supporting the idea of a privileged partnership instead of membership (Schimmelfennig, 2021). In May 2007 Sarkozy was elected in France: the newly elected President openly opposed the ongoing negotiations, something that was never done before for any other candidate (Bilefsky, 2007).

This combination of factors lowered the enthusiasm on the Turkish side, as well as the feeling of 'domestic ownership of the project' (Eralp, 2009: 167). The distance increased further after the AKP's new victory in the elections of 2007 – and later in those of 2011 – with the party gaining an increasing majority, in particular against the Kemalist establishment, and no longer being strategically in need of the EU and its democratising agenda (Öniş, 2008; Özbudun, 2014).

The reform process started to slow down: the annual reports by the Commission, monitoring the reforms' development between 2005 and 2010, were negative regarding respect for fundamental rights and independence of the judiciary. This led the Council and the European Council to intervene in order to ask Turkey to make a bigger commitment, in particular in the areas concerning freedom of expression, minority rights, trade unions, property rights, gender equality, and control of the military (Lippert, 2021).

In this context, a new rhetoric gained ground domestically (Aydın-Düzgit, 2018a, 2018b): besides the usual narratives of Westernisation and Europeanisation, that characterised previous phases of interaction with the EU, alternative discourses took a structured shape, especially the one of neo-Ottomanism, as the case of ‘Istanbul 2010 European Capital of Culture’ will show (Hauge *et al.*, 2016). Alpan (2014, cited in Aydın-Düzgit & Rumelili, 2021: 75) pointed out how the political elite’s discourse changed dramatically after the opening of accession negotiations. She underlines that, during the period 1999-2005, ‘Europe’ was a focal point in the political discourse, but the situation changed afterwards: Europe lost its centrality in the debate of the AKP government, being employed mainly as a negative example of an empty rhetoric, based on the false claims of ‘advanced democracy’, or being depicted as either a ‘partner in crime’ or an ‘unwanted partner’ (Alpan, 2016: 20-4, cited in Aydın-Düzgit & Rumelili, 2021: 75). This is a tendency observed also by Aydın-Düzgit, (2016, cited in Aydın-Düzgit & Rumelili, 2021: 75) and justified by the need to dismantle EU’s legitimacy and in turn its democratic requirements (*ibid.*). Ertuğrul (2012, cited in Aydın-Düzgit & Rumelili, 2021: 76) offers an interesting view on this attitude, claiming that this style of thought was an instrument allowing the AKP to ‘sublimate the position of the Other in the ideational structure of Europe’ in order to ‘reconstitute the identity of Turkey according to the neo-conservative/neo-Ottoman ideas’.

The Ottoman grandeur has been evoked also with the concept of *Stratejik Derinlik* (Strategic Depth) by the former Minister of Foreign Affairs and later Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu (2009) in a book of almost six hundred pages, that ambitiously shaped (at least in its initial phase) the AKP foreign policy around the idea of a *pax Ottomanica* in the former territories of the Empire, at the expense of the traditional gaze to the West (Murinson, 2006; Torun, 2021). Under the motto of ‘zero problems with neighbors’, Turkey tried to implement an eventually unsuccessful diversified policy, sometimes in contrast with EU’s views, thus becoming both a source of order and disorder in its surroundings (Michel & Seufert, 2016).

The recurring intra-EU debate about the desirability of Turkey's accession, the fatigue of the Enlargement process, and the 'lack of a clear and consistent EU strategy and commitment' (Tocci, 2005: 77) have all made Turkish society more sceptical about the prospect of joining the EU (Aydın-Düzgit & Kaliber, 2016). Eurobarometer data reflect this change: if, as seen in the previous chapter, 75% of the Turkish population thought favourably about Turkey's EU membership in 2002, in 2006 only 43% of the Turkish citizens had a positive view of the EU and just the 35% trusted it (European Commission 2006b, 2002a). The same trend can be found in 2010, with 42% of the population considering EU membership a good thing and only 21% trusting the Union (European Commission, 2010).¹⁴⁷ Furthermore, the opposition parties, in particular the CHP, stopped supporting the accession process, losing the focus on democratisation and adopting more nationalistic stands to criticise the government, especially on territorial issues, such as the one concerning Cyprus.¹⁴⁸ The backing from the business community started to vacillate too, with small and medium sized actors feeling the inferiority of their agency compared to the one of bigger players; civil society as well experienced a lack of institutional dialogue, that could have made its contribution significant (Eralp, 2009).

The story of 'Istanbul 2010 European Capital of Culture' can help to understand the ambivalence that has characterised the interaction between the EU and Turkey since the beginning of the AKP government and the ability of the latter in implementing its neo-Ottoman narrative within a European framework.

¹⁴⁷ For an overview on Turkish public opinion trends about the EU see Şenyuva (2018).

¹⁴⁸ The Republic of Cyprus' accession to the EU in 2004 led to a declaration, in 2005, by the Turkish government that it would continue not to apply the extension of the Additional Protocol of the Ankara Agreement to the Republic of Cyprus. For this reason, the Council of the European Union froze the negotiation on eight chapters and decided not to close any other until the recognition of Cyprus through the application of the Additional Protocol (Council of the European Union, 2006). While this decision 'prevented a definitive 'train-wreck', it further slowed down the already slow negotiating process' (Eralp, 2009: 161). In 2012 Turkey decided to freeze 'its relations with the Presidency of the Council of the EU during the second half of 2012 and not to attend meetings chaired by the Cyprus EU Presidency. The European Council expressed serious concerns with regard to Turkish statements and threats and called for full respect for the role of the Presidency of the Council, which is a fundamental institutional feature of the EU provided for in the Treaty' (European Commission, 2012a: 5).

Cool Istanbul

On 21 August 2005, while ‘Focus’ was still running in Berlin, another big event took place in Istanbul: the first edition of the Turkish Grand Prix, the Formula One race organised in the city until 2011. The bridge between East and West, the melting-pot of cultures, the meeting place of modernity and tradition: the narrative so much criticised in Berlin by the artists from Turkey was adopted by the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality of Kadir Topbaş (AKP) to present the initiative to an international audience. The promotional video ‘Welcome to Istanbul’,¹⁴⁹ where smiling workers and street sellers follow images of churches and mosques, busy streets, and historical pedestrian areas, was a meaningful part of this marketing strategy, consistent with the neo-Ottoman narrative of the AKP ruling the country since 2002.¹⁵⁰ Here below some stills of the promotional video, presenting an Orthodox priest in a Rum building, a Roma couple selling flowers, a ‘traditional’ Turkish shoeshiner, smiling men drinking coffee and a polite gentleman inviting tourists to sit in a cab.



Some stills from the promotional video

The imaginary of the multicultural cradle of civilisation started to resonate internationally, mixed with other captivating elements. Exactly one week after the 2005 Grand Prix, the US magazine Newsweek appeared worldwide celebrating ‘Cool Istanbul’ on its cover and describing Istanbul’s

¹⁴⁹ The stills of the video are from the PhD research of Vilden Seckinar, available online at https://edoc.ub.uni-muenchen.de/23672/1/Seckiner_Vildan.pdf

¹⁵⁰ For the main content of this narrative see chapter 3.

renaissance, between tradition and modernity, finance and culture, in an article titled ‘Turkish delight’ (Foroohar, 2005), available in the annex to the chapter. The piece is an excellent example of how this narrative has been embraced and supported by international actors too. In a few words, these pages described a multicultural Ottoman atmosphere tamed by reassuring Western credentials: the perfect combination for tourists, investors, and creative people looking for new opportunities. Starting from the early 2000s until the collapse of the political situation following the occupation of Gezi Park, Istanbul obtained internationally the label of being ‘cool’ (Özkan, 2015), an idea consolidated with the marketing strategy adopted by ‘Istanbul 2010 European Capital of Culture’ (Doğan, 2016): one of the event’s official promotional videos is emblematic in this sense, combining multicultural historical landmarks with business women looking at the new Istanbul skyline from their offices and young skaters wandering around town, as showed by the following stills.



Still from the promotional video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m-lh6zH74nQ>



Still form the promotional video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m-lh6zH74nQ>



Still form the promotional video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m-lh6zH74nQ>



Still form the promotional video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m-lh6zH74nQ>

The campaign proved to be very effective, looking at the ex-post evaluation of 2010 European Capitals of Culture (Rampton *et al.*, 2011: 77): the report points out a 11% increase in foreign tourists between 2009 and 2010, with 15% of the interviewees mentioning the event as the main motivation for their trip.

My 'own' cool Istanbul

I was part of the 15% of foreign tourists that went to Turkey specifically on occasion of the European Capital of Culture event: I visited Istanbul for the first time exactly in 2010, in late March, at the beginning of my master's studies in anthropology at Bicocca University. Despite the change of environment, I was still in touch with colleagues and professors from the bachelor programme in Cultural Management of Bocconi University, so I decided to join them when I heard about the annual study tour: the plan was to get to know more about the cultural scene along the Bosphorus. Everybody was talking about that in the art circles. I interviewed the Istanbul-based artist Deniz Gül, involved in the exhibitions organised in 2010, and she offered a clear picture of the atmosphere of those days:¹⁵¹

Interesting days. We witnessed a lot of bubbling around that time. I was at the beginning of my career, I graduated in 2004. I was very young and trying to get involved in the art scene. It was also a period in which we had the feeling that the negotiations with the European Union were on a positive track. There was a lot of interest in Istanbul as a city and in its culture. Many people were coming from Europe to meet artists here. This acceleration started in 2005 and lasted until the end of 2010-11, I would say. It was a phase very much influenced by the people that were coming to Turkey, to Istanbul basically. Istanbul is a very charming city, as you know. Still with its oriental look, but also with an occidental touch. Magazines such *Monocle*, *Vice* and websites looking at contemporary city culture were booming. It was not only about art; the media played a big role in that also. We have to read 'Istanbul 2010 European Capital of Culture' being aware of all these aspects. I think also the 2008 crisis has to be taken into account, with the following acceleration towards a spectacle society with all these big events and the production of culture at a very high speed.

It was in these circumstances that, under the guidance of professors Stefano Baia Curioni and Paola Dubini and with a group of thirty students, I set out for Turkey.

As I am used to do before going to a new city, I bought a map. Not one of those little and handy maps, but a 1: 10000 scale one. The size of a six people dining table. It is curious how an object can attract contrasting feelings, according to circumstances. I have been about to abandon it in the street so many times: when it refused to be properly folded or provoked me, hiding business cards

¹⁵¹ From a Skype interview, conducted on 3 May 2020.

in its fissures. On the contrary, many other times I thanked its insolence for being so cumbersome and voluminous: it was very welcoming with all our interviewees. Artists, musicians, filmmakers...anyone we encountered, at a certain point, would come up with the same question: ‘Do you have a map?’. Some wanted to show their galleries’ headquarters, some other the neighbourhood where they grew up... but the map fully performed its function identifying areas such as Sulukule, Başibüyük, and other peripheral neighbourhoods. These places, despite not being included in the official cultural itineraries, were often mentioned by the people we met, in order to make us aware of the less promoted side of Istanbul’s recent international rise, made by communities’ forced evictions and relocations, massive public housing projects, and summary restoration plans.¹⁵²

The analysis of the red thread connecting ‘Istanbul 2010 European Capital of Culture’ to these peripheral areas of the city adds further elements to problematise the narrative behind EU cultural policies. In particular, this case study wants to raise questions about the limits of the motto ‘unity in diversity’, through a discussion on the representation of cultural diversity and its use as a tool for city branding, urban development, and regeneration.

Istanbul candidacy to the European Capital of Culture Programme

From the ‘Initiative Group’ and the ‘city of four elements’...

The ‘European Capital of Culture’ programme, as seen in chapter 2, started in Athens in 1985, on the initiative of the former Greek Minister of Culture, Melina Mercouri. With its focus on the

¹⁵² I got to know very well all these issues in the following years: after that trip, I decided to investigate how and why the city was changing so dramatically and I made this inquiry the topic of my master’s dissertation. The material I collected during that fieldwork offers a solid background to the domestic dynamics of the European Capital of Culture event, that was not the object of my investigation. At that time, I looked at the role of the local art community in the transformation of Istanbul into a global city (Sassen, 1991). During the 2010 trip, I had the chance to notice that the art community was very vocal in its critique of urban renewal processes taking place under the AKP government. Many art exhibitions were focused on that theme. However, I also noticed the structural contradiction faced by the community: the majority of art initiatives and infrastructures for contemporary art in the city were sponsored by the same powerful actors involved in the violent transformation of the urban structure, as will be described in the next pages. For this reason, I started a research project about the ‘advocates and opponents of the global city’, analysing the ambivalent role of the art community in the rise of Istanbul as a global city.

celebration of European diversity, the initiative fully embodies the spirit of ‘unity in diversity’, linking to it the understanding of culture as a trigger of economic development, as suggested by EU institutions especially since the European Agenda of Culture 2007.

The introduction to ‘365 Days 459 Projects’ (Istanbul 2010 ECOC Agency, 2012: 10) – the Istanbul 2010’s catalogue I had the chance to consult at the personal archive of Mrs Beral Madra, visual art director of the event – summarises these aspects:

The objective of the project [The Capital of Cultures *ndr*] was to bring different European cities close to one another by way of culture and the arts and help them gaining a greater awareness of their respective cultures. It wanted to contribute to an awareness of Europeanness and citizenship of Europe based on the European Union Acquis, while at the same time give cities that held the title an opportunity to evaluate and strengthen their cultural and artistic infrastructure.

Istanbul could become one of the Capitals of Culture due to Decision 1419/1999/EC establishing that, in addition to two-member state cities, also European non-member states could apply for the title.

One day, the European Union Commission reached the unanimous decision that ‘Cities in countries that are not members of the European Union may also hold the title of European Capital of Culture’. On the day this decision was published in Turkey in the Official Gazette, an academic who saw the article thought ‘Why shouldn’t Istanbul earn that title?’ and acting on that thought he called together a group of friends. In time, that group took on the name ‘Initiative Group’ and began working on the project. In order to meet the initial criteria for application, the Initiative Group informed the government about the opportunity and asked for its support, which was granted and helped to accelerate the Group’s effort (Istanbul 2010 ECOC Agency, 2012: 14).¹⁵³

¹⁵³ From ‘I do not believe in coincidence’ the introductory text to ‘Istanbul 2010’ catalogue by Yılmaz Kurt, General Secretary of Istanbul 2010 European Capital of Culture Agency. The Initiative Group was originally constituted by thirteen NGOs: *Açık Radyo* (Open Radio), *İnsan Yerleüimleri Derneği* (Human Settlements Association), *IKSV* (Istanbul Sanat ve Kültür Vakfı, Istanbul Culture and Art Foundation), *İktisadi Kalkınma Vakfı* (Economic Development Foundation), *Tarih Vakfı* (History Foundation of Turkey), *Kültür Bilincini Geliütirme Vakfı* (Cultural Awareness Foundation), *Kültürlerarası İletişim Derneği* (Association for Intercultural Communication), dDF Advertising Agency, *Reklamcılar Derneği* (Association of Advertising Agencies), *Ulusal Ahüap Birliğı* (Turkish Timber Association), *Marmara Belediyeler Birliğı* (Union of Municipalities of the Marmara Region), *Türkiye Turizm Yatırımcıları Derneği* (Turkish Tourism Investors Association) and *Istanbul Sanat Müzesi Vakfı* (Istanbul Art Museum Foundation). All these organisations worked with some governmental actors, in particular the Office of the Prime Minister, Ministries of Culture and Tourism and Foreign Affairs and the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality (Öner, 2010).

EC/EU institutions have presented the programme since its inception as ‘popular and non-elitist’ (Patel, 2013: 7), giving wide autonomy to local actors in the implementation of their agendas and supporting the primary role of civil society. The introduction of ‘Istanbul 2010’'s catalogue continues along these lines (Istanbul 2010 ECOC Agency, 2012: 10):

Istanbul's European Capital of Culture process was initiated in the year 2000 by a civil initiative. Its primary objectives were, as part of the European Union accession process and within the scope to which Turkey had accepted that, strengthening a cultural artistic infrastructure that was participatory, transparent, open, inclusive and based on the principles of partnership and would contribute to developing cooperation between government and civil society. [...] This process has as its objective fostering debate about and the promulgation of contemporary cultural policies, the establishment of long-term, sustainable relations between cultural and artistic institutions in Turkey and Europe, as well as, through cultural and artistic relationships, enhancing worldwide perception of Istanbul as a contemporary and global city of culture and ensuring that these developments would have an ongoing and increasing impact long after 2010.

The collaboration between civil society, private foundations, intellectuals and governmental bodies made Istanbul's application unique compared to the previous ones that, since the first edition of 1985, had always been led by national or local governments (Öner, 2010). The then Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan officially declared his support to the initiative in a letter available in the annex to the chapter, later published in the proposal (Initiative Group, 2006:11), stressing this peculiarity too.

The proposal was submitted to the Head Office of Education and Culture of the European Council in Brussels on 13 December 2005, under the title *The City of Four Elements*:

The story begins with the Four Elements: earth, water, air and fire. The idea that these make up the universe – an idea as old as the history of thought – has strong roots in Anatolia (Asia Minor), which is today part of Turkey. The ancient city of Miletus, in Western Anatolia, is considered to be the precise birthplace of the long tradition of ‘Western Philosophy’ [...]. Aristotle himself (348-322 BC) who spent time in Assos, another ancient city in Western Anatolia, considered earth, water, air and fire as the four basic elements of nature and believed that dry, wet, cold and heat were their essential characteristics. Aristotle's thoughts remained influential for thousands of years in both ‘western’ and ‘eastern’ intellectual, scientific, philosophical and theological circles.



The logo of the initiative

Available at: <http://www.oktayaras.com/istanbul-candidate-for-2010-european-capital-of-culture-a-city-of-the-four-elements/tr/44861>

The proposal relied on the well-consolidated idea of Istanbul as the bridge between East and West, with neutral and inclusive tones, devoid of Ottoman references, perfectly fitting (at least in this initial phase) the inclusive agenda of EU cultural policy:

‘How Istanbul will function as a bridge connecting Europe to its East?’

The amendment of the European project, the meeting of civilisations and a greater tolerance for cultural differences will create a multidimensional framework for action and interaction, Istanbul will serve as a cultural bridge between Europe and the East, and new opportunities for international contacts will arise. This bridging function, which derives from the city’s geographical location, will create opportunities for international socialization in cultural life. In tune with the spirit of the ECOC programme, the other 2010 Capitals of Culture will be treated as other parts of a whole [...]. In the run up to 2010, Istanbul will organize joint projects with each year’s European Capital of Culture, strengthening and revitalising its relations with the other cities [...] thus enabling Istanbul to become in 2010 a most effective stanchion in a multilateral bridge.

The dossier focused also on participative actions involving institutions and citizens in order to establish democratic governance and urban transformation through participation in the long term (Öner, 2010). The Selection Panel gave a positive evaluation to the structure of the Initiative Group and the collaboration between civil and institutional actors (ibid.). Furthermore, the metaphor of the bridge, unlike what happened in Berlin, was in this case appreciated.¹⁵⁴ On 13 November 2006, Istanbul was confirmed as one of the three European Capitals of Culture 2010, together with Essen, representing Ruhr Region in Germany, and Pecs in Hungary. The report on the selection of ECOC's for 2010 focuses on the Turkish presentation of Istanbul as the city that would

function as a bridge, connecting Europe to its East. It is a living example of the meeting of civilisations. It has been at the crossroads of European civilisations for centuries and has learned to 'live differences' (European Commission, 2006a).

Patel (2013: 2) defines the ECOCs as the most meaningful EU cultural policy, in which Europeanness is negotiated 'as part of and in reaction to the European integration'. He points out how the programme crystallises the results of the negotiations between the EU and its constitutive units, in which contrasting interpretations of the European project are at stake. 'Istanbul 2010' offers an example of how two apparently similar narratives celebrating dialogue among cultures, equality and justice, put forward respectively by the EU and Turkey, found their display: the ambiguity, in this case, has been used, on one side, by the EU to implement its rhetoric of unity in diversity; on the other, by the Turkish government in its process of self-construction as a neo-Ottoman polity.

¹⁵⁴ The bridge idea is a common feature of discourse about Enlargement. During the Greek accession process, it was frequently referred to as a potential bridge between the EC and the Middle East. In Spain's case there were references to Spain as a bridge between Europe and Latin America.



The Google doodle for Istanbul 2010 European Capital of Culture
<https://www.google.com/doodles?q=istanbul+european+capital+of+culture+2010>

The image of Istanbul as a bridge of civilisations and point of connection of diverse peoples played a role both for the EU – trying to Europeanise Turkey – and for the Turkish political agenda and its neo-Ottoman effort of re-legitimisation of Istanbul as the welcoming capital of a multicultural empire (İğsız, 2015). The neo-Ottoman rhetoric of tolerance has been easily implemented, considering its suitability to the European Commission discourse about intercultural dialogue, as seen in chapter 2.

...to the ‘Istanbul 2010 ECOC Agency’ and ‘the capital of the world’

The neo-Ottoman narrative became explicit from 2007 onwards, when, with the promulgation of Law No. 5706, a new body called ‘Istanbul 2010 ECOC Agency’, directly connected to the Prime Minister’s office, was established in order to regulate the work of state officials, members of the civil society and non-governmental organisations (Öner, 2010). The Agency oversaw the creation of ‘a comprehensive urban development project through arts and culture’ able to ‘reveal Istanbul’s cultural wealth as an inspirational source for the whole world’ (ibid: 270).¹⁵⁵ Throughout the years the structure of the organisation gained an increasing number of governmental members, changing dramatically the nature of its decision-making processes. What started as a bottom-up model ended up with different results, becoming, according to many, a governmental project (Doğan,

¹⁵⁵ All these details were available on the Agency’s website, that was closed immediately after the end of the event.

2016), in which the civic body had simply advisory and coordination functions. For this reason, many intellectuals resigned from their posts, including the scholar Asu Aksoy, not in favor of the idea of city branding through the exploitation of culture:

The first announcement that the newly arrived General-Secretary delivered after his (Ankara-initiated) appointment to the Istanbul 2010 European Capital of Culture Agency was that turning Istanbul into a ‘brand city’ would henceforth be the key objective of the 2010 programme. In similar fashion, with the same objective in mind, in his first press conference following the award of 2010 European Capital of Culture status, Prime Minister Erdoğan was declaring that ‘the aim is to attract 10 million tourists to Istanbul’ (Aksoy, 2012: 103).

The Agency decided not to waste the international visibility offered by the programme: big events such as the ECOCs are an occasion for image-renaissance (Bianchini, 1993; Garcia, 2004) and potential economic regeneration,¹⁵⁶ as stressed by Husamettin Kavi, Chairman of the Advisory Board of Istanbul 2010 Agency, in his text for the catalogue (Istanbul 2010 ECOC Agency, 2012: 15):

We all know that today’s world ‘Culture and Art’ rank among the most powerful tools of promotion and marketing, and pluralism, participation and sharing are intrinsic parts of this journey. [...] For us the most important thing was to promote our amazing city, and by extension our country to Europe and European societies. [...] The ‘Istanbul 2010 European Capital of Culture’ also offered an important opportunity for a much-needed restructuring in the management of the city’s museums and its cultural heritage.

The promotional and political agenda of the Turkish government became even more blatant in the final stages of the preparation, when the idea of ‘the city of four elements’ was clouded by the less inclusive slogan ‘Istanbul, the capital of the world’. The ex-post report on the European Capitals of Culture 2010 (Rampton *et al.*, 2011) points out, indeed, how the final campaign for the event did not stress much the European dimension of the project, as initially planned, but was instead focused on the idea of Istanbul as ‘the most inspiring city in the world’, as described in the catalogue (Istanbul 2010 ECOC Agency, 2012: 7):

¹⁵⁶ Emblematic the cases of Glasgow and Liverpool European Capitals of Culture (Hankinson, 2006).

‘The City, The Only City’ is but one of the many titles that have been bestowed on Istanbul during its many millennia of history...What words and concept should one possibly hope to employ to describe in a single page a city worthy of the title ‘the Only City’... [...]

Since we first began our program we have been inspired by these ‘Four Elements’, which aided us in our attempts to at least begin depicting this city of cities, but no matter how we press the limits of the mind and language, we will fall short of truly describing Istanbul, European Capital of Culture for the year 2010. This title is an honour even for a city that at one time in its history was known as ‘the capital of the world’ and provides a chance for Istanbul to achieve the international status it once again merits.

The superiority of Istanbul in comparison to other cities was made clear by Prime Minister Erdoğan in person also during the press tour of the Historical Peninsula, organised on occasion of the event’s opening, focused on the preservation of cultural heritage:

Istanbul is a bit Sarajevo, a bit Jerusalem, a bit Paris, a bit Vienna, a bit Madrid, a bit Bagdad, a bit Damascus, a bit Amman. However, Istanbul is mostly Istanbul. If Istanbul is delighted, then Cairo is delighted, Beirut is delighted, Baku is delighted, Skopje is delighted. When Istanbul grieves, humanity grieves (Sol, 2010).¹⁵⁷

The glorious past of the city and its primacy as ‘the meeting place of civilisation’ is also emphasised in the catalogue’s text by Hayati Yazıcı, Minister of State and Chairman of the Coordination Board of ‘Istanbul 2010 European Capital of Culture’ (Istanbul 2010 ECOC Agency, 2012: 9):

Istanbul, because of its unique geographic location, has for centuries been the scene of numerous attempted conquests. It is for this reason that the diversity of the city gave rise to a rich heritage. Dozens of civilisations have grown and blossomed in this city, creating their most lasting and valuable works here. When we look from the vantage point of today, we see that Istanbul has been shaped by the legacy of the Romans, Byzantines and Ottomans, and its values continue today to be based on theirs. [...] Istanbul, which embraces both East and West and is a meeting point of intercultural dialogue, took the stage as a 2010 European Capital of Culture.

Throughout its magnificent past, Istanbul has had many loftily titles bestowed upon it, and is a world city that truly deserved to crown those many titles with that of 2010 European Capital of Culture. [...] An ancient centre, as always throughout its history, Istanbul is a city of religious, linguistic and ethnic tolerance. Like a selfless mother, the city nourishes, teaches and raises her offspring.

¹⁵⁷ My translation.

However, if on the one side, the promotional objective of the project has been successfully reached, on the other the multiculturalist narrative of both the EU and the Turkish government has not been validated in practice. In order to point out the discrepancy between the poetics and actual politics of the event, I want to analyse a specific case: the one of the Roma community.

Liberal multiculturalism: the limits of ‘unity in diversity’



Cover of the exhibition's catalogue about the EU 'Roma programme' of 2010
https://bemis.org.uk/resources/gt/eu/eu_projects_roma_inclusion_en%5b1%5d.pdf

In few words: while Roma musicians were delighting the public, in particular during the Ahırkapı Hidrellez Festival,¹⁵⁸ celebrating the cosmopolitan nature of the city, evictions occurred

¹⁵⁸ The Ahırkapı Hidrellez Festival took place with increasing success since 2002 in Ahırkapı neighborhood. Hidrellez is a seasonal festival welcoming spring, common to different traditions belonging

in the area of Sulukule, historically inhabited by a numerous Roma community, in order to make room for Ottoman-style residential buildings (Letsch, 2011). At the same time, in Brussels, EU projects in favour of the Roma community were taking place, with exhibitions and a big conference.¹⁵⁹

I tell the story of Sulukule neighbourhood through the words of the Sulukule Platform (Uysal, 2012), a civil initiative started in 2005 by inhabitants of the neighbourhood, architects, academics, and researchers to stop the renewal plan of the area:

The first target of the large-scale urban transformation in Istanbul was the Sulukule neighbourhood, one of the oldest Roma settlements in the world. Located within the conservation zone of the World Heritage Site Istanbul city walls, it was not only the harbinger of urban transformation policies and implementations, but also became renewed through the innovative urban struggle practice developed by the Sulukule Platform. [...]

Demolition in Sulukule began in 2007. Chambers of Architects, Urban Planners and the Platform had appealed to the administrative court for the cancellation of the project. The court did not grant a stay of order. In 2012, the local court revoked the joint project on the grounds that it was not in the public interest. Meanwhile houses had nearly been completed. Despite the court decision, the houses were handed over their owners. The people of Sulukule who had been forced out did not leave the neighbourhoods. They have settled in the streets closest to their demolished homes (Sulukule Platform, 2013: 322-3).¹⁶⁰

The majority of the people evicted from Sulukule have been moved to Taşoluk neighbourhood, in the northwest of Istanbul. I had the chance to visit the area in 2013. I took part in a workshop, documented by the pictures in the next pages, directed by the Lebanese architect and artist Maxime Hourani, aimed at observing and describing the geographical areas of Istanbul ‘where rural life intersects urban developments that are changing the face of the city and that uncover

to the territories of the Ottoman empire, including those of the Roma community. The Istanbul 2010 ECOC Agency included the festival in the programme as a ritual common to all the cultures of the city, emphasising how throughout the years it has brought together the diversity of the city to celebrate life.

¹⁵⁹ The full programme of the event can be found at this link:

http://bemis.org.uk/resources/gt/eu/eu_projects_roma_inclusion_en%5B1%5D.pdf

¹⁶⁰ This is an extract from the catalogue of the Istanbul contemporary art Biennial 2013 ‘Mum, am I a barbarian?’, in which the Platform took part with workshops and art activities.

dominating and latent power dynamics'.¹⁶¹ Walking around the fields with our sketchbooks, we drew the actual lines separating urban and rural landscapes and composed songs later on published in the artist book *A Book of Songs and Places*. Here some of the field notes from that trip:¹⁶²

We met Barış, an eighteen years old boy that approached us while having our lunch in the playground. I asked about the people that have been relocated there from Sulukule: 'They are all gone now. They went back to live in their neighbourhood. [...]'. [...] Then we met Ahmet. He invited us to drink some ayran¹⁶³ in his garden. He was curious about us. [...]. 'It is forty years I come to Taşoluk from Eskişehir to see my relatives. I have built this little house by myself, and I grow my own vegetables. It is still ok here. Thank God they didn't build that monsters close to my garden yet.' He points to Toki buildings on the other side of the hill.

Toki (*Toplu Konu Idaresi*), is the agency dealing with public housing in Turkey since 1984 and, until 2018, under the direct control of the Prime Minister: in July 2018 'with the amendments made to the Turkish Constitution, the 'Presidential Governmental System' was adopted in Turkey. Continuing its activities as a subsidiary of the Prime Ministry, Toki is attached to the Ministry of Environment and Urbanization (Pursuant to Decree Law No. 703 of 9 July 2018)'.¹⁶⁴ Laws 4966 (2003), 5126 (2004), 5582 (2007), 5793 (2008) transformed Toki into the only agency with the power of regulating the permissions for construction and sale of public lands (with the exception of those belonging to the army); it also gained the permission to build for profit on lands belonging to the state, through its own agencies or public-private partnerships, with the official motivation of building houses for low-income families (Ünsal & Kuyucu, 2010).

¹⁶¹ From the description of the workshop, available at:
<https://ashkalalwan.org/program.php?category=4&id=53>

¹⁶² The workshop took place between 11 and 17 September 2013. The notes are taken from my diaries then reported in my master's dissertation. The conversations were in Turkish. My translation.

¹⁶³ A cold yogurt-based drink, very common in Turkey.

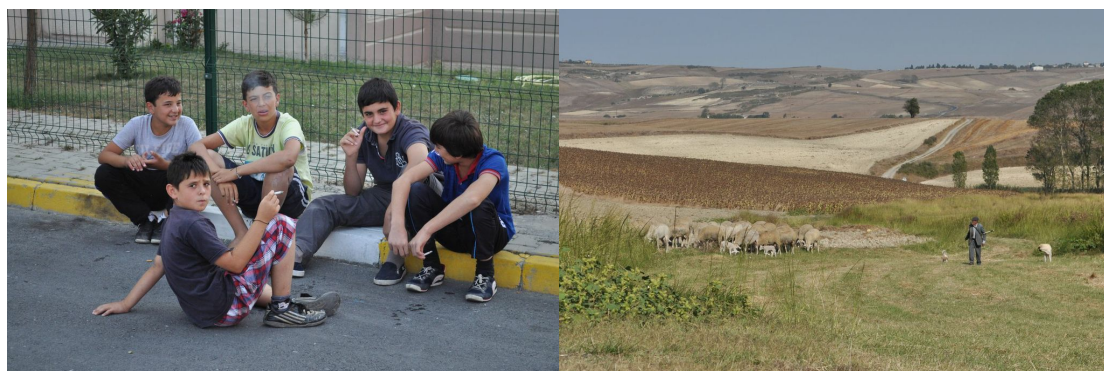
¹⁶⁴ From: <https://www.toki.gov.tr/en/administrative-position.html>



TOKI public housing complex Taşoluk.
Picture by Maxime Hourani.



Details of two TOKI buildings and a woman at work in their courtyard.
Picture by Maxime Hourani.



Kids chatting and smoking close to the TOKI houses and a shepherd in the fields around.
Picture by Maxime Hourani.



The workshop's participants in the field.
Picture by Maxime Hourani.



Distant view of Taşoluk's and detail of the local playground.
Picture by Maxime Hourani.



Ahmet's garden and a workshop colleague during the drawing session.
Picture by Maxime Hourani.



View of Taşoluk.
Picture by Maxime Hourani.

All the new laws enacted by the AKP government led to a remarkable increase in the urban transformation projects since the early 2000s: in particular, Law 5366 (2005) on Renewal (Use of Decrepit Historical and Cultural Assets) gave the right to local municipalities to evict residents of historical buildings and to renew them because of historical interest, with a contribution to the expenses. Sulukule is one of the neighbourhoods where this law was implemented.

Diversity, social inclusion, and 'urban transformation through participation' – all elements that were included in the application for 'Istanbul 2010 European Capital of Culture' and that apparently convinced the Selection Panel of the ECOC – did not correspond to reality.



Photography by Fatih Pinar, from the series *Sulukule*, documenting the state of the neighbourhood after the evictions
<http://www.fatihpinar.com/>



Photography by Fatih Pinar, from the series *Sulukule*,
<http://www.fatihpinar.com/>

In the context of ‘Istanbul 2010’, culture has proved to be conceived as:

a euphemism for the city’s new representation, as a creative force in the emerging service economy... a concerted attempt to exploit the uniqueness of fixed capital... In this sense, culture is the sum of a city’s amenities that enable it to compete for investment, its ‘comparative advantage’ (Zukin, 1995: 268).

The image of Istanbul as the crossroad of civilisations, the bridge between East and West, endorsing diversity and coexistence, is the sum of amenities Zukin talks about. ‘Istanbul 2010 ECOC’ has been an occasion to reiterate that narrative, without any mention of power relations or social injustice.

The folkloristic juxtaposition of cultures, crystallised in their ‘typical’ characteristics, had been functional both to Turkish and European institutions to convey a narrative of ‘unity’ and tolerance, magnifying diversity and transforming it into a symbol, but ultimately not necessarily pairing it with political tools of social justice (İğsız, 2015). İğsız (2015: 326) defines ‘Istanbul 2010 ECOC’

an example of liberal multiculturalism, namely:

a tamed version of cultural recognition in which alterity, cultural rights and representation receive some limited social endorsement. These rights are often marketed as ‘freedom’ without any real address of underlying power discrepancies, socioeconomic disparities, and historical patterns of violence.

The case of the Roma community was emblematic in this sense. The event proved to adopt a mosaic approach to diversity (İğsız, 2015), in which cultural differences have been represented as monolithic and immutable entities through the ‘museumisation’ (ibid.) of cultural heritage, namely a static and essentialised representation of traditions, reifying clichés and simplistic understandings of alterity, that could be perfectly matched with the motto of ‘unity in diversity’.

This aestheticised approach to multiculturalism is the same behind the idea of ‘unity in diversity’. This formula works as an easily appropriable motto, acting as a triumphal declaration (Passerini, 1998). The understanding of diversity in relation to unity leads to the perception of Europe as a system of diverse cultural-political units (regions or nation states), characterised by a constitutive integrity (Leerssen, 1993); in this way, differences among units are easily pointed out, but at the same time the diversity characterising each unit is underestimated, leading to a distortive typicality effect (ibid.): reality tends to be represented through stereotypes, according to which the most peculiar aspects of a unit are considered as the most emblematic (ibid.). A modular vision of Europe has validity in some cases, for example from a constitutional point of view: Europe is constituted by defined sovereign states; but from a cultural perspective, the use of this pattern is problematic, supporting a ‘comfortable but distortive national schema’ (ibid: 5).

The incommensurability between cultural and political borders is twofold. First political borders are precise, whereas cultural borders are fuzzy; second political borders are volatile whereas cultural borders are relatively stable. Europe is not a set of units but a set of borders; not an aggregate of identities but a web of differences (ibid: 13).

What ‘Istanbul 2010 European Capital of Culture’ brought about with this specific episode is an

issue that already emerged from the dispute originated by ‘Focus Istanbul’: a stereotypical and essentialised representation of culture, supposedly a vehicle of understanding and integration, but eventually an instrument for promotional purposes, carrier of conflict.

After 2010

The situation between Turkey and the European Union seemed to get better in 2011 and 2012, right in the aftermath of ‘Istanbul 2010 European Capital of Culture’. 2011 was the year of the so-called Arab Spring, a series of popular uprisings that brought the emergence of new regimes in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, and Yemen. These events brought up the need of possible models of guidance to the new leaders: for the third time, the so-called ‘Turkish model’ (namely a pro-Western secular Muslim state with a multi-party system and free market economy) became a debated issue in world politics, constituting a new appealing opportunity for the AKP government – especially in light of its neo-Ottoman agenda – to stress its democratic identity (Parlar Dal & Erşen, 2014; Taşpınar, 2011). 2012 saw the launch by the European Commission of the ‘Positive Agenda’ (European Commission, 2012) ‘intended to bring fresh dynamics into the EU-Turkey relations’, as stated in the introduction of the document, that however did not bring positive results.

The Turkish domestic situation dramatically changed in late May 2013, with the events of Istanbul Gezi Park: what started as an occupation by a group of environmentalists opposing the construction of an Ottoman-style shopping mall developed into the biggest mass protest since the foundation of the Turkish Republic (Gürcan & Peker, 2015). The heavy answer to the protests by the Turkish government, claiming the occupation has been maneuvered by foreign powers (Reynolds, 2013), has been harshly criticized by European institutions, with the European Parliament’s resolution condemning the action by the Turkish police against peaceful

demonstrations (European Parliament, 2013). Once again Turkey was leaving its European path and international press covered it.¹⁶⁵

Conclusions

The case of ‘Istanbul 2010 European Capital of Culture’ reiterates three of the four problematic issues characterising EU cultural policy presented in the previous chapters and show how they interact with each other: the local appropriation and re-enactment of European narratives; the uncontrolled promotional potential of cultural events; the stereotypical and essentialised representation of cultures.

First: there is an issue concerning subversion and implementation of European narratives for domestic purposes. In the case of 1975 ECHY this process happened through what Shore (2000) has characterised as non-governmental agents of European consciousness - i.e., in this case, the art historian and curator Oya Kılıç with the project ‘Istanbul 1800. In the context of ‘Istanbul 2010 ECOC’, this happened through the direct intervention of the AKP government: through the Istanbul 2010 ECOC Agency for example, the government changed the original plan proposed by the civil Initiative Group, which had framed the initiative with ‘The city of the four elements’ narrative. This was eventually subverted in the ‘Capital of the world’ discourse, in line with the institutional neo-Ottoman agenda. The event offered, indeed, a global promotional showcase for this vision, based on the interpretation of the Ottoman past as an era of benevolent inclusion of diverse peoples, matching – at least superficially – the European unity in diversity narrative.

The second aspect, concerning the marketing-potential intrinsic in big scale events, was already visible in ‘The Anatolian Civilisations’ of 1983. In that case, the exhibition worked, on one side, as a cultural diplomacy tool for the military regime, showing the good will to set the country back to its European path; on the other, it presented the ‘global city’ Istanbul to the international scene,

¹⁶⁵ The persecution against the supposed master minds behind the protest continued for many years, leading to the sentence for eight human rights activists on 25 April 2022. Among them is the philanthropist and civic leader Osman Kavala condemned to life in prison without parole. He is considered guilty of attempting to overthrow the Turkish government by force by orchestrating the protests. See the report by Freedom House for details: <https://freedomhouse.org/article/turkeys-gezi-trial-verdict-travesty-justice>.

with a new infrastructure for the arts and a competent team of professionals. ‘Istanbul 2010’, worked, to some extent, in these same directions too: taking place in a difficult contingency for Turkey’s negotiation process and, in general, for Turkey’s European vocation increasingly challenged by the neo-Ottoman narrative of AKP, the event had the potential – eventually unfulfilled – to give a new boost to Turkey-EU relations. Furthermore, it could – and actually did – attract significant tourist flows, through the multiple transformations of the multicultural rhetoric, that even became a synonym of ‘coolness’ for the international press.

All these processes took place through problematic stereotypical representations of culture, devoid of power dynamics, that emerged already in the case of ‘Focus Istanbul’: diversity can be instrumentalised as a promotional tool, to the detriment of the declared aim of unity, social inclusion, and mutual knowledge. The case of the Roma community was paradoxical: celebrated both in Brussels and Istanbul with concerts and exhibitions, it was at the same time evicted by governmental bulldozers in the historical neighbourhood of Sulukule to make room for new residential buildings.

ANNEX 1

Rana Foorohar, 'Istanbul delights', *Newsweek*, 25 August 2005

<https://www.newsweek.com/221turkish-delight-117821>

The article offers an emblematic example of the image that Istanbul gained internationally in the early 2000s: a multicultural cradle of civilisation, in which tradition and modernity blends, creating a cool and unique atmosphere.

Spend a summer night strolling down Istanbul's Istiklal Caddesi, the pedestrian thoroughfare in the city's old Christian quarter of Beyoğlu, and you'll hear something surprising. Amid the crowds of nocturnal revelers, a young Uzbek-looking girl plays haunting songs from Central Asia on an ancient Turkic flute called a *saz*. Nearby, bluesy Greek *rembetiko* blares from a CD store. Downhill toward the slums of Tarlabası you hear the wild Balkan rhythms of a Gypsy wedding, while at 360, an ultra-trendy rooftop restaurant, the sound is Sufi electronica – cutting-edge beats laced with dervish ritual. And then there are the clubs – Mojo, say, or Babylon – where the young and beautiful rise spontaneously from their tables to link arms and perform a complicated Black Sea line dance, the *horon*. The wonder is that each and every one of these styles is absolutely native to the city, which for much of its history was the capital of half the known world.

The sounds of today's Istanbul convey something important. They're evidence of a cultural revival that's helping the city reclaim its heritage as a world-class crossroads. After decades of provincialism, decay and economic depression – not to mention the dreary nationalism mandated by a series of governments dominated by the military – Istanbul is re-emerging as one of Europe's great metropolises. 'Istanbul is experiencing a rebirth of identity,' says Fatih Akin, director of this summer's award-winning film 'The Sound of Istanbul,' an odyssey through the city's rich musical traditions. Akin grew up in Germany but during the past decade has rediscovered his Turkish roots. 'There's such richness,' he says. 'So many people have crossed Istanbul and left their culture here.'

Signs of renewed self-confidence are everywhere. The city is still thickly atmospheric, with bazaars, Byzantine churches and Ottoman mansions pretty much everywhere. But that faded grandeur has recently been leavened with new energy. Stock markets are surging. Young, Western-educated Turks are returning home to start businesses. Foreigners are snapping up choice real estate. Turkish painters, writers, musicians, fashion designers and filmmakers are increasingly in the international spotlight. Two major new private museums devoted to Turkish art, the Istanbul Modern and the Pera Museum, have opened in the past year alone. Private galleries like Galerist and Platform are showcasing, and fostering, new artists from Turkey and around the region.

The city's renaissance is part and parcel of Turkey's embrace of Europe. It's no accident that the Modern's opening was pushed up last December to coincide with the European Union's decision to begin accession talks with Ankara. Turkey's drive to 'join Europe' undergirds the economic reforms that have given both Turks and foreigners the confidence to invest and buoyed the country's prospects. Inflation is in the single digits for the first time in 30 years, unemployment is down and GDP growth is more than 9 percent. Reforms pushed by the EU – from its insistence that the military step back from politics to human-rights and free-speech liberalizations – have reshaped Turkey's political and social landscape. At bottom, Istanbul's new look would not have been possible had the country's government not been so determined to prove its Western credentials.

In every area of life, a new generation of young Turks is reaching outward. This year's Art Biennale will draw artists from Bosnia, Iran, Egypt, Greece and Lebanon – a most uncommon mix – while the Web Biennale will feature work by Armenians, Ukrainians, Serbs, Macedonians and Romanians. 'Istanbul these days has as much dynamism as New York', says Genco Gülan, director of the

Istanbul Contemporary Art Museum. If anything, he enthuses, 'Istanbul is more alive. There's more interest here in doing something new.'

That cultural vibrancy has come hand in hand with a physical renaissance, the likes of which Istanbul hasn't seen in a century. Begin with Beyoğlu, an area of grand 19th century apartment buildings reminiscent of Budapest or Vienna that was largely abandoned by its Greek and Jewish inhabitants in the 1950s and became a Kurdish and Gypsy slum. 'Fifteen years ago, you'd be afraid to go there', says Gulen Güler, a film producer who lives in the neighborhood. Fusion restaurants, organic grocers and designer candle shops now abound, along with the city's trendiest shops, galleries, design studios and clubs – many of them standouts of contemporary design. Beyoğlu is also home to a growing colony of young foreigners buying up cheap apartments. 'This place is attracting people away from very cool scenes elsewhere, like Berlin', says Andrew Foxall, one of the owners of 20 Million, a design and photography studio in Çukurcuma, the artiest of Beyoğlu enclaves.

The rise of Beyoğlu is a good metaphor for Istanbul as a whole. At its best, it showcases all that's original and vibrant in the city. At its worst, it does just the opposite - testifying to Turkey's cultural insecurities. Yes, the melting pot that is the İstiklal Caddesi is genuine enough. But what to make of the Fransız Sokak, a whole street filled with faux French cafes and restaurants, complete with baguettes and piped accordion music? Contrast that with the restaurant Dilara's Abracadabra, whose owner, Dilara Erbay, conjures up a truly innovative new food culture based on traditional seasonal rhythms. 'This is Anatolia, a very spiritual and holy place', says Erbay. 'Anatolian food is alive, all the old stories are there. We prepare special foods when someone dies, when they are born, when guests come. You can tell all your life in food.' Erbay's next big thing is Sufi cuisine, simple and pure food eaten from a communal bowl 'to symbolize love and oneness', rooted in Turkey's ancient culture of Sufi Islamic mysticism.

It's a constant tussle, this East-West divide. For years being cool and innovative has long meant, simply, being Western. 'Kemal Atatürk wanted to change Turkey into a Western country; everything from our own culture was forbidden' recalls Fatih Akin. Now, he adds, more and more Turkish artists are rediscovering their own voices, grounded in their own traditions rather than borrowed ones. Listen, for instance, to the weird, haunting melodies of the dervish rituals that shape the mesmerizing electronic music of Mercan Dede, who mixes Sufi classical music played on the *ney* (a kind of flute) with computer beats. Look at the upper floors of the Pera Museum, dedicated to the work of young Turkish artists. (One female painter crowns her angry self-portrait with a Byzantine-style gold halo; a digital photomontage of horses and soldiers turns what might have been a battle of classical Greece and Persia into something resembling a videogame; in one photo of a large mosque, minarets tilt at 45 degrees, evoking missiles.) Or try on some of designer Gönül Paksoy's sumptuous Ottoman-inspired gowns made of antique silks and rich embroidery. These are all signs of a cultural voice growing from within, and no longer imported from abroad.

Not all the new art is a celebration. Filmmaker Kutluğ Ataman, shortlisted for last year's prestigious British Turner Prize, cuts close to Turkey's sociocultural bone. His latest video installation, 'Kuba', constructs a communal portrait of life in an Istanbul shantytown, voice by voice. The subjects range from criminals, drug addicts and teenage delinquents to religious radicals and the poor – an uncomfortably real slice of daily life at the margins.

Bold artistic voices like Ataman's are bound to collide with Turkey's many taboos – nationalist versus European, modern versus traditional, secular versus religious. While bright young things drink and flirt in expensive Beyoğlu restaurants, the more numerous poor look on in bewilderment and not a little disapproval. Outside one trendy record shop specializing in reggae and rap, graffiti on the wall reads RAP NO–MUSLIM YES. And just a hundred meters from the lively bars of İstiklal, an armored personnel carrier stands permanently parked outside the police headquarters on Tarlaşı Boulevard, ready for use during the sporadic disorders among Tarlaşı's largely Kurdish minority.

Istanbul and its artists are testing new political limits as well. Aynur, a Kurdish singer featured in 'The Sound of Istanbul', recalls that when she started performing 10 years ago, police would pull the plug on her. With new laws (another nod to the EU) authorizing broadcasts in Kurdish, she can now sing wherever and whenever she wants. But, she says, 'I only wish these changes were happening because we really believed in them, not because we're becoming members of the EU.' Even novelist Orhan Pamuk, whose books have been a huge success in Turkey and the West, was pilloried by nationalists earlier this year when he dared to ask what had happened to the Armenians of the Ottoman Empire in 1915, when hundreds of thousands were killed.

Still, taken together, the changes have been dramatic. For decades now, Greeks and Turks have lived in enmity. Yet the Pozitif photo gallery in Galata is currently hosting a show of stark images from Imroz, a Turkish Aegean island with a tiny, and dying, Greek population. It's a sad exhibit, says photographer Murat Yaykın, but 'it's important to tell the story' of how Greeks and Turks not so long ago lived side by side in harmony. A huge crowd also turned out last month when Greek singer Aiki Kayaloglou performed poetry by Greek poets Elytis, Kavafis and Sappho, as well as Turkish poet Nâzım Hikmet, set to music by contemporary Greek composer Manos Hatzidakis. Greek contemporary pop sells well in the record shops on İstiklal.

Perhaps most encouraging is the fact that, as Istanbul goes, so goes much of the rest of the country. The megalopolis accounts for roughly 45 percent of national industry, 55 percent of GDP and 60 percent of the country's exports. A whole generation of young Turks, educated abroad, is now being drawn back to their homeland, stoking the city's dynamism. Memduh Karakullukçu, 35, schooled at MIT, Columbia and the London School of Economics, worked as an investment banker and consultant in Europe and the United States before returning to head Istanbul Technical University's prestigious technology incubator. 'For the first time, living in Istanbul doesn't mean that I'm left out of the major social and financial networks' he says. 'I can be part of all that from here.' These new repatriates bring a worldliness and an openness their parents' generation lacks. 'There's a cultural shift. Both Turks and foreigners are excited about the possibilities of the city, which has been a well-kept secret for so long' says Oya Eczacıbaşı, chairwoman of the Istanbul Modern.

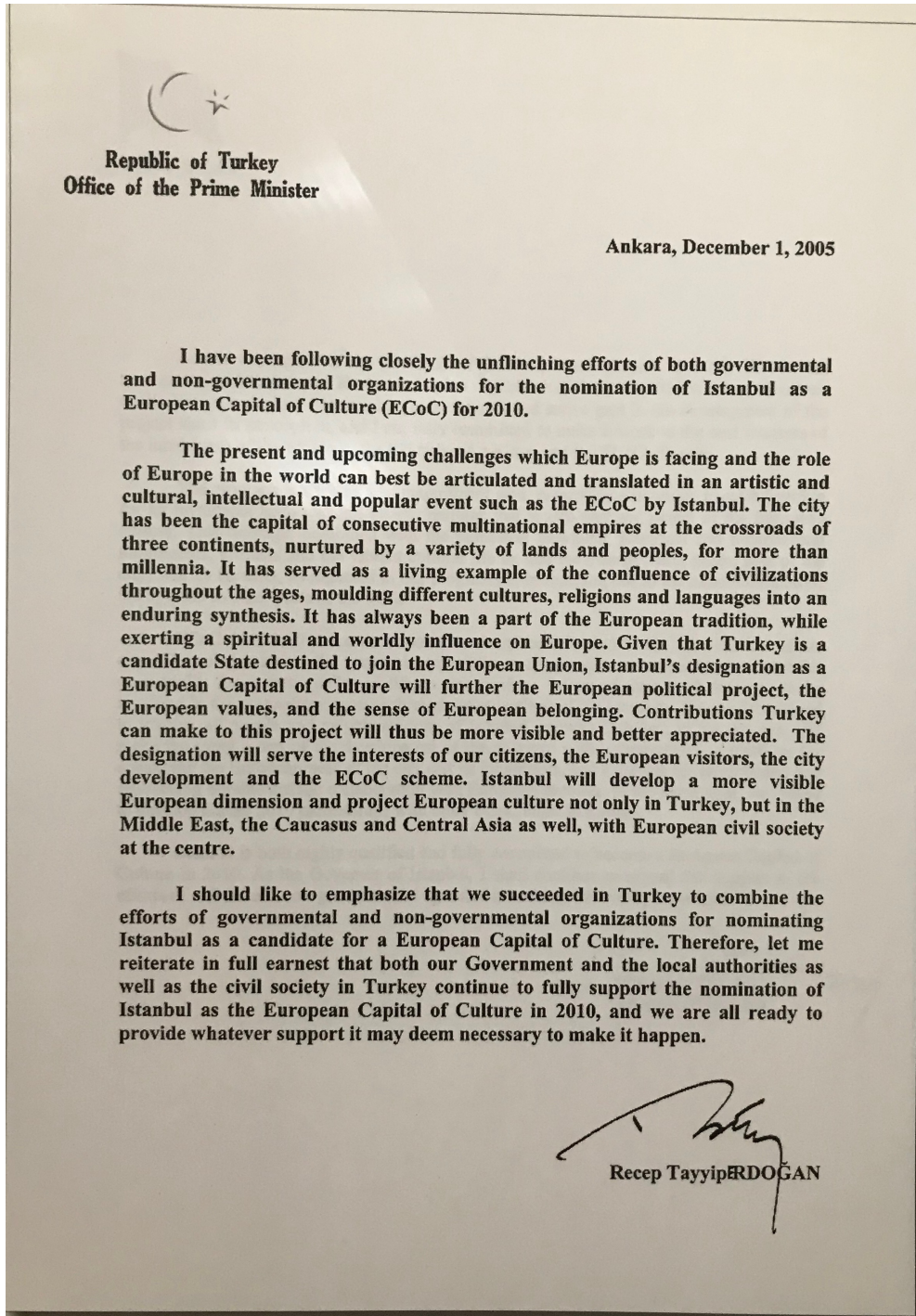
Europe may yet balk at admitting Turkey to its Union. Yet the world won't end if it does. All signs suggest that Istanbul will continue to re-create itself, perhaps even more energetically. Remember the sounds of Istanbul's streets – European and Turkish and Balkan and Middle Eastern, all coming together in a strange but beautiful harmony.

ANNEX 2:

Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's letter

Initiative Group (2006), *Istanbul: City of the Four Elements* [application proposal for Istanbul 2010 European Capital of Culture], İstanbul 2010 Avrupa Kültür Başkenti, p. 11

The letter presents the narrative about Istanbul as the crossroad of civilisations and stresses the collaboration between civil society, private foundations, intellectuals and governmental bodies as a unique element of the city's application for European Capital of Culture.



Chapter 8: 2018 European Year of Cultural Heritage

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Main features

	2018 European Year of Cultural Heritage
Location	Istanbul ¹⁶⁶
Date	9 October – 10 November 2018
Typology	EU periodical events taking place all over Europe
Turkey – EU relationship	Phase 6 (2013 – ongoing) Migration as a driver forward and political change in Turkey
Culture and identity in EC/EU documents	Third phase Post-Western Europe
Institutions involved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • European Union • Europa Nostra • Council of Europe • ICCROM • UNESCO • ICOMOS • Europeana
Declared aim	<p>‘To raise awareness of European history and values and to strengthen a sense of European identity’</p> <p>http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2017/02/09-cultural-heritage/</p>

Phase 6 (2013 – ongoing) – Migration as a driver forward and political change in Turkey

We left Turkey in the aftermath of the Gezi Park protests, with European Union’s eyes on it, monitoring its estrangement from European values. The scenario characterising this last phase has been defined by Aydın-Düzgit and Kaliber (2016: 5) as ‘de-Europeanisation’, namely

the loss or weakening of the EU/Europe as a normative/political context and as a reference point in domestic settings and national public debates. [It] manifests itself [...] firstly, as [...] a retreat of EU/Europe as a normative/political context for Turkish society and politics; and, secondly, as the growing scepticism and indifference in Turkish society towards the EU/Europe, risking the legitimacy of the EU/Europe [...] despite the fact that the country is formally subject to the pre-accession process.

¹⁶⁶ The EYCH was celebrated in 37 countries all over Europe, as stated on the website (<https://europa.eu/cultural-heritage/eych-events-grid.html>). Interestingly, the page about ‘The European Year in your country’ (<https://europa.eu/cultural-heritage/country-links.html>) presents only 33 countries; among the omitted ones there is also Turkey.

The attempt at giving new energy to the reform process through various initiatives – such as the Positive Agenda of 2012 and the 2013 roadmap for visa liberalisation – were not successful. The violations of fundamental political freedoms and human rights in Turkey increased dramatically after the 2013 Gezi Park protests and especially since the failed coup of 2016, as the next pages will describe.

The Turkish military actions in Syria and the closer diplomatic ties with Moscow added further complications to an already troubled situation. The EU found (and still finds) itself facing new challenges: the so-called refugee crisis with the consequent management of asylum policy; the threat of jihadi terrorism; the consequences of the Brexit vote and the rise of populist leaders (Saatçioğlu *et al.*, 2019); all this taking place in a changing global scenario, in which the international liberal order, in place since the end of World War II under US leadership, vacillates in front of the rise of new or reinvigorated powers, such as China and Russia (Morillas *et al.*, 2017).

In this difficult contingency, there was only one, but crucial issue that led to an ostensible rapprochement: migration. In particular, the Joint EU-Turkey Statement of 29 November 2015 (European Commission, 2015) – that activated the Joint Action Plan¹⁶⁷ – and the EU-Turkey Statement on Migration of 18 March 2016 (European Council, 2016) foresaw a cooperation between the two sides in managing the flows of refugees into Europe, while promising to re-boost the accession process, as well as speed up the process of visa liberalisation for Turkey (European Council, 2016). In this context, chapters 17 and 33, previously vetoed by France, were opened, respectively in 2015 and in 2016 (European Council, 2015; European Council, 2016), but since then no other progress was made.

[...] it [the deal *ndr*] soon proved vapid: Ankara now receives 3 (+3) billion euros in exchange for preventing irregular migrants from crossing into Europe and hosting them in Turkey, but any hope of progress on the remaining issues have withered (Benvenuti, 2017: 10).

¹⁶⁷ Energy has been another topic mentioned in the Action Plan, together with economy and security issue.

The agreement clearly suggested that both sides, not only Turkey, were moving away from European values. According to some interpreters, the deal signaled ‘the moment when the European Union lost its political innocence’ (Rankin, 2020), undermining the credibility of the Enlargement process at large:

the value and rule-based conditionalities that formed the basis of the Union soft power are being replaced by pure realpolitik. The best evidence of this is the recent Turkey deal: a government that is evidently and substantially regressing in terms of democratic criteria was promised advances in accession negotiations and visa liberalisation in return for cooperation on refugees. While it is doubtful that this deal will eventually materialise anyway, it certainly affects the credibility and leverage of Enlargement policy (Walldén, 2016: 3).

Human rights organisations and civil society initiatives harshly criticised the agreement, complaining about the definition of Turkey as a ‘safe third country’ for migrants and asylum seekers.¹⁶⁸ The deal had an immediate illusory success, reducing drastically the number of arrivals on the Greek coasts. The European Union celebrated Turkish (supposedly) humanitarian effort in the 2018 Report (European Commission, 2018a: 3):

During 2017, the implementation of the March 2016 EU-Turkey Statement has continued to deliver concrete results in reducing irregular and dangerous crossings and in saving lives in the Aegean Sea. Turkey sustained its outstanding efforts to provide massive and unprecedented humanitarian aid and support to more than 3.5 million refugees from Syria and some 365,000 refugees from other countries. Turkey and the EU further built on the fruitful cooperation under the Facility for Refugees in Turkey. By the end of December 2017, the full envelope of EUR 3 billion had been contracted, with 72 projects and almost 1.2 million of the most vulnerable refugees benefited from monthly cash-transfers. Disbursements reached EUR 1.95 billion to date.

¹⁶⁸ Human Rights Watch, ‘EU: Turkey Mass-Return Deal Threatens Rights, 15 March 2016’, <https://www.hrw.org/node/287601>; Amnesty International, ‘EU-Turkey Refugee Deal: a Historic Blow to Rights’, 18 March 2016, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/press-releases/2016/03/eu-turkey-refugee-deal-a-historic-blow-to-rights>; UNHCR, ‘UNHCR Urges Immediate Safeguards to be in Place Before Any Returns Begin Under EU-Turkey Deal’, 1 April 2016, <http://www.unhcr.org/56fe31ca9.html>; Amnesty International, ‘Turkey: No Safe Refuge: Asylum-seekers and Refugees Denied Effective Protection in Turkey’, 3 June 2016, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/eur44/3825/2016/en>

However the deal proved to be inconsistent in the long run, with President Erdoğan's threats to reopen the gates to Europe¹⁶⁹ showing how asylum seekers have been instrumentalised as a 'bargaining chips in a deadly political game', to use the words of the Amnesty International's Deputy Research Director, Massimo Moratti.¹⁷⁰

If 2016 started with this seeming cooperation, the situation changed in the aftermath of the failed coup of 15 July: the EU condemned this undemocratic attack against the Turkish government, however it disapproved the measures adopted in response, such as the proclamation of the state of emergency, followed by growing detentions of journalists and activists (Eski, 2019), and the discussion on the reintroduction of the death penalty (European Parliament, 2016).

The broad scale and collective nature, and the disproportionality of measures taken since the attempted coup under the state of emergency, such as widespread dismissals, arrests, and detentions, continue to raise serious concerns. Turkey should lift the state of emergency without delay. Serious shortcomings affect the 31 decrees taken to date under the state of emergency. They have not been subject to a diligent and effective scrutiny by parliament. Consequently, the decrees have long not been open to judicial review and none of them has yet been subject to a decision by the Constitutional Court. These emergency decrees have notably curtailed certain civil and political rights, including freedom of expression, freedom of assembly and procedural rights. (European Commission, 2018a: 3)

The new presidential system, approved by the constitutional referendum of April 2017, that entered into force after the elections of June 2018, created further distance between the two sides, causing EU's worries about the rise of an illiberal democracy (Saatçioğlu *et al.*, 2019). The Commission stated in the annual report:

In April 2017, Turkey held a referendum which approved by a close majority constitutional amendments introducing a presidential system. The amendments were assessed by the Venice Commission as lacking sufficient checks and balances as well as endangering the separation of powers between the executive and the judiciary. The referendum itself raised serious concerns in relation to the overall negative impact of the state of emergency, the 'unequal playing field' for the two sides of the campaigns and undermined safeguards for the integrity of the election (European Commission, 2018a: 4).

¹⁶⁹ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2020/03/greece-turkey-refugees-explainer/>

¹⁷⁰ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2020/02/turkeyeu-refugees-must-not-pay-the-price-in-political-game/>

This led to the following decision by the EU's June 2018 General Affairs Council:

Turkey has been moving further away from the European Union. Turkey's accession negotiations have therefore effectively come to a standstill and no further chapters can be considered for opening or closing (Council of the European Union, 2018: 13).

So, in 2018, when the European Architectural Heritage Year took place, the EU-Turkey relationship was not on a positive track. What is important to notice in this phase is the emphasis by the EU on the engagement with Turkey as an outsider, as the Other, and not as a country on the path of accession. The Commission expressed its concerns in the Annual Report:

The Turkish government reiterated its commitment to EU accession, but this has not been matched by corresponding measures and reforms. On the contrary, Turkey has been moving away from the European Union (European commission, 2018a: 3).

The 2018 Communication on EU Enlargement Policy (European Commission, 2018c) clearly points out how, after five years since the last Enlargement, despite negotiations being underway with Serbia and Montenegro, the perspective for Turkey was the one of the 'key partner':

In February 2018, the European Commission reaffirmed the firm, merit-based prospect of EU membership for the Western Balkans in its Communication. This is a strong message of encouragement for the whole Western Balkans and a sign of the EU's commitment to their European future. Leaders in the region must leave no doubt as to their strategic orientation and commitment. [...]

Turkey is a key partner for the EU and a candidate country, with which dialogue at high-level and cooperation in areas of joint interest have continued, including support to Syrian refugees. The Commission recognised Turkey's legitimate need to take swift and proportionate action in the face of the failed coup attempt of July 2016. However, Turkey has been significantly moving away from the European Union, in particular in the areas of the rule of law and fundamental rights and through the weakening of effective checks and balances in the political system. The European Commission has repeatedly called on Turkey to reverse this negative trend as a matter of priority (European Commission, 2018c: 1-2).

So, although the possibility of Enlargement looked (and looks) increasingly distant for Turkey, 'EU policymakers were also reluctant to have Turkey fully disengaged from Europe' (Saatçioğlu

et al., 2019: 2). The characterisation of Turkey as a crucial strategic EU partner was one of the narratives characterising EC/EU-Turkey relation since its inception (Hauge *et al.*, 2016). In this phase, it became the dominant tendency (Gilbreath & Selçuki, 2019; Şenyuva, 2018), expressed also in the opening lines of the 2018 report on Turkey by the European Commission: ‘Turkey remains a key partner for the European Union’ (European Commission, 2018a: 3). ‘The problem is, however, there is no agreement on what form such an enhanced partnership should take’ (Saatçioğlu *et al.*, 2019: 2). The case of ‘2018 European Year of Cultural Heritage’ well embodies the atmosphere just described.

The launch of the event: Turkey the big absence

As stated in the press release launching the event, ‘2018 European Year of Cultural Heritage’ had ‘the aim [...] to raise awareness of European history and values and to strengthen a sense of European identity’.¹⁷¹

The aim of the European Year of Cultural Heritage is to encourage more people to discover and engage with Europe's cultural heritage, and to reinforce a sense of belonging to a common European space. The slogan for the year is: Our heritage: where the past meets the future.

The year will see a series of initiatives and events across Europe to enable people to become closer to and more involved with their cultural heritage. Cultural heritage shapes our identities and everyday lives. It surrounds us in Europe's towns and cities, natural landscapes and archaeological sites. It is not only found in literature, art and objects, but also in the crafts we learn from our ancestors, the stories we tell our children, the food we enjoy in company and the films we watch and recognise ourselves in.¹⁷²

The two promotional videos released for the occasion gave material shape to these statements. In the first one, images of the Parthenon, the Berlin Wall and other well-known European architectural landmarks appear accompanied by bold characters reading: ‘shared history’, ‘common values’, ‘culture’, ‘beauty’, ‘heritage’, ‘diversity’, as the following stills show.

¹⁷¹ <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2017/02/09-cultural-heritage/>

¹⁷² https://europa.eu/cultural-heritage/about_en.html



Still from the promotional video of '2018 European Year of Cultural Heritage', available at:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RcNwEBrs5oY>



Still from the promotional video of '2018 European Year of Cultural Heritage', available at:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RcNwEBrs5oY>

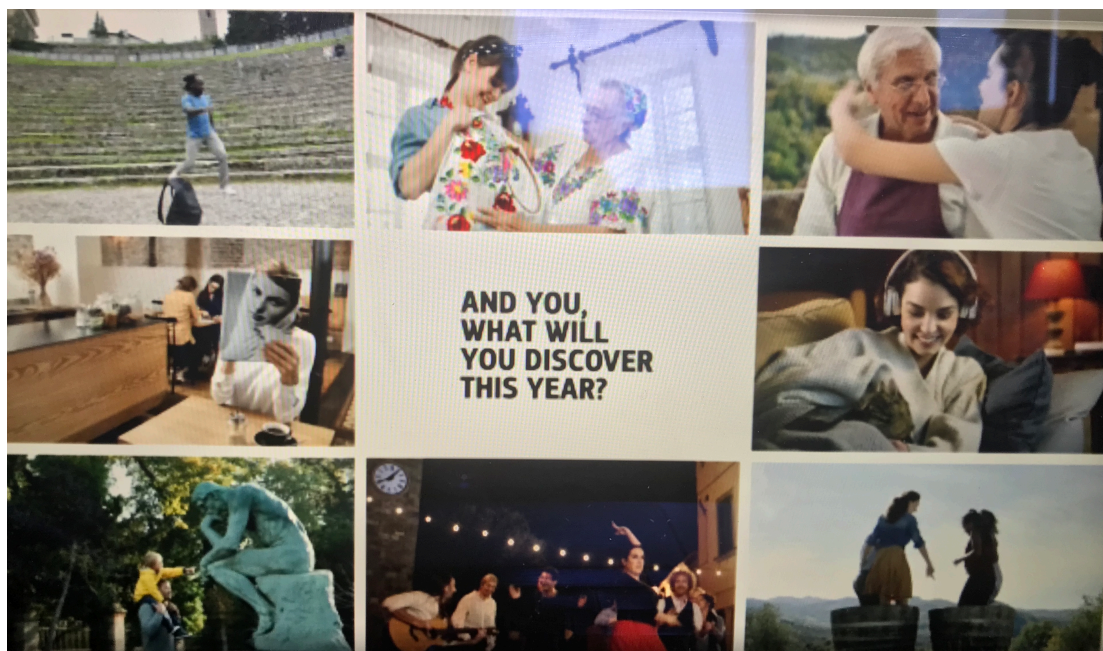


Still from the promotional video of '2018 European Year of Cultural Heritage', available at:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RcNwEBrs5oY>



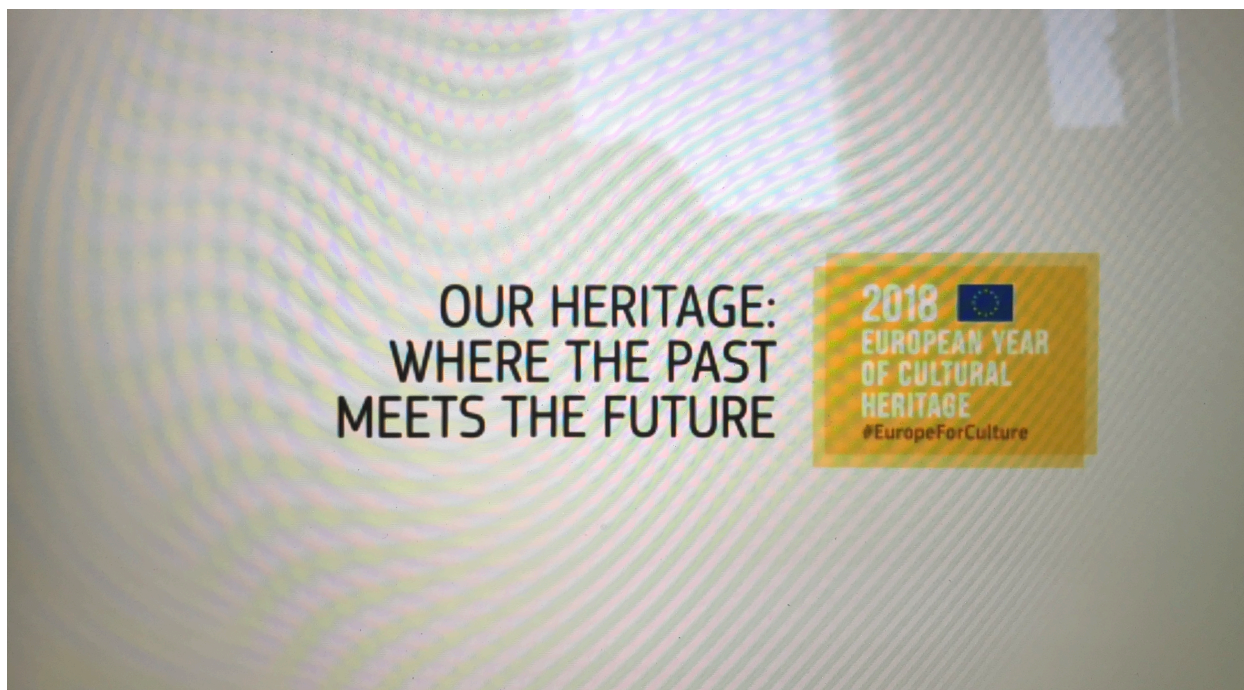
Still from the promotional video of '2018 European Year of Cultural Heritage', available at:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RcNwEBrs5oY>

The second video¹⁷³ connects these elements to the days to come for Europe, through the motto 'Our heritage: where the past meets the future'.



Still from the promotional video of '2018 European Year of Cultural Heritage, available at:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RcNwEBrs5oY>

¹⁷³ <https://europa.eu/cultural-heritage/>



Still from the promotional video of '2018 European Year of Cultural Heritage, available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RcNwEBrS5oY>

I watched these videos in Milan on 7 December 2017, on the occasion of the opening ceremony of '2018 European Year of Cultural Heritage'. Tibor Navracsics, the European Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth, and Sport, officially kicked off the event:

Cultural heritage is at the heart of the European way of life. It defines who we are and creates a sense of belonging. Cultural heritage is not only made up of literature, art and objects but also by the crafts we learn, the stories we tell, the food we eat and the films we watch. We need to preserve and treasure our cultural heritage for the next generations. This year of celebrations will be a wonderful opportunity to encourage people, especially young people, to explore Europe's rich cultural diversity and to reflect on the place that cultural heritage occupies in all our lives. It allows us to understand the past and to build our future.

I was present at the event with Barış Altan, Secretary General of Europa Nostra Turkey, the local branch of Europa Nostra. This heritage organisation has been founded in 1963 to support and protect natural and cultural heritage across Europe.¹⁷⁴ As described on the official website, 'Europa Nostra Turkey is an independent association that works parallel to the European Federation of Cultural Heritage Organisations, Europa Nostra'. It was founded in June 2010, on

¹⁷⁴ <https://www.europanostra.org/organisation/>

the occasion of the Europa Nostra Congress taking place in Istanbul, with the mission of ‘stimulating cultural heritage activities in Turkey and developing joint projects with national and European institutions and individual researchers’.¹⁷⁵ The primary element of Europa Nostra Turkey’s vision is ‘unifying cultural heritage circles in Turkey around a common concept of cultural heritage in line with the definitions that were developed by UNESCO, European Council, and European Union’.¹⁷⁶ Looking at its agenda, the organisation can be considered one of the domestic actors labelled by Onursal-Beşgöl’s (2016) as ‘agents of change’, namely intermediaries for policy transfer from the European to the national level (Dolowitz & Marsh, 1996; Radaelli, 2000).

I met Altan for the first time in 2017 and we had the chance to talk about the association’s role as an active instrument in shaping the domestic arena in heritage field. His words offered a helpful insight into the shortcomings and limitations experienced by the institution. He explained to me:¹⁷⁷

In theory Europa Nostra Turkey should aim at giving shape to heritage policy in the country, but in practice this did not really happen so far. The European dimension has limited contribution to EN Turkey’s actions: EN Turkey basically creates its own agenda focusing on the current cultural heritage discussions which are carried out in Turkey, but at the same time it follows the improvements and discussions on cultural heritage in Europe, as part of a wider European network.

EN Turkey has nearly no agenda in making contributions to discussions at a European level; there are some attempts to raise awareness in Turkey related to cultural heritage, but this goal is also not achieved well enough. Shaping the domestic arena or the carrying out of advocacy programs have always been part of many cultural heritage organisations’ agenda, as well as EN Turkey, but the political environment for the last eight-ten years has made such efforts resultless.

The practical difficulties faced by Europa Nostra in implementing its ‘Europeanising’ agenda mirror the broader scenario of ‘de-Europeanisation’ depicted by Aydın-Düzgit and Kaliber (2016).

The adverse political climate Altan talks about had a visible impact on the implementation of ‘2018 EYOCH’ in Turkey, especially from the perspective of Europa Nostra.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ Answers given to a questionnaire distribute in September 2017, after a preliminary meeting in Istanbul in June 2017.

This is how the events unfolded.

As stated on the official website of Europa Nostra:¹⁷⁸

2018 has been declared the European Year of Cultural Heritage. This is a unique occasion to celebrate our shared cultural heritage across Europe. [...] As the most representative heritage network in Europe, EN is an official partner and has been closely involved in the preparations for the European Year.

Despite the declared intent by the general Europa Nostra office to be an active player during ‘2018 European Year of Cultural Heritage’, EN Turkey found itself in the difficult position of having limited access to the event’s funds, distributed mainly by Creative Europe, due to its recent withdrawal from the Programme.

The withdrawal from Creative Europe

After almost two years of participation, in December 2016 the Turkish government announced its decision to exit the programme, which became effective at the beginning of January 2017. According to the news agency Habertürk, the decision came at a time of increasing tension between the EU and Turkey and as a reaction to the Creative Europe Programme’s support for a symphonic concert commemorating the Armenian genocide (Vivarelli, 2016). The event took place in Germany in June 2015, right after the German parliament released a symbolic resolution defining as genocide the atrocities committed in 1915 against the Armenian community (ibid.).

The withdrawal from the Creative Europe Programme represented a setback for the Turkish cultural industry, reducing the budget for artistic production and weakening ties with the European creative sector. Artists and art professionals manifested their disappointment at the decision. Gülin Üstün, director of Meetings on the Bridge film festival¹⁷⁹ – one of the initiatives supported by Creative Europe – declared:

¹⁷⁸ From: <http://www.europanostra.org/our-work/policy/european-year-cultural-heritage/>.

¹⁷⁹ More information available at: <http://film.iksv.org/en/meetingsonthebridge>.

As one of the beneficiaries of the fund, we are deeply saddened by the withdrawal of Turkey from Creative Europe. In addition to providing a much-needed financial support to Meetings on the Bridge, Creative Europe is a productive network and a crucial platform for active exchange of expertise for the artists and organisations working in Turkey and Europe (Vivarelli, 2016).

Discussing with Altan before the beginning of ‘2018 European Year of Cultural Heritage’, he expressed his worries:

It looks like there will not be structured programs related to 2018. Neither the Ministry of Culture and Tourism nor the Ministry for EU Affairs has 2018 in their agendas. Leaving Creative Europe Programme will result in a lack of funding for actions in 2018. But there might be singular initiatives by various cultural heritage organisations. EN Turkey is trying to bring together some cultural heritage organisations in order to organize more structured activities. [...] EN and its main ruling bodies have great faith in the European idea. This faith is reflected in its programs and main activities. But, of course, problems rising in the unity of Europe affect EN. That’s why EN is paying extra attention to the 2018 EYPOCH.¹⁸⁰

Altan’s evaluation in the aftermath of the event confirms its previsions: ¹⁸¹

Europa Nostra Turkey did not organize any event on its own during 2018 EYPOCH but cooperated with other organisations, such as ICOMOS Turkey, to organise one event in March 2018. The title of the event was ‘From 1975 European Year of Architectural Heritage to 2018 European Year of Cultural Heritage’. As far as I could follow, there was no specific expectation from this event. The speakers and speeches did not aim to specify how 2018 EYPOCH could contribute to the cultural heritage movement in Turkey. They concentrated more on historiography from 1975 to 2018. More in general, we cannot talk about a structured series of events for 2018. The NGOs labelled their already ongoing events with 2018 EYPOCH. There is no legacy left from 2018 such as there is no legacy left from ‘Istanbul 2010 European Capital of Culture’.

‘The Silence of 206 Rooms: Studies on the Büyükada Greek Orphanage’

One of the few events organised in Istanbul during 2018 EYPOCH¹⁸² was the exhibition ‘The Silence of 206 Rooms: Studies on the Büyükada Greek Orphanage’. Curated by the artist Hera Büyüktaşçıyan, the event took place at the Galata Greek School of Istanbul, organised by the

¹⁸⁰ Answers given to a questionnaire distribute in September 2017, after a preliminary meeting in Istanbul in June 2017.

¹⁸¹ Email interview, 20 July 2020.

¹⁸² Full list of events available at: <https://www.avrupa.info.tr/en/2018-european-year-cultural-heritage-7756#:~:text=2018%20The%20European%20Year%20of%20Cultural%20Heritage%20%7C%20EU%20Delegation%20to%20Turkey>

Istanbul Ecumenical Greek Patriarchate and supported by the Delegation of the European Union to Turkey, hosting art works by Ali Kazma, Dilek Winchester, Murat Germen, and Hera Büyüктаşçıyan. The exhibition had its focus on the Greek Orphanage of Büyükkada, one of the islands in the Marmara Sea, close to Istanbul.

As Murat Germen told me:¹⁸³

The exhibition focuses on Prinkipo Greek Orphanage which is considered as one of the '7 World Heritage in Danger of 2018'¹⁸⁴ by Europa Nostra. The exhibition opens a door to the reminiscence of this memory space, which is the biggest wooden building in Europe, work of the French architect Alexandre Vallaury (1850-1921). The exhibition tells the transformation of Prinkipo Palace to a home that embraced the orphans of Istanbul Greek community and to a ghost building as a result of political and social events against the minorities.

The press release¹⁸⁵ adds further elements about the content of the show:

The exhibition at the Galata Greek School, which almost met with a similar fate as the Büyükkada Greek Orphanage, will provide a narrative of the evolution of this edifice [...].

[The artists] have managed to transfer the legacy of one school to another, in addition to oral accounts by witnesses and printed and visual documents that shed light on a historical record on the verge of disintegration.

[...].

'The Silence of 206 Rooms: Studies on the Büyükkada Greek Orphanage' invites you to take a stroll through the corridors of this school of life, which contains a layered account of the city's obscured history, and to look at the past through the prism of today.

The story of a building on the verge of disappearance is told, through the exhibition, in another edifice that was about to meet the same destiny: the Galata Greek School, located in a central district of Istanbul. The Galata Greek Primary School was built at the end of the nineteenth century for the Greek community of the neighbourhood. Like other Greek schools in the city, it stopped functioning in the 1980s due to the demographic and political changes, both in Turkey

¹⁸³ Email interview, 23 July 2020.

¹⁸⁴ 'The 7 Most Endangered' programme is run by Europa Nostra in partnership with the European Investment Bank Institute, with the support of the Creative Europe programme. Launched in 2013, it forms part of a civil society campaign to save Europe's endangered heritage, raising awareness, preparing independent assessments and proposing recommendations for action. While not guaranteeing direct funding, the listing of a site often serves as a catalyst for public and private mobilisation.

From: <https://www.europanostra.org/europe-7-most-endangered-heritage-sites-2020-announced/>

¹⁸⁵ Available at: <https://www.avrupa.info.tr/en/silence-206-rooms-studies-buyukada-greek-orphanage-8780>.

and Istanbul. In 2001, it started operating as a nursery school, but was eventually forced to close again in 2007, due to lack of students. In 2012, it was returned to the Greek community and opened its doors to the Istanbul Design Biennial. From that moment on, it has become an active cultural centre hosting mainly art events.¹⁸⁶

As Hera Büyüктаşçıyan explained to me, during the making of the exhibition there were high hopes about the participation in 2018 EYCH:¹⁸⁷

‘2018 European Year of Cultural Heritage’'s involvement in the project happened through Korhan Gümüş¹⁸⁸ who has been very active during the Prinkipo Greek Orphanage's inclusion in the Most Endangered Heritage List of Europa Nostra, as well as making a lot of efforts in creating bridges with various European institutions to save the building. Having the label of 2018 EYCH was important for us as we believed that it could create more opportunities for saving the building as soon as possible, as well as establishing a more concrete base for the discussion on cultural heritage. So, while we were preparing the exhibition, we applied with this project '206 Rooms of Silence: Etudes on Prinkipo Greek Orphanage' in order to have the support and the label as well. The project was kindly accepted. That's how the European Year of Cultural Heritage got involved. They made a small financial contribution alongside the other sponsors such as private sources (Athanasios Martinos, Schwarz Foundation, Umur Publication house) and CSOs as *Sivil Toplum için Destek Vakfı* (Support Foundation for Civil Society).¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁶ Information available at: <http://galatarumokulu.blogspot.com/>.

¹⁸⁷ Email and phone interview, 20-24 July 2020. I thank Hera Büyüктаşçıyan for her very kind support in shipping the material about the exhibition from Istanbul to Venice, a precious help in time of traveling restrictions due to the Covid pandemic.

¹⁸⁸ Korhan Gümüş is an architect and urban planner. He was director of urban and architectural projects for the Istanbul 2010 European Capital of Culture Agency.

¹⁸⁹ The European Union's website offered all the details about how to gain the label:

What is the label?

The European Year of Cultural Heritage label (comprising a logo, a slogan and a hashtag) is available for activities, events and projects taking place between 7 December 2017 (official launch of the year at the European Culture Forum in Milan) and 31 December 2018. The label is reserved for projects which contribute to achieving one or more of the objectives of the 2018 European Year of Cultural Heritage, as endorsed by the European Parliament and the Council of the EU in Article 2 of the legal decision calling for the year.

Does your project share the year's vision? Apply for the label and leave your mark.

Who can grant the EYCH 2018 label?

- National Coordinator in your country - for all projects at national, regional and local levels
- The European Commission - for all EU funded projects via our application form
- The members of the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018 Stakeholder Committee, for all cross-border projects implemented by the cultural heritage stakeholder organisations.

(From: https://europa.eu/cultural-heritage/how-label-your-event-eych-2018_en.html).

As Burçin Altınsay (Büyüktaşçıyan *et al.*, 2018: 152-153), Chair of Europa Nostra Turkey, writes in the catalogue:

Prinkipo Greek Orphanage was nominated for the programme by Europa Nostra Turkey Association, with the grace and approvals of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople which is the owner of the building by historical donation. Turkish Timber Association, Association for the Protection of Cultural Heritage and the Islands, World Heritage are non-governmental organisations that have supported the application. Previously, many such efforts were made to save the structure; Europa Nostra Turkey only mediated the selection of the building to the ‘7 Most Endangered’ programme list by compiling all previous work and efforts, on behalf of all those concerned parties.

Furthermore, she stresses the reasons behind the building’s choice, emphasising its European nature (*ibid.*, 153):

There is a cultural dimension to the selection of the Orphanage which is the unique and meaningful place this structure holds within European Cultural Heritage. It was built by an organisation of European origin, in a period when the interaction of the Ottoman world with European culture had considerably increased; moreover, Alexandre Vallauri, one of the most important architects of Istanbul who designed the structure, was connected to Europe with his family roots and had studied at Beaux-Arts. Thus, such connections give the structure a special meaning in our common cultural heritage with Europe. The fact that it is the largest wooden construction in Europe from the time it was built makes the structure unique in terms of our architectural heritage.

After the inclusion in the ‘7 Most Endangered’ programme, an expert mission took place at the Orphanage, at the end of May 2018, confirming the poor condition of the structure and testifying the ‘urgent need to save the building’.¹⁹⁰ The images by Murat German, documenting the state of the Orphanage during the show, offer an eloquent portrayal of the current situation.

¹⁹⁰ Important meetings took place also with members of the government and possibilities for the building’s future have been foreseen. As an afterward, it might be mentioned that on 29 July 2020 Europa Nostra and the European Investment Bank Institute issued a technical and financial report, but unfortunately up until today no funds have been collected to implement the plan and the building is still at risk of collapse. In February 2020, People’s Democracy Party (*Halkların Demokratik Partisi*, HDP) deputy Tuma Çelik called upon the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism to take immediate action (Duvar English, 2020). Thus, the inscription in the list of the ‘7 Most Endangered’ so far did not bring any remarkable result.



Image from the catalogue by Murat Germen (Büyüктаşçıyan *et al.*, 2018: 12-13)

‘The wave of all waves’, the artwork by Hera Büyüктаşçıyan for the exhibition presented in the following image, evoke the complexity and fragility of the minority heritage.



The wave of all waves

Image from the catalogue (Büyüктаşçıyan *et al.*, 2018: 69)

I asked the artist if she felt like being part of a ‘European’ project celebrating its heritage, during the show. She answered:

Sadly not, for the above-mentioned reasons. This event only created a resonance and gave visibility in international platforms to the current situation of the orphanage. But apart from that, sadly (as per what we experience now with Hagia Sophia), since cultural heritage is in the control of small groups and becomes a part of internal politics (especially Minority Heritage), the event will not be able to benefit from any international platform. The only success this project had was that it created a sense of awareness within the local audience who knew very little or completely nothing about the history of the site. In this sense, I believe that through such projects when unspoken histories become more visible and exposed from an objective point of view, they embrace a wider audience and can create a consciousness. So, overall, I think more than the existence of the EU... it was mostly educational and had an impact at a certain extent within the social platforms.

EU cultural policies as an ‘engine of differentiation’

The desire to document and preserve the building was for the video artist Ali Kazma the trigger for the participation in the event. His interview gave a crucial contribution to the entire research project, especially for the definition of the EU cultural policies as engines of differentiation, as explained in the coming pages.

He told me how he became part of the exhibition:¹⁹¹

It was a chain of events that led me to the project. I wanted to do something on this building, and I called a few friends that had houses on the island, thinking they could know someone that could get me access to this place. One of this people was Hera. All the contacts I spoke to were concerned about the building, its fragile state. So, they didn’t want anyone to come in and shoot. I thought it was not easy, but I wanted to try with other channels.

One month later, at most two, Hera called me and said that there was a project about the building and asked if I wanted to be involved. And I said yes. I wanted to do it. I knew the building was collapsing. From my trips to the island, I knew how a beautiful and amazing place it was. I felt it was an important thing that I needed to document.

I was not aware at all that the project would be part of the EYOCH, and I still wasn’t until you wrote to me. Maybe I should have read the catalogue more carefully, but for me the exhibition was just a chance to make this video. I didn’t know if it was founded by this or that institution. Of course, I knew the topic was kind of sensitive from the point of view of the Turkish state and I knew they were looking for some funds, but I didn’t know if the money would come from a Turkish fund, a European fund, the Church... You know how it is in Turkey: there is no real established way of funding

¹⁹¹ Zoom Interview conducted on 27 July 2020, while Kazma was in Paris.

anything. So, you just try to do whatever you can. Anyways I was working with Hera, I trusted her.

Büyüктаşçıyan pointed out the complexities related to the possibility to take care of the building, also with the support of international actors and events such as Europa Nostra and 2018 EYCH:

Apart from a small contribution, when I look back to the whole process of the exhibition and conference series, sadly the involvement of the EYCH did not (as per my experience) create much effect, due to the internal politics that need to be resolved first. The matter with the Prinkipo Greek Orphanage is a difficult one. Even though the Ecumenical Patriarchate owns its property rights still due to the current government, it may not be easy to make progress on such matter that relates with minority history as well.

Ali Kazma explained to me in detail his vision about cultural projects on minority heritage in the context of the current EU-Turkey relations:

The idea behind the project is even more relevant now, with the Aghia Sophia business.¹⁹² It is of course a story of Turkish Republic vs minorities, Turkish state vs

¹⁹² This chapter took shape in July 2020, while President Erdoğan officially reconverted Aghia Sophia into a mosque. This UNESCO World Heritage Site was built in 537, being the seat of the Orthodox patriarch of Constantinople, and the spiritual heart of Byzantium. It turned into a mosque following the Ottoman capture of Constantinople on 29 May 1453 and finally became a museum in 1935, shortly after the end of the Ottoman empire and the establishment of Turkish Republic under Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. While local newspapers close to the government published polls showing that almost three quarters of the Turkish citizens are in favour of this decision (Sabah, 2020), disappointed reactions have flourished outside of Turkey. On 13 July 2020 the EU foreign ministers, during their first physical meeting since the spreading of the coronavirus pandemic, condemned Ankara's decision declaring that it 'will inevitably fuel mistrust, promote renewed divisions between religious communities and undermine efforts at dialogue and cooperation' (Ekathimerini, 2020). The 27-member bloc reached 'a consensus among member states that EU-Turkey relations were currently under strain because of worrying developments affecting the EU's interests. The Council discussed other critical issues in the current EU-Turkey relations, such as the illegal Turkish drilling activities in the Exclusive Economic Zone of Cyprus and the military conflict in Cyprus' (ibid.). On the same occasion, Josep Borrell, High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, has declared: 'Turkey is an important country for the EU with whom we would wish to see our relations strengthened and developing. This should be done in respect of EU values, principles and interests. At the same time there are worrying developments, in particular in the Eastern Mediterranean and regarding Libya, that affect the EU's interests' (Council of the European Union, 2020: 4). The Greek Minister of Culture in late June officially complained to UNESCO about the consequences of this decision: 'What the Turkish government and President Erdoğan are attempting to do today revives and reignites fanatical nationalist and religious sentiment. It is an attempt to reduce the monument's value and international radiance' (Ekathimerini, 2020).

UNESCO expressed its concerns about the decision too, with several letters that culminated in the one of 10 July 2020, calling for the universal value of World Heritage to be preserved (<https://en.unesco.org/news/unesco-statement-hagia-sophia-istanbul>).

Turkish President Erdoğan denounced international condemnation over Ankara's decision, claiming that: 'The accusations against our country on the Hagia Sophia mean a direct attack on our sovereignty rights.

the people who it deems not a good element (like the Greeks, the Jews, the Armenians, the Kurds, the Alevi, now the seculars). There is always an enemy of the state in Turkey, preferably a bunch of them, where all the national security policy turns around. This building is a very good example of that history. So, in that way the project has a European dimension; also, because it is based on the heritage of a minority a lot of members of which now have moved to Greece, a lot of them have been exchanged during the exchange of population and Greece now is part of the EU. So, it does have a European dimension. I mean, it seems the perfect exhibition for the European Union to finance. It fits its ideas in many ways: it seems inclusive, yet it is also divisive; it seems it is giving money to an art initiative in Istanbul in Turkey, but it is also a problematic theme, and it is not something the Turkish state would be happy to finance or would be happy to see happening. So, it's the kind of thing I think would work well. It wouldn't be surprising not to get any support from the EU.

Kazma interestingly defined the project 'inclusive yet divisive', resonating with what analysed in the previous chapters: the case studies showed how, despite a starting point based on dialogue, unity and solidarity, many events turned out with the opposite result. I asked him to elaborate more on the concept.

Well, the event is both: inclusive and divisive. This is because, in a way, it talks about an unfair taking of a property from a minority by a state with the excuse of safety (even if, obviously, it was done because of the tensions between the Greek state and the Turkish state, the population exchange and all that). So, from a side, there is an unfair treatment of a building, symbol of a minority, taken away from a people, that now is part of the EU (the Greek people, I mean). An event pointing to this building, to its history, and to the wrongful treatment of its owners is an inclusive movement, because it brings about an injustice that was committed by a state. It points at an injustice that was done; so, in a way, it is a step of justice, maybe.

But in another way, this event is telling the Turkish state: 'You have always stolen things from Europeans, like Aghia Sophia, like the Orphanage. You have always treated your minorities in a bad way'. From a nationalistic and security-based perspective, this attitude is the problem of the European Union: it is not democracy, but realpolitik. Wherever the EU can use democracy to push the Turkish state in a position of 'powerlessness', let's say, they use it. This is the argument of the nationalist and the state, and they use this kind of events to support it.

This creates a very difficult situation in Istanbul. It is always like that. Anytime you have a problem with a minority, with politics that are questioning the behaviour of the state, the nationalist people use it to divide. So, this event has both of this sides. Obviously, I am for the policies of justice to take part, but it doesn't always work that way. Sometimes it makes it worse.

I asked Kazma if he felt that European events have been always organised within this kind of

Those who do not take a step against Islamophobia in their own countries... attack Turkey's will to use its sovereign rights' (Ekathimerini, 2020).

inclusive/divisive framework. He replied to me:

No, I think there was a moment in which the political will in Europe was inclusive. There was a vision of expansion. But with Sarkozy and Merkel that stopped and the functionaries...they follow: maybe they do not have a clue, but they know what is expected from them. Everything started to be more divisive and focused on European values: this belongs to Europe, this doesn't.

I was talking about this with a friend recently: now the EU has become an engine of differentiation; it is not an engine of inclusion, but it is an engine that says: 'this is like that', 'you are different in that way', 'Italians are lazy', 'Greeks don't work'. Now they also want the French to be in the same cup. I am not even talking about Turkey. Well, 'Turkey you are out anyway because you are Muslim. Out!'.

Because it is closing and closing, this engine has started to destroy itself and, of course, I see it here now in France: the French are becoming very defensive, because what the Dutch, the Austrian, the Finnish are saying. They don't like the idea they seem to be on the same line of others... but they didn't say anything of course when the same happened to Portugal, Greece, Italy, and Spain. But now they are next, so they can understand maybe.

Europe has become a divisive place. You see, the British have left; look at what is happening with Poland, Hungary: they don't want to be democratic, yet they want to be part of Europe when it comes to taking the money. It is a difficult moment and the minute it started it was with Sarkozy's policy of exclusion and saying 'we are Europeans'. The minute you say that, it becomes: 'who is more European?'. Is it the French with their philosophers? Or is the Dutch with their money? Who is more European? What is the core European value? And then it becomes about losing and losing and losing.

I think the vision of this inclusive Europe was lost due to politics and probably domestic reasons, or maybe because there is a big base who didn't want to be inclusive in Europe. I think Europeans have made their project much more difficult, this EU project I mean. And now it is not living its best moment. And I am sorry for that because, really, for me it is the only project in the world that was promising, but not anymore.

These things have waves, maybe there will be a moment in which it will be more inclusive again, with a vision for the future, a soft power based on inclusion, but it doesn't seem to be on this level right now. Even among itself...this project is eating itself now.

Being aware of this, I was happy to be part of the project at the Greek School because I already wanted to work on this building. I wasn't told to do that. I was looking for a way to do it. The exhibition became an excuse. Through it, I could make the video. So, I didn't even look who was funding it. It just gave me the chance to get the permission to access the building.

Kazma's words resonate with the interpretation that Rumelili (2016b) offers of the process of EU's candidacy as a practice of differentiation, presented in chapter 5. His view suggests another possible key to interpret EU cultural policy as an engine of differentiation itself, mirroring the Enlargement process, and hardly being able to fulfil its declared original purpose of 'construction'

of the citizens of Europe, united in their diversity.¹⁹³

Conclusions

2018 European Year of Cultural Heritage took place in what has been defined by Aydın-Düzgit and Kaliber (2016) as a phase of ‘de-Europeanisation’, in which the normative/political power of Europe was at its lowest and the controversial deals on the so-called refugee crisis looked like the only instrument to keep the connection between the EU and Turkey alive. The deterioration of human rights in the aftermath of the failed coup of 2016 further compromised the situation. In this context, interactions on a cultural level decreased too, especially after Turkey decided to withdraw from the Creative Europe programme, following a concert that took place in Germany commemorating the Armenian genocide. This move created further difficulties in the fund raising for the 2018 initiative, that went almost unnoticed, surrounded by the discouragement of heritage organisations, as declared by Altan of Europa Nostra Turkey. Among the few events that were organised under this label, there was the contemporary art exhibition ‘The Silence of 206 Rooms: Studies on the Büyükkada Greek Orphanage’ at the Greek Galata school of Istanbul, telling the story of abandonment of the biggest wooden building of Europe. Curated by Hera Büyüктаşçıyan, the show presented works by the artists Ali Kazma, Dilek Winchester, Murat Germen, and Hera Büyüктаşçıyan: the exhibition offered big visibility to the building in various European institutions, that led also to its inclusion in the ‘7 Most Endangered’ programme; however, no progress was made in terms of actual restoration.

¹⁹³ Another possible and interesting way to read Kazma’s words, is offered by another Rumelili’s article (2004). She argues that the construction of European identity takes place in relation to difference. She points out that the practice of ‘Othering’ external states by the EU follows different paths and constructs, in this way, different aspects of European identity. According to her view, as from Kazma’s words, the European identity incorporates both inclusive and exclusive aspects that emerge at different times and with different Others. The discourse on European identity, suggests Rumelili (2004), positions Turkey in a liminal situation, partly Self/partly Other, thus creating an ambivalent attitude, both inclusionary and exclusionary. The metaphor of the bridge, often invoked in the previous pages, embodies as well the idea of something that stays in between. Of course, as described at the beginning of the chapter, ‘2018 EYPOCH’ took place in a phase of clear de-Europeanisation for Turkey, in which the country looked far beyond the *limen* (threshold) of the European Self, fully anchored in a dimension of Otherness. However, this is only one part of an oscillatory movement that the pendulum of Turkey-EC/EU interaction have been doing since its inception, as seen in the previous chapters, so it wouldn’t be surprising to see it coming back.

Kazma, one of the participating artists, after stressing the importance of the initiative in terms of public awareness and social justice, commented also on the general framework of the event, pointing out its intrinsic normative value: if there is the need to save a building belonging to minorities in Turkey, it is because the state perpetrates its unfair treatment towards those communities that can endanger national security. In a broader sense, what emerges from Kazma's words is the fact that these events make visible the practice of differentiation taking places in the context of the Enlargement process, in which Europe is considered as the normal, desirable entity, carrier of good and positive values, that all the other countries, at the moment devoid of them, have to aspire to.

CONCLUSIONS

Conclusions

The feeling of belonging to a close-knit community, cherishing memories from the past, acting together in the present, and collectively building its future is a crucial component of political legitimacy (Beetham & Lord, 1998; Herz, 1978; Melich, 1986; Obradovic, 1996). Being ‘less than a state but more than an international organisation’ (Smismans, 2016: 340), the EU has faced difficulties, since its inception, in shaping a solid and shared sense of inclusion among pre-existing monolithic national entities. This peculiarity implies consequences on its legitimacy, understood as the capacity to ‘engender and maintain the belief that the existing political institutions are the most appropriate ones for society’ (Lipset, 1963: 77) and have, consequently, the right to rule.

Through the case of Turkey, this research project has questioned the value of European cultural policies as tools of ‘construction’ for the citizens of Europe, capable of fostering a feeling of belonging in the challenging context of a supranational political entity, characterised by expanding borders. These pages have pointed out and problematised the peculiar connotation of European cultural initiatives as promoters of mythopoietic narratives on identity, supposedly able to offer ‘new normative and cognitive foundations for governing’ (Della Sala, 2010: 2), in time of legitimacy crisis.

Remotti’s (2010) expression ‘impoverishment of culture’ helped to give a more defined content to the often evoked ‘state of crisis’, characterising the recent times. Considering culture as the set of human ‘models of’ and ‘models for’ necessary to establish meaningful connections with reality (Geertz, 1987), chapter 1 outlined a current condition of ‘cultural impoverishment’ (Remotti, 2010), bearer of a permanent ‘crisis of the presence’ (De Martino, 2002), where these models are not anymore able to construct a horizon of meaning. With a specific reference to the European Union and the Enlargement process, this state has been defined as the inability to create significant relations with the newcomers, due to the lack of proper ‘models of’ and ‘models for’ (Geertz, 1987) to cope with the complexity (Gandolfi, 1999) intrinsic in the encounter with a cultural Other. The thesis suggested reading the increasing abuse of the identity concept (materialised in

cultural artefacts and artistic productions) and the tendency to reduce every crisis to identitarian terms as a possible way out for a cultural world at its end, trying to freeze and protect its supposed immutable substance, instead of questioning it through new and meaningful interpretative structure.

The concept of identity has been often employed also in the political science literature of the past decades, to give an explanation to the crises of political legitimacy in modern democracies (Kohli, 2000). Following the work of Beetham and Lord (1998), identity has been understood in this research as one of three criteria (together with democracy and performance) constituting the legitimacy of a political system, namely the capacity to ‘engender and maintain the belief that the existing political institutions are the most appropriate ones for society’ (Lipset, 1963: 77) and have, consequently, the right to rule. Culture is used in many cases as a cognitive-epistemic orientation to give substance to the vague content of identity (Kohli, 2000): the definitions of ‘heritage’ and ‘civilisation’ are an example of a process establishing a clear and limpid series of ‘models of’ and ‘model for’, pertaining to a specific culture and defining it in its essence. The increasing attention by European officials to cultural initiatives showcasing the unique and at the same time universal heritage of its civilisation can thus be interpreted as part of the ‘legitimacy obsession’ characterising the EC/EU since the beginning of its ‘constraining dissensus’ days (Hooghe and Marks, 2009), especially in the post-Maastricht period, facing a serious decline in popularity and growing indifference from its citizens.

As chapter 2 described, in the aftermath of WWII, the sensitive cultural issue (linked to the identitarian construction of the pre-war nation-states) was a domain pertaining only to the Council of Europe that, at that time, played a crucial role in writing identitarian narratives later appropriated by the Union. In the following decades, EC/EU institutions started to talk about culture in official documents, often connecting it to identity, and eventually, in 1992, the Maastricht Treaty made this realm officially part of the institutional competences of the newly created Union. Throughout the years, European narratives associated identity with culture in the

name of different keywords: ‘unity’ was the central idea in the 1970s, with the attempt at fostering a linear narrative celebrating the ancient and glorious common roots of Europe and connecting it to the recent days; ‘diversity’ was the crucial concept of the 1980s, with growing attention to subnational narratives; ‘unity in diversity’ became the official motto of the Union from the 1990s onwards – the post-Cold War era – with an emphasis on intercultural dialogue and the importance of values, instead of cultural membership, as a vehicle of cohesion for the newly-born polity.

Cultural events can function as the *active* and *dialectic* dimension of the *static* institutional narrative (Duncan, 1991) expressed in these official documents. Following Duncan’s work (1991), exhibitions can be approached as rituals, namely symbolic actions transmitting the values and regulations constituting a community (Han, 2020). Rituals ‘construct’ communities through the display of their constitutive symbols, and so do exhibitions. Considering identities as constantly (re)constructed by the recognition of other individuals and/or entities, within a structure of shared meanings (Aydın-Düzgit & Rumelili, 2021; Cederman, 2001; Stråth, 2016), this research looked at exhibitions as one of the places where this process of (re)negotiation and (re)construction takes place, through the action of different agents of European consciousness (Shore, 2010), namely diverse actors with interests in the employment of the European label. Cultural policies can function as identity building engines, actively defining the border between ‘European Self’ and ‘European Other’: in other words, they hold the potential to unite or divide. For this reason, it is particularly relevant to observe their functioning in the context of the Enlargement, especially with an unusual candidate like Turkey. Being relational, identities can only be articulated through the interaction with their constitutive other(s) (Aydın-Düzgit & Rumelili, 2021): Turkey, depicted for centuries as the Other of Europe and embodying the EC/EU eternal candidate, represented an emblematic case to conduct this enquiry, testing the actual limits of the claimed European ‘unity in diversity’.

Bearing these premises in mind, the six selected cultural initiatives have been scrutinised answering a specific question: **can EU cultural policies, with their underlying identitarian**

mythology, act as a valuable tool of integration for an expanding political entity and, consequently, have an impact on its legitimacy? To rephrase it: did the EU cultural events here described succeed in their attempt at ‘constructing’ and uniting Europe and Europeans?

Each case has problematised different theoretical and practical aspects embedded in the overarching vision that framed European cultural policies throughout the years, as described in the previous lines, and has shown the limits of this approach, grounded in mythopoeitic narratives on identity. Two case studies pertained to Turkey’s pre-Enlargement era (i.e.: ‘1975 European Year of Architectural Heritage’ and ‘The Anatolian Civilisations’ exhibition of 1983). This was a time, during the Cold War, when Turkey held the reputation of what we would call today a ‘potential candidate’, namely a country involved in Euro-Atlantic institution – such as the Council of Europe - and with a clear and recognised European vocation, despite not being directly involved in the Enlargement process. The following four cases belonged to the years of the country’s actual involvement in the Enlargement process: ‘Europe, a Common Heritage’ campaign (2000); ‘Urban Realities: Focus Istanbul’ contemporary art exhibition (2005); ‘Istanbul 2010 European Capital of Culture’; ‘European Year of Cultural Heritage’ (2018). The first three events were supported by the Council of Europe, while the last three by the European Union (with the involvement of the CoE for the ‘European Year of Cultural Heritage’). This fact mirrors first of all the status of Turkey in relation to the Enlargement and European organisations, but also reflects the central role of the Council of Europe in the making of European policies in the cultural field in their early stages.

The analysis of ‘1975 European Architectural Heritage Year’ (chapter 3), organised by the Council of Europe and taking place all over Turkey, offered the possibility to think in depth about the concept of heritage and the universal value ascribed to it by international organisations, such as UNESCO, giving shape to a rhetoric later appropriated also by European institutions. The initiative had the aim to build greater awareness about European sites and monuments, carriers of

the continent's founding values and, for this reason, considered to be 'universal' properties, above the division of the nation-states. The event was the dynamic enactment of a static narrative emphasising the preservation of these symbolic architectural sites, keepers of a European common essence. Turkey, as a member of the Council of Europe, was one of the countries participating in the initiative, positively depicted by European observers as walking on its path of modernisation from the East – the place where it allegedly belongs – to the West, welcomed and supported by Euro-Atlantic institutions. The Ottoman/Turkish timber houses were the main object of attention during the event and Turkish efforts in their preservation were praised for their 'Europeanness' and modernity. Despite the overall positive atmosphere surrounding Europe-Turkey interactions at the time, the domestic debates concerning these wooden edifices made clear how, in local contexts, supra-national narratives can be easily re-appropriated and re-elaborated leading to opposite results, i.e. the development of projects supporting particularistic stances. In this specific case, these buildings, inscribed in the World Heritage List for their outstanding universal value certified by an international organisation, became at the same time the core of nationalist discourses, as in the case of the exhibition 'Istanbul 1800', curated by the art historian Oya Kılıç: the show looked at modernisation (synonym of Europeanisation) as the cause of oblivion of the Ottoman past and thus interpreted the restoration of these buildings not as a universal, but as a national(ist) duty. An event that was supposed to foster the universality of European founding values ended up, in some cases, supporting contrasting agendas. Other agents of European consciousness involved in the event, such as the local Turing Club, appropriated this process for economic reasons instead, taking advantage of the 'authenticity of the buildings' for promotional purposes, an aspect visible also in the following case study.

'The Anatolian Civilisations' exhibition of 1983 (chapter 4) was organised in Istanbul three years after the military coup of General Kenan Evren, at a time in which Turkey, with a new constitution and after elections, was eventually restoring civil authority. The event was an occasion for the military junta to display its will to go back to a democratic path, founded on European values,

after years of difficult interactions with the Council of Europe and the European Communities, with the European Parliament even freezing the Association Agreement in 1982. The event was also an occasion for Turkey to start building an infrastructure for the arts, at a time when the country was transitioning to liberal economy and Istanbul started its making as a global city (Sassen, 1991). The show was the XVIII of the 30 ‘exhibitions of European art’ by the Council of Europe that wanted to ‘increase knowledge and appreciation of European art as one of the highest expressions of Europe's culture and common values’ and ‘advance the awareness of European identity and unity’ (Council of Europe, 2015). This static narrative was dynamically enacted (Bouchard, 2007; Duncan, 1991) by the exhibition’s curatorial framework, with the idea of the multicultural cradle of civilisation, matching on one side the spirit of the Council of Europe projects, but on the other also the local political agenda, increasingly embracing a neo-Ottoman vision. This chapter has started to point out more systematically the connection between European cultural initiatives and promotional/economic aspects that have been further analysed in the following cases, emphasising their intricate consequences. Furthermore, it revealed, for the second time, how a narrative conceived as supranational and universal could be embraced and reformulated by domestic actors for national aims, thus subverting the initial intention of policies aimed at the construction of the citizens of Europe, through awareness in their common heritage. The Anatolian Civilisations exhibition was a success in terms of local legacies in infrastructures and international visibility; what is relevant to notice, however, is the fact that the narrative developed internationally about Turkey’s position towards Europe is, once again, presenting the country as something different from Europe, at most ‘a bridge’ connecting the East to the West, Europe to Anatolia.

The case of ‘Europe, a Common Heritage’ campaign of 2000 (chapter 5) offered the opportunity to discuss about the change of perspective in the narrative on heritage and identity shaping European cultural policy in the post-Cold War era. After the fall of the Berlin Wall, the EC – soon to be EU – faced the necessity to define its new status in the global arena, as happened to Turkey

in relation to the Euro-Atlantic alliance and the changing international order. The heritage campaign of 2000 was a turning point for the Council of Europe, in terms of cultural action: looking at past initiatives, especially the '1975 European Architectural Heritage', the Council made clear the necessity to expand the borders of its action in the context of the reuniting of Europe (Graubard, 1991). Turkey was granted candidate status just one year before the event, eventually re-directing its path in the European direction: this fact gave the cue to look at Europe's expanding borders in a period of profound change and, in a broader way, at the process of candidacy and the Enlargement process, as the space in which the boundary between European Self and Other are reshaped, not only through the fulfilment of the Copenhagen Criteria, but also through a broader process of cultural reconfiguration. The myth of a normative Europe (Manners, 2011, 2002), holder of the 'normal' values other countries aspire to gain thorough the transformative process of candidacy, offered a possible key to interpret the new direction European cultural initiatives took in this phase: set aside the grand narratives of the previous decades, a new inclusive discourse on culture and heritage as vectors of inclusion and solidarity among diverse peoples started to take shape. The focus passed from tangible to intangible heritage, namely from objects, sites and artefacts to values: in this way, a new possibility of embracing different traditions opened up, widening the range of action of European cultural initiatives to territories previously unexplored and now on their way to re-unite to where they, supposedly, belonged. In this context, the new myth of 'unity in diversity' began to be formulated and implemented in the image of the 'mosaic of cultures', in which traditions are expected to manifest their true essence, according to international expectations. The following case study well clarified the implications of this problematic attitude.

The contemporary art show 'Urban Realities: Focus Istanbul' (chapter 6) took place in Berlin in 2005, with a very peculiar timing: it opened right after the London terrorist attacks of July and closed its doors at the same time as accession negotiations opened for Turkey, considered finally 'sufficiently' ready to start its European 'construction'. The exhibition wanted to present the

multiple faces of an EU candidate's major city, trying at the same time to work against long lasting prejudices, rooted especially in countries such as Germany that for decades welcomed workers from Anatolia. In this way, the exhibit aimed at taking a step further in the construction of Turkey as European. Despite the good intentions and the plurality of agents of European consciousness (Shore, 2000) involved (i.e.: the Municipality of Berlin, the German cultural fund Hauptstadtkulturfonds, the European Commission and the Istanbul Foundation for Art and Culture IKSÜ), the curatorial framework of the exhibition was the origin of a harsh dispute. The text was considered based on stereotypical and superficial representations that led, eventually, to the withdrawal of many of the invited artists belonging to the artistic community of Turkey, tired of being considered the 'ambassadors' of Turkey's integration into the European Union in exhibitions displaying flying carpets and traditional tea rooms, in the name of intercultural dialogue and solidarity. Simplified representations can have strong commercial drives but can at the same time be an obstacle to dialogue, as the 'Focus' controversy showed: this episode of mutual misunderstanding, that culminated in an identitarian dispute between art communities at different stages of their development, demonstrated how a system in support of the arts, implicitly reiterating cultural stereotypes, can hardly work as a vector of inclusion. Events based on territorial specifications can turn out to have the opposite effect of that originally envisaged: instead of demolishing prejudices, they can reinforce them, as happened in this case, with Turkey ending up embodying a distant European Other, despite its proximity to the European institutions. The need for artists coming from a specific region to create works clearly attributable to their origin not only has negative effects on creativity but can also result in what Iğsız (2015) has defined as 'liberal multiculturalism', something which the analysis of 'Istanbul 2010 European Capital of Culture' has clearly displayed.

Through the specific experience of the Roma community intertwined with urban regeneration projects, 'Istanbul 2010 European Capital of Culture' (chapter 7) offered the possibility to elaborate more on the implications of a simplified showcase of cultural alterity. Celebrated both in

Brussels and in the European Capital of Culture with concerts and exhibitions, the Roma population of Istanbul was at the same time evicted by governmental bulldozers from the historical neighbourhood of Sulukule, in order to make room for new residential buildings. This paradoxical situation underlined, once again, how the choice of art as a platform to address diversity runs the risk of conveying an aestheticized version of multiculturalism, offering an a-political relationship to the past, in which, as happened in this specific case, minorities are treated merely as a nostalgic reminiscent of a multiethnic empire. This process goes hand in hand with the depoliticisation of the subjects (Karaca, 2013), in a sort of ‘bracketed’ recognition of diversity (Povinelli, 2002) that informs ‘the governance of difference by delaying the confrontation with social injustice and violent history’ (İğsüz, 2015: 327). Furthermore, this case gave the space to deepen the investigation of two other aspects that emerged from the previous pages. First: the local appropriation and re-enactment of European narratives. As happened with ‘1975 European Year of Architectural Heritage’, again, an EU rhetoric was re-shaped, in this case by the local government, for internal purposes: the narrative of ‘unity in diversity’ turned out to be, in the making of the programme, a successful display for the neo-Ottoman magnificence of Istanbul ‘capital of the world’. The AKP government promoted this vision, taking advantage of the initiative to strengthen its Ottoman hegemony instead of boosting the already vacillating Turkey-EU relationship in the framework of Enlargement negotiations. The event was, indeed, the perfect showcase for the Ottoman past, depicted as a time of inclusion of diverse traditions under one umbrella, mirroring, at least superficially, the European rhetoric of unity in diversity. The second aspect concerns the commercial nature of cultural events and their employment as triggers of economic and urban development, as was the case of ‘The Anatolian Civilisations’ of 1983. The initiative was able to attract a remarkable flow of tourists, through the multiple re-adaptation of the multicultural rhetoric, spread also by the international press.

The final case analysed has been ‘2018 European Year of Cultural Heritage’ (chapter 8). The event took place in a phase of so called ‘de-Europeanisation’ (Aydın-Düzgit & Kaliber, 2016) for

Turkey, in which the normative/political power of Europe was at its lowest, the respect for human rights had seriously deteriorated following the failed coup of 2016 and deals over migration looked like the only factor keeping a connection alive between the two poles. Very few events were organised by local heritage organisations in this framework also due to the unavailability of funds, distributed mainly by Creative Europe Programme from which Turkey withdrew in 2016, due to a dispute with Germany about a concert commemorating the Armenian genocide. Among those events, there was the contemporary art exhibition ‘The Silence of 206 Rooms: Studies on the Büyükkada Greek Orphanage’ organised at the Greek Galata school of Istanbul and curated by Hera Büyüктаşçıyan. The show had the merit of giving international visibility – but not an actual intervention - to the biggest wooden building of Europe on the verge of collapse. The interviews with the participant artists, in particular the one with Ali Kazma, helped to elaborate a general framework for the events so far analysed: Kazma’s words helped to interpret EU cultural initiatives, strongly grounded in identitarian narratives, as a potential ‘engine of differentiation’, enacting essentialising dynamics of differentiation. Kazma underlined, first of all, the undeniable importance of this initiative, in terms of public awareness and social justice; but he also pointed out the intrinsic normative value characterising the general framework of the event: the necessity to safeguard minority heritage in Turkey happens because of the perpetration by the state of an unfair treatment of these communities, considered as a threat to national security. Kazma’s words described, in a broad sense, European cultural initiatives as another engine of differentiation, similar to the one enacted by the Enlargement process, in which Europe is considered as the normal, desirable entity, carrier of good and positive values, that all the other countries have to aspire to.

Going back to the core of the question guiding the research: did the events here analysed succeed in ‘constructing’ and uniting Europe and Europeans? Despite a starting point based on dialogue, unity and solidarity, the described events turned out mainly to have the opposite result, acting as ‘engines of differentiation’, to use Kazma’s words, repeatedly constructing Turkey as the Other of

Europe or, in a better scenario, as a country on its path to embracing and embodying European values.

The general narratives that emerged from these projects tend to depict Turkey and Europe as two separated entities, a discourse embraced and reinforced by Turkish actors too for domestic aims, in a reciprocal game allowing the respective identitarian constructions, in need of an 'Other' to be supported. Even in times of institutional proximity in the stormy Turkey-Europe history, these events have found a way to create distance and mark a difference between the two entities: Turkey was always depicted as 'on the path to..', 'a bridge between...', 'a vehicle for...' and these events, with their symbolic potential, reinforced and ritualised this characterization.

While particularistic interests – economic or political - have been served by different agents of European consciousness, the original declared aim of these initiatives has been disregarded: the construction of a shared European identity capable of supporting the legitimacy of a post-national political entity in the making is far from being reached. The old 'models of' and 'models for' of identity and culture, dear to the nation-state construction, proved once again to be inappropriate to foster cohesion: unlike the Marcellinara clock tower for the Calabrese shepherd met by De Martino (see p.44), they offered only an immediate and superficial comfort, but resulted ineffective on the long run, stressing once again the need to overcome a current cultural impoverishment, through the definition of new interpretative categories.

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