FILM FESTIVALS AS PLATFORM FOR CULTURAL DIPLOMACY
THE CASE OF THE TURKISH-GERMAN FILM FESTIVAL

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Introduction

“Our cultures are bound to meet. We have a duty to make the most out of this encounter.”

(Mogherini, 2016)

Since the turn of the millennium a number of significant developments have taken place: increased globalisation, geopolitical changes, EU enlargement, rising controversies and debates on value systems, etc. On top of that came the general economic crisis followed by major events amongst which the arrival of refugees fleeing the armed conflict in the Middle East, terrorists attacks in France, Belgium, Germany, to name just a few. Today it seems both Europe and the world are riding on the waves of populism and rage, fearing “the other”, the stranger, as the cause of its problems. Nations are faced with an increased internal polarization. In the light of this context, Turkey plays a decisive role. Due to its geopolitical position and cultural identity as a Muslim secular state, the country on the Bosporus represents a bridge between the West and Muslim countries. Therefore, it has long been considered of special importance in cultural diplomacy for EU foreign policy (Senocak, 2017), especially for Germany. No wonder, one might say…

About three million people with Turkish migratory background presently live in Germany, accounting for the largest Turkish diaspora in the world. Round five million German tourists used to travel to Turkey every year (Hochstätter, 2016). “These figures alone have a great influence on the countries’ respective domestic policy and bilateral relations”, so German Ambassador to Ankara Martin Erdmann (in Hochstätter, 2016). According to him, Germany has no other partner in the world with which it has - or had? - such a tight and multilayered relationship as with Turkey. Indeed, the complex bond between the two countries is deeply rooted in their respective history. Turkish-German relations have, over time, sustained in different realms such as the military, economy, diplomacy, culture and education (Yeneroglu, 2016). Today, according to Prof. Dr. Leidinger (2018), diplomatic relations between the two countries are at one of their most critical point. A series of major political events in Turkey, the country’s increasingly disastrous state of democracy, an endless debate on Turkey’s potential EU-accession and the EU-Turkey refugee deal are but
some of the key factors in the deterioration of German-Turkish relations. While drifting further apart stakes are high for the two nations but also for Europe, so it seems, for bilateral relations do not operate in a vacuum.

Out of these societal developments the terms ‘soft power’ and ‘cultural diplomacy’ have, for some time now, received increasingly political attention and have gained traction within governments around the world (Dragićević Šešić, Mihaljinac & Rogac Mijatović, 2017). Politicians often see these practices as a tool for counteracting the decline in political relations through better mutual understanding and respect. However, more and more non-political actors have taken up the task of fostering intercultural dialogue through exchange, by creating cultural projects that act as ‘cultural diplomacy from below’ (Dragićević Šešić et al., 2017). In the midst of this grim scenario, arts managers, cultural curators and artists are more and more seen as having the potential to unite an increasingly heterogeneous society. This is based on the assumption that if art works can be used to “express identities and concerns, preserve and fabricate memories and state ideas and ideals; then we can also use them to explore, understand and get better acquainted with the cultural, social, ideological diversity” societies are made of (Gonçalves & Majhanovich, 2016, p. 6). Film festivals, by using films and framework programmes for establishing intercultural dialogue can be seen as precisely such an undertaking.

The Turkish-German Film Festival of Nuremberg created in 1992 by Turkish immigrants as an annual cultural event with a political stance presents an outmost interesting case study for this matter. Even more so, as no previous research on this specific film festival exists; not even in Germany. The present paper takes up the task of giving an insight into the Festival’s contribution to the intercultural dialogue within the context of Turkish-German bilateral relations. The central question being: can the Turkish-German Film Festival, where culture and politics seem to meet, be seen as a platform for cultural diplomacy?

Before starting with the analysis of our case-study, this research calls for some insights into the context from which this Festival was born and takes place today. Hence, we will start by looking into the German-Turkish relationship and its main challenges. How did the relationship reach its current state? And why are the stakes so high, especially for Germany? Moreover, key concepts such as cultural diplomacy and cinematic diplomacy as well the place and role of film festival therein need our
special attention. Also, for the Turkish-German Film Festival was founded by Turkish immigrants, it seems relevant to look into the bond between film festivals and migration on which principally academic Iordanova has given some key insights. The second part of this research will focus on our research object: the Turkish-German Film Festival. After a brief history on its formation, we will look into the Festival’s specific mission and self-positioning. Then an insight will be given into the driving forces behind the Festival. Further, we will focus on how this Festival, based on its programming and framework program, can foster dialogue and intercultural exchange. The role of German-Turkish relations and the impact they might have on the event will of course be taken into account.
Literature review

GERMAN-TURKISH RELATIONS

Various historical incidents have had different impacts on German-Turkish relations and have shaped them each in a specific manner. Hence, reducing the nations’ relations solely to today’s perspectives would provide a limited historical reality. However, an in-depth political-historic analysis of bilateral relations would go beyond the scope of this research paper. Indeed, the milestones that shaped German-Turkish relations up to this day are numerous. Brimmed with ups and downs, the relationship has mainly been of geopolitical and economic nature. While the economic relationship has been an overall constant and positive factor, the European and NATO dimensions have been central and played out in German party politics. Next to this, the unsolved problems of integration of some of the Turkish and Kurdish immigrants living in Germany and the overall state of human rights and democracy in Turkey have significantly influenced the bilateral relationship (Dahlman, 2004; Szabo, 2018). For the purpose of the present research paper we will start by giving a general overview on the current state of relations between Germany and Turkey, followed by a more in-depth analysis of two key factors in German-Turkish relations: Turkey’s EU accession process and the Turkish diaspora in Germany.

THE CURRENT STATE OF THE GERMAN-TURKISH RELATIONSHIP

Over the last two decades the German-Turkish relationship has undergone profound changes and, as previously mentioned, seems to have reached one of its most critical point (Leidinger, 2018). While opinions diverge about a specific ‘turning point’ in time that led to the current rift in the German-Turkish relationship, there are in fact multiple intertwined factors that have contributed to its deterioration (Bur & Copur, 2017; Gottschlich, 2016; Szabo, 2018). Turkey’s changing political landscape and the deriving consequences certainly play a major role herein. In 2002 the AKP, Turkey’s Justice and Development Party, was elected and along with it started the accession to power of Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Later in 2014 Erdogan was elected President of Turkey. Today, from academics to newspaper headlines, all seem to agree that Turkey’s current President is reshaping the nation more than any other leader since the founder of modern republic Atatürk (Gottschlich, 2016; Rumpf, 2017;
Butler, 2018). According to experts Burak and Copur (in Hochstätter, 2018), since the Arab Spring in 2011 a significant change occurred in Turkey and started the decline of the country in the international view. From this point on they say, “Turkey had turned from an emerging regional power into a ‘problem country’, as the country went from a peace-oriented soft-power model to a militaristic hard-power strategy” (as cited in Hochstätter, 2018).

With regard to the German-Turkish bilateral relations, Burc and Copur (2017) claim that the “crisis-marathon” in the countries’ relationship started with the refugee deal between the European Union and Turkey that went into effect two years ago. This has to be understood in the light of Germany’s leading role in the closing of the deal that aimed to limit refugee influx mainly from Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan (Janning & Möller, 2016). Critics and opponents to the deal argued, amongst others, that it would open Germany to blackmail and put Turkey in a position of power. Without going into all the details, it was actually noticed that, since the passing of the deal, Chancellor Merkel has kept a noticeable neutral position towards human rights violations and restrictions on the freedom of expression occurring in Turkey (Burc & Copur, 2017; Kingsley, 2016; Szabo, 2018). Turkey on the other hand has shown to interfere into Germany’s domestic politics. Motives went from complaints about learning material on the Armenian genocide in a German school, to complaints on the presence of the German Ambassador at the trial of Turkish journalists Can Dündar and Erdem Gül (Hochstätter, 2016), up to the Böhmermann affair1. But 2016 was to bring a lot more than ‘just’ the refugee deal. First came, in June, the official recognition of the Armenian Genocide of 1915 by the Parliament (‘Bundestag’) of the Federal Republic of Germany. This was not well received by the Turkish government who recalled its Ambassador in Germany and accused deputies of Turkish migratory background of being “the extended arm of the PKK”2 (So eskalierte der Streit, 2016). Then, one month later, followed a coup attempt in Turkey.

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1 Böhmermann affair: Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan filed legal charges against German comedian and satirist Jan Böhmermann over his “defamatory poem” about the Turkish leader. German prosecutors eventually dropped the charges but the case sparked a diplomatic row between Berlin and Ankara. For detailed information on the Böhmermann case see the publication: ‘The Case of Satirist Jan Böhmermann’ (Columbia Global Freedom of Expression initiative, 2016).

2 The PKK, also called, the Kurdistan Worker’s Party, is an organisation based in Turkey and in Iraq. Since 1984 the PKK has been involved in an armed conflict with the Turkish state,
The failed coup that took place on July 15 2016 marked a decisive turning point in Turkey’s political history and, consequently, Turkey’s relations with Germany. Since the incident the Turkish government keeps extending Turkey’s state of emergency (Karasu, 2017). More than 50,000 people have been detained and more than 150,000 Turkish state officials have been fired or suspended (Deutschland und Türkei, 2018). Among these are also German citizens, human right activists and journalists such as Die Welt’s journalist Deniz Yücel, who was arrested in February 2017 and released in February 2018, caught a lot of attention (Shaheen, 2017). Overall, critical voices in Turkey are shut down through restriction of the freedom of press and massive pressure. As a consequence, the number of Turks - journalists, diplomats, militaries, artists, professors, activists, up to regular civilians - seeking asylum in Germany keeps increasing (“Asyl in Deutschand”, 2018).

The Turkish government identifies the ‘Gülen movement’ as responsible for the attempted coup (Gottschlich, 2016, p. 24) and is proceeding to ‘cleansing’ acts against alleged Gülen supporters throughout the country and beyond (Gottschlich, 2016, p. 24). As explained in an article over “Erdoğan’s long arm in Germany”, the government in Ankara even pursues its battle against opponents, critics, Kurds and Gülen supporters beyond Turkey’s borders, up to Europe and to Germany (Alkousaa, 2017). This makes for another very delicate point in the already fragile German-Turkish relationship since Erdoğan requested Germany to track down Gülen supporters and extradite them to Turkey. While Germany does not give in, the country seems to become a front line for the battle of power in Turkey (Brandt, Heinemann, Sat & Unger, 2017) and concern is growing that tensions between Erdoğan backers and Gülen supporters are spilling over onto German soil (Alkousaa, 2017).

On top of all that, since April 2017, the Turkish political system underwent profound changes with a constitutional amendment that elevated the office of President Erdoğan to the central position of power, giving de facto more power to Erdoğan (Rumpf, 2017; Von Marschall, 2017). Important to highlight here is that electoral campaigns preceding the vote with regard to the constitutional referendum also took place in Germany, with the objective to gain voices from a vast number of

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with the initial aim of achieving an independent Kurdish state, later changing it to a demand for equal rights and Kurdish autonomy in Turkey (White, 2015).

3 For more information on the Deniz Yücel case, see article: 'Assault on freedom of expression': Die Welt journalist's arrest in Turkey condemned (Shaheen, 2017).
Turks living there. However, Germany did not stay put and electoral campaign appearances of Turkish Ministers were banned (Karasu, 2017; Von Marschall, 2017). This, in turn, triggered considerable indignation in Turkey who pointed towards undemocratic proceedings on part of Germany (Karasu, 2017).

To conclude on the current German-Turkish relations, one last important event must be mentioned: The Turkish military operation in the Syrian district of Afrin in spring of 2018. The Turkish army took the district with the town of same name to prevent the formation of a coherent region under Kurdish influence ranging from Iraq to Syria and to the Turkish province Kilis. The international community condemned strictly this action as a “Turkisation” beyond the Turkish border. However, many Kurdish immigrants living in Germany are of the opinion that not enough is being made from part of the government to stop military operation in Afrin and condemn Germany for not putting a stop to its armament supply destined at Turkey (“Türkei belagert”, 2018). Several protests have taken place in cities throughout Germany as a result (Leubecher, 2018).

When looking at the current German-Turkish relations and their recent developments, Turkey is often reduced to one man’s action, namely President Erdogan. However, many argue it is a wrong approach (Bur & Copur, 2017, Dündar, 2018; Ergün in Urban, 2018). Halil Ergün (in Urban, 2018) gives an interesting insight on the situation. According to him, beyond the intimidation policy led by Erdogan it is a more general change that is taking place in Turkey:

“Erdogan alone is not the problem (...) The current situation is the result of a very long process and the rule of law has continuously been trampled on, after every “fascist coup” and the following constraint on fundamental rights. To understand the current situation in Turkey one has to look into the power structures in Turkey, at its historical development as well as the role that world politics attributed to Turkey time and again”.

Moreover, and perhaps most importantly, it should not be forgotten that Turkey is not Erdogan.

THE TURKISH DIASPORA IN GERMANY

‘We called for labor but people came instead’

(Frisch, 1965)
However important geopolitical matters, when looking at German-Turkish relations the year of 1961 could perhaps be seen as the crucial moment in time. This was the year in which a labor agreement between the two countries was signed. But more than that, it marked the beginning of a ‘life-long’ bond between the two nations, as Germany was to become the country with the largest Turkish diaspora in the world. Moreover, the deriving problems of integration of some of the Turkish and Kurdish immigrants living in Germany have greatly influenced the bilateral relationship (Szabo, 2018) and remain a complex issue up to this day. Especially the human rights and minority issues in Turkey (such as the unsolved Kurds conflict) have had, as a consequence of the diaspora, direct internal political repercussions on Germany (Burc & Copur, 2017).

As stated earlier, it all started in 1961 with the labor Agreement between the Federal Republic of Germany and Turkey. Germany was in need of labor as a result of the booming economy of the post-war period while Turkey suffered high unemployment and would benefit from the foreign currency Turkish workers sent home. Over the next 12 years almost 900,000 ‘guest workers’ came from Turkey (Luft, 2014). A crucial point with regard to the initial idea of the ‘guest-worker programme’ is: it was meant to be limited in time, guest workers were not supposed to stay (Herbert 2011; Motte, 1999). However, what was meant as a temporary stay in Germany turned into a progressive immigration process. Those who remained, together with their descendants, continue to shape today’s Germany – socially, culturally and economically. Of course Turks were not the only one to come to Germany during that time. ‘Guest-workers’ from other countries such as Greece, Italy, Spain, etc. also came to Germany for employment and many stayed as well. However, none of these migrant populations were as large as the Turkish one. Until today, with approximately 3 million citizens of Turkish origin living in Germany, the Turkish diaspora makes up the largest group among foreign nationals as well as among people with migratory background (Luft, 2014). But more importantly than their number, Turkish migrants come from a Muslim country with a very different culture compared to those who, at the time of the “guest-workers programme”, came from neighboring countries with a more or less similar culture (Herbert 2011; Steinbach, 2011). However, as historian and expert on the German ‘integration debate’ Ulrich Herbert explains in an interview for Zeit Online (Staas, 2011): “in the
1970s and 1980s the Turks were already seen as ‘culturally different’ but not because of the religious aspect. More since the 1990s does the religious difference seem to have taken on importance”. He further adds that since the attacks of 9/11, the debate has become more critical.

When it became clear that the many ‘guest-workers’ would stay the first debates and controversies on the employment of foreigners in Germany emerged, soon followed by the fear of natives of being swamped. Hence, it appeared important to address issues such as foreign policy and social integration. However, it took Germany over two decades to acknowledge its status of ‘immigrant country’ and start to put in place a proper integration policy (Herbert, 2001). This long denial has evidently had many repercussions. Not only did it lead to wrong approaches as to how to deal with the immigrant issue in the past, but also complicated greatly the already complex clash of cultures. Looking back at history, it comes as no surprise that the intercultural co-existence of Turkish rooted German citizens and natives German remains challenging and unequal on various levels. As missing ‘a sense of belonging and recognition’, Turks and people of Turkish origin represent the least integrated group in Germany, according to a recent study (Pollack et al., 2016). In fact, on political level in Germany rules a controversial debate around the issue of a proper ‘integration policy’ regarding migrants that goes as far back as the migration history itself, thus about 60 years ago. However divergent the opinions, one thing can be noted: the focus in the ‘integration debate’ in Germany revolves almost entirely around migrants of Muslim faith; hence mainly Turkish people and Arabs (Steinbach, 2011). In 2010, sceptical and negative voices were raised loud and clear for the first time in the history of the ‘integration debate’. The book of Thilo Sarrazin ‘Deutschland schafft sich ab’ (Germany abolishes itself) published that year, as well as the statement by chairman of the German Christian Social Union Horst Seehofer that “Germany does not need migration from ‘other cultures’ (pointing to people from Turkey and Arabic countries) (“Seehofer gegen”, 2010), attracted a lot of attention and gave a new impulse to the whole debate (Steinbach, 2011). Most importantly, it showed how much work there is left to do with regard to reaching social cohesion amongst all and peace-full coexistence.

Since Sarrazin debate, the ‘integration problematic’ in Germany has taken on a whole new dimension. While the democratic state of Turkey keeps declining,
President Erdogan increasingly appeals to the Turks living in Germany to support their home-country: from voting for him from abroad up to boycotting Germany’s elections. With its three-million strong Turkish community, concerns are also growing that tensions between Erdogan backers and Gülen supporters are spilling over onto German soil. Indeed, the polarisation that reins in Turkey seems to increasingly take place in Germany too (Alkousaa, 2017). This is true with regard to the Gülen situation but also with regard to the Kurdish minority. And as Can Dündar points out in one of his articles on German-Turkish relations: “instead of reacting to every provocation from Erdogan, the priority should be on telling people of Turkish origin that they are not second-rank citizens: ‘here is your second home where you are free to choose for yourself’” (Dündar, 2017).

TURKEY AND THE OPEN-END EU-ACCESSION PROCESS

“Yes, we should all line up along the Bosphorus Bridge and puff as hard as we can to shove this city in the direction of the West.

If that doesn’t work, we’ll try the other way; see if we can veer to the East.

It’s no good to be in between. International politics does not appreciate ambiguity”.

(Shafak, 2006)

_A European Turkey?_

Obviously there is not one right answer to what constitute – or what doesn’t – European identity. Nevertheless, in order to join the EU, a country has to satisfy two conditions as stipulated in the Treaty on the European Union (TEU) and the Copenhagen criteria. Article 2 of the TEU stipulates that any country wishing to join the EU must fulfill following conditions:  

1. be a state within geographical Europe; and
2. respect and commit to the values set out in Article 2 TEU, which call for respect for: human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality and the rule of

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law; human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities; and a pluralistic society and for non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men (Article 2 of TEU).

In the case of Turkey, although its geographic location has been a source of controversy due to its unique location – far western Turkey lies geographically in Europe while most of the country lies in Asia – it is mainly the compliance to Article 2 of the TEU that seems to be a major obstacle for Turkey’s accession. Indeed, Turkey still does not fulfil the criteria on human rights, respect for and protection of minorities (Senocak, 2017). Moreover, various Turkish intellectuals are raising their concern regarding the path their country appears to follow. Author Elif Shafak said in an interview on October 23, 2016⁵ that “Turkey was regressing” and increasingly moving towards an illiberal democracy; a democracy that bears the seal of authoritarianism. Can Dündar, former editor-in-chief of the center-left Cumhuriyet newspaper and in exile in Berlin for two years, regularly writes columns for the German newspaper Die Zeit on current issues in his country. On March 12, 2017, in a column over German-Turkish relations he describes Turkey as “a land of prohibitions where prisons are filled with those who exercised their right to criticize”.⁶ In another of his columns entitled ‘Still no happy end’, from February 14, 2018, he writes “(...) there are no more independent Judges left in Turkey who would sign a judgment such as The press does not serve those governing, but those governed’”.⁷ These are only a few of the many examples with regard to current happenings in Turkey. Not only Turkish opponents to President Erdogan but also European leaders are witnessing Turkey’s tormenting turn. When looking at the previously mentioned Treaty on the European Union, it appears evident that Turkey does not fulfill membership

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requirement at the present day. Nevertheless, some also suggest that, over time, the EU has developed “an alternative approach towards Turkey which can be best described as a ‘containment strategy’, designed to delay indefinitely the prospect of membership, while keeping Turkey within the economic, security and political sphere of influence of the EU” (Arikan, 2017).

Germany’s role

Turkey’s entry in the NATO\(^8\) in 1952 has revealed itself to be crucial, putting the country at the heart of geopolitical interests for Germany and Europe overall (Dahlman, 2004; Quaden, 2018). According to Kramer (in Szabo, 2018), during the Cold War, West Germany became “a mentor for Turkey in Europe” because it saw the country as a key NATO ally. Indeed, due to its unique location between the East and the West Turkey has always been considered a bridge between the Muslim and Western world; Hence of great interest to the European Union and the domestic politics of its member states with regards to issues of immigration and regional security. The conclusion of the EU-Turkey refugee deal in 2016 in response to the refugee crisis in Europe reinforces previous arguments.

In order to better comprehend the situation, one has to look at the official German position on Turkish membership in the EU. Indeed, with regard to the decision-making processes in terms of determining the EU’s enlargement politics \textit{vis-à-vis} Turkey, Germany has been assuming a leadership role (Turhan, 2016). And its position towards Turkey’s accession has not always been what it is today. In fact, Turkey experts Burc and Copur (2017) characterized the early promising years of Erdogan’s AKP Party as a “golden age of the Europeanization of Turkey” A time during which Germany proactively promoted Turkey’s membership in the EU and opened German citizenship to Germans of Turkish origin (Szabo, 2018); hence, also a

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\(^8\) NATO: The North Atlantic Treaty Organization. It is an intergovernmental military alliance between several North American and European countries that was signed on 4 April 1949.
“golden age” for German-Turkish relations. However, Angela Merkel’s positioning in 2005 against Turkey’s access to the EU, calling instead for a “privileged partnership”, marked a decisive turn (Burc & Copur, 2017; Szabo, 2018). According to academic Turhan, Germany’s inconsistent positioning since the opening of accession talks with Turkey has continually put a strain on bilateral relations (Steinbach, 2011; Turhan, 2016).

Further, according to academic Turhan, Germany’s inconsistent positioning since the opening of EU-accession talks with Turkey has continually put a strain on bilateral relations (Turhan, 2016). In a similar line of thought Can Dündar points to Germany’s lack of a clear policy towards Turkey. He sees this “zigzags policy”, as he calls it, between ‘we can’t lose Turkey’ and ‘we can’t accept Turkey’ as partly responsible for the continued escalation of tensions (Dündar, 2017).

A matter of cultural differences?

The interesting role Turkey plays in the European Union’s enlargement process has become particularly apparent since the start of accession talks on October 3, 2005. For more than a decade now, Turkey’s accession process within the EU is a highly controversial issue, and both its advantages and disadvantages have been contested. As explained by Bac and Taskin in the Ankara Review of European Studies (2007):

“The opening of the Turkish accession talks marked the beginning of a new era in terms of defining what constitutes Europe and the European identity. (…) Thus, Turkey’s ability to adopt the EU standards is only one aspect of the whole picture with the EU specific factors playing an equally important role”. (p. 31).

Indeed, a major obstacle in Turkey’s negotiations seems to be precisely the extent to which it is perceived to be part of the European identity (Bac & Taskin, 2007). This inevitably raises multiple questions as to what European identity actually is and means or rather, is there such a thing as a common European identity? In her paper on the role of EU cultural diplomacy in Muslim majority countries, Senocak (2017) points to the issue of identity as inextricably linked to the question of the limits of Europe. According to her, Europe does not have an identity in terms of ethnicity, nor one that could be considered ‘quasi-ethnic’. However, she says, Europe does have a
structural reality, where “history and common values for mutual benefit unite the continent” (Senocak, 2017, p. 10). In a EU Commission press release in 2014, Androulla Vassiliou, former EU Commissioner for Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth, speaks about culture as being a vital part of our collective European identity. According to her, it is culture that “helps to underpin our shared values such as respect for human rights, diversity and equality” (Vassiliou, 2014). Hence, the most important question may perhaps be: is Turkey’s accession to the European Union a question of cultural differences?

In the same line of thought, Elizabeth Shakman Hurd (2006) claims that the issue of the European enlargement with regard to Turkey reveals, next to geopolitical and economic issues, also hidden obstacles. In her article The Politics of Religion and the Prospects for Turkish Accession to the EU (as cited in Senocak, 2017, p. 11) she explains it as follows:

“Even if economic and political obstacles to Turkey’s accession are lifted, even if Turkey is deemed to be in unambiguous conformity with the Copenhagen criteria, European opposition to Turkish membership will persist ... the Turkish case is controversial in cultural and religious terms, as it involves the potential accession of a Muslim-majority country to an arguably, at least historically, Christian Europe”.

Examining the arguments put forward, the question then becomes: what differentiates Turkey from Europe culturally? And is there even one European culture? As Senocak highlights (2017), the ‘artisans of Europe’ have time and again engaged “in a quest for the cultural foundations of the continent’s unity, the essence of its identity and the limits of diversity” (p. 6). Drawing on the arguments of Endruweit (1998), the European Union is not a society but an institution of several states that represents different societies. Therefore, he says, one cannot speak of a culture in the strict sense of the concept, but rather of “a cultural area, perhaps Christian-Occidental” (Endruweit, 1998). Moreover, defining the conditions for membership became more difficult since Europe took the direction of an increasingly political unit with common democratic decision-making. Indeed, as Günter Endruweit wrote in 1998 for The Journal of International Affairs, “common politics is based on common decisions according to values. Values are essential components to culture. The more heterogeneous cultures there are in an organisation, especially a political one, the more probable it is that (...) conflicts might arise”. In an article for the European
Journal of Social Theory, Strath (2002) points out that Christianity remains indeed the one common denominator and a base of unity among the nation-states of Europe. According to her, religion continues to be the major difference between Turkey and the EU (Strath, 2002). As a matter of fact, in contrast to EU member states, Turkey is a Muslim-majority country where the base of unity is not Christianity but Islam. A Eurobarometer survey on public opinion in the EU published in 2005 indicates that religion is actually perceived a major obstacle to Turkey’s accession into the EU (European Commission, 2005). According to the survey, 55% of the respondents believe that ‘cultural differences are too significant to allow for this accession’, while 63% have a “strong fear that Turkey’s accession would cause a large influx of Muslim immigrants” (as cited in Senocak, 2017, p. 11). A more recent survey carried out in 2017 for the centre-right European People’s Party, shows that public opinion regarding Turkey’s membership has not become any more favourable: 77% of respondents were of the opinion that Turkey should simply not access the EU. Interestingly, resistance appeared to be highest in Germany, with 86% of respondents voting against (Kroet, 2017). In this context, Senocak (2017) argues in favour of a better cultural understanding of Turkey in order to counter the negative perceptions held by EU citizens regarding Turkish membership. According to her, “the cultural aspect of Turkey as a Muslim-majority country being considered a threat to European identity has shaped European minds for centuries” (Senocak, 2017, p. 12).

The reason religion seems to be at the centre of attention regarding Turkey’s potential accession to the EU can be linked to the place attributed to religion in politics. In today’s Europe nation-states are all – more or less – secular ones, thus based on the “principle of separation of the state from religious institutions” (“Secularism”, n.d.). This does however not mean that the Christian religion doesn’t play a role in Europe. Indeed, as explained by Alexander Görlach in his article As if God did not exist (2013):

Christianity has become such a big part of our perceived reality and of European civilization that it is not regarded as a religion anymore. It has become a set of symbols, a set of values, a set of stories, a set of utopias, and so forth.

He adds that today, Europe is becoming increasingly aware of the intertwined relationship of the secular state and the Christian religion. According to him, this is
partly due to the growth of the Muslim population: “As a strong Muslim minority has emerged in each country of the EU, we have witnessed the rise of a certain sensitivity towards other, smaller religious groups” (Görlach, 2013). Nevertheless, a historical process in Europe has led to a clear hierarchy between secular and Christian authorities, settling the supremacy of the law over religious convictions. This is not a given in debates with Muslim communities, as Islam hasn’t been subjected to the same historical processes that shaped Christian churches in Europe (Görlach, 2013). Despite perceptions to the contrary, Turkey does share with Europe the long 20th century experiment with modernization and the eventual embrace of a market-democratic form. Indeed, in the 1920s and 1930s Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, founder of the Republic of Turkey, imposed numerous ‘westernizing’ reforms on the country and banned Islamic-religious mores from the public sphere (Dahlman, 2004), with the military as guarantor for the Kemalist principles. However, these fundamental changes in the structure of the country on social, cultural and political level – that moreover occurred over a short period of time – could obviously not be embraced by an entire population. Today, the current Turkish government, with its authoritarian shift through instrumentalising religion, seems to point towards a political Islam in place of an independence of state and religion.
CULTURAL DIPLOMACY

“It is not about ‘using culture for diplomatic reasons’. It is connecting cultures for better understanding.”

(de Greef, 2017)

THE CONCEPTS OF SOFT POWER AND CULTURAL DIPLOMACY

Throughout history cultural exchange has been intertwined with the pursuit of foreign relations. From the Great Exhibition of 1851 to the present day people have used culture to display themselves, assert their power and understand others (Bound et al., 2007). In that sense, cultural diplomacy has existed as a practice for centuries. However, over the past ten years, in response to societal developments -as mentioned in the introduction- the terms ‘soft power’ and ‘cultural diplomacy’ have received increasingly political attention and have gained traction within governments around the world (Dragičević Šešić, Mihaljinač & Rogac Mijatović, 2017). As political scientist Joseph Nye said “world politics today is like a three-dimensional chess game, incorporating military power, economic and transnational relations, as well as his three pillars of soft power: foreign policy, political value and culture” (as cited in Dragicević Šešić et al., 2017). Jacqueline Bertrand Lessac, executive producer and founder of Global Arts Corps New York, said in a similar line of thought: “Along with political and economic frameworks, international relations now encompasses ideas relating to home, mobility, identity, belonging and entitlement” (as cited in Global Seminar Salzburg, 2014, p. As far as theoretical perspective is considered, cultural diplomacy has appeared most of all in relation to the concept of soft power (Umińska-Woroniecka, 2016). Hence, it makes sense to begin from this point. ‘Soft power’ and ‘hard power’ both form the two broad approaches to conducting regional and international relations, and were first coined by political scientist Joseph Nye. According to Nye, ‘hard power’ and ‘soft power’ share the same objectives but use an entirely different set of factors and resources. If ‘hard power’ harbours an implicit threat or use of military or economic weapons, this is not the case in ‘soft power’ (Nye, 2004) –which is why both terms are often presented as opposite by political theorists. As defined by Nye (2004), ‘soft power’ is “the ability of one country to shape the preferences of another, and to do so through attraction and influence, rather than coercion”. In other words, it blends attraction, influence, and persuasion (Nye,
2004), drawing on certain cultural aspects, political values, and specific policies in order to induce other people to pursue ‘shared objectives’ (Hayden, 2012; Snow 2009). Consequently, it is also temporarily and contextually constrained since, according to van Elteren (2006), both current and historical relations or tensions with other national groups may affect projections of soft power as well as how these are potentially perceived/received. Hence, it seems comprehensible that Nye’s notion of ‘soft power’ has changed over the years (see Nye 1990, 2002 and 2004) - despite critics pointing to a lack of consistency – as there is some sense in having a concept reflecting the political context of the day (Nisbett, 2016).

However, similarly to soft power it has been argued that there is a lack of clarity about “what precisely the practice of cultural diplomacy entails” (Mark, 2010). In fact, the concept has been handled in various ways by many academic articles (see for example Finn, 2003; Vickers, 2004; Channick 2005; Arndt, 2006; Hicks, 2007; Brademas, 2009). According to Bound et al. (2007), the concept of cultural diplomacy is simply “not easily defined”. This might reside in the fact that the notion of cultural diplomacy itself encompasses two broad and ambiguous terms, namely ‘culture’ and ‘diplomacy’. Hence, a debate over definitions of cultural diplomacy should best be preceded by the explanation of the term ‘culture’ itself. When it comes to culture one could find enough material to write an entire book. In the present context, ‘culture’ can be best understood by referring to both of the definitions proposed by cultural study academic Raymond Williams (as cited in European Union, 2017):

- an aesthetic definition: ‘the works and practices of intellectual and especially artistic activity. This seems often now the most widespread use: culture is music, literature, painting and sculpture, theatre and film’; and

- an anthropological definition ‘which indicates a particular way of life, whether of a people, a period, a group, or humanity in general’.

Rather than being opposed to each other, it can be said that the latter encompasses the former, but not the other way around. Based on the Mexico City Declaration on Cultural Policies by the UNESCO (1982), ‘culture’ can further be understood as:

“the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterize a society or social group (...) and includes not only arts and letters, but also modes of life, the fundamental human rights, value systems, traditions, and beliefs”.

In the light of both definitions, the importance of intercultural understanding as a key factor to peaceful co-existence appears quite evident. Indeed ‘culture’, both a source and function of one’s identity, is a major determinant of how people perceive each other and negotiate differences (Bound et al., 2007). In fact, ‘cultural identity’ is probably the most important aspect of an individual’s over-all identity as it forms the basis on which to rely in order to interpret the environment and the world, as well as relating to other people (Ménissier, 2007). Today, as Bound et al. point out, we can no longer think of “relatively static cultures presenting themselves to each other for understanding and appraisal. Instead, cultures are meeting, mingling and morphing” (p. 19).

Anthony Parsons, a former British diplomat, pointed out some of the advantages of using culture as an instrument of diplomacy. Here is what he said (as cited in Kitsou, 2013):

“It is dazzling obvious. If you are thoroughly familiar with someone else’s language and literature, (…), its arts and its people, you will be instinctively disposed, all other things being equal (…) to support him actively when you consider him right and to avoid punishing him too fiercely when you regard him as being wrong”. (p. 22).

While this statement appears very honourable, a study carried out by Nisbett and Doeser (2017) on how United Nations diplomats use the arts in their negotiations revealed that diplomats gave over 150 different responses to what cultural diplomacy is actually for. There is, in fact, no agreement on the objectives of cultural diplomacy (see Mark, 2009; Ang, Isar & Mar, 2015; Dragićević Šešić et al., 2017), except that it appears to play an increasingly important role.

So what then is cultural diplomacy? According to the most frequently cited definition presented by American political scientist and author Milton Cummings (2003), cultural diplomacy is “the exchange of ideas, information, art and other aspects of culture among nations and their peoples in order to foster mutual understanding” (p. 1). It is important to note that this definition does not suggest that cultural diplomacy is a State matter, nor that its purpose is political. Yet, as argued by Nisbett (2016) the word ‘diplomacy’ has “connotations of negotiations, peacekeeping and international relations, and governments directly and indirectly fund cultural diplomacy” (p. 133). While it is often seen as part of foreign relations (Mitchell,
1986), it is however unclear how seriously politicians take it. Nowadays, priority is increasingly put on determining the actors of cultural diplomacy in order to pin down some kind of definition (Ang et al., 2015; Uminska-Woroniecka, 2016; Dragićević Šešić et al., 2017). But even this appears a daunting task as the actors performing diplomacy are evolving too. As Barston (2013) emphasised in his book *Modern diplomacy*, it is unwise to see diplomacy from a narrow, traditional perspective in the sense of Arndt (2006) – see further below. Indeed, diplomacy today has many participants such as politicians, advisors, civil servants, but also international organisations and multinational companies, NGOs, up to ordinary citizens (Barston, 2013).

Whatever models exist for cultural diplomacy, one is struck by the variety of approaches to the analysis of this topic. Hecht and Donfried (2010) summed it up quite well by writing: “One set (…) of authors grapples with the tension between propaganda and diplomacy, another set accentuates the use of diplomacy as an instrument to work at the exclusion of politics, a third defines cultural diplomacy beyond the realm of the state” (p. 9-10). According to Ang et al. (2015), much of this indeterminateness stems from the “conflation of cultural diplomacy in its traditional sense, which is essentially interest-driven governmental practice” (as defined by Arndt, 2006), with cultural relations, “which tends to be driven by ideals rather than interests and is practiced largely by non-state actors” (p. 365). Indeed, these two terms are increasingly used as synonymous as differences can be complex and fairly subtle. Nisbett (2013) even claims that it is now widely accepted that there is an abundance of terms – cultural diplomacy, international cultural relations, international cultural cooperation, etc- and that these are used “vaguely, loosely and interchangeably”. Dragićević Šešić et al. (2017) point out for example that if cultural relations are understood as “the execution and the craft without or with little state influence” (p. 212), some international cultural activities can actually not develop without support from politics (e.g. encouraged by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, etc.).

Although ‘soft power’ seems to be taken more seriously in recent years, there is still little research on the role of culture in politics (Ang et al., 2015). While cultural diplomacy is often dismissed as a lesser tool that will always come secondary to ‘hard power’ (see Mark, 2010; Reeves 2007; Riordan, 2003; Vaughan, 2005), literature suggests that limited attention is paid to cultural relations (Dragićević Šešić et al.,
This is partly linked to the inconsistency around the application, understanding and usage of these terms and concepts (Dragićević Šešić et al., 2017), along with the difficulty in determining the long-term impact of such practices (Mark, 2009). Despite us not having a clear sense of these terms in theory nor in practice, many academics and politicians do actually support the benefit from carrying out practices of soft power. Bound et al. (2007) for instance, even though highlighting the difficulty to define cultural diplomacy, claim that such practices are “vital in providing the operating context for politics” (p. 20). For American diplomat and academic Cynthia Schneider (as cited in Dragićević Šešić et al., 2017), “they will not solve political crises but they can help to reverse the decline in relations through increased understanding and respect” (p. 109). Former Minister of Defence of Bosnia and Herzegovina Selmo Cikotić (n.d.) highlighted the importance of cultural diplomacy, “especially in today’s environment of high interdependence as major feature of modern international relations”.

If prior analysis could leave us indecisive as to whether or not cultural diplomacy has a critical role to play, following arguments clearly show the relevance of such practice. Firstly, one should note that practices of soft power don’t necessarily cross national borders. According to Dragićević Šešić et al. (2017) cultural diplomacy can and should entail internal diplomatic actions within the borders and boundaries of what is now ‘the super-complex’ cultural demographic internal to European nation states. Indeed, global neoliberal capitalism, with its craving for cheap labour, has led to most European countries now facing an extraordinarily diverse and internationalised population. As duly reminded by Dragićević Šešić et al. (2017), we cannot simply assume to share historic European values of Enlightenment or democracy when, at the same time, the terms of these population’s migration did not necessarily contain such a demand. Hence, as pointed out by Jonathan Vickery, professor at the Centre for Cultural Policy Studies at the University of Warwick (as cited in Dragićević Šešić et al., 2017):

“*Our concepts of freedom and civil society are being re-drawn through the reality of a substantive diversity, where even the golden apples of ‘democracy’ or ‘human rights’ are contested or mean different things to different incoming minority groups*”. (p. 47)

Obviously, intercultural understanding is not only crucial between different nations.
but also within nations, as cultural diversity is very much present on national level. Secondly, we are seeing the emergence of subsets of cultural diplomacy. To name but a few examples, there is ‘dance diplomacy’, ‘gastrodipomacy’, ‘twitter diplomacy’, ‘cinematic diplomacy’ and many more. As laid out through several examples in *Cultural Diplomacy, Arts, Festivals and Geopolitics* by Dragićević Šešić et al. (2017), these practices are forms of ‘diplomacy from below’. This means that there is “a role for ordinary citizens within International Relations, moving cultural diplomacy away from the formal spaces occupied by political diplomats and ambassadors, to street food stalls, festivals and teenagers bedrooms” (p. 110). Some inspiration can be drawn from another, yet closely related science, which in Conflict Resolution is called ‘peace-building from below’. The concept includes grassroots theories, which focus more on “ordinary” people and agents such as grassroots organisations and activists (Ramsbotham, Woodhouse & Miall, 2011). Monika Mokre, in her contributing article *Cultural diplomacy from below* that can be found back in the book *Cultural Diplomacy, Arts, Festivals and Geopolitics* by Dragićević Šešić et al. (2017), explains ‘cultural diplomacy from below’ drawing on projects built by refugees and migrants in Austria. She argues that since WWII, similarly to Germany, several groups of refugees and migrants have come to Austria, thereby, changing the populations as well as the culture of this country. Over time, migrants founded or joined cultural associations, which came to play an important role in the ‘host-country’. From a broader theoretical perspective, Mokre (2015) says, these cultural and artistic activities/associations can be understood as a contribution to democracy. In upholding the culture of the country of origin on the one hand, and stimulating cultural encounters on the other hand, they help negotiate a new collective identity. Mokre thus concludes that is seems plausible to claim that “a specific form of cultural diplomacy from below and within - in the form of artistic projects - has developed as a consequence of forced and voluntary migration to Austria”(as cited in Dragićević Šešić et al., 2017, p. 68). As pointed out by Gonçalves and Majhanovich (2016), if art can be used to “express identities and concerns, to preserve and fabricate memories and to state ideas and ideals, then we can also use it too to explore, to understand and to get better acquainted with the cultural, social, ideological, … diversity” that societies are made of (p. 6). This is why artistic activities are at the heart of cultural diplomacy.
FILM AS CULTURAL DIPLOMACY

As a subset of cultural diplomacy, cinematic diplomacy focuses on the use of film for establishing intercultural dialogue. Cinema and foreign policy have long been intertwined, from WWII American screenings in Europe to Cold War film exchanges opposing the USA and the USSR who used films to showcase the benefits of the countries’ respective ideologies (Gardels & Medavoy, 2009; Harvey 2005). According to former U.S. Ambassador and academic Cynthia Schneider (2009), film has only recently regained its image in diplomacy and is now used as ‘cinematic diplomacy’ by governments and Film Festivals. The focus of this reinvented concept is on peace through intercultural dialogue and understanding; the underlying argument being that “film not only portrays cultural differences, but also shared human themes, thus connecting nations as equals” (Herrschner, 2015, p. 127). In addition to that, television and film narratives have the potential to shift perceptions on a large scale. For instance, by humanising and normalising people otherwise seen as threatening and alien, narratives seen on screen have the ability to reduce bigotry and prejudice (Schneider, 2017). As Stephen Hutchings (2008) makes clear in one of his essays on cinema and intercultural dialogue: “cinema serves as an ideal space where definitions of Self and Other can be articulated, negotiated, and disseminated” (as cited in Norris, 2013, p. 140). Further, a survey carried out by the UNESCO in 2009 regarding film funding highlighted the importance to focus on diversity. Former UNESCO director Koïchiro Matsuura stated at the time that film productions were a “brilliant example for how the cultural industry –as a carrier of identities, values, and content- could open the door to dialogue and understanding of cultures” (as cited in Merkel, 2009). All this aligns with the idea of Kulturaustausch (cultural exchange), promoted by the German Federal Foreign Office as their credo for cultural diplomacy. The German-Turkish Film Festival employs films to create exactly such an exchange. Through bringing together Turkish and German films on one platform, it encourages dialogue between German citizens, the Turkish diaspora in Germany as well as Turkish citizens coming to Germany in the context of the Festival.

FILM FESTIVALS AS CINEMATIC DIPLOMACY

Film Festivals proliferated in particular from the late 1960s and, while starting as a European phenomenon with the aim of forming a counterweight to Hollywood, it
is important to characterise the network as open to participation of any entity (de Valck, 2007). Today, Film Festivals are seen as true international events. While their main mission is to give the filmmakers opportunities to present their work, their purpose is broader. Film Festivals are at the same time a platform for exposure and meeting. As places of reciprocal showcase of national films, taking cultural works out of their original context and disseminating them through other cultural circles, they offer a platform for different rhetoric on national character and ideas (Herrschner, 2015; Wong, 2011). By offering the audience the possibilities to enjoy new productions, to be confronted with new visions and participate in debates, it brings cultures together. And because festivals can start or simply permit constructive dialogue, bridge ideas, and facilitate access to large numbers of people to connect and interact, they are actual instruments of cultural diplomacy (Dragićević Šešić et al., 2017). De Valck, Kredell and Loist (2016) argue that the study of Film Festivals does, indeed, go further than only the study of the film screened. It also encompasses a host of other disciplinary approaches that keep the public sphere in focus, such as cultural diplomacy.

In this line of thought, two categories by anthropologist Victor Turner (2008) appear essential for analysing festivals, namely the notions of ‘communitas’ and ‘liminality’. Starting with the former, ‘communitas’ can be understood as ‘social anti-structure’. Referring to festivals, the notion stands for a “potential community, a community in becoming that carries a possible connotation of togetherness: the community and equality among people when social order and social roles are suspended” (Dragićević Šešić et al., 2017, p. 134). According to Turner, there are three kinds of ‘communitas’: the normative, the ideological, and the spontaneous or existential communitas. Turner describes this last category of ‘spontaneous or existential communitas’ as “breaching the norm-governed social structure and directly confronting it. It is immediate, usually short-lasting, and its main power and quality is the experience of participating” (Turner, 2008). Festivals could be broadly defined as spontaneous or existential communitas because “they are immediate and short-lasting and create a possibility of equality and participation. They are extraordinary events, in an extraordinary place, at an extraordinary time for short-lasting communitas” (Dragićević Šešić et al., 2017, p. 134). According to Iordanova and Rhyne (2009) the unique character of these ‘time-events’ is created through the enhancement of
standard programming by creating an interpretative framework around each film. This framework consists of a limited number of screenings, Q&A sessions, the presence of ‘stars’, and the marketing before and during the festival. But this is not all; the program of festivals goes actually beyond the mere framework around films. For instance, the opening and closing night, panel discussions, musical entertainment program, etc. all contribute to the festival experience. Nichols describes this experience by the audience as similar to that of an anthropologist or tourist immersing themselves into a different culture. Indeed, as places of social and cultural contact, Film Festivals serve as “mediation of collective identities by combining cinema and its ‘dream-like state of reception’ with –as de Valck calls it- a ‘politics of participation’ and ‘experience of difference’” (Herrschner, 2015, p. 129); thereby alluding to the festival’s potential for cultural diplomacy (Herrschner, 2015). An additional important point with regard to the festival experience can be explained through the previously mentioned notion of ‘liminality’ (Turner, 2008). This concept draws on both the idea of festivals as ‘time-event’ and as ‘social anti-structure’. In festival terms, the liminality is “a moment of discontinuity of the usual time in which a new (symbolic) time takes place, causing a representative standstill and a temporary collapse of social order” (Dragićević Šešić et al., 2017, p. 133). In that sense, the time of the film and the time of the festival are inextricable for audience members who, put on a foot of equality, view the films in this specific context (Iordanova and Rhyne, 2009).

Going back to the first part of the definition of spontaneous or existential communitas –“breaching the norm-governed social structure and directly confronting it”- one can best refer to academic Aleksandra Jovičević and her contributing article Festivals as Social Dramas and Metaphors: Between Popular and Subversive in Dragićević Šešić et al. (2017). She starts by highlighting the large proliferation of festivals since today almost every city hosts a festival of some kind. This trend of festivalization of culture, according to Jovičević, can lead to a certain vulgarization and simplification of serious research and topics, especially with regard to festivals that attract a large number of ticket paying audience. However, on second thoughts, she says (as cited in Dragićević Šešić et al., 2017), even if considered entertainment, festivals with intellectual and aesthetic agenda can:
represent a counter point to an overwhelming new populism and anti-intellectualism that is reflected in almost every postmodern society, and not only in the electronic media, but also in the larger political debate, as well as on every level of social life (...). Therefore, festivals with specific agendas (...) can promote a quality debate, otherwise absent in the wider society and perhaps they could become an instrument for social change because they assert alternative modalities of thinking and debating. (p. 136).

In short, Aleksandra Jović points towards the realization that festivals seen as ‘social dramas and metaphors’ today can be more important for their social and political impact in comparison to their aesthetic and entertaining dimension. In the same line of thought, Delanty et al. (2011) posits ‘festivalization’ of cultural diplomacy as a shift away from the axis of elite/popular culture towards an idealised, new democratic space. Habermas describes the public sphere as a “discursive arena for critical dispute and open debate on issues of public interest and thus a space in which opinions are formed” (Herrschner, 2015, p. 130; Wong, 2011, p. 226). According to Wong (2001), viewing Film Festivals as public spheres means focusing on the two-way conversation a festival engages in as well as the critical productivity it possesses. Indeed both counterparts, filmmakers and professional managers on one side and audiences on the other, deserve special attention for their possible contribution to the processes towards ‘emancipated community’. In that sense, festival audience(s) can represent a passage from the spontaneous or existential communitas to the ideological one9 that can offer a new model for society. As pointed out by Goldhill (as cited in Dragićević Šešić et al., 2017, p. 139), “every public interaction, thus the festival, can be considered a political act, promoting and projecting forms of citizen’s participation in the state: to be in an audience is above all to play the role of democratic citizen”.

To conclude, it makes sense to view Film Festivals as Erfahrungsräume (a space for experience) (Stringer, 2003); emphasising how the festival offers a unique experience by creating an atmosphere of belonging (Roesch, 2010). This leads us to Anderson’s (2006) concept of ‘imagined communities’. Anderson describes ‘nations’ as ‘imagined communities’ and proposes the following definition of the nation:

9 The ideological communitas, as defined by Turner (2008), comprises history and theory, conceptualizing previous communities, and may offer a utopian model of society.
It is an imagined political community (...). It is imagined, because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion (...). It is imagined as a community, because regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always connected as a deep, horizontal comradeship.

To put it in a simple way, ‘imagined communities’ – such as nations – are based on an intangible connection bonding the group; hence creating a sense of belonging. Indeed, in the ‘live’ space of the festival, organisers, filmmakers and audiences form an actual community by the act of their very real togetherness. At the same time, they foster an imagined community that comes to live in the act of watching a film and imagining distant human beings becoming part of one’s own experiences (Iordanova, 2010).

Thus, according to Iordanova (2010), the festival’s set-up extends an invitation to “engage in what is essentially a political act of imagined belonging and to continue the nation building process that is pre-supposed by extending it to the diaspora and beyond” (p. 13).

FILM FESTIVALS AND MIGRATION

Within multicultural societies, Film Festivals related to diasporas and ‘imagined communities’ usually happen at the periphery of the mainstream public sphere. Iordanova distinguishes between three types of such “diaspora-linked” Film Festivals. Without going into too many details, the present research paper calls for our attention regarding the two first types of festival presented by Iordanova, as the German-Turkish Film Festival can probably be positioned somewhere in-between. Firstly, she points to festivals as tools of cultural diplomacy. These are for the major part supported by state-level efforts or other politically powerful body, hence benefitting from a higher visibility and positioning within the festival circuit. According to Iordanova (2010) one can speak of cultural diplomacy when such assistance is systematic and sustained. Moreover, it should be noted that in some cases cultural diplomacy initiatives are backed solidly by interested parties in the source countries. For instance, The German Federal Ministry of Education and Research, which is also responsible for culture, largely supports the Goethe Institute in the organisation of Film Festivals abroad. Then, special attention needs to be paid
to what Iordanova (2010) presents as festivals set up to promote political and identity agenda. Such festivals can be divided into three groups, so Iordanova, each related to different categories of ‘imagined communities’. First there are festivals build on a certain supranational agenda, often linked to a shared geographical space or linguistic practice. Secondly, there are festivals engaged in identity building in the context of the on-going struggle experienced by certain dispersed populations; and thirdly there are festivals that promote political agendas. The latter aim to foster understanding and togetherness between different groups, thus creating a specific kind of ephemeral ‘imagined community’. However, it should be noted that many such festivals have difficulties sustaining themselves and securing continuous financial backing. Migrants themselves are more often than not the driving force behind those festivals because they are still close to their cultural roots and/or are poorly connected to the culture of their new host societies. Iordanova (2010) further states that the production of such festivals is a personal project for many programmers, who function as important cultural mediators. By targeting the members of the respective diasporas while also striving to make a mark in the cultural space of the location where they are held, these festivals are fostering the creation of ‘imagined communities’ and, thereby, the negotiation of new collective identities. Hence, Film Festivals related to diasporas can help overcome fragmentation by creating a momentary site for mutual empowerment at-the-margin that benefits all groups in the context of multicultural ‘global cities’ (Hjort, 2009).
GERMAN-TURKISH CULTURAL RELATIONS

The Federal Republic of Germany stands quite apart with its “galaxy of cultural diplomacy”, also called auswärtige Kulturpolitik. In fact, German cultural diplomacy plays an increasingly important role in German foreign politics. It started with the German government of Chancellor Willy Brandt (1969-1974), who recognized the potential of Nyes’s concept of soft power and called cultural diplomacy the “fourth pillar of German foreign policy” (Denscheilmann, 2010; Schulte, 2000). Hence, during the 20th century a unique ‘German model of cultural diplomacy’ has emerged, describing the mandate of one entire branch of foreign policy to independent non-government organizations (Stringer, 2003). There are a plethora of different institutions active in the field – of which a list can be found on the website of the Institute for foreign relations (Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen, n.d.). However, the first organization to come to mind is without doubt the Goethe Institute (GI). As Germany’s main organ of cultural diplomacy, funded to a large extent by the Federal Foreign Office, its aim is to “represent an authentic and varied picture of contemporary Germany” – mainly abroad (Denscheilmann, 2010). The GI understands film as a particularly useful medium to engage in a Kulturaustausch (cultural exchange) and engages widely in contemporary cinematic diplomacy. In this context, it should be pointed out that Germany today emphasizes the notion of cultural exchange as its leading principle of cultural foreign politics (Herrschner, 2015). As stated by the Goethe Institute (as cited in Dragićević Šešić et al., 2017, p. 89), culture is often considered in itself to be:

“a unifying, mediating and supporting element” in the process of globalisation - concerned with “entering in dialogue with one another, encountering, and getting to know one another on the same level in order to overcome prejudice in a meeting which takes place as independently as possible of political dogma and on a peaceful basis”. (p. 4).

As a matter of fact, cultural diplomacy, intercultural dialogue and international cultural co-operation do not take place in political vacuums, nor on economic islands. When looking at German-Turkish relations, as it is the focus of our subject, cultural events have often been used as chess pieces in diplomacy between the two countries. But if cultural exchange should serve as a tool for promoting understanding, it appears political tensions are in the way for some time now. Reimer Volker, head of
the Goethe Institute in Istanbul explained that in the German public debate Turkey is being reduced to Erdogan’s policy and that barely anything else, apart from that, is being perceived. “In Germany there is this idea that Turkey must be boycotted, in order to not support the Turkish Government. Anyone who, as an artist, still goes to Turkey, is often pressured to justify themselves for it” (“Aus Angst vor Erdogan”, 2017). As recent examples show, cooperation in the field seems at the least fragilised. In 2017 the theatre Schaubühne in Berlin decided to cancel their performance planned at the Theatre festival in Istanbul. The reason therefore was the arrest of journalists, academics and human rights activists in Turkey, making the theatre fear for its own security if performing. In the same year, German Art College Burg Giebichenstein put a halt to their long-standing scholarship program in Istanbul. Further, in the frame of an exhibition in a German town on Art from Anatolia, three museums cancelled participation on short notice (“Aus Angst vor Erdogan”, 2017).

Nevertheless, Minister of State at the Federal Foreign Office, Marie Böhmer, stresses that given the on-going tensions between the two countries, cultural relations between Germany and Turkey are essential. At the opening of the international book fair in Istanbul in 2016 she said: “Books and literature mediate between cultures and help to communicate beyond borders. Also, in difficult times we put great emphasis on intercultural understanding and dialogue – with the Government and the Parliament and civil society” (“Böhmer”, 2016). Joachim Sartorius, Jury-Chef at the Culture Academy Tarabya in Istanbul, that promotes exchange between Turkish and German artists, made a similar statement. According to him, especially in times of tense political relations, German-Turkish cultural exchange is “more important than ever” (2017). While further adding that all artistic areas are in demand: from architecture, to music, to film. In order to encourage the exchange, the Tarabya Culture Academy has, for the first time, open up scholarship to any artist and cultural producer who wants to apply (“Kulturakademie Tarabya”, 2017).

However, as the word exchange implies, both party concerned have to play along. This appears to be more problematic on Turkish side, as President Erdogan has always sought to promote an Islamic culture in Turkey, separate from foreign influence, so Sinan Ciddi, director of Georgetown University’s Institute of Turkish

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10 The Culture Academy Tarabya in Istanbul is being supported by the Goethe-Institute, Germany’s worldwide cultural institute.
Studies in an interview with *The New York Times* (2018). Indeed, while Turkey becomes more and more sceptical towards the West, promotion of exacerbated nationalism under Erdogan seems to gain ground. The article from *The New York Times* published on March 2018 sums it up quite well: “As Turkey turns inward, cultural exchange falls by the side” (Quinn, 2018). To mention but a few examples, in November 2016 Turkey withdrew from the arts funding body Creative Europe, the European Commission's framework program for support to culture and audio-visual sectors. The reason therefore was money from Creative Europe being used to fund a concert at the German embassy in Istanbul that dealt with the Armenian genocide. Another significant example draws on our present case study: The Turkish Culture Ministry decided 2018 that Turkey would not sponsor the German-Turkish Film Festival in Nuremberg. Director of the festival Adil Kaya said in a telephone interview (as cited in Quinn, 2018) that it was “a sign of an increasingly inward-looking Turkey that is no longer open for cultural dialogues with other countries, especially with Germany”. Adil Kaya explains it as follows: “If they give money, they do not understand why they might get criticism in return” (as cited in Quinn, 2018).

**Preliminary conclusion**

The previous literature review revealed that while cultural diplomacy remains difficult to pin down in theoretical terms, the practice has overall received increased attention and recognition over the past years. With regard to the German-Turkish relations, many -from Turkish intellectuals and academics to German politicians- have highlighted the importance of such practice in order to maintain dialogue, especially during tense political times. Next to this, film festivals, as cultural time-events with their supporting program, appear to have the potential of creating ‘imagined communities’ by offering a democratic space for intercultural exchange and debate. In this context, at the crossroad between politics and culture, an alternative approach to analyzing film festivals appears of interest in order to highlight the interrelation with the political context and their potential as a platform for cultural diplomacy.
Research Design

The present research will be approached through a case study as research strategy. According to Yin (2003), the need for case studies comes from wanting to understand complex social phenomena because “the case study method allows investigators to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events” (p. 2). Indeed, case studies are a research strategy in which a program, event, activity, or individuals are thoroughly explored (Stake, 1995) as the focus lies on understanding “the dynamics present within single settings” (Eisenhardt, 1989).

Through the specific case of the Turkish-German Film Festival in Nuremberg, the present paper takes up the task of giving an insight into the Festival’s contribution to the intercultural dialogue within the context of German-Turkish bilateral relations. The central research question being: “Can the Turkish-German Film Festival be seen as a platform for cultural diplomacy in the context of German-Turkish relations?” However, as the focus lies on this specific case, it should be noted that any conclusion about the forthcoming analysis is to be considered in its due context and cannot be automatically extrapolated. As highlighted by Yin (2003), a common concern regarding case studies is indeed that “they provide little basis for scientific generalization” (p. 10).

OPERATIONALISATION OF THE RESEARCH QUESTION

In order to formulate a response to the central research question “Can the Turkish-German Film Festival be seen as a platform for cultural diplomacy in the context of German-Turkish relations?” following sub-questions must be answered:

(1) **How does the Film Festival profile itself?**
This sub-question will provide an insight into the festival’s purpose and what its curators aim to achieve through it. The focus herein is put on the ‘self-representation/positioning’ of the Turkish-German Film Festival.

(2) **Who are the driving forces behind the Turkish-German Film Festival?**
As seen in the literature review, priority is nowadays increasingly put on determining the actors/funders of cultural diplomacy in order to determine whether or not certain practices –such as film festivals- can be understood as a
form of cultural diplomacy (Ang et al., 2015; Umińska-Woroniecka, 2016; Dragićević Šešić et al., 2017). Regarding the analysis of the Festival’s funding we hope for a better understanding of the dynamics behind the Festival and its potential political correlation.

(3) Where lies the focus in the Festival’s programming and can it be linked to topics of interest to cultural diplomacy?

A film festival revolves first and foremost around the films being screened. Hence, an analysis of the programming appears of great value in order to point towards the Festival’s potential recurrent themes, focus topics, tackled issues, etc. The intention here is to expose the programming’s potential contribution to matters of cultural diplomacy such as: films tackling socio-political issues in Turkey and Germany, migration and life in-between two cultures, narratives relating to religion, ethnicity and identity, etc.

(4) How does the supporting program contribute to intercultural exchange?

A major aspect of a film festival is, next to its programming, its supporting program, which turns the festival into a participative experience. In order to determine the potential contribution of the supporting program to intercultural exchange and cultural diplomacy one has to know what the supporting program consists of as well as its implications.

CASE SELECTION

The choice for this particular Film Festival is based on several motives. Firstly, no research about the Turkish-German Film Festival in Nuremberg has been carried out up to this day, making the present research paper a first in terms of academic analysis of the Festival and its link to cultural diplomacy. Indeed, information and other publications on individual, small-scale cultural festivals –such as the Turkish-German Film Festival- are often scarce or even unavailable in comparison to large well-known festivals. Secondly, as confirmed by previous literature review, there is still little research on the role of culture in politics (Ang et al., 2015) and cultural diplomacy is often dismissed as a lesser tool (Mark, 2010; Reeves, 2007; Riordan, 2003; Vaughan, 2005). Given Germany’s multicultural society with its large share of Turkish inhabitants and Turkey’s polarization spilling on German soil, it appears of utmost interest to look into the role of Nuremberg’s
Turkish-German Film Festival as a platform for cultural diplomacy. In fact, the present analysis could provide valuable insights with regards to the role of such an event in helping to foster understanding and maintain dialogue, especially in times of political friction. Thirdly, a more personal reason drew me to this particular case: the fact that I myself am half-German, grew up in-between three cultures and have German family living in Nuremberg. This makes up for a particular bond regarding this research topic; not to mention the access to information through mastering the German language.

METHODOLOGY

For the analysis of the Turkish-German Film Festival as a platform for cultural diplomacy we have chosen the triangulation method. Also known as “multi-method approach”, triangulation makes use of different methods for the study of an empirical phenomenon (Gillham, 2000; Jick, 1979; Kelle 2001) and, as highlighted by several authors (Hartley, 2004; Lamnek, 2010; Yin, 2003), is often used in case study research. The main idea behind it is to improve accuracy of analysis, explanation, and judgments by collecting different kinds of data bearing on the same issue (Cox & Hassard, 2005; Jick, 1979). In that sense, the triangulation method helps to capture a “more complete, holistic, and contextual portrayal of the unit under study” (Jick, 1979, p. 603). Indeed, for the present research, it is crucial we try to understand (not merely describe) the dynamics of the Film Festival within the larger context of German-Turkish relations and how it contributes to the intercultural debate. Consequently, a thorough documentary research about and around the Festival (media echo) will be completed by in-depth interviews in order to make sense of the data collected and shed light on the implications of this yearly event.

The present analysis will be carried out under a constructivist approach. Indeed, choosing for this framework allows us to take into account the larger context, the fact that meanings are constructed (interviewees’ opinions), and that I myself, as inquirer, will generate a meaning from the data collected (interpretation of data) (Creswell, 2009). Moreover, as pointed out by Deniz & Lincoln (1998), triangulation and constructivism go hand in hand. In fact, in an atmosphere of constructivism triangulation appears to be particularly relevant as it can help to clarify meaning by providing multiple perceptions.
As above-mentioned, a documentary analysis of the Festival’s materials will be complemented by insights from semi-guided interviews as well as personal observations in order to formulate an answer to the research question. Details on each method and its specific use will hereby be presented:

1. **In-depth Interviews**

We have chosen to carry out in-depth semi-guided interviews, meaning that a broad interview outline was prepared beforehand within which the respondents were questioned with regards to the research question and sub-questions. As a non-standardized interview form, the outline consisted in a list of open questions that formed the basis of a conversation between the interviewee and myself (Gläser & Laudel, 2009). This form of interview was chosen because it allows not only asking factual questions but also enquiring about the respondent’s position and opinions (Flick, 2002; Yin, 2003). The interviews were carried out between the 15th and 20th of April 2018 and lasted in average 45 to 60 minutes. Regarding the selection of the interviewees, attention was paid to their relevance for the present inquiry. Hence, people with an expertise and preferably long-time experience within the Festival. For practical reasons - location abroad, limited timing, and availability- the interview list is limited to six people.

*List of interviewees*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Function within the Festival</th>
<th>Starting date</th>
<th>Function outside the Festival</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aytén Akyildiz</td>
<td>Festival director</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Works for the FFTD all year round</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Program director</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Festival co-founder</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basak Özdemir</td>
<td>Jury member (Öngören prize for Human Rights and democracy)</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Educational counselor for migrants (Munich)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georg Escher</td>
<td>Occasional moderator for panel discussions (+ long-time festival goer)</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Political journalist for the Nuremberg Newspaper</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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11 FFTD: Film Festival Türkei/Deutschland: original name oft he Turkish-German Film Festival.
2. **Documentary research**

Next to the interviews and as part of the triangulation method, an extensive documentary research has been carried out that involves the use of texts, documents and videos as source materials. The documentary research is essential in this case with regard to collecting information on, amongst others: funding, programming, supporting program, and media echo. Indeed, while interviews will provide first-hand insights and help put existing information into perspective, the documentary research provides the basis for the analysis.

**Documentary research: main sources**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What</th>
<th>Where</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Research aim</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Festival website</td>
<td><a href="https://www.fftd.net">https://www.fftd.net</a></td>
<td>Online</td>
<td>Info on Festival/year (program, funders, guests, awards, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Festival booklets</td>
<td>Received at the Festival</td>
<td>Print</td>
<td>Info on Festival/year (program, sponsors, guests, prizes, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspaper articles</td>
<td>Festival website: <a href="https://www.fftd.net">https://www.fftd.net</a> &gt; “press” &gt; “media echo”-archives</td>
<td>Online</td>
<td>Festival’s resonance and linkage to political context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Main sources:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Hürriyet (German version)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Milliyet (German version)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Nürnberg Nachrichten</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Nürnberger Zeitung</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Plärrer Magazin</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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12 KKQ: KunstKulturQuartier: headquarters and main venue of the Turkish-German Film Festival. The KKQ also serves as venue throughout the year for various cultural events in Nuremberg.
Based on the documentary research for the extraction of data, we will furthermore proceed to a thematic content analysis of the Festival’s programming in order to gather additional relevant information. The thematic content analysis will be carried out as follows:

- **Time-span**: 15 years, from 2004 to 2018
- **Items of analysis**: 45 films
  The analysis will focus for each year on the *opening film*, the *winner of the ‘feature film competition’*, and the *Öngören-prize winner*. This means that three films/year will be analyzed on a macro-level.
- **Selection criteria**:
  a. Opening films: as an established part of the Festival’s yearly opening ceremony, the opening film benefits from a special screening context with increased media attention.
  b. Winners of the feature film competition: this category exists since 2004. Taking each year’s best feature winner appears as a good sample to gain insight into the overall tackled issues.
  c. Öngören-prize winners: this special prize honors every year a film (and its filmmaker) that focuses on themes around democracy and human rights.

**PROCEEDING AND STRUCTURE**

A succinct introduction will precede the multi-perspective analysis and presents the Turkish-German Film Festival from a historical point of view. The analysis of the Film Festival will then be divided into three main parts:

In the first part, we will look into the driving forces standing behind the Festival, namely: its founders and its funders. An important point hereby is to establish whether or not an influence is exerted on the Festival from the side of politics. Regarding the analysis of the Festival’s funding, we will proceed to an inventory of the main benefactors in each category (subsidies, sponsors, circle of friends) over the years (2004 to 2018), with a special attention for the funds provenance (from...
Germany/Turkey; from the public/private sector). Next to this, the Festival’s main mission and self-positioning will be investigated through in-depth interviews combined with a documentary research.

In the second part, we will look into the content-level of the Turkish-German Film Festival. The main objective hereby is to determine whether or not the Festival can be seen as a catalyst for debate around German-Turkish relations/issues. Here, we will proceed in two steps. Firstly, a thematic content analysis (as detailed further above) will be carried out with regards to the Festival’s programming. Secondly, we will look into the supporting program of the Festival with a special focus on the podium debates.

Finally, we will briefly look into the Festival’s recognition on national level in order to gain an insight into the reach of its actions.
The German-Turkish film festival in Nuremberg

Analysis

THE BIRTH OF A FESTIVAL

The small-scaled event that started 27 years ago under the name of “the Turkish film week - Nuremberg” was originally born from the longing of a group of young Turks of the second generation for their national cinema. In 1992, with the help of the Nuremberg Office for Culture and Recreation and the “Kultur Forum Türkei-Deutschland (Cultural Forum Turkey-Germany), Adil Kaya -festival director up to this day- together with a few friends created the first “Turkish film week ’92”. Starting off with one guest and six films, the organizers’ initial aspiration was to “offer the public in the Nuremberg region an insight into the Turkish film world in order to enrich the multicultural society” (Kulturinitiative Nürnberg, 1992, p. 1); and a way for these young Turks to preserve a piece of their home culture. Such initiatives, known as the “Turkish film days”, already existed in other places in Germany such as in Mannheim, Munich, Essen or Cologne. However, contrary to the latters the Turkish film week would develop over time into a much more prominent film platform, unique in its genre. As soon as 1994, the festival’s initial objective was broadened under the motto “encounter of the German and Turkish cinemas” with corresponding co-productions and guests (Kaya & Kulaoglu, 1994, p. 2). Nevertheless, the desire to open a window through films into the versatility and contradictions of the country that is Turkey always remained a priority. For five consecutive years after its start, the “Turkish film days” presented new works from the Turkish cinema along with a short-film and documentary competition (since 1994) as a reflection of the international cinema in Germany. In response to a growing success, in 1998 and again in 2000, an attempt was made to develop the film days into an international Film Festival: the InterFilm Festival of Nuremberg. It still encompassed the program of the Turkish film days but also presented contemporary films from Greece and Italy as well as the intercultural cinema of Europe. The idea behind it was to showcase Germany’s multicultural society by presenting the cinematic art of the origin countries of the most represented ethnic groups in Nuremberg (Akyildiz-Ilterli et al., 2000). Unfortunately, due to a failure in appealing to the public’s interest for certain films outside of the mainstream productions (Rau, 2000) the project was put to a halt after only two editions. Overall, the dialogue with the audience was missing and, as noted by the organisers and city representatives, it needs more than “an insider audience who is already familiar with the topics of the festival – migration and identity abroad” (Rau, 2000, p. 11).

After two years of conceptual re-thinking and planning, the organisers of the former “Turkish film days” launched in 2003 an entirely revisited concept of the initial event. The
“Turkish-German Film Festival” (*Film Festival Türkei/Deutschland - FFTD*) as we know it was born. While the Festival remains true to its roots by offering a platform to the underrepresented Turkish cinema art in Germany, the focus is put on the encounter with the contemporary German cinema while keeping a special eye on the works of filmmakers with migratory background (Markwirth, 2015). In short, the concept of the Festival was newly defined with the emphasis lying on the “multicultural” aspect.

**DRIVING FORCES BEHIND THE EVENT**

**ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE**

Born out of a personal initiative by Turkish immigrants, the Festival’s driving forces are its creators and team of volunteers. Further, the city of Nuremberg plays a crucial role since the very beginning through the support from the KUF (Office for Culture and Recreation) and the Nuremberg cultural initiative. Due to the event’s growth over the years, a support association was created in order to ensure the Festival’s continuity. In 1997, Adil Kaya, the founder and driving force behind the Festival, created with a few other people the *InterForum - Kunst & Kultur Nürnberg International* (InterForum – Art & Culture Nuremberg International). Composed of an international board, a scientific/artistic advisory board and members of various origins from the fields of art, culture and politics, InterForum was founded with the objective to promote a more open society and intercultural dialogue. Since its creation InterForum thus organizes the yearly Turkish-German Film Festival (10-days event). Next to the Film Festival the association succeeded in developing other projects, all contributing to a more diverse composition of society, from theater productions, to music, to photo exhibitions. Since September 1999, it also launched a film distribution platform in order to show politically engaged and artistically demanding films from Turkey all year round (InterForum). While InterForum is the main organizer of the Film Festival, the Office for Culture and Recreation of the city of Nuremberg remained an important supporter until 2011 and, since 2009 the KKQ (Art Culture Quartier) of the city acts as main provider of the Festival’s facilities.

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13 The KUF (Amt für Kultur und Freizeit - *Office for Culture and Recreation*) has as main objective the integration of people from other countries and the promotion of peaceful co-existence in the multicultural Nuremberg. Retrieved from the KUF Kultur website: [https://kuf-kultur.nuernberg.de/teaserbeitrag/engagement-fuer-fluechtlinge/](https://kuf-kultur.nuernberg.de/teaserbeitrag/engagement-fuer-fluechtlinge/)

14 KKQ (KunstKulturQuartier) was created in 2008 as a city initiative that aims to inspire new ways of thinking through art (dance, music, theater, film, painting, literature, etc.). The KKQ encompasses numerous locations throughout the city, from cultural centers to film houses. Retrieved from the KunstKulturQuartier website: [https://www.kunstkulturquartier.de/kunstkulturquartier/ueber-uns/profil/](https://www.kunstkulturquartier.de/kunstkulturquartier/ueber-uns/profil/)
The key positions within the organizational structure are held since the very start by InterForum Chairman Adil Kaya – also founder and director of the Festival until 2008 and current Festival director (since 2008) and program director (since 1995) Ayten Akyildiz. The Festival’s board also included Jürgen Markwirth from the Office for Culture and Recreation of Nuremberg until 2010. Since 2015, cultural director of the city of Nuremberg and KKQ director Dr. Matthias Strobel, as well as artistic director of the city of Nuremberg Michael Bader joined the board team. While Adil Kaya acts as the representative figure of the Festival, Ayten Akyildiz together with Michael Bader are responsible for the Festival’s design (in terms of content, guests, etc.) and Dr. Matthias Strobel manages the commercial aspect and finances.

FUNDING

The financing of the Turkish-German Film Festival relies on three pillars: subsidies, sponsors and the Festival’s circle of friends. While exact figures regarding the budgeting remain confidential from the side of the Festival, a closer look into the provenance of funding reveals interesting information.

As can be seen on the following chart, the FFTD is predominantly funded by Germany, and more specifically by German public institutions as revealed by our in-depth analysis (appendix n°). While Turkish funding made its entrance starting from 2006 with the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism as benefactor, Turkish support ceased entirely for the last two years.

![Provenance of subsidies chart]

With four to six benefactors per year, we see that at the launch of the FFTD (2003 to 2006) benefactors came exclusively from Germany. From 2004 until 2013 a major benefactor was the German Robert-Bosch Foundation, which support gave a real impulse to the Festival. As
one of the major foundations in Europe that is associated with a private company, its aim is to support new educational and societal projects (Robert-Bosch Stiftung, n.d.). Although support from the Robert-Bosch Foundation is usually limited to three years (renewable once), the FFTD benefited from funds for a total of 10 years. According to Ayten Akyıldız, this shows how much the Festival was perceived as a vital project (A. Akyıldız, personal communication, March 20, 2018). Next to this, the FFTD is predominantly funded by German public institutions; the chief supporter being the city of Nuremberg. Indeed, since the very start of the Festival, the city has shown great support on both financial and material (free offices, venues and screening locations) level. This is also confirmed by Ayten Akyıldız who claims that “without the city, nothing would be possible. Of course, we get support from various sides. But our most loyal supporter has always been this city” (A. Akyıldız, personal communication, March 20, 2018). Since 2003 the FFTD also gets funds from the Bavarian State Chancellery, since 2005 from the BKM (the Federal Government's Commission for Cultural and Media), and since 2011 from the Bavarian State Ministry of Economics and Media, Energy and Technology.

As mentioned above, Turkish funding made its entrance starting from 2006 with the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism as benefactor. With a financial support of more or less 50,000€, Turkey provided until recently one fifth of the FFTD’s total budget (“Wichtige Plattform”, 2018). According to Urban (2006), this was “proof for the recognition of the FFTD in Turkey and its significance for the filmmakers there”. Funding from Turkey has always been accompanied by a visit and a speech at the opening ceremony from a representative of the Turkish Ministry of Culture or the General Consul at the FFTD. As revealed by Ayten Akyıldız, if Turkey supports such a Festival in Germany, they want to know what is going on (A. Akyıldız, personal communication, March 20, 2018). Moreover, during two years (2015 and 2016) Turkey’s Promotion Fund also provided financial support. However, in 2017 both Turkish benefactors ceased to provide any support. According to InterForum chairman and FFTD founder Adil Kaya, fact that Turkey turned down financial help over the two last years is linked to the presently tensed relations between the two countries. He explains it as follows: “If they give money, they do not understand why they might get criticism in return” (as cited in Quinn, 2018). In a personal interview on March 16, 2018 journalist Georg Escher pointed to the fact that since the failed putsch of July 2016 in Turkey a big change had occurred. Indeed, the deterioration in bilateral relations seem to have also impacted the FFTD (G. Escher, personal communication, March 16, 2018):

“With the increasing recognition of the Festival in Turkey we had gained huge supporters next to our main funders: the Union of the Young Turkish Entrepreneurs, private business people, etc. But since the Putsch they are all gone. Nothing is left.”
This is also confirmed by our analysis on the number of sponsors over the years, as can be seen on following chart:

**FFTD - Funding**

The red line shows a clear decline of sponsors and has never been as low as in 2017 and 2018. The only sponsor remaining over the last two years is Keynote SIGOS, a private company of which Festival founder Adil Kaya is the CEO. Unlike the sponsors, the circle of friends (brown line) who support the FFTD (min.1000€/person) slightly rised during the past years. Moreover, it appears from our analysis that contrary to subsidies, the circle of friends is composed over 50% by Turkish rooted supporters—as can be seen from following chart:

**Circle of friends - provenance**
And those who are present since the start are, on the one hand, Turkish immigrants from the second generation and friends of the FFTD’s founders and, on the other hand, German politicians such as Nuremberg Mayor Dr. Ulrich Maly or State Minister Günter Gloser (see appendix n°). No wonder, thus, that the circle of friends continues to show its support throughout difficult times. When asked about it, Ayten Akyıldız adds (A. Akyıldız, personal communication, March 20, 2018):

“The words ‘circle of friends’ have to be taken very literally. The members are truly friends, people who accompany and support us and the Festival for a long time already. And as important as the financial support is, there is also the voluntary dedication of many people without whom we could never hold a Festival of this scope”.

In these difficult times, the city of Nuremberg has also, once again, shown its support. Matthias Strobel claims that, “The city of Nuremberg made the impossible possible”. As he clarified, not only did the city covered the FFTD’s deficit of 40,000 € from 2017 but also closed an eye with regards to administrative regulations so that the Festival could receive funds from multiple sources within the state of Bavaria. However, Dr. Strobel insists on the fact that 2018 was a ‘rescue action’ (M. Strobel, personal communication, March 20, 2018).

How it will go on next year, no one knows; especially since the FFTD suffers from chronic underfunding as is the case with many small and medium-sized film festivals.

FUNDING AS A TOOL FOR POWER?

When looking at the FFTD’s funding, though exact figures are not available, it appears quite clear from previous analysis that the Festival is for the major part supported by state-level efforts. Hence, it inevitably raises the question of influence the funders might exercise on the Festival. Obviously, the city of Nuremberg has an influence on the FFTD in so far as it determines the amount of subsidies the Festival receives. But this is about how far it gets. Indeed, nor political instructions nor content-related guidelines are imposed on part of the city. Even more so given that the FFTD, as Nuremberg’s own Festival, has a special significance for the city (M. Strobel, personal communication, 20 March, 2018). The entire compilation of the program lies in the hands of the designated Festival team members, under the supervision of Festival and program director Ayten Akyıldız who works in total freedom. As she said herself: “When it comes to the programming, I make all the decisions; and I don’t belong to any party” (A. Akyıldız, personal communication, March 20, 2018).

With regards to funding originating from Turkey, Matthias Strobel admitted that attempts were made from Turkish side to involve themselves in the decision-making process of the programming. However, he clearly stressed that it never happened, as they were very firm on that point (M. Strobel, personal communication, 20 March, 2018):
“When it comes to the programming, we make the decisions; that's the golden rule. If someone would come along and tell us not to screen a certain film, that would be the end of the cooperation for us. And this has also been decided in agreement with Nuremberg’s Mayor Ulrich Maly.”

An interesting point worth highlighting is that, in 2017, pressure was put on the FFTD from an external source, condemning funding from Turkey. Indeed, in January 2017 the Nuremberg Alliance for peace in Kurdistan sent an open letter (appendix n°) addressed to Dr. Strobel, the festival organizers, Nuremberg’s mayor Ulrich Maly, and Nuremberg's Cultural Affairs Speaker Prof. Julia Lehner. They requested that the festival stops accepting any funds coming from Turkey, that no more Turkish representatives be invited, and that the city of Nuremberg compensates the financial loss. This presented a very difficult question of principle for the Festival, namely: do they accept money from a State that is clearly violating Human Rights? When asked about it, Ayten Akyıldız explains that this denunciation by Nuremberg Alliance for peace in Kurdistan was very disappointing as she always made it a priority to include films about the Kurdish issue into the programming. “If we get no money, how can we show these films?” she asks (A. Akyıldız, personal communication, March 20, 2018). Matthias Strobel also explains that the FFTD’s position has always been to maintain dialogue, whatever the times: “If Turkey decides to withdraw its funding, as was the case this year and last year, then there is nothing we can do about it.” But accepting funds from Turkey, according to him, “does not legitimize or justify what is happening in Turkey. Especially given the fact that this Festival has always been very open and critical” (M. Strobel, personal communication, 20 March, 2018).

RECOGNITION OF THE FFTD

As a Film Festival of this scope, focusing exclusively on the cinematic landscapes of Turkey and Germany with the aim to foster a two-way dialogue, the FFTD is unique in its genre. Actually, similar events do exist in other cities in Germany, such as the Turkish film days of Munich, the Turkish film week in Berlin, the Turkish Film Festival in Frankfurt, etc. Yet, none of them compete with the FFTD as they are much smaller in scope and usually focus on Turkish cinema only. Nevertheless, despite prominent guests and numerous efforts on part of the organizers, the challenge to establish the festival within the German film landscape has always remained difficult. In his foreword on the occasion of the 15th Festival

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15 For the Turkish film days of Munich see: https://www.filmstadt-muechen.de/veranstaltungen/29-turkische-filmtage-2018/
16 For the Turkish film week in Berlin see: http://berliner-filmfestivals.de/turkische-filmwoche-berlin
17 For the Turkish Film Festival Frankfurt see: https://www.turkfilmfestival.de
Edition, Adil Kaya (2010) explains that it is quite difficult to become part of the community in Germany and even more so to establish oneself as an NGO -referring to InterForum and the FFTD. “When, on top of that, you want to play the lead role as migrant, you are at least two goals behind when you start the game”, he adds (Kaya, 2010, p. 4). Indeed, while the FFTD has imposed itself in the field as the most important platform for Turkish films in Europe, the recognition remains until now much stronger in Turkey than in Germany (G. Escher and A. Akyıldız, personal communication, March, 2018). Nevertheless, the level they have reached so far and the acceptance of the Festival gives the Festival’s organizers hope that the dialogue taking place is not only a short flare-up but will, through unwavering commitment, develop into an institution and become an example for similar institutions. Moreover, while recognition remains challenging on national level, the FFTD’s significant role for Nuremberg seems duly acknowledged, as shows the continuous funding and support of the Festival by the city.

Today, while the biggest names of the Turkish cinema still make up a majority of the guests, the FFTD increasingly welcomes important German names such as filmmaker Volker Schlöndorff (2018), film critic Klaus Eder (2010), actor Armin Mueller-Stahl (2009) and actor Mario Adorf (2007), president of the Hofer Film days Heinz Badewitz, etc.; all of whom contribute to as well as confirm the FFTD’s increasing recognition in Germany. Further, with regard to the audience, the FFTD has now reached a 50/50 balance of Turkish and German public. This has not always been the case and points towards an increased recognition of the Festival beyond the migrant community. Regarding the press coverage, it remains foremost regional (State of Bavaria) as far as Germany is concerned (G. Escher, personal communication, March 16, 2018). In Turkey however, the festival continues to be duly reported on as major event and makes for national coverage in newspapers and television broadcasts (A. Akyıldız, personal communication, March 20, 2018). This year however, Turkey’s withdrawal as funders of the FFTD made it into the New York Times; perhaps a sign of an increasing international recognition…

STRIVING FOR HIGHER IDEALS

THE FFTD’S PROFILE: MISSION AND SELF-POSITIONING

Similar to the development of a screenplay, the development of a Film Festival follows different steps. The initial idea becomes over time a philosophy, which develops over the years into a distinctive profile. A Festival’s profile describes the commitment, goals and ideals it intends to fulfill and thrives for. Most importantly, it stresses the particularities through which it might differ from other Festivals. Drawing on previously presented findings
and a personal interview with Festival director Ayten Akyıldız (appendix n°), the FFTD’s profile can be presented as follows. As a predominantly state-funded cultural organization, the FFTD neither generates profit, nor could invited filmmakers make financial gains through, for instance, concluding contracts with producers or distributors. Indeed, unlike the Berlinale or Cannes, the FFTD is not a ‘market festival”; it is much more a Festival for the public than an industry meeting. While on a global scale the FFTD plays only a small role it nevertheless wishes, like many other Festivals worldwide, to fulfill an important cultural-political mission. According to Festival founder Adil Kaya (2004), with a program of high quality films, the FFTD aims on the one hand to contribute to the breaking down of stereotypes and, on the other hand, to develop into a film festival at the European level. With its objective of “contributing to break down stereotypes” the organizers have repeatedly insisted on the FFTD’s function as a platform for dialogue between cultural groups of different origins. Hence, the FFTD, through its programming and supporting program, aims in first line to “mediate culture from both cultural worlds, provide new perspectives and promote cooperation between film professionals from both countries” (Film Festival Türkei/Deutschland [fftd], 2016). And when asked about the Festival’s political stance, Adil kaya (as cited in Dotterweich, 2014) leaves no doubt:

“We are absolutely a political Festival. We address issues that affect people in Germany as well as in Turkey. And you have several of these in Turkey but also several in Germany, one shouldn’t forget that” (p. 41)

–alluding to the whole tapping scandal, Germany’s surveillance of Turkey. However, he does not want to reduce the Festival to the sole purpose of showing films relating to current issues; “The FFTD is first and foremost meant to be intercultural”, so Kaya (as cited in Dotterweich, 2014, p. 41). And while the Festival’s organisers assert wanting to be political through their programming choices, they do not want the Festival to serve as battle field for political discourses. As journalist and Festival moderator Georg Escher explains, “It is in first line a film festival and not a political event; Fact alone that specific films are being shown is a political statement as such” (G. Escher, personal communication, March 16, 2018). He further exemplifies his statement by referring to the Kurdish minority in Nuremberg:

“The Kurds are expecting the Festival to take position, also against the Turkish government (...) They criticized that the Turkish General Consul makes a speech at the opening gala (...) In this point –and Adil and Ayten agree with me on this- the

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18 Following media reports the German foreign intelligence service appears to have been spying on Turkey and on Turkish citizens living in Germany for years. For more information on the matter see the article: Not-so NATO-ally? Germany spying on Turkey for 38 years. Retrieved from the website: https://www.rt.com/news/182496-germany-spy-turkey-intelligence/
expectation towards the festival is simply wrong. (…) Should we expect the festival directors to offend or criticize the Consul General on a public stage? What would be the point of that.”

When asking Dr. Matthias Strobel, head of Nuremberg’s cultural department, about the FFTD’s mission, we gain a somewhat different perspective on the matter. Speaking as a ‘representative of the city’, Mr. Strobel sees a double mission in this Festival (M. Strobel, personal communication, 20 March, 2018). Firstly, it should serve Turkish immigrants as a platform to present and share their culture, while at the same time being a way of preserving their home culture abroad. Secondly, he explains that for the city of Nuremberg the initial hope was that the Festival would help foster integration through cultural exchange. However, “an error in reasoning was made” he claims, before adding:

“The initial idea to present Turkish movies so that the guest-workers would come to see them and mingle with the German public happened only on the brink. People who came to Germany for work, the majority of them were not cinemagoers. (…) It becomes easier now to win over the second generation; adults who went to school in Germany, who were raised here and are to some extent already integrated.”

Ayten Akyıldız, current Festival and program director, and present since the Festival’s beginning in the 1990s, has a quite different opinion as regards the ‘integration’ aspect of the Festival. She insists the FFTD was never intended as a tool for integration but as a place for exchange on equal level (A. Akyıldız, personal communication, March 20, 2018):

“I am against this word ‘integration’ (…) When we invite guests such as Mario Adorf or Volker Schlöndorff, people from the German audience ask us: why do they come to the festival, what do they have to do with Turkey. So I ask myself, what do they want from us? Integration? Apparently not… Why shouldn’t we invite a well-known German filmmaker; isn’t he also our filmmaker?”

THE FFTD AS CATALYST FOR DEBATE

From our inquiry into the Festival’s self-positioning and the statements of key actors regarding the Festival’s mission, it emerges that the FFTD present itself as a high-quality Festival with a political, socio-critical, and esthetic aspiration. Further, it was claimed by several interviewees that the provenance of the FFTD’s funds did not influence in any way the content-level of the Festival. Subsequent analysis of the FFTD’s programming and supporting program aims to verify these arguments as well as reveal whether or not the
content-level of the FFTD acts as catalyst for debate around German/Turkish issues. As laid out in the methodology, in order to create a framework for our research, the present analysis focuses on a time-span of 15 years: from 2004 until 2018. For practical reasons of time and scope, next to the results only relevant key examples will be presented. The detailed programming and supporting program analysis can be found back in the appendix (appendix n° and n°).

ON-SCREEN: PROGRAMMING

THEMATIC CONTENT ANALYSIS

For the purpose of this analysis, the FFTD’s opening films, best feature winners, and Öngören-prize winners of the last 15 years have been statistically evaluated and assigned to various criteria filtered out specifically for this purpose. It should be noted that the criteria’s are not mutually exclusive. Yet, the attempt was made to group the film contents into key topics:

• Socio-political
In this category we find films mainly dealing with politics, world affairs, power structures, gender roles, poverty and human rights. Most of these films attempt to provide an insight into different cultures, social classes, daily life circumstances, etc. and to convey a realistic portrayal of the society in question - a special focus lies on Turkey-. These films, just by showing and contemplating these portrayals of society, carry elements of social-criticism. It addresses the question of where the limits of the societal system lies and which conflicts arise when limits are reached or even trespassed.

• Historical
Here films mainly scrutinize aspects of the unresolved past and memory, whether recent of distant, and show how successive generations renegotiate cultural memory. It often offers understandings of how the past shapes the present. These films deal with problems and questions about home and identity and mainly focus on the ethnic minorities in Turkey, thereby initiating discussions on taboo subjects.

• Ethnicity/minorities
War, displacement, un-surmounted past, social struggle and marginalization, cultural identity, and boundaries of nationality are the main material these films are made of. The films in this category often tackle issues that tend to blend in with films of the category historical issues and more often than not play against a political backdrop. The Kurdish problematic is often
present in these films. But other ethnic/minority issues are given a voice as well, such as the Turkey-Greece problematic and Istanbul’s Greek minority issue, the ethnic issue between Bosnia, Serbia and Croatia, Serbs/Albanian problematic, etc.

- Migration
In this category, films attempt to confront us with the sense of displacement, alienation, racism and stigmatization often experienced by migrants. They capture the promise and challenges of exodus by displaying the tensions within families who are globally dispersed or trying to establish themselves in new locations. Films in this category tend to blend in with films of the category *socio-political*.

- Interpersonal relations
Experiences with love and sexuality, various relationship constellations, family, friendship, separation, loss and the often associated conflicts are the material these films are made of. These elements are mainly conveyed through stories revolving around generational conflicts, cultural clashes, and long-distance relationship. Amongst other it addresses individual destinies in their confrontation with the societal system, its rules, its contradictions and its rigidity. However, it is here less about the societal system, such as in the category *socio-political issues*, but rather about the human himself, what shapes and defines him, and how he enters into relation with others.

- Identity quest
In this category we find films that tackle the general loss of meaning in our modern era and even more so the cultural break following the disappearance of traditional certainties. Identity problems, torment between traditional values and the attempt to integrate oneself are portrayed through individual journeys taking place abroad as well as in one’s own country.

**Results: opening films**

The opening film of each new FFTD’s edition is always screened during the opening gala of the Festival, thereby benefitting from an exclusive setting. Indeed, the presence of politicians and journalists next to prominent guests of the industry is always guaranteed. Moreover, the unique venue for the opening gala allows for the accommodation of a larger public. Hence, the opening films, through this context, receive a special status and are sure to attract a wider audience.

The thematic content analysis of the opening films tried to assign the films to the different categories. By using individual examples, we will further inquire whether or not there is a link on the level of content between the opening speech at the gala, the social and political events of the respective past year, and the actual opening film or, if the film is completely detached these elements.
The evaluation of the analysis shows that films with a socio-political focus, occupying a bit more than one third of the opening programming, have the most weight; followed by films focusing on historic issues. Hereby should be noted that, except for one, all films with a ‘historic focus’ also have a socio-political focus. As a matter of fact, most films dealing with history are political. Yet, reversely this is not the case. Thus, films with a socio-political and historic focus make up for a bit more than 40% of the opening programming. In third place come films that focus on interpersonal relations, closely followed by films revolving around identity quest. Films revolving around minorities, migration and tribute films do not seem to occupy an important role as far as the opening programming is concerned. When looking more closely into the opening films with a socio-political and historic focus it appears as quite striking that the emphasis is put on Turkey, as shown by the following pies:
Indeed, the thematic content analysis revealed that the opening films of the socio-political and historic category almost exclusively focused on the portrayal of the Turkish society. Through individual destinies reflecting daily life circumstances in Turkey, these films show us how the country is changing, how migration from rural to urban areas represents a cultural break for many people, as well as the class differences in the big city. Altogether it portrays a Turkish society increasingly torn between tradition and modernity, between East and West.

With regard to the link on content-level between the opening speech at the gala, the social and political events of the respective past year, and the opening film, no direct nor consistent linkage can’t be established. Nevertheless, in a few cases, the link between the current socio-political context of the respective past year and the thematic of the opening film can be assumed. In 2004 for instance, the film “Uzak” by filmmaker Nun Bilge Ceylan tackles, through a personal story, the migration issue from rural to urban areas in Turkey, pointing towards the cleavage between ideals and reality. It dresses a portrait of Istanbul and the crisis of a generation, its modern identities and communication challenges. Set in the context of 2004, with intense debates around Turkey’s EU-access, the film can be seen as showing the slow changes occurring in Turkish society towards ‘western modernity’. In 2006, the Turkish-Italian film Cuore sacro (Sacred heart) by filmmaker Öäsentek revolves around a personal journey of emotional and spiritual transformation of a workaholic businesswoman, triggered by tragic events. And in 2010, the opening film Kosmos by filmmaker Reha Erde, with appears not any more linked to current events as Sacred heart in 2006. Further, in 2016, the film Haymatloz (Exile in Turkey) by filmmaker Eren Önsöz tackles the German-Turkish migration history under the nazi-regime: the exile of (Jewish) Germans in Turkey in the 1930s. The documentary recounts the journey of these German migrants as well as their legacy and the role they played in the Europeanization of Turkey. The documentary ends with an important discourse about the present and future of Turkish society, as Atatürks modernization and the German exiles’ achievements are gradually reversed by Erdogan and his politics. With tensed German-Turkish relations in 2016 and Turkey drifting further away from European democratic values, the link between the thematic of this opening film and the socio-political context at the time appears quite obvious.

By these examples we see that opening film and current social-political events are not necessarily correlated. On the one hand, the opening film should represent the FFTD but, at the same time, a single film cannot be considered representative for the whole Festival. Moreover, when it comes to the opening ceremony, the opening film has to correspond to a broad audience, consisting of politicians, sponsors, friends, guests, etc. (A. Akyıldız, personal communication, March 20, 2018).
Here again, the results of our analysis show that among the ‘best feature winners’ more than a third have a socio-political focus, followed by films focusing on interpersonal relations. The share of films with a historic focus comes in third. And here again, films revolving around minorities and migration are rather scarce. When taking a closer look into films with a socio-political focus and those with a historic focus, regarding the countries they focus on, here is what we find:
With regard to the films with a socio-political focus, particular attention is again paid to Turkey. Most of these films revolve, as mentioned above, around the tension between tradition and modernity in a changing world and the deriving search for identity. Often, in this Turkish production, it is the rigid patriarchal values that are exposed (and denounced). Interesting to note is that almost one third of the films with a socio-political stance and one fourth of the films with a historic stance, focus on other countries. This finding validates Adil Kaya’s statement that “the FFTD is first and foremost meant to be intercultural”. For example, in 2005 the movie Molly’s Wy offered an up-close look at Poland’s post-industrial landscape and at the tangled human webs being spun, now that millions of east Europeans can come West in the newly expanded EU. In 2012, the film Die Brücke am Ibar (My beautiful country) that, through a personal story, relates the destructiveness of the Kosovo War of 1999 and how love can be stronger than ethnic barriers. Overall, films with a historic focus appear to concentrate more on Germany, tackling the Holocaust and Germany’s divide during the Cold War era. With regards to films tackling issues of minorities, while the accent lays on the Kurdish problematic, a voice is also given to other minorities such as in the above mentioned
film *My beautiful country*, who beyond its historic focus tackles the issue between Serbs and Albanians.

**Results: Öngören-prize winners**

Every year, the FFTD honors a film and its filmmaker that is particularly concerned with the topics of democracy and human rights with the *Öngören prize for democracy and human rights*. Although this is not a criteria for selection, it appears from our analysis that the majority of the Öngören winners are documentaries (73%). With regard to the thematic focus of the film, following pie result from our analysis:

![Pie chart showing thematic focus of Öngören winners 2004-2018]

With regards to films with a socio-political focus and films with a historic focus, the conclusions that can be drawn from our analysis are more or less similar to that of the last two categories in terms of proportions. However, the tackled issues in the category socio-political focus, for the Öngören winners, are less about Turkish society and more about deportation and migration problematic. Further, when looking into the countries they focus on, Germany appears to take up more attention with more than a third of the films focusing on Germany:
Of course, films about Turkey—whatever the category—remain more numerous but it seems attention is still paid to diversity. The second point worth highlighting is the increased number of films dealing with ethnic/minority issues. Indeed, after the socio-political and historic categories, this category comes in third position with a share of 22%. The focus in this category is laid once again on the Kurdish problematic but also on the Greek-Turkish issue.

To conclude on our analyses, it appears clear that many of the selected films at the FFTD play against a political background, while dealing with various issues ranging from deportation, to tension between tradition and modernity, to honour killings and ethnic wars. Indeed, a specific programming with a main issue is not the objective of the FFTD, explains Festival and program director Ayten Akyıldız. Hence, the FFTD shows first and foremost universal themes, “but always engaged” (personal communication, 20 March, 2018):

“Look at what is happening all around the world: wars, murder of women, rape and harassment of children, incest … all of it happens, everywhere. Therefore our program is always mixed. (…) We don’t bury the head in the sand and turn a blind eye to issues that do not suit us. This is true for the Turkish films we show as well as for the German films.”

Further, when asked about the focus on Turkey in each category, Mrs. Akyıldız explains (personal communication, 20 March, 2018):

“I want things to change in Turkey but for it change, people have to know what is going on. And I don’t want this only because it is my country but because I see people suffer from the situation there. If I can contribute with my programming, then I will do it.”

To conclude, it should be noted that beyond the opening films and competitive program, the FFTD also presents under the category “Filmlandscapes” (Filmlandschaften) retrospectives as well as current productions representative for the more contemporary film production of both country; Although, this last aspect should not be taken to literally. For instance this year, the film Djam by filmmaker Kazim Öz was a coproduction between Turkey and Greece. Mrs
Akyıldız explains how she absolutely wanted to have the film in the programming as it shows, through travels and music, how Greeks and Turks are actually alike where it not for the religion.

OFF-SCREEN: SUPPORTING PROGRAM

In order to offer a comprehensive overview on the various activities offered by the FFTD next to its film screenings, an inventory of the different activities per year has been carried out, for the last 15 years, along with representative examples for each category (appendix n°). The podium debates revealing themselves as most relevant to the present research, an in-depth documentary research for each year’s debate has been carried out, complemented by an interview with moderator Georg Escher.

As seen in the literature review, the supporting program is actually the crucial aspect that gives the festival his added value and makes the festival experience such a unique one. Indeed, it can be understood as a real tool for fostering intercultural exchange. When asked about the importance of the supporting program at the FFTD, Festival director Ayten Akyıldız explains (personal communication, 20 March, 2018):

“(…) Of course, the films are the most important part. We are first of all a Film Festival. (…) But it is important to put things into context, to talk about what you have seen in a film; that’s when it becomes interesting and people can start to understand each other. But therefore you have to create a space were people feel safe to say what they think. (…) Our Festival is like a big family, that’s why people come back every year. People feel that, they feel the familiar atmosphere.”

The FFTD offers various activities throughout the 10-days of its happening. Some of the activities happen around the films screenings such as: the opening ceremony of the FFTD the talks with artists that consist of Q&A questions after the screenings, and special screenings for schools with debate afterwards. A series of other activities on the other hand are not directly linked to the films. This is the case of the podium debates, concerts, reading sessions, photo exhibitions and theater plays. Before going into further detail regarding the two activities (talk with artists and panel discussions) that calls for our special attention in the context of this research, we will present a short overview of the other activities. In fact, we can differentiate between the activities that do not necessitate the public’s involvement (entertainment) and those who require the public’s active participation (discursive activities). This does however not mean that the activities falling into the ‘entertainment’ category cannot act as catalyst for debate later on.
ENTERTAINMENT ACTIVITIES

Concerts:
The concerts play an important role at the FFTD. Since 2004, each year, various concerts take place in the Festival Lounge where people reunite on informal level. When looking into the various concerts that were held over the years, one notices immediately how the FFTD’s activities perfectly merge with the festival’s mission and ambitions. Indeed, interculturality is also reflected in the music played and the bands invited. For instance, in 2004, Italian composer and guitarist Carlo Domeniconi was invited to the FFTD to play its "Berlinbul Concerto", a musical East-West dialogue, that links Berlin to Istanbul; hence, perfectly fitting the Festival's frame. But the music played at the FFTD, like the Festival’s film programming, travels beyond the borders of Turkey and Germany. In 2007, the ‘Fanfare Ciocărlia played music from the Balkans, with musicians and dancers coming from various countries. And in 2015, a musical journey through multicultural Turkey took place with the band “Kardeş Türküler”. This band brings people from various cultures together through songs and dances from Anatolia, Thrace, and Mesopotamia. Through their music this band aims to dismantle stereotypes and promote peace by emphasizing on the richness of diversity with regards to religion and ethnicities that still exist in these regions. Therefore they sing their songs in Turkish, Kurdish, Armenian, Arabic, Tcheck, Rumanian, etc.

Photo exhibitions:
Several photo exhibitions have taken place over the years at the FFTD’s venue. All the exhibitions were tribute to Turkish filmmakers such as: Atif Yılmaz in 2007, Ara Güler in 2010, and Nuri Bilge Ceylan in 2013. Linked to the photo exhibitions are often screenings of the filmmaker’s major works. Again through these exhibitions, the FFTD proves that it stands for inclusiveness. Indeed all two of the men to whom the FFTD paid tribute were descendants of ethnic minorities: Atif Yılmaz is from Kurdish origin, Ara Güler from Armenian origin.

Theater plays:
On a few occasions theater groups were invited to perform at the Festival’s venue. It comes as no surprise that the plays chosen are everything but mere entertainment. To give but one example, in 2007 a theater play called "Schwarze Jungfrauen" (Black virgins) revolved around about five Muslim women and their radical vision of the world. The play was based on interviews with young Muslim women living in Germany, asking about issues such as their place in German society, their religious expression in the public space, their religious moral standards and facing exclusion.
DISCOURSE ACTIVITIES

Talks with artists:
The talks with artists take place in the form of a Q&A session following the screening of a film and are thus directly linked to the film in question. These talks are always announced beforehand in the Festival’s program. Although they usually take place in the cinema, the talks are often continued in the Festivals Lounge afterwards and with fewer people. For instance, this year, filmmaker Kazim Özdemir presented his film “Zer”. It tells the story of a young men’s quest after its Kurdish roots and, at the end, he finds out that all the inhabitants of his grandmother’s village were massacred by the Turks because they were Kurdish. Thanks to a framework program that enabled for Q&A and further debate with filmmaker Kazim Özdemir, the audience came to learn a lot more about the current situation in Turkey and the Kurdish issue. Indeed, people from the audience, Turks and German, gathered together with the filmmaker to talk about his film and ask questions. What resulted of this debate is thus manifold: first, people from the audience of different ethnic groups gathered to exchange; then, knowledge was shared on the issue of the Kurdish minority in Turkey. This last point should not be underestimated given that the polarisation between Kurds and Turk also takes place in Germany. Thirdly, the filmmaker explained how the full version of his film, as we had just seen it, could not be shown in its entirety in Turkey, due to strict censorship and the film’s explicit allusion to the massacre of Kurds by Turks. This is thus a very good example of how, departing from a film, a larger societal debate can be created.

Podium debates:
Podium debates are organized on a regular basis and cover current problematic. Indeed, Ayten Akyıldız explains that they get the inspiration for the Podium debates from reading the newspaper and watching the news: “(…) We know what’s going on and this pushes us to pick up on certain of these matters” (personal communication, 20 March, 2018). During our conversation she adds:

“(…) People look for recipes, a quick solution. After the motto: “what do we have to do”. But it’s not about giving people a recipe or telling them what they want to hear. That is why stories have to be told. People can listen to it, go home, and think about what they to wrong or what they could change. That is why dialogue is so important and that people here come together. That is why this Festival is so important. It’s about pushing people to think, and therefore we organise these podium debates. And the concept work because every time the room is full.”
In order to give an overview we will first list the various debates that took place over the years, before going into detail about some of them in order to who how they contribute to the more general cultural-political debate.

- The Art of cinema as bridge for cultural dialogue (2006)
- The representation of Turks in film and television (2007)
- Between Islam, Christianity and humanism: what is the Occident afraid of? (2008)
- 50 Years of Turkish migration: a cultural-political balance (2011)
- Upheaval in the Islamic World and in Europe? (2011)
- Home country and cinema (2014)
- „Quo Vadis Europe?“ Refugees, migrants, half- and other Europeans (2016)
- Did Germany learn from the NSU-case? (National Socialist Underground trial - "Kebab murders") (2017)

When looking at the moderators and invited guests for these debates (for the detailed list see appendix n°), the link between culture and politics become quite evident. Indeed, with representatives from German political parties, German and Turkish representatives of Cultural Institutions, sociologists, lawyers, German and Turkish artists, up to Islam-scientist, these debates certainly offer multiple perspectives into current issues and dilemmas. To illustrate how the podium debates can serve as a catalyst for debate, we will take the case of last years’ debate about the NSU case. Georg Escher, who moderated the debate, explained it was originally planned to be about current happenings in Turkey. But it seemed us “too redundant” says Mr. Escher,

“everything had already been said and it was foreseeable that people on the podium would just confirm how bad the situation in Turkey is: that human rights are being violated, people incarcerated, etc. Probably nothing new would have been said.”

So in the end a panel discussion was organized about the topic of the NSU-Murders (Bosphorus serial murders). “A topic where some questions had yet to be asked and where all the answers had not yet be given”, so Gerog Escher. He led the debate and found it very stimulating. However, he adds that some people criticized the choice of the topic, arguing that the actual theme was the ongoing situation in Turkey and that this was just en escape from the actual, important topic. In his opinion (G. Escher, personal communication, March 16, 2018):

“These people are missing the point. The organizers of the festival told me personally that the fact that these murders happened, under which 3 out of the 10 in Nuremberg, had
as consequence that Turkish people living here feel personally threatened. And this is a matter as well. This is directly linked with the co-existence of different ethnic groups here in Nuremberg.”

Hen ends by saying: “if you ask me, this a better topic than the other one where only platitudes would have been said or things already known repeated.”

The fftd’s recognition

As a Film Festival of this scope, focusing exclusively on the cinematic landscapes of Turkey and Germany with the aim to foster a two-way dialogue, the FFTD is unique in its genre. Actually, similar events do exist in other cities in Germany, such as the Turkish film days of Munich19, the Turkish film week in Berlin20, the Turkish Film Festival21 in Frankfurt, etc. Yet, none of them compete with the FFTD as they are much smaller in scope and usually focus on Turkish cinema only. Nevertheless, despite prominent guests and numerous efforts on part of the organizers, the challenge to establish the festival within the German film landscape has always remained difficult. In his foreword on the occasion of the 15th Festival Edition, Adil Kaya (2010) explains that it is quite difficult to become part of the community in Germany and even more so to establish oneself as an NGO, referring to InterForum and the FFTD. “When, on top of that, you want to play the lead role as migrant, you are at least two goals behind when you start the game”, he adds (Kaya, 2010, p. 4). Indeed, while the FFTD has imposed itself in the field as the most important platform for Turkish films in Europe, the recognition remains until now much stronger in Turkey than in Germany (G. Escher and A. Akyıldız, personal communication, March, 2018). Nevertheless, the level they have reached so far and the acceptance of the Festival gives the Festival’s organizers hope that the dialogue taking place is not only a short flare-up but will, through unwavering commitment, develop into an institution and become an example for similar institutions. While recognition remains challenging on national level, the FFTD’s significant role for Nuremberg is certainly being acknowledged as shows the continuous funding and support by the city to the Festival.

Moreover, while the biggest names of the Turkish cinema still make up a majority of the guests, the Festival increasingly welcomes important German names such as filmmaker Volker Schlöndorff (2018), film critic Klaus Eder (2010), actor Armin Mueller-Stahl (2009)

19 For the Turkish film days of Munich see: https://www.filmdstadt-muenchen.de/veranstaltungen/29-turkische-filmtage-2018/
20 For the Turkish film week in Berlin see: http://berliner-filmfestivals.de/turkische-filmwoche-berlin
21 For the Turkish Film Festival Frankfurt see: https://www.turkfilmfestival.de
and actor Mario Adorf (2007), etc. which also contributes as well as confirms the FFTD’s recognition in Germany. Further, with regard to the audience, it has now reached a 50/50 balance of Turkish and German public which points towards an increased recognition of the festival beyond the migrant community. With regard to the press coverage, it remains foremost regional (limited to Bavaria) as far as Germany is concerned. In Turkey however, the festival continues to be duly reported on as major event and makes for national coverage in newspapers and television broadcasts (G. Escher and A. Akyıldız, personal communication, March, 2018).
Conclusion

From the founders initial desire to foster intercultural dialogue on equal level, is born the most important platform for Turkish films in Europe. While acting as a platform where Turkish and German niche films as well as co-productions are being shown, away from the mainstream program, the FFTD offers a valuable insight into the different cultures. Especially through the numerous films on the Turkish culture and history, the FFTD gives the German audience a unique opportunity to gain a different insight/viewpoint on the Turkish diaspora and the Turkish culture in general. All of which ultimately contributes to a better mutual understanding.

Especially since relations between Germany and Turkey have greatly declined, the FFTD appears more relevant than ever. Indeed on local level, as an event that takes place for more than 20 years and was created by Turkish migrants, it has become an institution amongst the Turkish diaspora in Germany; while being increasingly visited by the German public. Moreover, as polarisation among the Turkish population even spoils on German soil, it is crucial that the Turkish rooted citizens of Germany feel, on equal level with Germans, as first-class citizens and not left aside. And while the festival’s founders do not see this Festival as a ‘tool for integration’ –contrary to the city of Nuremberg- it is nevertheless undeniable that the event contributes to reinforce a sense of belonging of the Turkish community to the city –as shows the ongoing support by the circle of friends to the Festival.

Further, while Turkey is turning increasingly inwards and dialogue is missing, the FFTD represents a platform of great importance for the voices of Turkey that are kept still at home (e.g.: films about the Kurdish issue), helping them raise concern about ongoing issue. Through their films, Turkish filmmakers have the opportunity to tell the world a different story.

This is not only achieved through the films that are being shown, for the FFTD, as an event, acts also as a platform for encounter between the different cultural groups. The Q&A’s and debates following the films encourage greatly the intercultural dialogue and exchange and, in an informal setting, help shift old perspectives and gain new insights. Indeed, as a political Festival, as Mr. Kaya said himself, the FFTD can act as a catalyst for socio-political debates. Although this seems to work just fine on the level of the local event between audience from both origins, it appears more difficult on politica level as Turkey completely shut down.
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