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# **Clash of Civilizations or Consensus of Civilizations: The Case of Turkish Membership of the European Union**

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by

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*"I believe the coming century will be shaped in good measure by the way in which Turkey itself defines its future and role today and tomorrow. For Turkey as a country at the crossroads of Europe, the Middle East and Central Asia, the future can be shaped for the better if Turkey becomes fully a part of Europe as a stable and democratic secular Islamic nation."*

(US President Bill Clinton's speech at Georgetown University, November 1999).

## INTRODUCTION

It is widely agreed upon by the scholars and the practitioners that the practice of international relations has been dominated by *Realpolitik* since the times of Thucydides' *History of Peloponnesian War* (around 400 B.C.), as well as the discipline of International Relations since its foundation as a separate discipline right after WWI.

While it is mostly the world events, which shape the ideas (and the theories) of International Relations (as a discipline) and international relations (as a practice), it is also true that the ideas and the theories also have an impact on the course of world events. It is exactly the "power of ideas" that gives hope and courage to human beings in their struggle to create a better world. The discipline of International Relations emerged with a noble mission: scientifically studying the causes of war and the ways of preventing wars. Today the discipline does not have such a noble and clear mission. Hence, the discipline of International Relations should have a mission according to the new realities of global politics. It is the belief of the author that there should be a conscious effort to design the new mission of the discipline taking into the consideration the realities on the ground (such as the war against global terrorism, the war against Iraq), as well as the "power of ideas." Simply put, the mission or the missions of the discipline, whatever it or they may be, should be intensely fortified with *normative thinking*.

The "clash of civilizations"<sup>1</sup> is an excellent example of the first half of the 1990s that shows the power of ideas and how much such ideas influence the policy making and hence the course of world events. Although the end of the Cold War briefly brought out a relatively optimistic, neo-idealist moment,<sup>2</sup> the terrible events of 9/11 which were followed by the US' war against global terrorism as manifested by the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq reverted the globe back to the harsh perceptions of *Realpolitik*. The "clash of civilization" thesis (idea), though emerged in the relatively optimistic post-Cold War era, became readily available for wide usage right after the events of 9/11.

After the 9/11 events, today we are faced with a Hobbessian international climate where the "clash of civilizations" is perceived as one of the, if not the dominant, paradigms of world politics. Meanwhile, however, the European Union (EU), its widening and deepening integration a la Immanuel Kant's *perpetual peace*, though currently a bit in disarray after the 2005 Constitutional Treaty referenda fiascos in France and the Netherlands, looks like an aberration from the Hobbessian international climate.

It is against this background that the EU membership of Turkey should be evaluated. European integration as symbolized today by the European Union is about construction of an idea. With little doubt, it is the most important and realistic conversion of an idea to reality – from theory (idea) to practice – of the 20th century. And it is an idea that is sure to continue to

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1 See Bernard Lewis, "The Roots of Muslim Rage," *Atlantic Monthly* (September 1990) where he uses the expression "clash of civilizations" and see Samuel P. Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol.72, No.3 (Summer 1993), pp. 120-147 where the "clash of civilizations" thesis became very popular.

2 See the 1993 ISA Presidential Address of Charles W. Kegley, "Neoidealist Moment in International Studies? Realist Myths and the New International Realities," *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol.37 (1993), pp.131-146.

evolve in the 21st century. The European political elites, however, have to make a choice of just what this idea is to become. The EU can become a union of more than two-dozen *Christian* countries based on common European *Christian* cultural values. This will surely be a great achievement and find its way among the very important events of the world history. The EU can also choose to become a union of more than two-dozen countries among which Turkey will exist. Hence, the EU will be a union based on far more than just common religious heritage (*Christianity*) but on such values as democracy, supremacy of rule of law, respect for human rights and the tolerance for and consensus of different “civilizations.” Which EU, the one with or without Turkey, will be a bigger achievement for humanity? In other words, which EU, the one based on European *Christian* values or the one based on more universal values, will be an important achievement for the humanity?

The aim of this article is to emphasize the power of ideas and the need for the scholars and practitioners to think normatively as to how to transform the Hobbessian international climate of the post-9/11 era into a Kantian climate of peace and tranquility. Hence, the predominantly *Muslim* and democratic Turkey’s joining the EU, of course after satisfying the EU criteria just like the current member states, is a very powerful idea, precisely an exercise of “normative thinking,” that has the potential to foster the Kantian perpetual peace not just within the borders of the EU, but beyond where it will have a dramatic positive impact on the transformation of the Hobbessian international climate of “clash of civilizations” to the Kantian “consensus of civilizations” which we are in desperate need today.

## INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND THE POWER OF IDEAS?

It is widely agreed upon by the scholars and the practitioners that the practice of international relations has been dominated by *Realpolitik* since the times of Thucydides’ Peloponnesian Wars, as well as the discipline of International Relations since its foundation as a separate discipline right after WWI.

Realist theory (*Realpolitik* or *Machtpolitik*)<sup>3</sup> has been the dominant “paradigm” (to use Kuhn’s (1962) terminology)<sup>4</sup> in the study of international politics at least since Thucydides’ *History of Peloponnesian War*. Although we have also witnessed the emergence of Idealist or Utopian theories for brief periods of time, such as Kant’s *Perpetual Peace* (1795), such theories “did not exercise decisive influence on the thoughts of those in power”<sup>5</sup> as much as the dominant Realist theory which has managed to dominate the discipline up until today. Hence, it is the argument of this author, that Realist perspective also dominated a good part of the history of international politics since Thucydides’ *Peloponnesian War*. Gilpin follows a similar perspective when he states the main assumption of his theory: “[N]ature of international relations has not changed fundamentally over the millennia.”<sup>6</sup> In this paper, however, the focus will be on the 20th century.

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3 Realist theory has several key assumptions: states are the main actors (players) in international politics; states seek power, either as an end in itself or as a means for other ends, in an anarchic environment (i.e., no world governance); states’ behavior is rational in the sense that they seek to maximize their interests (usually seeking more power); states are differentiated from one another in terms of their capabilities as greater powers and lesser powers; and, Realists believe that one can separate (distinguish) domestic politics from foreign policy.

4 Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1962.

5 Robert Kohane, “Realism, Neorealism and the study of World Politics,” in Robert Keohane (ed.) *Neorealism and its Critics*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1986, p.8.

6 Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1981, p.291.

Realism is the antithesis of the Idealist notion that world can be transformed on the basis of an idea.<sup>7</sup> Woodrow Wilson's idealistic speeches during WW I (and his famous Fourteen Points), legalistic attempts such as the Kellogg-Briand Pact (1927) to outlaw war, and the establishment of international institutions, such as the League of Nations, can be regarded as the instances of Idealist challenge against the dominant Realist paradigm both in academia and in real life international political practices. However, the Idealist part of the early interwar years had been shattered by the late 1930s with, first, the Great Depression and later with the rise of fascism in Germany, Italy, and Japan, and their expansionist aspirations (i.e., their strive for more power). We witnessed once more the cruel reality of power politics with the start of WW II. In that regard, E. H. Carr (1939) rightly points out that political Realism is the study of international politics "as it is," while political Idealism is the study of international politics as "it ought to be." Two months after Carr sent his *Twenty Years' Crises* (June 1939) for publication, WW II (September 1939) broke out. Less than a decade later the Cold War started between the two superpowers (the US and the USSR) which heralded Carr's correct prophecies.

Just like the rise of fascism and the emergence of WW II shattered the popularity of the post-WW I Idealism, and opened the path for *Realpolitik* (the Realist paradigm) to dominate the field of IR during the Cold War, the end of the Cold War and gigantic transformations in world politics, such as the fall of Soviet Union and the unification of Germany, raised challenges against the dominant Realist paradigm in IR. Some IR scholars, such as Kegley, in his 1993 ISA Presidential Address, started to talk about the need of reconstructing Realism with Idealist Wilsonian insights. Kegley calls this "the Neoidealist moment in international studies." That is, he regards the changing conditions of international politics in the post-Cold War era as a "defining moment" (which Alker in his 1992 ISA Presidential Address called) for our field.

Ferguson and Mansbach argue that paradigm shifts in a field (including IR) occurs not only because of the intellectual limitations of the dominant paradigm, but also due to transformations in world events (politics).<sup>8</sup> The unprecedented end of the Cold War can be regarded as a significant transformation in world politics. At least, the dominant bipolar balance of power had been destroyed before the eyes of the Neorealists who argued that bipolar balance of power was the most stable and durable type of balance of power, and hence, wrongly predicted that the Cold War bipolar system would have lasted longer.

Many important world events (transformations) are followed by theoretical revolutions or paradigm shifts, to use Kuhn's lexicon.<sup>9</sup> Kant's Idealism after the war of Grand Alliance, Clausewitz's Realism after the Napoleonic Wars, Wilson's Idealism following WW I, Morgenthau's Realism after WW II can be listed as examples of how world transformations can influence theory (ideas) of International Relations.

Can ideas transform world politics, rather than the other way around? For a true Idealist, the answer is a big YES. In my opinion, ideas do have an impact and they do have consequences on world politics, if they are uttered at the right time and at the right place. After all, Marxist ideas tremendously influenced the former Soviet Union and People's Republic of China, and many other communist countries. In the 1980s and 1990s, we witnessed how the ideas of Islamic Fundamentalism impacted countries like Algeria, the Sudan, Afghanistan, Pakistan and even Turkey (following the Iranian Revolution). However,

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7 I think it is more precise to put it the other way around as "Idealism is the anti-thesis of Realism", since my reading of history tells me that human beings had been Realists before they were Idealist.

8 Yale H. Ferguson and Richard W. Mansbach, *The Elusive Quest: Theory and International Politics*, South Carolina, University of South Carolina Press, 1988.

9 Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*.

if one thinks about system-wide transformations (i.e., the transformations of the whole international system), one has to be more cautious in supporting the argument that ‘ideas can transform the whole world politics.’ It seems to me that world events influence ideas (theories) much more than ideas (theories) influence world events. This, however, should not obscure the power of ideas on world events. Today, the “clash of civilizations” discourse, though emerged in the first half of the 1990s, has tremendous impact in the shaping of foreign policies of many states – and, hence on the course of world events.

## THE (DAMAGING) POWER OF THE IDEA OF “CLASH OF CIVILIZATIONS”

Since the publication of Samuel Huntington’s famous article, “The Clash of Civilizations?” in *Foreign Affairs* (Summer 1993), the idea of “clash of civilizations” became very popular both in the academia and in the world of real practitioners of world politics. This was precisely because the “clash of civilization” paradigm was seen as a substitute for (or the continuation of) the Cold war paradigm. What Huntington tried to do in his famous article was to offer an alternative paradigm of world politics to that of the Cold war. However, what he ended up doing was to create the perception that the new Cold war would be between the “West” and the “Rest” where “Islam” (and “Confucianism”) would be the immediate threat to the “West.”<sup>10</sup>

The Cold War that had started after World War II and lasted until the early 1990s between the two super-powers and their allies had been the fundamental determining factor in international relations during most of the second part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. During the Cold War era, *Realpolitik* had been the dominant *paradigm* in international relations in general; and more specifically in the making of foreign policies of states, as well as in the discipline of International Relations. *Realpolitik*, sometimes defined as *power politics*, regarded war, security/defense, military issues and so forth as primary issues or as issues of *high politics*. In that regard, economics, democracy, human rights, environmental and social issues and so forth naturally became secondary issues or issues of *low politics*.

The two super-powers had imposed a series of rules on the states who were involved or forced to be involved in the Cold War. Sözen calls this series of rules the *Cold War discipline*: “The super-power competition was the number one priority issue for the two Cold War super powers - the US and the USSR. This competition should not be interrupted by ‘petty’ regional or ethnic conflicts... This was the *Cold War discipline*.”<sup>11</sup> In this context, the two super powers perceived each other in the “we” versus “they” dichotomy. Hence, the *other* of the US (broadly representing the West) was the USSR (broadly representing the East) and vice versa. In other words, the Cold war paradigm was based on the classical self-definition through opposition to the *other*.

Soon after the end of the Cold War, the dominant paradigm – *Realpolitik* – was challenged and questioned by liberal perspectives – liberalist *paradigm*. Throughout the globe, then, a spirit of optimism was becoming dominant. In that sense, issues of *high politics* of the Cold War (i.e., war, security/defense, military issues, and so forth) were losing their priority and importance and issues of *low politics* (economy, democracy, human rights, environmental and social issues) were filling in the vacuum created by the departure of the issues of *high politics*.

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10 See Huntington, “Clash of Civilizations?,” p. 146, where he actually observes “the paramount axis of world politics will be the relations between “the West and the Rest”; ... a central focus of conflict for the immediate future will be between the West and several Islamic-Confucian states.”

11 See Ahmet Sözen, *The Cyprus Conflict and the Negotiations: A Political and International Law Perspective*, Ankara-Turkey, Can Reklam, 1998, p.2.

The end of the Cold War has manifested two opposing global trends: *fragmentation* (*disintegration*) and *integration*. On the one hand, the EU (and to a lesser extent, such organizations as NAFTA and APEC) had been widening and deepening their integration, while on the other hand such multi-ethnic countries as former Soviet Union and former Yugoslavia had been disintegrating into dozens of newly independent nation-states. The two opposing global trends of the post-Cold War era created an ambivalent atmosphere of optimism and pessimism. With the end of the Cold War, danger of a nuclear war had been mostly diminished and new opportunities to solve the previously ignored (due to the Cold War discipline) domestic political and social problems had arisen. However, on the other hand, numerous ethnic conflicts had poisoned different regions of the world in the 1990s.

It was during this confusing early post-Cold war period that Huntington wrote his famous essay "Clash of Civilizations?." When it appeared in *Foreign Affairs*, the leading journal of foreign policy in the US, the essay made a tremendous impact on the influential opinion and policy makers who regularly follow *Foreign Affairs*. According to Huntington,

[w]orld politics is entering a new phase, ... the fundamental source of conflict in this new world will not be primarily ideological or primarily economic. The great divisions among humankind and the dominating source of conflict will be cultural. Nation states will remain the most powerful actors in world affairs, but the principal conflicts of global politics will occur between nations and groups of different civilizations. The clash of civilizations will be the battle lines of the future. Conflict between civilizations will be the latest phase of the evolution of conflict in the modern world.<sup>12</sup>

In fact, Huntington borrowed "clash of civilizations" thesis from an earlier article in *Atlantic Monthly* by Bernard Lewis. According to Lewis, "[w]e are facing a mood and a movement far transcending the level of issues and policies and the governments that pursue them. This is no less than a clash of civilizations - the perhaps irrational but surely historic reaction of an ancient rival against our Judeo-Christian heritage, our secular present, and the worldwide expansion of both."<sup>13</sup>

According to Edward Said, what Huntington provides in his essay "is a recycled version of the cold war thesis, that conflicts in today's and tomorrow's world will remain not economic or social in essence but ideological, and if that is so then one ideology, the West's, is the still point or locus around which for Huntington all others turn."<sup>14</sup> In that sense, for Huntington, the West's Cold war continues in a different platform against a different enemy or enemies. In other words, "the cold war continues, but this time on many fronts, with many more serious and basic systems of values and ideas (like Islam and Confucianism) struggling for ascendancy and even dominance over the West."<sup>15</sup> For Said, Lewis uses the Orientalist "methods – the lazy generalizations, the reckless distortions of history, the wholesale demotion of civilizations into categories like irrational and enraged, and so on." It is important to note that, "Huntington has picked up from Lewis the notion that civilizations are monolithic and homogenous and, second, how – again from Lewis – he assumes the

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12 Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?," p. 120.

13 Lewis, "The Roots of Muslim Rage." Bernard Lewis actually used the expression "clash of civilizations" way before 1990s. However, the "clash of civilization" discourse became popular after it appeared in the *Atlantic Monthly* (September 1990) and especially with Huntington's article in *Foreign Affairs* (Summer 1993). For an excellent account on the evolution of the "clash of civilizations" discourse, see John Trumbour, "The Clash of Civilizations: Samuel P. Huntington, Bernard Lewis, and the Remaking of Post-Cold War World Order," in Emran Qureshi and Michael A. Sells (eds), *The New Crusades: Constructing the New Muslim Enemy*, New York, Chichester and West Sussex, Columbia University Press, 2003.

14 Edward W. Said, "The Clash of Definitions," in Emran Qureshi and Michael A. Sells (eds), *The New Crusades: Constructing the New Muslim Enemy*, New York, Chichester and West Sussex, Columbia University Press, 2003, p.69.

15 Said, "The Clash of Definitions," p. 69.

unchanging character of the duality between “us” and “them”.” Hence, for Said, it is important that the reader should be aware of the similarities in the methods that Lewis and Huntington use. “[L]ike Bernard Lewis, Samuel Huntington does not write a neutral, descriptive, and objective prose ... Like Lewis, Huntington defines Islamic civilization reductively, as if what most matters about it is its supposed anti-Westernism.”<sup>16</sup> In effect, what the “clash of civilizations” discourse in the 1990s achieved was to first look for a post-Cold war enemy and later replace the old Cold war enemy, USSR (Russians, the East etc.), with the new enemy (Islam). According to Huntington, Western liberalism would crumble if it is not challenged by a competing ideology, like Marxism-Leninism. In other words, liberalism would collapse without an enemy. For Huntington, “[f]ragmentation and multiculturalism are now eating away at the whole set of ideas and philosophies which have been the binding cement of American society.”<sup>17</sup>

The “clash of civilizations” idea, though was built on faulty arguments, sloppy categorizations of solid civilizations and lack of a “neutral, descriptive and objective prose,”<sup>18</sup> nevertheless, created a huge impact not only on the foreign policies of the states, but also on the academic and theoretical discussions in the discipline of International Relations. While it is mostly the world events, which shape the ideas (and the theories) of International Relations (as a discipline) and international relations (as a practice), it is also true that the ideas and the theories also have an impact on the course of world events. The “clash of civilizations” is an excellent example to demonstrate the power of ideas, especially when they are used at the right time and the right place. In this case, the “clash of civilizations” idea was used right after the end of the Cold war when both practitioners and the scholars were looking for a paradigm to replace the Cold war one. This was the perfect timing. When this timing was combined with the right location – *Foreign Affairs* – the impact was huge. Yet, the world major events in the 1990s, except the war in former-Yugoslavia, did not really provide substantive support for the “clash of civilizations” thesis. However, the 9/11 terrorist events came as a big bang that boosted the popularity of the “clash of civilizations” idea both among the practitioners and the scholars. In that sense, one needs to read the roots of the 9/11 events correctly, in order to understand the current international climate with minimum distortions.

## CURRENT INTERNATIONAL CLIMATE: READING THE 9/11 EVENTS CORRECTLY

The biggest terrorist attacks of all times on 11 September 2001 in the US, no matter whoever the culprits were, were a response to “globalization.”<sup>19</sup> Since the US is seen as the

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16 Said, “Clash of Civilizations?,” p. 71.

17 “The Islamic-Confucian Connection,” interview with Samuel P. Huntington, *New Perspectives Quarterly*, Vol.10, No.3 (June 22, 1993).

18 There are lots of articles which brought excellent criticism on the “clash of civilization” thesis of Samuel Huntington. For example, see Fouad Ajami, “The Source of Future Conflicts – II: The Summoning,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol.72, No.3 (Summer 1993), pp. 148-157; Said, “The Clash of Definitions”; John Trumbour, “The Clash of Civilizations: Samuel P. Huntington, Bernard Lewis, and the Remaking of the Post-Cold War World Order,” in Emran Qureshi and Michael A. Sells (eds), *The New Crusades: Constructing the New Muslim Enemy*, New York, Chichester and West Sussex, Columbia University Press, 2003; and Roy P. Mottahedeh, “The Clash of Civilizations: An Islamicist’s Critique,” in Emran Qureshi and Michael A. Sells (eds), *The New Crusades: Constructing the New Muslim Enemy*, New York, Chichester and West Sussex, Columbia University Press, 2003.

19 According to many scholars and practitioners the events of 9/11 were interpreted as a response to “globalization” perceived as ‘Americanization.’ See, Ahmet Sözen, “Küreselleşme ve Amerika’nın İkilemi: Küreselleşmenin Getiri ve Götürüleri [Globalization and the American Dilemma: Contributions and Setbacks of Globalization]” *Karizma*, Vol. 9, (January-February 2002), pp. 54-58.

driving engine of the globalization phenomenon, especially since the end of the Cold war, then all the sins and the virtues of globalization are attributed to the US.

The aim of any terrorist act is to convey a message. The targets of 9/11 were chosen calculatingly by the terrorists in order to inflict fear and trauma on the American public – a way of punishing the US administration. One can understand why those targets were chosen, if one looks at the symbolic importance they carry. It is a fact, that globalization, real or myth, is seen by many people outside the “West” (US and Europe) as “Americanization” where, besides “Americanization” (or “Westernization”) different other names as “neo-imperialism,” “corruption” or “injustice-ization” of the world are used to define *this* globalization. In that regard, the Twin Towers were perceived as the symbol of American *economic*, Pentagon as the American *military* and the Whitehouse as the American *political* “neo-imperialism.”

When one looks at the globalization phenomenon analytically, US’ worldwide impact and hegemony in such domains as political, economic, military and cultural are very visible.<sup>20</sup> To many people, this is perceived as “Americanization” of the globe. It was exactly this, a reaction to the “globalization” a la Americana, that motivated the designers of the 9/11 terrorist acts. Since it is mostly, if not always, the strong (in this case the US) who decides on the rules of the game, the weak is mostly, if not always, doomed to fail in this game. It is precisely because of this perception that the weak, in this case the terrorists of 9/11, resorted to terrorism. Because, terrorism is a method that often used by the weak.

The terrorist acts of 9/11 came as a big shock to the whole world. Soon after the 9/11 events, there was a kind of unexplainable feeling dominant in the minds of many scholars as well as practitioners that “things will not be the same again.” In other words, the feeling was that the 9/11 terrorist acts would change the nature of world politics dramatically. Hence, the US reaction to the 9/11 would be an important milestone in the new course of world politics. Shortly after the 9/11, many comments were made as to how the US would and should react to the terrorist acts of 9/11. According to Sözen,

[h]ow the US will “define” and react to this wild attack, will be very important as to how terrorism and counterterrorism specifically and international relations in general will be shaped in the years ahead of us. Currently, the US operation in Afghanistan is seen as a limited one and that it is been carried out in rational scope. I hope that this scope is not stretched out. However, the recent signals are not encouraging. The US is signaling that the current operation (in Afghanistan) will be extended to include (an operation in) Iraq. In addition, after the bomb attacks in Israel (December 2001), the US has provided a green line for Israeli attacks on the Palestinians where excessive force was used. These will cause the escalation of the (worldwide) events... The following days after 9/11, the US administration and the American people were in a big trauma and were giving reactions which were outside the “*rational thinking*” – an important characteristic of the US (and the West in general). For example, Bush’s definition of the (terrorist) attacks as a “war against civilization” and many racist attacks on the Arabs and Muslims in different parts of the US, are the effects of the post-event trauma. These should be regarded as normal given the magnitude of the experienced violence (of the 9/11). However, in order for a safer and better world in the future, the US should take *rational* steps from now on.<sup>21</sup>

Unfortunately, the US reaction to the 9/11 was not all rational. Its declaration of a war against global terrorism was based on a new strategy in foreign policy, the doctrine of pre-emption together with unilateral action, which replaced the traditional US policy of deterrence and multilateralism. However, the US unilateral action, such as the war against Iraq in 2003,

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20 For a detailed account on the perception of “Americanization” in economic, political, military and cultural globalization, see Sözen, “Küreselleşme ve Amerika’nın İkilemi: Küreselleşmenin Getiri ve Götürüleri [Globalization and the American Dilemma: Contributions and Setbacks of Globalization].”

21 See Sözen, “Küreselleşme ve Amerika’nın İkilemi: Küreselleşmenin Getiri ve Götürüleri [Globalization and the American Dilemma: Contributions and Setbacks of Globalization],” p.56.



by and large, failed to attract the necessary support from the majority of the international community. It was obvious, at least to some observers even before the war against Iraq, that unrestrained and “irrational” actions of the US would turn things uglier on a worldwide scale. “US’ irrational steps, such as defining the September 11 as a “war of civilizations” and holding the “Islamic” civilization as responsible, will strengthen Samuel Huntington’s 1993 “clash of civilizations” thesis and cause to a very dangerous “Islam”-“West (Christian)” polarization in international relations.”<sup>22</sup>

The terrible events of 9/11 which were followed by the US’ war against global terrorism as manifested by the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq reverted the globe to the harsh perceptions of *Realpolitik*. The “clash of civilization” thesis (idea), though emerged in the relatively optimistic post-Cold War era, became readily available for wide usage right after the events of 9/11. Today, in the post- 9/11 era, we are faced with a Hobbessian international climate where the “clash of civilizations” is perceived as one of the, if not the dominant, paradigms of world politics. Meanwhile, however, the European Union (EU), its widening and deepening integration a la Immanuel Kant’s *perpetual peace*, though currently a bit in disarray after the 2005 Constitutional Treaty referenda fiascos in France and the Netherlands, looks like an aberration from the Hobbessian international climate. It is against this background that the EU integration in general and the membership of Turkey in particular should be evaluated.

## THE MEANING OF THE EU INTEGRATION IN THE POST-9/11 ERA

European integration as symbolized today by the European Union is about construction of an idea. With little doubt, it is the most important and realistic conversion of idea to reality – from theory to practice – of the 20th century. And it is an idea that is sure to continue to evolve in the 21st century.

Although some scholars and politicians like to associate the roots of the EU with the formation of Europe as a political community towards the end of the Middle Ages and emphasize its *Christian* character,<sup>23</sup> the EU is by and large a post-WWII peace project with the aim of preventing the wars among the states of Europe – the original *raison d’etat* behind the creation of the EU. The European integration towards the EU started as the European Coal And Steel Community in 1952 and later transformed into the European Economic Community with the Treaty of Rome in 1957. The EEC was established as an economic community with six founding members (Germany, France, Italy, and the three Benelux countries – Belgium, Netherlands and Luxembourg). The Community went through six waves of enlargement since the Treaty of Rome before it reached to its current 27 member state Union: 1973 (UK, Ireland and Denmark), 1981 (Greece), 1986 (Spain and Portugal), 1996 (Austria, Finland and Sweden), 2004 (Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Cyprus and Malta) and 2007 (Bulgaria and Romania).

The EEC has gone through serious reforms since the Treaty of Rome. This original economic community was formally transformed into a political union (EU) in 1993 through the Maastricht Treaty (1992). It is very obvious that the European political elites have been

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22 See Sözen, “Küreselleşme ve Amerika’nın İkilemi: Küreselleşmenin Getiri ve Götürüleri [Globalization and the American Dilemma: Contributions and Setbacks of Globalization],” p.57.

23 For an indepth analysis of the European identity, see Tomaz Mastnak, *Evropa: Med evolucio in evtanazio* (Ljubljana, Studia Humanitatis, 1998), Chapter 3. For an excellent account on the evolution of European identity in relation to the Muslims, and more specifically in relation to the Turks, see Tomaz Mastnak, “Europe and the Muslims: The Permanent Crusade?,” in Emran Qureshi and Michael A. Sells (eds), *The New Crusades: Constructing the New Muslim Enemy*, New York, Chichester and West Sussex, Columbia University Press, 2003.

carrying the original economic community, though with occasional ups and downs, towards a more integrated political union - the United States of Europe - as the founding fathers of the EEC had once envisaged.<sup>24</sup>

Today, the EU is a *sui generis* institution, a kind of hybrid between an international organization and a supranational one. It stands to be the most successful Kantian project of the 20<sup>th</sup> and the 21<sup>st</sup> centuries in a Hobbessian world. The EU succeeded in creating the *perpetual peace* within its territories with a *normative power*<sup>25</sup> to even shape its neighbors and the aspirant future member states to live in peace – i.e., to join in the region of the *perpetual peace*.

The Europeans have stepped out of the Hobbessian world of anarchy into the Kantian world of perpetual peace. European life during the more than five decades since the end of the World War II has been shaped not by the brutal laws of power politics but by the unfolding of a geopolitical fantasy, a miracle of world-historical importance: the German lion has laid down with the French lamb. The conflict that ravaged Europe ever since the violent birth of Germany in the nineteenth century has been put to rest.<sup>26</sup>

## IMPORTANCE OF TURKEY'S EU MEMBERSHIP: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Turkey's relations with the EU date back to 1959 when Turkey applied for associate membership to the then European Economic Community (EEC). It took 30 years until Turkey was officially declared a candidate country for final membership at the EU Helsinki Summit in December 1999.<sup>27</sup> The EU today is a political union of 27 *Christian* states with two acceding states, *Muslim* Turkey and *Christian* Croatia, who are currently negotiating accession to the Union. Since 1987 when Turkey officially applied to the full membership of the Union, there has been a never-ending debate regarding the membership of *Muslim* Turkey to the EU.

The debate on Turkey in the EU platforms as well as in the member states can be roughly categorized in three headings:

1. The size, relative poorness and the socio-economic structure of Turkey;
2. Turkey's performance of satisfying the Copenhagen political criteria;
3. Turkey's culture, religion and related historical and psychosocial perceptions on Turkey;

Many scholars and politicians attribute the size, relative poorness and the socio-economic structure of Turkey as the biggest challenge in front of EU membership. It is usually argued that Turkey is too big, too poor and too agrarian that hinders its march to become an EU member. For these, Turkey needs to go through a very radical structural transformation in order to be ready for the EU membership. In other words, Turkey needs

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24 For an excellent analysis of the post-WWII history of Europe, see Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945*, London, Penguin Press, 2005. Also see, David Wood and Birol Yesilada, *The Emerging European Union*, 3rd ed., New York, Longman, 2005, for an excellent and concise account of the evolution and the working of the EU and its organs.

25 See Ian Manners, "Normative Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms?," *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Vol.40, No. 2, (2002), pp. 235-58.

26 Robert Kagan, "Power and Weakness," *Policy Review*, No.113 (June 2002).

27 For more on the history of Turkey-EU relations, see Ahmet Sözen, "Turkish Democratization in Light of its EU Candidate Status" in *The Constitution for Europe and an Enlarging Union: Union in Diversity?* (Eds: Kirstyn Inglis and Andrea Ott), Amsterdam, Europa Law Publishing, 2005, pp. 279-305.

many years to transform its relatively agrarian socio-economic structure to an industry and services based – typical European – socio-economic structure, and increase the level of its wealth.<sup>28</sup> On the other hand, there are those scholars and politicians who look at the Turkey-EU relations from a more technical, bureaucratic point of view and point to the problems that Turkey is experiencing in fulfilling the Copenhagen political criteria.<sup>29</sup> In that regard, Turkey's membership of the EU is a rather technical and bureaucratic matter. During the accession negotiations, the Commission would help Turkey to harmonize its laws and their implementation with the *acquis communautaire*. In other words, during the years-long accession negotiations, if Turkey successfully harmonizes itself with the EU, the final destination will be the automatic accession of Turkey to the Union, just like the other member states once experienced.<sup>30</sup>

The most important and the most difficult challenge to be surmounted in front of Turkey's accession probably involve its culture, religion and related historical and psychosocial perceptions on Turkey. For many scholars and politicians, especially from the Christian Democrat camp, Europe, now embodied by the EU, has sound *Christian* elements or roots that are closely intertwined in *Christianity*. The idea here is that the European identity was once defined against the “common enemy of Europe” who were perceived to be the Muslims and later the Turks.<sup>31</sup> In that sense, a *Muslim* Turkey has absolutely no place in the *Christian* European family, which is perceived as the EU today. However, some scholars and politicians are more careful, or that they use more politically correct language, nowadays in their debate on Turkey's membership of the EU. Instead of stressing the religion or the historical and psychosocial perceptions on Turkey, they prefer to talk about the limits of the boundaries of the *geography* of Europe and, when not so convincing, only then, talk about the *cultural* differences between Turkey and the EU (member states). Former French President, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, Head of the European Union Convention for the constitution, commented on Turkey which attracted worldwide media coverage, where he argued that “Turkey must never be allowed to join the European Union ... since it has a different culture,

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28 For an excellent indepth analysis of the recent transformations in Turkey, since the 1999 EU Helsinki summit, see Ziya Öniş, “Turkey's encounters with the new Europe: multiple transformations, inherent dilemmas and the challenges ahead,” *Journal of Southern Europe and the Balkans*, Vol.8, No. 3, (December 2006), pp. 279-298.

29 Copenhagen criteria (1993) can be broken down to three categories: Political Criteria: The candidate country has to achieve stability in its institutions, to guaranteeing democracy, the superiority of rule of law, respect for human rights and respect for and protection of minorities; Economic Criteria: The candidate country has to have a functioning market economy and the capacity to cope with competitive pressures and market forces within the Union; Acquis Communautaire: The candidate country has to have the capacity to approximate its administrative structures to the European Community legislation, so that all the Community legislation and provisions under the Community treaties are adopted by the candidate country. In addition, the candidate country should be able to take on the obligations of membership, such as adopting the aims of political, economic and monetary union of the Community. For more on the membership criteria, see Ahmet Sözen, “Turkish Democratization in Light of its EU Candidate Status,” pp. 292-293.

30 For a debate on Turkey's being either an asset or a liability for the EU, see Aylin Güney, “On Turkey's Inclusion in EU Enlargement: An Asset Or A Liability?” *Perceptions*, (Summer 2004), pp. 135-155. Also see the speech of the Commissioner for Enlargement Olli Rehn, “Turkey's accession process to the EU: Lecture at Helsinki University,” ABHaber.com, (27 November 2006), where he emphasized the technical role of the Commission in the accession negotiations.

31 For the Turkish identity and how it was historically perceived in Europe, see Dimitris Livanios, “The ‘sick man’ paradox: history, rhetoric and the ‘European character’ of Turkey,” *Journal of Southern Europe and the Balkans*, Vol. 8, No.3, (December 2006), pp. 299-311; Zeki Küçük, “Turkey and the European Union: The Simple Complexity,” *Turkish Studies*, Vol.7, No.2, (June 2006), pp. 275-292; Hasan Ulusoy, “The Importance Of Identity Building In Avoiding The Clash of Civilisations In The Age Of Globalisation (With Some Reflections On Turkey – EU Relations),” *Perceptions*, (2004), pp. 97-113; and Tomaz Mastnak, *Evropa: Med evolucio in evtanazio* (Ljubljana, Studia Humanitatis, 1998), Chapter 3. For an excellent account on the evolution of European identity in relation to the Muslims, and more specifically in relation to the Turks, see Tomaz Mastnak, “Europe and the Muslims: The Permanent Crusade?.”

a different approach, a different way of life. ... Turkey is a country that is close to Europe, an important country ... but it is not a European country ... Its capital is not in Europe, 95% of its population are outside.”<sup>32</sup> This is exactly the perception that fosters the “clash of civilizations” idea (or paradigm). It is precisely this, which makes a *Muslim* - but democratic, in the sense of satisfying the Copenhagen political criteria – Turkey important, to break the “clash of civilizations” paradigm. In that sense, the Turkey–EU relations has an important impact not only on Turkey and the EU but also, on a far larger scale. The future nature of this relationship will help to shape the nature of the relations between the EU and its neighboring *Muslim* countries, as well as the broader relations between the “Western” and the “Islamic” civilizations, to use Huntington’s discourse. To put it very straight, in short, Turkey’s EU membership in the future, will be a very valuable precedent to disprove the validity of the “clash of civilizations” paradigm.

## CONCLUSION: NEED FOR NORMATIVE THINKING

Both Turkey and the EU are now at a crossroads where the course they plot will have important implications and impact on world politics in the post-9/11 era.

1. The EU must decide whether it is a *Christian club* and that the *clash of civilizations* is inevitable, or that it is based on certain universal norms - such as, respect for human rights, democracy and superiority of rule of law - which, if fulfilled by any European country, determine its membership – thus, it can be an example of consensus of different civilizations.
2. Turkey must decide whether it wants to be a fully democratic state or remain a semi-democracy with the possibility to become a more *Middle Eastern* and authoritarian state – thus, failing to be a model<sup>33</sup> of a democratic country with a *Muslim* population for the Central Asian and Middle Eastern states. The steady reforms in Turkey, however, since the early 2000s show that Turkey has already crossed the critical threshold and that a clear promise of accession by the EU will help Turkey to maintain this critical threshold.

It is the observation of the author that the democratization reforms through purely internal dynamics in Turkey have progressed very slowly.<sup>34</sup> It was only recently, in the late 1990s, that the democratisation attempts increased in Turkey mainly due to Turkey’s aspirations towards EU membership – an external dynamic. In other words, the EU’s *conditionality* tool (or its *normative power*) is working in the background of Turkey’s internal democratisation reforms. Hence, the EU plays a very important role in Turkey’s democratisation.

European political elites, however, has to make a choice of just what this idea (i.e., the future EU) is to become. The EU can become a union of more than two-dozen *Christian*

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32 See the Guardian, 9 November 2002. For more on the current perception on Turkey in European Union, see Zeki Kütük, “Turkey and the European Union: The Simple Complexity,” pp. 281-284 and Aylin Güney, “On Turkey’s Inclusion in EU Enlargement: An Asset Or A Liability,” pp. 148-150.

33 Turkey was seen as the only secular democratic country with a predominantly Muslim population. In that regard, after the end of the Cold War, lots of articles were written that suggested that Turkey could be a model for the newly independent states of Central Asia and the Middle Eastern states which have predominantly Muslim populations.

34 For a detailed account on democratization reforms in Turkey, see Ahmet Sözen, “Turkish Democratization in Light of its EU Candidate Status.”

countries based on common European *Christian* cultural values. This will surely be a great achievement and find its way among the very important events of the world history. The EU can also choose to become a union of more than two-dozen countries among which Turkey will exist. Hence, the EU will be a union based on far more than just common religious heritage but on such universal values as democracy, supremacy of rule of law, respect for human rights and the tolerance for and consensus of different “civilizations.” The inclusion of Turkey into the EU as a full member would mean the including of the “other” into “us.” This, in Huntington’s terms, would mean a very important beginning for including of the “Rest” into the “West.” Which EU, the one with or without Turkey, will be a bigger achievement for humanity? In other words, which EU, the one based on European *Christian* values or the one based on more universal values, will be an important achievement for the humanity? I think the answer is quite obvious.

We, the students of International Relations, should never forget that the discipline of International Relations emerged with a noble mission: scientifically studying the causes of war and the ways of preventing wars. We should also be aware that, unfortunately, today the discipline does not have such a noble and clear mission. Today, the discipline of International Relations should have a mission according to the new realities of global politics. It is the belief of the author that there should be a conscious effort to design the new mission of the discipline taking into the consideration the post-9/11 realities on the ground (such as the war against global terrorism, the war against Iraq), as well as the “power of ideas.” Simply put, the mission or the missions of the discipline, whatever it or they may be, should be intensely fortified with *normative thinking*. Debating Turkey’s membership of the EU is precisely an exercise of *normative thinking* which we, the students of International Relations, should do more often and on many other issues in the post-9/11 era.