Paper prepared for the

Sixth Euroacademia Forum of Critical Studies

Asking Big Questions Again

23 – 25 November 2017

Lucca, Italy

This paper is a draft

Please do not cite or circulate

Haven of Peace and Prosperity or Neo-Nazi Nightmare? A Discourse Mythological Analysis of the AKP's Discourse on the EU

Catherine MacMillan (Yeditepe University, Istanbul)

Having made its first application for membership of the European Economic Commuity (EEC) in 1959, Turkey is by far the European Union (EU)'s longest-standing candidate country and, arguably, it seems no closer to accession than it was at its first application almost sixty years ago. Indeed, Turkey's accession process has been likened to the sufferings of the mythological Sisyphus, condemned to eternally roll a boulder up a hill only to watch it roll back down again (Çakır, 2011: 166).

Following a second application in 1987, Turkey was eventually recognised as a candidate country at the 1999 Helsinki Council. The following years were characterised by intensive Europeanising reform on the part of the governing tripartite coalition government, and, following its election in 2002, by the Justice and Development (JDP/AKP) party, a self-declared 'conservative democratic' party (Alpan, 2016: 15). Notably, the early AKP years saw a particularly energetic period of EU-oriented reform, with the issuing of six constitutional reform packages and a new penal code between 2002-2004 (Yaka, 2016: 154), which included radical reforms in sensitive areas such as enhancing the rights of freedom of expression and assembly, the abolition of the death penalty, the abolition of the ban on teaching and broadcasting in languages other than Turkish, the narrowing of the jurisdiction of military courts over civilians, and the abolition of state security courts (Kaliber, 2016: 59). These extensive reforms resulted in the opening of accession negotiations in 2005, based on the Commission's positive report of the previous year.

Since the opening of negotiations, however, Turkey's EU accession process has slowed to a virtual standstill. Calls on the European right for a so-called 'privileged partnership', the EU's emphasis on 'open-ended' negotiations, together with the EU's decision in 2006 to freeze 8 out of the 35 negotiation chapters in response to Turkey's refusal to open its ports to Cyprus dampened enthusiasm for EU accession in Turkey. This was followed by further vetoes of 6 and 11 chapters by Cyprus and France respectively (Müftüler-Baç and Çiçek, 2016: 192). In this context, the pace of EU-oriented reform in Turkey declined significantly, with increasing 'cherry picking', particularly in controversial areas such as minority rights, civil-military relations and the rule of law (Yılmaz, 2016: 90) (Paul, 2012: 26). Turkish public opinion, with only 33% of Turkish respondents considering that EU accession would be a 'good thing' in 2015, a drop from 75% in 2001 and the lowest percentage recorded in any of the candidate countries.

From 2011 onwards, Turkey's accession process has continued to progress at a snail's pace, with only 15 out of 35 chapters opened as of January 2016, and only one (science and research) provisionally closed (Aydın-Düzgit and Kaliber, 2016: 3). The period since 2013 has seen considerable political change and turmoil in Turkey, including the Gezi Park protests, the renewal of conflict in the South East, a spate of terrorist attacks in Istanbul and Ankara, the attempted coup of July 2016 and the April 2017 referendum on the adoption of a presidential system. In this context, while the AKP government did continue to undertake a limited number of Europeanising reforms, most notably in relation to the judiciary, civil-military relations and corruption (Yılmaz, 2015: 94) (Öniş, 2013), Turkey has arguably undergone a process of de-Europeanisation in recent years (Düzgit-Aydın, 2016) (Yılmaz, 2016) (Cebeci, 2016). Importantly, there has been increasing backsliding in fundamental rights and freedoms, especially in the areas of freedom of speech and of assembly, perhaps most notably in the media which were criticised by both the Commission and the EP (Kemahlıoğlu, 2015: 446) (İçöz, 2016: 9).

In spite of the refugee deal between Turkey and the EU which entered into force in 2016, and which initially promised to inject new life into Turkey's moribund accession process, Turkey/EU relations have arguably reached a new low-point in the context of the attempted coup of 15 July 2016 and the resulting crackdowns on organisations and individuals suspected of being involved with the Gülenist movement. In November 2016 the EP voted by overwhelming majority, in a non-binding motion, in favour of halting Turkey's accession process given Turkey's 'disproportionate repressive measures' following the coup (Reuters, 2016), while many German politicians in particular, including Chancellor Merkel herself, have also recently argued that Turkey's membership bid should be put on hold indefinitely.

In this context, then, this paper aims to examine the AKP's discourse on the EU using a variant of the *discourse mythological approach* (DMA) as devised by Kelsey (2013, 2014, 2015), which was originally developed to examine mythology as a discursive practice of journalistic storytelling. The DMA is underscored by a combination of Critical Discourse Analysis, in this case the Discourse Historical Approach, and theoretical approaches to political myth. The paper, then, approaches AKP discourse in relation to the EU's own political mythology, notably its founding myth, i.e. that of European integration arising from the ashes of the Nazi era and World War II to construct a continent based on peace, prosperity and fundamental rights.

2 The Discourse Mythological Approach
2.1 Critical Discourse Analysis and the Discourse Historical Approach

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is a method of discourse analysis that focuses on the study of the relations between discourse and social and cultural developments in different social domains; it sees discourse as a 'culturally and socially organised way of speaking' (Kelsey, 2014, p.314). While the theoretical premises of CDA can be traced back to Althusser's theory of ideology, Bakhtin's game theory and the philosophical traditions of Gramsci and the Frankfurt school (Aydın-Düzgit, 2016, p.48), CDA may comprise a wide variety of methods within this broad context. As the focus of CDA is problem oriented, then, the methods used are necessarily interdisciplinary and eclectic (Meyer and Wodak, 2009, p.6)

Among the many approaches which can be included under the umbrella of CDA, this paper focuses on the discourse-historical approach (DHA), which is characterised by its specific focus on identity construction. According to the DHA, the discursive construction of 'us' and 'them', or 'in' and 'out' groups, is viewed as the basic fundament of discourses on identity and difference. Thus, given its focus on discursive constructions of 'us' and 'them', the DHA has been used in studies on topics such as racist discrimination or national stereotypes (Wodak and Boukala, 2014, p.178). In line with the importance of context in CDA, the DHA links discursive practices, social variables, institutional frames and socio-political and historical contexts (Wodak and Boukala, 2014, p.178).

According to the DHA, then, specific discourses should be examined taking into account both interdiscursivity and intertextuality. Interdiscursivity signifies that discourses are linked to each other in various ways, thus a discourse on one topic frequently refers to topics or subtopics of other discourses; discourse on climate change, for instance, may refer to other discourses such as finances or health. Similarly, according to Wodak, intertextuality means that individual texts are linked to other texts, both in the past and in the present. Such connections may be established in different ways, for instance, through explicit reference to a topic or main actor; through references to the same events; by allusions or evocations or by the transfer of main arguments from one text to the next (Wodak, 2011, p.39).

Broadly speaking, the DHA is oriented towards five general questions, through examining the relevant discursive strategies used:

1. How are persons/events/phenomena/objects/processes and actions named and referred to linguistically? (*Referential/nomination* strategies)
2. What characteristics, qualities and features are attributed to social actors, objects, phenomena/events and processes? (*Predication* strategies).
3. What arguments are employed in the discourse in question? (*Argumentation* strategies).
4. From which perspective are these nominations, attributions and arguments expressed? (*Perspectivisation/Framing*)
5. Are the respective utterances articulated overtly; are they intensified or mitigated? (*Intensification/Mitigation* devices) (Wodak, 2011, p.44).

Such strategies may deploy various linguistic means. Referential/ nomination strategies, for instance, may use tropes, substitutions, certain metaphors and metonymies in order to create in-groups and out-groups in discourse, such as the use of 'we' and 'they' or of metaphors such as 'family' and 'home' (Aydın-Düzgit, 2012, p.23). This is closely related to predication, which, according to Reisigl and Wodak can be defined as 'the very basic process and result of linguistically assigning qualities to persons, animals, objects, events, actions and social phenomena'(2001, p.54).

Similarly, argumentation strategies can take a variety of forms, frequently using *topoi,* which can be described as 'parts of argumentation which belong to the obligatory premises of an argument, whether explicit or tacit', and connect the argument with the conclusion or central claim. *Topoi* tend to provide 'common-places' instead of substantial evidence, and may be used to construct other groups or positions as scapegoats (e.g. by depicting them as a burden, a threat or too costly) (Wodak, 2011, pp. 42-43). They are thus central to the analysis of seemingly convincing fallacious arguments which are widely adopted in prejudiced and discriminatory discourses (Wodak and Boukala, 2014, p.180).

2.2 Discourse and Myth

As Kelsey notes, while it is important to distinguish between mythology, ideology and discourse, theoretical approaches to mythology and ideology hold overlapping concerns to disciplines of discourse analysis. Discourse is informed by ideological practices, which construct myths. The myths themselves, then,

express the ideology through the dramatisation and theatrics of storytelling (Kelsey, 2015, pp. 4-5). Thus, understanding the role of myth can serve a similar purpose to that of CDA: both analyse language in order to address ideological concerns and challenge power relations that construct discourses in ways that serve particular ideological interests (Kelsey, 2014, pp. 314).

Myths are narratives which have a sacred quality in that they are 'repositories of a collective representation of values, beliefs, aspirations, finality, ideals and attitudes' (Della Sala, 2017: 2). Notably, a political myth is distinguished from other political narratives in that political myth possesses significance for a particular social group or society (De Vriese, 2017: 8). In this context, a political myth can be defined as the 'work on a common narrative which grants significance to the political conditions and experiences of a social group' (Bottici and Kühner, 2012: 98); it frames 'who can govern, why, how and over whom' (Della Sala, 2016, p.524). Political myth also provides ontological security for the polity in question, in that they help to define its identity, and why it remains as a political community (Della Sala, 2017: 3). In this sense, then, a political myth 'tells a simple story that makes the evolution of a society and its polity intelligible' (Della Sala, 2010: p. 4). Myth is also characterised by its 'inherent and sometimes unaware emotional commitment, which is a powerful generator of action' (Persson and Petersson, 2014, p.194).

In this context, political myths, in telling stories that are part of a collective memory, serve the purpose of forming and reinforcing the bonds of community and solidarity (Della Sala, 2016: 525). There is an especially intimate relationship between political myth and national identity (Persson and Petersson, 2014, p.194). Notably, the most compelling political myths are those connected with state and nation building, which can be foundational or primary myths that spawn derivative myths. Primary myths, also known as arche-myths or the mythmoteur, refer to the basic myths that are central to the foundation and existence of a political community, which recount how and why the political community was formed. Foundation myths thus tend to highlight the emergence of political order from Chaos (Della Sala, 2016: 528). Such myths traditionally rely on stories about golden ages, heroic acts and immeasurable suffering and sacrifice (Toth, 2015: 554).

Identities, however, are created *vis a vis* an Other (or Others). Political myths are no exception to this in that they contribute to the creation and the maintenance of national identity through creating a national Self which is contrasted with Others who do not form part of the political community. As Bottici and Challand point out, for instance, a political myth may be distinguished from other forms of historical narrative when the past is mobilised to uphold threatening views opposing 'us' and 'them' (2013, p.168). 'Fortress' myths, in particular, may serve to uphold this division between 'us' and 'them'.

As Della Sala argues, 'The stability of the nation and state depends partly on the ability of these stories to adapt to changing conditions, to be re-invented with each generation and for new stories to emerge that do not put into question the original myths' (della Sala, 2016, p.526). Successful myths 'become inscribed in political practices, rituals and institutions of different kinds and supported by prevailing beliefs and norms (2010); they may, thus, become 'normalised' and taken for granted, and may not be open to critical scrutiny (Persson and Petersson: 2014, p. 195).

Myths, however, are not fixed but tend to come in many variants; thus the same narrative pattern may be re-appropriated in order to respond to differing needs for significance (Bottici and Kühner, 2012, pp.96-97). According to Bell's concept of mythscape, which he describes as 'the temporally and spatially extended discursive realm wherein the struggle for control of people's memories and the formation of nationalist myths is debated, contested and subverted incessantly' (Bell, 2003, p. 66), there may be counter-uses of political myth, for instance between the 'officially' promoted myths and alternative versions from below (Persson and Petersson, 2014, p.195). Indeed, political myth itself is ridden with inherent contradictions and may be challenged and subverted from within by successful counterclaims, thereby potentially bringing down the powers that be; in this sense, the myth 'contains the seeds of its own destruction' (Persson and Petersson, 2014, p.195).

2.3 Political Myth and the European Union

While political myth is normally connected with the nation state, it has been argued that the EU itself possesses its own political mythology. As Della Sala points out, 'These have ranged from sacred narratives that trace how and why the EU was created to accounts of its exceptionalism, suffering and redemption, its missionary role, of its transformation and renewal and of a territory or political space' (2016, p. 531). In this context, perhaps the most important founding myth of the EU concerns how the original member states of the EU emerged from the ashes of World War II to renounce nationalism and, through integration, to build a Europe based on peace and prosperity. In this view, the prevention of war was the *raison d'etre* of the European integration project. The Schuman declaration, for instance, stated, in what as Kølvraa argues was something of a utopian fantasy, that the primary ambition of the European integration project was 'to make war in Europe not only unthinkable, but materially impossible' (Kølvraa, 2016, p.172).

In this sense, as Wellings and Power argue, European integration and the European identity that legitimised it can be understood as 'very emotive indeed' (2016, p.157). Wellings and Power argue that, while such arguments about peace were becoming secondary to prosperity arguments by the early 1970s, they have become prominent again since the 1990s. This can be understood as an attempt to 're-legitimise' the EU in the face of increasing challenges, such as the demise of the 'permissive consensus' in the face of widening and deepening of integration, and of the Eurozone crisis, by regenerating a narrative based on the emotive memory of war and totalitarian terror (2016: p.169).

In this sense, the EU arguably understands itself as a normative, or ideological, power which seeks to 'civilise' its external environment (Manners, 2002: p.23) (Zielonka, 2013: p.36), an understanding which, according to Waever (1998) and Diez (2005: p.634), is inextricably linked to the EU's construction of its own past as its principal Other[1]. However, importantly, Nicolaidis and Howse have noted that the EU's official self-image is somewhat utopian, or *EUtopian,* in that it is somewhat idealised rather than representing what Europe actually is (2002).

Moreover, in this context, the foundation myth of the EU has become institutionalised; the preamble to the Lisbon Treaty, for instance, argues that the European integration project represents 'civilisation', in terms of political and human rights and prosperity, in contrast to repeating the 'bitter experiences' of the past;

> Drawing inspiration from the cultural, religious and humanist inheritance of Europe, from which have developed the universal values of the inviolable and inalienable rights of the human person , freedom, democracy, equality and the rule of law. […] Believing that Europe, reunited after bitter experiences, intends to continue along the path of civilisation, progress and prosperity for the good of all its inhabitants […] and that it wishes to deepen the democratic and transparent nature of its public life, and to strive for peace, justice and solidarity throughout the world.

3. The Evolution of the AKP's Discourse on Turkey-EU Relations

3.1 AKP Depictions of the EU Post-2005: The EU as Sick Man of Europe, Untrustworthy Cheat and 'Christian Club'

While, prior to 2005, AKP discourse on the EU was rather positive, portraying, for instance, Turkey's accession as a chance to disprove the 'clash of civilisations' thesis through the promotion of an 'alliance of civilisations' (Alpan, 2016: 19), AKP leaders became increasingly critical of the EU during the period following the opening of negotiations, which coincides with the slowing of Turkey's accession process. In this context, negative depictions of the EU in the post-2005 period tend to focus on the reversal of Orientalist tropes such as backwardness, unreliability and religious fanaticism which have often been applied to Turkey itself in European discourse, including in the context of its EU accession bid (MacMillan, 2010). In AKP discourse, instead, it is the EU itself that is framed as backward, untrustworthy and dominated by religion rather than reason.

Perhaps most notably, AKP discourse has sought to reject, and even reverse, the Orientalist discursive trope of the Turk as the 'sick man of Europe'; instead of Turkey, it is the EU itself which is depicted as Europe's 'sick man'. Thus, the AKP has repeatedly argued that Turkish accession will not be a drain on EU resources but will rather benefit the EU in economic and security terms. As Erdoğan argued, 'Turkey does not want to be a burden on the EU, but rather it wants to help share the difficulties the union has confronted' (Hürriyet Daily News, 2010).

In this context, in AKP discourse, Turkey's economic and demographic vitality are juxtaposed with Europe's ageing population and crisis-ridden economy. Bağış, for instance, portrayed Turkey, with its dynamic economy and large market, as a 'saviour' for crisis-ridden Europe (Karabat, 2010). In a 2011 Newsweek article, Erdoğan took the 'sick man' metaphor further by describing Europe's employment and social security sectors as being 'comatose', its economy as 'stagnant' and its population as 'near geriatric', in contrast

---

[1] Of course, while the experience of the Second World War and the Holocaust is certainly a defining Other for the EU, it is certainly not the only one; indeed Othering in this regard has often taken a geographical as well as a temporal form. As Neumann, for instance, argues, the East, particularly the Ottoman Empire and Russia, has traditionally been an important European Other, and continues to be relevant in that it 'is continuously being recycled in order to represent European identities' (1999: p.207). For Bottici and Challand, for instance, the EU's Eastern Other takes two principal forms: the 'Hammer and Sickle' of Communism and the 'Crescent' of Islam, which 'among all the Others of Europe … stand out for their capacity to coagulate and reproduce significance within their respective contexts' (2013: pp.168-171).

to Turkey, which he dubs 'the Robust Man of Europe' (Newsweek, 2011). More recently, Erdoğan has directly applied the 'sick man' metaphor to the EU: 'Today's sick man is the European Union. Its economy is shrinking, its debts are increasing, its trade volume is narrowing' (Milliyet, 2017)

In addition, the EU has frequently been accused of dishonesty and unreliability in its treatment of Turkey, other traits frequently attributed to 'Oriental' countries in Orientalist discourse. Such accusations of 'not playing by the rules' have been most notable in the context of calls on the European right for a 'privileged partnership', while the AKP has also denounced the European Commission for being biased in its progress reports on Turkey's EU accession. In 2012, when the AKP took the unprecedented step of preparing its own progress report[2], former Europe minister Egemen Bağış tweeted that 'We wrote Turkey's own progress report when [we] saw the skewed nature of the text that was prepared by the EU' (Hürriyet Daily News, 2012). He argued that the EU's reports were, for Turkey, '…the mirror that we hold up to ourselves. However this year's report, seen through the EU's broken mirror, has been far from instructive' (Daily Motion 2013).

Moreover, the EU has also been frequently accused of being a 'Christian club' in AKP discourse, with the issue of Turkey's accession being put forward as a challenge for the EU to prove its secular nature. Describing Turkey's accession as a 'test of loyalty' for the EU, for instance, Erdoğan argued that;

> 53 years have passed and you're still putting us off. Why are you putting us off? I'll tell you, I haven't mentioned this before except in private meetings. Hey, EU, you don't accept us because a large majority of our population is Muslim. You can't prove the opposite (BBC 2016).

Similarly, Erdoğan recently referred to the domination of the EU by a 'crusader alliance'; 'They went to the Vatican, all the leaders of the EU countries, and, obedient as lambs, they listened to the Pope. Now do you understand why they haven't accepted Turkey for 54 years?' (Deutsche Welle Türkçe, 2017).

3.2 The EU as Fascist Dystopia? Resurrecting the Nazis in Recent AKP Discourse

The period since 2011 has often been characterised as one of de-Europeanisation in Turkey[3]. According to Aydın-Düzgit and Kaliber's definition, de-Europeanisation refers not only to a slowing or reversal of EU-oriented reforms, but more broadly 'a loss or weakening of the EU/Europe as a normative political context and a reference point in domestic affairs and national political debates'(2016: 6). However, as Alpan emphasises, Europe has not lost its role as a reference point in Turkish political discourse completely. Thus, while Europe

> lost its central role within political debates, no longer being the lingua franca of politics …the political actors still spoke 'Europe' as what might be termed a second language, and made intense reference to it for different purposes within different contexts (Alpan, 2016: 23).

In this context, the AKP's more recent discourse has frequently framed the EU in even harsher terms than in the 2005-11 period, often depicting it, whether directly or indirectly, as a neo-fascist empire. Thus, in contrast to Turkey itself, which is described as a positive example of values such as democracy, human rights and the rule of law, the EU is depicted as returning to the dark days of fascism, intolerance and racism, domestically, in its foreign policies and in the context of the refugee crisis. In other words, as Aydın-Düzgit points out with regard to Erdoğan's discourse, Europe is depicted as an 'inherently discriminatory' entity not only towards Turkey but also towards groups within the EU (2016: 52); in this sense, the EU, both directly and indirectly, is compared with Nazi Germany.

Comparisons with Nazi Germany, even when indirectly implied, are powerful and emotive; as has been noted, the prevention of the recurrence of the traumas of Nazi domination and World War Two through the development of a peaceful, prosperous, interconnected Europe has been a particularly important myth underlying European integration. In this sense, then, as Wæver points out, the European past has been 'securitized' in that 'Europe's Other … is Europe's own past which should not be allowed to become its future' (1998: 90). It is particularly interesting to note that similar comparisons between the EU and the Third Reich have been widely used by both right and left wing Eurosceptic and/or populist parties from within EU countries,

---

[2] It also produced its own report in 2013. Cebeci, for instance, interprets these reports, along with 'Turkey's New European Union Strategy', published in 2014, through the Foucauldian framework of *counter-conduct* (Cebeci, 2016: 128).

[3] See, for example, Aydın Düzgit (2016) Aydın Düzgit and Kaliber (2016) Alpan (2016) and Cebeci (2016), among others, for further discussion of de-Europeanisation in Turkey.

including the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP), the *Front National, Podemos, Cinque Stelle* and *SYRIZA* (MacMillan, 2017) (MacMillan, 2015).

In the Turkish context, such comparisons are not limited to President Erdoğan's own speeches, but have also been used by the AKP government more widely. In 2011, for instance, Egemen Bağış, during a ceremony to commemorate the Holocaust at Auschwitz, argued that 'the EU …is today under the risk of being overtaken by a racist mentality that cannot internalize its own values and emulates the fascist methods of the1930s' (cited in Nas, 2012: 36). In another 2011 speech, he argued that;

> While people are being packed into wagons and deported in Europe [referring to the deportation of the Roma in France] Turkey is instigating new openings, coming to a point whereby it is a source of inspiration for others (Nas, 2012: 39-40).

Similarly, following the 2014 EU Parliament elections, in which the rise of extreme right and hard Eurosceptic parties caused a 'political earthquake', former Turkish EU Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu argued that the rise of parties with 'marginal political ideas' threatened the 'universal values' which underscore the EU. In his view;

> The European Union, which was born as a peace project from the ashes of the Second World War, has made the fight against racism, discrimination and xenophobia one of its principles. The current political trend in this union, which was founded on the shared values and ideals of humanity, threatens the very values around which Europeans united. This situation is a worry for the entire world (Milliyet, 2014).

Here, then, Europe is depicted as a place where, despite its best efforts to adopt 'universal values' with the founding of the EU, such values remain extremely fragile in the face of the rise of the extreme right. On the other hand, Çavuşoğlu argues that Turkey's full membership is 'vital for the future and peace of the continent' because of 'the historical and cultural values of tolerance which Turkey represents' (Milliyet, 2014). In this sense, then, in both speeches, Europe, in contrast to Turkey, is depicted as naturally inclined towards intolerance, particularly in times of economic crisis, and therefore unable to live up to the founding values of the EU.

More recently, in response to the accusations by Jean Aseelborn, the Luxembourg Foreign Minister, that the Turkish government's measures since the attempted coup of July 15th 2016 resembled a 'Nazi regime', Erdoğan replied that;

> Shamelessly, regardless of the blood on their hands, they compare us to Nazis. You are the Nazis. The Nazi mentality appeared in the West, not the East, and it's a mentality that led to disaster. The source of the idea of mass murder is not the East, it's the West (BBC, 2016).

Deputy Prime Minister Numan Kurtulmuş has also recently accused Europe of racism and xenophobia in the context of the Turkish accession process:

> Europe cannot maintain such racist, xenophobic, anti-immigrant, anti-Islamic, and anti-Turkish attitudes. Europe is being tested on EU-Turkish relations…In recent times we have been experiencing a number of additional problems that have not arisen from the institutional structure of the EU, which is a radical change in the general attitude and style of European politics. This is not only poisoning Turkish-EU relations, but also poisoning Europe's future. Growing racism, xenophobia, [and] anti-Islamic attitudes also influence different countries and different political movements in Europe (Akan, 2017).

Similarly, Erdoğan directly accused several European countries of 'Naziism' in response to their banning of pro-AKP rallies in the run-up to the April 2017 referendum on the transformation of Turkey from a parliamentary democracy into a presidential system. In this context, he described Europe as a 'rotten continent' which was 'no longer the center of democracy, human rights and freedoms, but it is one of oppression, violence and Naziism' (Hürriyet Daily News, 2017).

In this context, Erdoğan dubbed the Dutch 'Nazi remnants' and 'fascists' following their refusal to allow Turkey's foreign minister to enter the country in order to hold a pro-government rally (Sanchez, 2017). Referring to Germany, he argued that 'Your practices are not different from the Nazi practices of the past .. I thought it's been a long time since Germany left [Nazi practices]. We are mistaken' (Oltermann, 2017). More recently, in the run-up to the German elections, Erdoğan described comments by chancellor Merkel and Martin Schulz advocating putting an end to Turkey's accession process as 'Naziism' and 'fascism': 'What happened is Naziism. What happened is fascism. I am not saying 'You are a Nazi, you are a fascist. I am only defining what happened' (Anderson, 2017).

Such accusations of Naziism have also been made at EU level. In another speech, for instance, Erdoğan responded to the decision to ban the circlulation of the pro-Erdoğan Daily Sabah in the EP by pointing out that,

'As long as you call Tayyip Erdoğan a dictator, Tayyip Erdoğan will call you fascists and he will call you Nazis' (QHA, 2017).

The AKP has also framed the EU as intolerant and xenophobic in the context of the recent refugee crisis. Erdoğan's advisor Osman Sert, for instance, compared the historical treatment of Jews in Turkey and Europe in the context of the 2015 migration crisis, again contrasting a Turkish tradition of tolerance with an intolerant Europe;

> In Turkey, throughout our history, and I am not talking about the republican period, in the very first ages, in the 15th century, we opened our borders to Jewish migrants. There is no Jewish massacre in Turkey. I don't want to compare Turkish history with European history. No-one can question Turkey exploiting the refugees issue (Barigazzi, 2015).

Former Prime Minister Davutoğu also alluded to Holocaust imagery when, referring to EU pressure on Turkey to cooperate with it on stopping the flow of refugees and to accept the return of those rejected by the EU, he accused the EU of trying to turn Turkey into a concentration camp. Following talks with Angela Merkel, then, he argued that;

> We cannot accept an understanding like 'give us the money and they stay in Turkey'. Turkey is not a concentration camp. I said this to Merkel too. No one should expect Turkey to turn into a concentration camp where all the refugees stay in (Aljazeera, 2015).

More recently, Erdoğan argued that both the refugees and the Turkish government were victims of the EU's 'hate policies';

> In Turkey there are over 3 million refugees, we don't see these as a threat but Western society sees 100, 200, 300 people as a threat, the hate policies that they have developed against migrants and foreigners have also started to trap this country's government (NTV, 2016).

Similarly, the AKP has argued that the EU's lukewarm support for the government in the aftermath of the attempted coup d'état of 15 July 2016, is the result of the EU's tacit rejection of democratic values and its support of the perpetrators of the coup. In this context, President Erdoğan himself directly accused the EU, and the West more generally, of supporting the coup; 'Is the West in favour of democracy or of the coup? .. I think they support the coup. If they supported democracy, all of their statements would have been in this direction. But they have given themselves away' (Sabah, 2016b).

For some AKP commentators, then, the EU's reaction to the coup signified that it had abandoned its declared values. EU minister Ömer Çelik, for instance, argued that, 'If the EU does nothing now against the most serious attacks on democracy when is it going to? The ones who preach to Turkey on democracy and values should now look inside the EU to protect our common values and stick to common sense' (Sputnik, 2016). Meanwhile Kalın, spokesman for the Turkish presidency, suggested that its reaction following the coup indicated that the EU was not supporting its declared values of democracy, human rights and the rule of law;

> The EU promotes itself as the protector of democracy, human rights and the rule of law, but by showing a weak reaction to the biggest threat to democracy in a candidate country they have caused disappointment … Turkey is stronger and more united than ever. Unfortunately, Brussels seems to have missed this spirit of unity and togetherness. The obscurity of the EU leaders first statements resulted in anger and conspiracy theories…(Sabah, 2016a).

Ahead of the 2016 EP vote on Turkey's accession process, Erdoğan argued that the vote 'has no value in [Turkey's] eyes' (Reuters, 2016), and noted that 'We have made clear time and time again that we take care of European values more than many EU countries, but we could not see concrete support from Western friends ... None of the promises were kept' (Reuters, 2016).

4. Conclusion

In its most recent discourse, the AKP government has frequently referred to the EU, as well as Europe more generally, as an inherently discriminatory entity, characterised by xenophobia and racism. This is, of course, a discursive reversal of the EU's founding myth, according to which it as organisation born out of the ashes of the Second World War and which, founded on values such as democracy, freedom and human rights, intended to bring peace and prosperity to Europe and, later, to the rest of the world.

In this sense, then, it is suggested that, despite its efforts to overcome its intolerant history, Europe is fated to repeat the horrors of its past; its attempts to become 'civilised' have, according to AKP discourse, been thwarted by an almost genetic urge towards fascism. Notably, the EU has been framed as being tacitly complicit

with the perpetrators of the 2016 attempted coup, and thus as rejecting democratic values. While allusions to Europe's Nazi past became evident as early as 2011, roughly co-inciding with the period of de-Europeanisation in Turkey, direct comparisons of EU institutions and Member States to Nazis have become especially prominent in 2017. Such accusations of Naziism can be placed in the context of European criticisms of repressive measures on the part of the Turkish government in the aftermath of the attempted coup, leading to increased calls for an end to Turkey's accession process both at EU and Member State level.

In contrast to the depiction of the EU as a racist, intolerant and quasi-Nazi entity, AKP discourse frames Turkey as the 'true' guardian of 'European' values such as democracy, freedom and the rule of law. Just as Europe is described as inherently intolerant, it is argued that Turkey's tendency towards tolerance is also historically rooted. Thus, according to AKP discourse, if the EU rejects Turkey the fault is with an EU that, unable to escape its past, has become intolerant and racist; the fault is not with Turkey, which is depicted as a paragon of democratic virtues.

Bibliography

Alpan, Başak (2016), 'From AKP's 'Conservative Democracy' to 'Advanced Democracy': Shifts and Challenges in the Debate on 'Europe', *South European Society and Politics* 21(1), pp. 15-28

Akan, Ali Kemal (2017), 'Racist attitudes test Turkish-EU ties: Deputy PM', *Anadolu Agency,* 12 July Available at: http://aa.com.tr/en/europe/racist-attitudes-test-turkish-eu-ties-deputy-pm/859911 (accessed: 14 July 2017)

Al Jazeera (2014) 'Erdogan: Turkey Freer Than Some EU States', 9 February. Available at: http://www.aljazeera.com/video/europe/2014/02/erdogan-turkey-freer-than-some-eu-states-20142971837480535.html (accessed: 6 June 2014).

Al Jazeera (2015), 'Davutoglu: Turkey "Not a Concentration Camp", 18 October. Available at: http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/10/davutoglu-turkey-concentration-camp-refugees-151019194658061.html (accessed: 15 January 2016).

Alpan, Başak (2016), 'From AKP's 'Conservative Democracy' to 'Advanced Democracy': Shifts and Challenges in the Debate on 'Europe', *South European Society and Politcs* 21(1), pp. 15-28

Aydın-Düzgit, Senem (2012), *Constructions of European identity: Debates and discourses on Turkey and the EU,* London: Palgrave Macmillan

Aydın-Düzgit, Senem (2016), 'De-Europeanisation through Discourse: A Critical Discourse Analysis of AKP's Election Speeches', *Journal of South European Society and Politics* 21(1), pp. 45-58

Aydın-Düzgit, Senem and Alper Kaliber (2016), 'Encounters with Europe in an Era of Domestic and International Turmoil: Is Turkey a De-Europeanising Candidate Country?', *Journal of South European Society and Politics* 21(1), pp. 1-14

Bağış, Egemen (2009). *The Future of Turkey/EU Relations and Expectations*, 15 November]. Available at: http://egemenbagis.com/en/1148 (accessed: 9 March 2011).

Bardakçı, Mehmet (2010). 'Turkish Parties' Position Towards the EU: Between Europhilia and Europhobia'. *Romanian Journal of European Affairs* 10(4), pp. 26-41.

Barigazzi, Jacopo (2015). 'Turkish Official: Erdoğan is Not Blackmailing EU', 12 April Available at: http://www.politico.eu/article/turkish-official-erdogan-is-not-blackmailing-eu-refugeessummit/ (accessed: 15 January 2016).

BBC Türkçe (2016), 'Erdoğan: AB müzakerelerini referanduma götürebiliriz', 23 June Available at: http://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler/2016/06/160623_erdogan_ab_muzakere_referandum (accessed 5 February 2017).

Bell, D. (2003), 'Mythscapes: Memory, Mythology, and National Identity', *British Journal of Sociology* 54(1), pp. 63-81

Bottici, Chiara (2007) *A Philosophy of Political Myth.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bottici, Chiara and Amelie Kühner (2012), 'Between Psychoanalysis and Political Philosophy: Towards a Critical Theory of Political Myth', *Critical Horizons* 13 (1), pp. 94 - 112

Bottici, Chiara and Benoit Challand (2013), *Imagining Europe: Myth, Memory and Identity.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Çakır, Armağan Emre (2011). 'Political Dimension: Always in the List of "Also-Rans": Turkey's Rivals in EU-Turkey Relations', in Armağan Emre Çakır (ed.), *Fifty Years of EU-Turkey Relations: A Sisyphean Journey*. London: Routledge, pp. 10-45.

Cebeci, Münevver (2016), 'De-Europeanisation or Counter-Conduct? Turkey's Democratisation and the EU', *Journal of South European Society and Politics* 21(1), pp. 119-132

Della Sala, Vincent (2010), 'Political Myth, Mythology and the European Union', *Journal of Common Market Studies* 48(1), pp.1-19

Della Sala, Vincent (2016,) 'Europe's Odyssey?: Political Myth and the European Union', *Nation and Nationalism* 22(3), pp. 524-541

Diez, Thomas (2005) 'Constructing the Self and Changing Others: Reconsidering 'Normative Power Europe', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 33(3), pp. 613 – 636.

Deutsche Welle Türkçe (2017), 'Erdoğan'dan Avrupa'ya: Haçlı ittifakı', 2 April Available at: http://www.dw.com/tr/erdo%C4%9Fandan-avrupaya-ha%C3%A7l%C4%B1-ittifak%C4%B1/a-38256911 (accessed: 20 April 2017).

Erdoğan, Recep Tayyıp. (2011). 'The Robust Man of Europe: Turkey has the Vigor that the EU Badly Needs'*, Newsweek*, 17 January. Available at: http://www.newsweek.com/2011/01/17/the-robust-man-of - europe.print.html (accessed: 20 July 2011).

Hürriyet Daily News. (2012). 'Turkey Prepares Its Own Progress Report for First Time'. December 31. Available at: http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkey-prepares-its-own-eu-progress-report-for-first-time-.aspx?pageID=238&nID=38023&NewsCatID=338 [accessed: 5 June 2014]

Karabat, Ayşe (2010). 'Bağış: Hold on Europe, Turkey is coming to rescue you'. *Today's Zaman*, 10 December. Available at: http://www.todayszaman.com/newsDetailgetNewsByld. action;jseesionid=534703AA0318E8596DEFB8 (accessed: 13April 2011).

Kelsey, Darren. (2013), The Myth of the "Blitz Spirit" in British Newspaper Responses to the July 7th Bombings, *Social Semiotics* ,23 (1), pp. 83-99

Kelsey, Darren (2014), The Myth of the City Trickster: Storytelling, Bankers and Ideology in the*Mail Online*, *Journal Of Political Ideologies*, 19(3), pp. 307-330.

Kelsey, Darren (2015), Hero Mythology and Right-Wing Populism, *Journalism Studies ,* pp. 1-18 Retrieved 13 February, 2016 from http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/1461670X.2015.1023571

Kemahlıoğlu, Özge (2015), 'Winds of Change? The June 2015 Parliamentary Elections in Turkey', *South European Politics and Society* 20(4), pp. 445-464

Kølvraa, Christoffer (2016), 'European Fantasies: On the EU's Political Myths and the Affective Potential of Utopian Imaginaries for European Identity', *Journal of Common Market Studies* 54(1), pp. 169-184

MacMillan, Catherine (2010)'Orientalist Discourse and Major Issues Regarding Turkey's Accession Process' in Clara Sarmento (ed.) *From Here to Diversity: Globalization and Intercultural Dialogues*. Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, pp. 125-142.

MacMillan, Catherine (2013a). *Discourse, Identity and the Question of Turkey's Accession to the EU:Through the Looking Glass* (London: Ashgate).

MacMillan, Catherine. (2013b), 'Competing and Co-Existing Constructions of Europe as Turkey's 'Other(s)' in Political Discourse'. *Journal of Contemporary European Studies* 21(1), pp. 104-121

MacMillan, Catherine (2015), *Send in the Clowns? Carnivalesque Populism in the UK Independence Party and the Five Star Movement*. Paper prepared for the 5th Euroacademia International Conference Europe Inside-Out: Europe and Europeaness Exposed to Plural Observers, Barcelona, 27 – 28 March

MacMillan, Catherine (2016a), 'Turkey's Carnivalesque Challenge to the EU's Monologue: A Response to Nykänen'**,** *Journal of Contemporary European Studies* 24(1), pp. 117-131

MacMillan, Catherine (2016b), *An Evil Empire? The EU as Dystopian Monster in the Discourses of Four European Populist Parties (The Front National, Podemos, Syriza and UKIP*. Paper Presented at the conference on 'Europe in Discourse: Identity, Diversity, Borders', September 23-25, Hellenic American College, Athens, Greece

Milliyet. (2014). 'AP Seçim Sonuçlarını De_erlendirdi', 29 May Available at : http://www.milliyet.com.tr/ap-secim-sonuclarinidegerlendirdi/ siyaset/detay/1889525/default.htm (accessed: 3 June 2014).

Nas, Çiğdem (2012). 'Europeanisation of Identity: The Case of the Rebuffed Candidate'. In Çiğdem Nas and Yonca Özer (eds.), *Turkey and the European Union: Processes of Europeanisation.* London: Ashgate, pp. 23-44

NTV (2016), *Erdoğan: AB Defteri henüz Kapatamadık,* 29 November Available at: http://www.ntv.com.tr/turkiye/erdogan-ab-defterini-henuz-kapatmadik,-ZZ3j6Cl6UiQ9NgusAWgVA?_ref=infinite (accessed: 4 May 2017)

Öniş, Ziya (2013), 'Sharing Power: Turkey's Democratisation Challenge in the Age of AKP Hegemony', *Insight Turkey* 15(2), pp. 103-122

Paul, Amanda (2012). 'Turkey's EU Journey: What Next'?, *Insight Turkey* 14(3), pp. 25-34

Persson, E. and B. Petersson (2014) 'Political Mythmaking and the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi: the Russian Great Power Myth Meets the Olympic Games', *East European Politics* 2014, pp. 1-18

Reuters (2016), *EU Lawmakers call for Halt to Turkey Membership Talks over Post-Coup Crackdown,* 24 November

Available at: https://www.rt.com/news/368039-turkey-eu-membership-talks/ (accessed: 26 November 2016)

Sabah (2016a), *Cumhurbaşkanlığı Sözcüsü Kalın'dan AB Ülkelerine 15 Temmuz Eleştirisi,* 19 August

Sabah (2016b)*, Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan'dan AB'ye Sert Tepki!*, 2 August

Available at: http://www.sabah.com.tr/gundem/2016/08/02/cumhurbaskani-erdogandan-abye-sert-tepki (accessed 3 Febrary 2017).

Sputnik (2016), *AB Bakanı: Almanya'nın Kararı Demokratik Değerlere Aykırı,* 31 July

Available at: http://tr.sputniknews.com/turkiye/20160731/1024164924/ab-bakani-celik-almanya-tepki.html (accessed 13 April 2017)

*S*araçoğlu, Cenk and Özhan Demirkol (2015), 'Nationalism and Foreign Policy Discourse in Turkey Under the AKP Rule: Geography, History and National Identity', *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 42(3), pp. 301-319

Wodak, Ruth (2011), *The Discourse of Politics in Action: Politics as Usual.* Baisingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan

Wodak, Ruth and S. Boukala (2014), Talking about Solidarity and Security in the Age of Crisis: the Revival of Nationalism and Potectionism in the European Union – a Discourse-Historical Approach. In C Carta and J.F. Morin (eds), EU Foreign Policy through the Lens of Discourse Analysis: Making Sense of Diversity (pp. 171-190). Surrey: Ashgate,

Wodak, Ruth and M. Meyer (2009), Critical Discourse Analysis: History, Agenda, Theory and Methodology. In Ruth Wodak and M. Meyer (eds.) *Methods for Critical Discourse Analysis* (pp. 1-33) London: Sage