Europeans in-Between

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Turkish Diaspora in Germany.
Separated on Screen

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> "Art is the lie that tells the truth."
> *Pablo Picasso*

1   Introduction

The history of the discourse on immigrants (and by immigrants themselves) is a story of the relation between the *others*, who are perceived as foreigners, and the *us*, who are referred to as natives.

The sources of this delimitation are historically grounded, with the initial purpose to define the image of Europe not only as a continent, but also as a unique civilization with distinct traditions, customs, values, and cultural and political attributes. These distinguishable codes have been searched for by comparing and contrasting European countries with non-European countries. The most popular division has drawn the imaginary border line between East and West, namely between Europe and Asia. Christianity was contrasted to Islam,[1] progress, science and constitutionalism to stagnation, prejudice and political arbitrariness; rationalism and liberty to irrationalism and oppression. Montesquieu's theory of climates, according to which only in Europe, contrary to Asia, there are favourable condi-

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[1] Bo Stråth, "A European Identity: To the Historical Limits of a Concept," *European Journal of Social Theory* vol. 5, no. 4 (November 2002): 396.

tions for freedom, was further developed by many philosophers.[2] Throughout
time, the border line has been acquiring new and newer roles. Additionally to its
geographical function, it commenced to operate as cultural, social, political, and
economic boundary.

In the course of the new realities, in which Europe has now become a home
to many non-Europeans, the discursively constructed line of delimitation has been
projected from Europe's periphery to its interior. Different tools and arguments
are applied to justify this division, yet in the cultural perspective it seems to follow
the formula "non-European remains non-European." In other words, the differ-
ences between people are generally perceived as static and immutable and concern
not only the immigrants, but also their descendants. The situation of the Turkish
minority in Germany is an example of an extreme variant of such differentiation.

Political, media, and even artistic discourses construct the dichotomy be-
tween German Turks and Germans, proclaiming the existence of "pure Turkish
culture" and "pure German culture" and making a distinction between them as
black vs. white, good vs. bad, at the same time praising and marginalizing these
constructs. On the one hand, such a layout exists because immigrants are seen as
"odd" elements in a time when Europe is constructing its European identity and
the incorporation of "Muslims" would produce the need for a re-shaping of this
identity. On the other hand, German natives are concerned about an increase of
cultural diversity within their society and fear it will diminish the role of their cul-
ture – "Hochkultur."[3]

More significantly, the dichotomy appears to be dangerous because it pro-
vides Turkish-Germans with the label "Turkish" and this may provoke a resistance
against this labelling and a struggle for recognition on their side. Regarding the
results of research conducted by Werner Schiffauer in 1999 among second genera-
tion Turkish-German youth, Katherine Pratt Ewing comments that "a struggle for
recognition motivates many of these youth to identify with radical Islamist
groups."[4] Furthermore, within the polarization between "Turkish" and "German",
there is a big potential for discrimination on grounds of cultural background, as
well as for alienation, marginalization and exclusion. As Stuart Hall has argued,
"marking 'difference' leads us […] to stigmatize and expel anything which is de-
fined as impure, abnormal."[5] The process of stigmatization is already observed in
different discourses. One such an example can be found in German politician

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[2] Ronny Ambjörnsson, "East and West. On the Construction of a European Identity" (paper pre-
sented at the conference Cultural Crossroads in Europe of the Swedish Council for Planning and
Coordination of Research, Stockholm, Sweden, 1997): 85-87.

[3] Anna Maria Mayda, "Who is Against Migration? A Cross-Country Investigation of Individual Atti-
tudes toward Immigrants," *Review of Economics and Statistics* vol. 88, no. 3 (2006): 515.

[4] Katherine Pratt Ewing, "Migration, Identity Negotiation and Self-Experience," in *Worlds on the Move:
Globalization, Migration and Cultural Security*, ed. Jonathan Friedman and Shalini Randeria (London: I.B.
Tauris, 2004), 137.

[5] Stuart Hall, *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices* (London: The Open Universi-
ty/Sage Publications, 1997), 236.

Thilo Sarrazin's book *Germany Abolishes Itself*. Sarrazin claims that the behaviour of the Turkish minority in Germany and "their inability to study" is mostly due to their "cultural roots", specifically to the "cultural environment of the Islamic world."[6]

All in all, the dichotomy seems to propose that the only way to be recognized and to avoid the discrimination is to assimilate by rejecting one's identification as Turkish as well as Turkish customs and traditions.

Considering these challenges, there is an urgent need to find uniting elements that could approach the cultures from a different perspective. Indeed, although the German society still seems to be reluctant to digress from this differentiation in its representation of Turkish Germans, it has to be noted, however, that not every discourse is following this scheme. There are discourses that endeavour to dissolve these divisive notions, even though their efforts are conditioned and influenced by previously shaped binary constructions.

In its efforts to identify such discourses, this paper is mainly addressing the cinematic representation of the Turkish diaspora in Germany in selected films in which the German Turks' cultural identities are strongly pronounced. Critical textual analysis proves to be a valuable methodology, as observing and questioning the elements that create meaning within the filmic piece (acting, directing, mise en scène, etc.) is necessary to gain insight about how the identities are being represented in one film or another. Furthermore, the analysis is supplemented by the investigation and application of a relevant theoretical framework on identity and representation, in particular the theories of Stuart Hall.

The main question to answer is to what extent the dichotomy exists in different films and how the retention of the dichotomy operates discursively on the cinematic ground: Which films maintain the dichotomy and which are endeavouring to dissolve it?

By suggesting that the immigrant cinema dissolves the imagined and culturally constructed dichotomy, this paper shows that the immigrant cinematic representation reveals more outcomes and findings than non-immigrant representations by complicating a simplistic, binary self-perception of the Turkish minority, and their perception by others. Furthermore, in my view the cinematic representations of immigrants made by immigrants and their descendants themselves propose new visions and disclose a new reality that can be present, yet we may not be aware of it.

A theoretical framework on the different approaches to identity construction and its connection with representation is provided before addressing the cinematic discourse analysis. The film texts are classified in two different types, according to the classification provided by cinematic analysts. The first one is the "cinema of duty" or "cinema of victimization": Turkish immigrants are mostly

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[6] Christian Thiel, "Could Sarrazin Be Right about Integration in Germany?" *Spiegel Online International,* 6 May 2011, http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/0,1518,760937,00.html (accessed 7 May 2011).

represented as those who carry the "burden" of their "Turkishness," which "impedes the way to integration." The second one, the films of the category "pleasures of hybridity cinema" endeavour to dissolve the notions of "victimization." Both approaches will be discussed and questioned before a conclusion is drawn.

2   Theoretical discourse on cultural identity through representation

Identity is a subtle and controversial issue that is frequently questioned and discussed by sociologists, social anthropologists, psychologists and other researchers. An individual, while defining his/her own identity, can refer to its diverse dimensions: gender, religion, ethnic group or race, political and professional affiliations, etc. As Renata Matkevičienė has argued, identity, on the one hand, can be understood as a personality, as a uniqueness of the individual, but on the other hand it is based on the characteristics of the individual that relate him/her to a specific group and indicate his/her belonging to and inclusion into this group.[7] If we determine identity in the cultural context, cultural identity will compose a larger concept of individual identity.[8] Therefore, cultural identity determines the belonging of the individual to a cultural group, however, not necessarily to one particular group, but to several distinct cultural groups.

An issue arises as to how we place the abstract nature of identities in practical terms; how do we realise that this pattern, this characteristic, view, idea, etc. is exactly the thing with which we can identify ourselves? Identities are very often defined through difference, namely we characterise ourselves with ideas "of who we are" through setting off a contrast "of who we are not."[9] But the construction of one's identity takes place the other way round, depending specifically on how other people perceive us in the process of determining themselves, how they identify us with the characteristics that they do not possess, and what meanings they create within this identification. As Stuart Hall has put it, the meanings of the things and practices depend on "how we represent them – the words we use about them, the stories we tell about them, the images of them we produce, the emotions we associate with them, the ways we classify and conceptualize them, the values we place on them."[10] In other words, Hall argues, "identities are always constituted within, not outside, representation,"[11] whether these are representations by others

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[7] Renata Matkevičienė, "Identities and intercultural communication: Thematic map of the 14th Congress of Nordic Network for Intercultural Communication," *Information Sciences* vol. 45 (2008): 63, http://www.leidykla.vu.lt/fileadmin/Informacijos_mokslai/45/60-69.pdf (accessed 5 May 2011).

[8] Daphne Jameson, "Reconceptualising cultural identity and its role in intercultural business communication," *Journal of Business Communication* vol. 44, no. 3 (2008): 207.

[9] Kathryn Woodward, *Identity and Difference* (London: The Open University/Sage Publications, 1997), 1-2.

[10] Hall, *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, 3.

[11] Stuart Hall, "Cultural identity and Diaspora," in *Identity: community, culture, difference,* ed. Jonathan Rutherford (London: Lawrence Hill, 1998), 222.

and/or self-representations. The quality of the analysis of the cinematic representation of identities is therefore essential for understanding how the identities of German Turks are already constructed within the German society, and how this construction differs from film to film.

In this regard, it is important to briefly review different approaches to cultural identity construction in order to determine which scheme is present in each of the selected films. I would like to discuss essentialist and non-essentialist conceptions as the approaches that define cultural characteristics as homogeneous, and constructivist conception which views cultural identity as heterogeneous. According to an essentialist approach, identity is "one authentic set of characteristics which all share and which do not alter across the time."[12] This is the concept that is widely used by constructors of the dichotomy Turkishness vs. Germanness. Positioned in the framework of the static and essentialist terms of culture, identities of immigrants are frequently represented with ascribed collective cultural attributes which are unlikely to be changed, assuming existing "homogeneous cultural identities."[13]

When talking about migration experience and identities, there is also a non-essentialist linear approach that was developed by anthropologist Arnold van Gennep and further elaborated by Victor Turner. According to this concept, immigrant identities can change in two ways: follow the alterations "among generations" and "occur during the lifetime of immigrants and their descendants as they […] balance the demand and expectations of an old and new culture."[14] Moreover, the transformation of migrant identities is seen as "a passage from 'one life to another'."[15] Arnold van Gennep proposed three stages of this passage: a pre-liminal phase (separation), a liminal phase (transition), and a post-liminal phase (reincorporation). They were further researched by Victor Turner, who explained the liminal phase as a phase of "in-betweenness."[16] However, in contrast to Homi Bhabha's "in-betweenness," which means the reality of cultural mix when one is drawing from many cultures in a structural context and then results in "hybridity,"[17] Turner's concept carries exclusive connotation. This means that people are not associating themselves any longer with the culture of the society they or their parents had been previously part of, but at the same time they are not part of the society they are living in, resulting in a so-called crisis of identity. Thus, by going through these three stages, the cultural identity of the migrant and his/her de-

[12] Woodward, *Identity and Difference*, 11.

[13] Deniz Göktürk, "Turkish delight – German fright. Migrant identities in transnational cinema," European Institute for Progressive Cultural Policy, 2000, http://eipcp.net/transversal/0101/goektuerk/en (accessed 1 May 2011).

[14] Olga Seweryn, "Identity Change as a Consequence of the Migration Experience," in *Imagining Frontiers. Contesting Identities*, ed. Steven G. Ellis and Luďa Klusáková (Pisa: Pisa University Press, 2007), 23.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Ibid., 24.

[17] Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of culture* (London: Routledge, 1984), 2-3.

scendants would be related to the host society after the transformation via reaching the stage of "reincorporation", and consequently the attributes of the initial (home) identity would be completely eliminated.

On the other hand, the constructivist definition of identity claims that "identity is 'a production' which is never complete, always in process."[18] Some adherents of the constructivist approach consider identity to be embedding multiple dimensions, "made of diverse and often conflicting selves,"[19] in constant transformation and reconstruction. Others have suggested the concept of transculturality, stating that the process of intermingling two cultures leads to the creation of "a new cultural product."[20]

The concept of transculturality is not new. Nevertheless, it has only recently become a trend in academic debate on the perception of culture. There are different visions on what transculturality specifically means, yet generally the concept proposes a broader and deeper understanding of cultures. Moreover, it is intended to respond to the challenges of globalisation and, particularly, to the world's dramatically increasing cultural inter-influence, and to the reality of migration, in which diverse cultures are located and reallocated in the conditions of mutual adaptation, recognition and acceptance. At the micro-level, mutual ignorance between different cultures living in one society is expected to be overcome and mutual understanding is expected to be reached by recognising the hybridity of cultures, by disrupting notions of cultural purity, and by attracting more attention to the cultural mix. The main significance of the concept of transculturality is its power to dissolve beliefs of the inequality of cultures and to eliminate the grounds for cultural racism. As Wolfgang Welsch puts it in his essay, the concept of transculturality sets up a different vision of the relation between cultures, which is "not of isolation and of conflict, but one of entanglement, intermixing and commonness."[21] In this context, the discourse on the differentiation between natives and immigrants as between two different spherical cultures becomes irrelevant.

In contrast to essentialist and non-essentialist models that view "cultures as mutually distinct and internally homogeneous," transculturality, or the hybrid identities model, explains identities as consisting of "heterogeneous and even contrasting elements."[22]

The analysis of the films will discover in which of these ways the cultural identities of Turkish-Germans are articulated. We will find out whether the cultural identity is represented as invariable, based on intrinsic characteristics and the collective memory of the particular cultural group, as essentialists are defining it. We

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[18] Hall, "Cultural identity and Diaspora," 222.

[19] Hazel Rose Marcus and Paula Nurius, "Possible selves," *American Psychologist* 41 (9) (1986): 957.

[20] Bhabha, *The Location of culture,* 3.

[21] Wolfgang Welsch, "Transculturality - the Puzzling Form of Cultures Today," in *Spaces of Culture: City, Nation, World*, ed. Mike Featherstone and Scott Lash (London: Sage, 1999), 205.

[22] Anna Bagnoli, "Constructing the Hybrid Identities of Europeans," in *Resituating Culture,* ed. Gavan Titley (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2004), 59.

will find out whether it goes through the three-stage transformation process, as argued by van Gennep and Turner, or whether it is illustrated as something fluid, flexible, and heterogeneous that can be reconstructed, as it is argued by the adherents of the constructivist approach. It is important to analyse and, especially, to question the cinematic representation of cultural identities as, in such a way, it will be possible to find out which meanings are preferred, which meanings are of little importance and how these meanings render identities' conceptualization.

It is also important to bear in mind that representation functions not only as a reflection of what constitutes reality, but has a constructionist role "by which meaning is produced and exchanged between members of a culture."[23] Film discourses, as types of representation, are not only telling the stories and rendering the ideas of the directors, but they also can construct new meanings and new realities by influencing the process of people's self-identification.

3   "Films of duty" or "films of victimisation"

As it was stated before, most of the discourses about the German Turks in Germany are characterised by the strong divergence argument, according to which Turkish and German are two extreme poles that can hardly coexist within one society. The artistic images which reveal this dichotomy appeared, apparently, when the 1980s political situation in Turkey was unstable and the family reunification of Turkish guest workers, who were invited to work in Germany in the 1960s, became inevitable. The documentary *Die Kümmeltürkin geht*, filmed in 1985 by the German filmmaker Jeanine Meerapfel, which was one of the first German films about the life of immigrants, provided fruitful ground for developing the images of the incompatibility between the Turkish mentality and the German way of life. Based on the real story of an immigrant woman who decides to return to Turkey after 14 years of living in Berlin because she cannot adopt, the film has launched the series of cinematic representations of immigrants as victims of "displacement", accompanied by their identity crisis.

Paradoxically, the constructed scheme was followed by directors of Turkish background, although they also intended to depict the mutual understanding between Turkish and German cultures. Tevfik Baser, the first, most influential Turkish first-generation migrant director, became famous for his two films *40 Square Meters of Germany* and *Farewell to False Paradise* (1989). Both of them represent Turkish women who preserve their Turkish identities, refusing to integrate into German society. In *40 Square Meters of Germany*, preserving happens because of the lack of communication with the outer world and, as a result, lack of communication and interaction with Germans: the woman is locked alone in her room by her husband for months. In *Farewell to False Paradise*, identity invariability is shown by Turkish

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[23] Hall, *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, 15.

immigrant Elif's nostalgic feelings for home when she attempts to reproduce an "imaginary homeland" in prison.

Additionally, these films depict Turkish women as victims of their Turkish traditions: they are confined to close spaces by the fault of their husbands (confinement in a room in the first case and being sentenced to prison after killing the husband in the second case). Elif's passage from life with her husband to her life in prison is depicted as crossing the symbolic border between humiliation, where she is abused, raped and terrified by her husband, and liberation, which she finds in prison through communication and interaction with German prisoners. Prison is shown as a protection zone for her personal development in contrast to the rigid Turkish values, with which she grew up.

In this context, the binary construction of the differences between German and Turkish cultural worlds refers mainly to the representation of the difficulties immigrants face during their adaptation to their host society. These difficulties are connected with immigrants' home culture mentalities that do not allow them to start enjoying the German way of life. Films that followed this schema were called "films of victimization"[24] later on. These films simplified, as Rob Burns has noted, "protagonists to stereotypes, portraying the migrant as victim and focusing excessively on conflict of an intercultural or intracultural kind."[25] As we see, the main emphasis was put on gender relations.

As Katherine Pratt Ewing has observed while analysing the "films of victimisation", a distinguishing line was drawn between the values of the traditional patriarchal Muslim world and contemporary and sophisticated German society. The openness and freedom of German culture were set off against the closed space and confinement of Turkish culture.[26] The most prominent film that skillfully represented this dichotomy from the German point of view was a film of 1988, *Yasemin*, which was directed by German filmmaker and actor Hark Bohm. In this film the main protagonist Yasemin, a Turkish-German girl, articulates a double identity: she is a Turkish obedient daughter at home, always listening to her father, and feels German outside her house, when she goes to school or to a Judo club, where she fights with great ability. The problem is that she is separately identifying herself with two cultures, but cannot combine these identities in a way in which she could unconsciously act like a German-Turkish, regardless of the situation. For instance, this is shown in the episode when Yasemin dances with her father at her sister's wedding. Even though she likes the German style of dancing, she can only make herself dance "Oriental" style.

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[24] Rob Burns, "The Politics of Cultural Representation: Turkish-German Encounters," *German Politics* vol. 16, no. 3 (2007): 358.

[25] Ibid.

[26] Katherine Pratt Ewing, "Between cinema and social work: diasporic Turkish women the (dis)pleasures of hybridity," in *The Anthropology of Globalization: A Reader,* ed. Jonathan X. Inda and Renato Rosaldo (Malden: Blackwell, 2008), 192.

The message of the aforementioned films can be interpreted as follows. The Turkishness of the main protagonists that governs their actions is portrayed as not acceptable within German society. It seems that the only way for the protagonists to integrate is to disassociate themselves from their "Turkish identity" as soon as possible, because German culture stands for prominence and positivity, and Turkish culture shows meanness and negativity. According to these cinematic representations, acquiring the culture and the lifestyle of Germans, would release these Turkish women from oppression.

Such a representation is reminiscent of the liminal concept of identity by van Gennep. Turkish and German cultures are perceived as homogeneous ones. The protagonists of the films are either in the pre-liminal or liminal (in Yasemin's case) phases of the reconstruction of their identities. The great emphasis on the homogeneity of Turkish culture and its delimitation suggests only a scarce probability of co-existence of persons with a Turkish background and Germans in one society. Turkish immigrants and their descendants can only be integrated if they completely eliminate their Turkishness and acquire German identity.

4   "Pleasure of hybridity"?

By staying in the frames of dichotomy without going beyond, we lose the possibility of acquiring new knowledge. We stick to the knowledge that is created by ideology as it seems to be easier and not complicated. However, it does not mean that such knowledge is complete. We need to peel back the onion to reveal what is beyond the frames.

Agreeing with Stuart Hall that cultural identity is not only a matter of "being" but also a matter of "becoming,"[27] I believe that the binary vision of its nature, according to which one can be either *a uniform one* or *a uniform other*, functions only in the world of abstractions and does not take into consideration all the complications and particular circumstances. Expressing all the aspects of life in a binary vision seems to be easier. This reflects the ideal situation in which different objects and subjects stand in a specific relation to each other being put in order and separated into contradicting groups.

In essentialist positions such a binary construction is justified, as the cultural identity of Turkish-German, in their view, is seen as an authentic set of characteristics that does not alter through time. But, referring to James Clifford, who has noted that "authenticity has become a highly problematic category,"[28] we should not neglect the reality of displacement. As constructivists would argue, both differences and common characteristics within one cultural group should be taken into account. Moreover, the points of alteration, such as displacement, play a significant role in identity construction.

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[27] Hall, "Cultural identity and Diaspora," 225.
[28] James Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth – Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), 5.

Since the Turks left Turkey, the change in their identity has already been engendered as they came into contact with another culture, which in this case is the German culture. German Turks will never be referred to as Turkish Turks, neither by others nor by themselves. They are not visitors, they are not "guest workers" anymore, but they are a part of German society, and are influenced by the new political, social and cultural conditions.

Approaching the issue from the macro-level, it has to be argued that globalization has made the world inter-connected and inter-influential in different aspects. Although in the 19th century the main emphasis was put on cultural homogenization and cultural identity was understood as equivalent to national identity, a concept that was needed for the consolidation of nations, today's realities require the recognition of the cultural complexities and of the necessity for uniting people in dealing with these complexities. Deniz Göktürk has interesting remarks on a very important tendency of globalization. He talks about people in post-colonial and trans-colonial locations as those that "are often torn between religion and secularism, between tradition and modernisation, mostly envisaged as 'Westernisation', before they even travel to the West."[29] Turkey is one of the countries that can be also considered a subject of Westernisation. This process has become more visible after Turkey applied for membership in the European Union in 1987. Considering Göktürk's point, it is already difficult to implicitly correlate conservatism, conformity and oppression, as represented in the aforementioned film representations, with the identity of Turkish people. It is also extreme to claim the pure authenticity of Turkish culture.

Patricia Ehrkamp has argued that while talking about immigrants' identities we have "to think beyond dichotomies and mutually exclusive notions of local and transnational ties, and to recognise immigrants as agents who are able to forge their belonging and multiple attachments."[30] As a response to the depiction of the dichotomy between German and Turkish cultures, in which Turkish culture is explicitly marginalised, contemporary directors have intended to refute this division and to claim the existence of "hybrids" within society. This new wave of films has been celebrated as "neo-neo" German cinema.[31] Therefore, aiming to dissolve the dichotomy and serving as a prototype for integration, a demand was created for "hybridity", a process, which, according to Bhabha, creates a new product of cultural identity that goes beyond the original culture and a "received" tradition.[32]

The most prominent film director who has responded to the depicted dichotomy is Fatih Akin, German-born director of Turkish origin. A brief interpreta-

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[29] Göktürk, "Turkish delight – German fright."

[30] Patricia Ehrkamp, "Placing identities. Transnational practices and local attachments of Turkish immigrants in Germany," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* vol. 31 (2) (2005): 347.

[31] Katherine Pratt Ewing, "Between cinema and social work: diasporic Turkish women the (dis)pleasures of hybridity," in *The Anthropology of Globalization: A Reader,* ed. Jonathan X. Inda and Renato Rosaldo (Malden: Blackwell, 2008), 193.

[32] Bhabha, *The Location of Culture,* 3.

tion of the representation of identities in his *Kebab Connection* of 2005 and a detailed analysis of his film *Head On* of 2004 are to be provided.

Kebab Connection makes the meaning of constructed "Turkishness" more dimensional. The director clearly renounces the notion that all representatives of the Turkish minority share the same cultural mentality and depicts various people who differently articulate their identities. There are still those with conservative ways of thinking, who live in "ghetto" regions, avoid interaction with Germans, mock German lifestyles and express contempt towards those Turkish descendants who enjoy these lifestyles. There are those who are changing their attitudes and, following closer interaction with each other, reaching mutual understanding and mutual acceptance. Fully integrated German-Turkish women are depicted as an example of those who have successfully combined their jobs with bringing up their children. There is also a close-knit family of Turkish immigrants that abides by hierarchical respect on a daily basis, yet constantly speaks German amongst each other.

However, the film also produces some negative images of Turkish-Germans, particularly the fanatical adherence of some to their "Turkish" traditions. Also interesting is that Germans are represented as implicitly open for communication with German Turks, which is not mutual.

The story of *Head On* tells about the relationship between two Turkish-German people, Cahit and Sibel, who have nothing in common but their Turkish backgrounds. They marry each other on the grounds of convenience, which unexpectedly evolves into a love affair, however, realised only after they are no longer together. Cahit has successfully undergone the process of integration. He has cut all ties with his Turkish background and is enjoying his life in a free, liberated German society. On the one hand, his identity construction is reminiscent of van Gennep's non-essentialist approach, as Cahit seems to be positioned in the last phase of reincorporation. He does not believe in Allah and has contempt for Turkish traditions. Cahit has accepted the possibilities that German society has proposed him: he becomes a punk and anarchist. He is a Turk by blood, but totally denies his personal and cultural identity as a Turkish man. He even talks about other Turkish men as "others". He does not find traditions of the Turkish community, such as family gatherings, important and mocks them. Cahit makes fun of the "honour of the family" tradition that is shown as intrinsic to Turkish culture, putting himself in opposition to it. On the other hand, his cultural identity is consistently uncertain. In the beginning of the film he is almost completely German with some remains of Turkishness in the form of knowledge about Turkish traditions. In the end, thanks to Sibel, he moves closer to his Turkish identity again, but comes back to Germanness as soon as Sibel leaves him.

In contrast to Cahit, Sibel's identity is clear from what is visible in the first few scenes. She belongs to a close-knit, traditional Turkish family. She is an obedient and decent girl, although not for a long time. Living in German society she finds for herself the opportunities that she would like to enjoy. She is ready for anything in order to get away from the restrictions of her culture.

Consequently, she gets these opportunities, following her marriage of convenience to Cahit who allows her to do whatever she wants. She gets a piercing and a tattoo on her body, sleeps with any man she likes and convinces herself that this is the German way of life and that she has become liberated from her oppressive traditional Turkish culture. At this point Sibel celebrates her "reincorporation" into German society as she wants to identify herself with open-minded German women and in her behaviour there is no longer any trace of an obedient and faithful girl. However, her identity starts to negotiate this transformation. Sibel enjoys the freedom to live an open sexual life because she misses this feature in her culture and she finds it attractive, but at some point she comes back to her Turkishness, particularly when she feels threatened by something "alien". In the episode, when a German man, her one-night lover, wants to talk to her about their relationship she runs away from him saying, "I am a married Turkish woman and if you touch me one more time, my husband will kill you." Sibel is emphasising that she is Turkish and alludes to the strict family obligations in her Turkish tradition. Even if she does not adhere to these obligations, she still identifies herself with them and this identification is still powerful.

Even if Sibel's life in Germany was the articulation of "hybrid" identity, the hybridity completely evaporates when Sibel starts to live again an "obedient life" in Turkey. Why does she do that? Ronald Niezen argues that people with a "pseudo-hybrid" cultural identity become very vulnerable during the process of transition of their identities. As a result, they are trying to struggle against new experiences by endeavouring to come back to their original, supposedly pure form of identity.[33] Sibel struggles the other way round. She reinforces her Germanness when she comes to Turkey and continues to behave as an open-minded German woman. To her dismay, she finds her behaviour to be unaccepted in Turkey and becomes an alien there. That is why probably she renounces her "liberation," marries a Turkish man, gives birth to a girl, and comes back to her "obedient way of life." Even when Cahit comes for her to "release her," she refuses to go with him. Can we assume that Sibel has resigned herself to the necessity of preserving her family? Can we assume that she did not escape with Cahit because she wanted to be a good example for her daughter? Or maybe she has decided to sacrifice herself and her love for the sake of her "family honour" and in such a way came back to the norms of Islamic culture, represented as such before? If yes, then who is she now? With which traditions, with what way of life can she now identify herself? And to where has the "German" woman's way of thinking disappeared?

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[33] Ronald Niezen, *A World beyond Difference. Cultural Identity in the Age of Globalization* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 40.

5   Conclusion

Films function as constructionist models and cultural artifacts because the experience of the individual may depend on how his/her identity is represented and this representation can influence the process of identification. As much as the artistic discourses have succeeded in creating the images of "German tradition" positivity and "Turkish tradition" negativity, film stories of German-Turkish directors also have a big chance to succeed in the dissolution of these images, as well as in the creation of their own. By possessing very powerful instruments, such as the director's cultural self-perception or even a personal concern with the issues at hand, immigrant (minority) cinema can build a bridge between the natives and the so-called "aliens". This assignment should be easier now that third and fourth generation of Turkish immigrants reside in Germany and their stories should be told.

In search of uniting elements between separated "Turkish" and "Germans", the diasporic cinematic self-representation has made significant efforts to complicate the meanings of identities and to dissolve the constructed dichotomy. These film narratives did reveal more outcomes and findings that differed from the narrow vision of dichotomy discourses. Overall, Fatih Akin, in contrast to other filmmakers, went furthest in this direction by representing his protagonists as "hybrids" with identities in constant process of negotiation. The notions of cultural purity were completely disrupted and the abstract positions that do not take into consideration complications and particular circumstances were renounced in *Kebab Connection*. Shifting and hybrid identities were articulated in *Head On*.

Nevertheless, films about Turkish-Germans made by Turkish-Germans themselves have raised more questions than provided answers. First of all, they have remained in the schemata of dichotomy representation as they start the negotiation of identities from their initial, "pure" nature. The represented "Turkish tradition" remains restrictive and closed-space and the German way of life is shown as desirable in all the films discussed. The films about Turkish-Germans shot by Turkish-Germans themselves continue to give room for the essentialist approach, which appears to be powerful and difficult to disrupt.

Even the representation of hybridity is fragmented and sometimes shifts to the "liminal passage" of identities' change. The hybridity of the protagonists may be also contested, as sometimes it is doubtful if the protagonists were real hybrids. Should the hybrid identity be shifting and fluctuating, attaching one to another, and at the same time exclude one cultural marker and substitute it with another one? Should it be a refusal of some particularities of the "original" tradition by accepting others from the "received" tradition? Or, maybe, the notions of the divergence of cultures were not completely disrupted because Turkish-Germans simply feel comfortable within the framework of the constructed dichotomy?

Serving as an alternative to the discursive polarization constructs, prevalent in diasporic cinema of the 1980s and 1990s, the concept of transculturality has

marked its presence in the new German-Turkish films of the 2000s, although it appears to be weak and "immature" in dissolving these constructs.

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