Constructing European Identity Through Mediated Difference: A Content Analysis of Turkey's EU Accession Process in the British Press

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Abstract: An ever expanding and constantly intensifying mass-mediated environment means that we are surrounded by a variety of narratives that shape our sense of identity through mediated notions of difference. The lack of clear boundaries demarcating Europe have made discourses of differentiation particularly important for European identity formation. In the case of European identity, which has been defined historically in contrast to the Eastern frontier, the East continues to be used as an important point of reference for the construction of an opposing Other vis-à-vis Europe today. The empirical part of this research explores the role of mediated Othering in forging European identity, through a quantitative content analysis of British newspaper texts centred on Turkey with a European dimension; in particular, it looks at Turkey's bid to join the EU. Results show that although the British press communicate an inclusive interpretation of European identity, it continues to portray Turkey in connection with persistent exclusivist perceptions.

Key words: British press and Turkey, European identity and media, narrative, difference, Eastern Other

INTRODUCTION

Media narratives are at the heart of the European identity construction process as they are central to the formation and reproduction of collective identities to form an imagined community (Anderson, 1983). An ever-expanding and constantly intensifying mass-mediated environment means that we are surrounded by a variety of narratives that "create identity at all levels of human social life" by drawing "symbolic boundaries" (Loseke, 2007, p. 661). Exploring how media narratives construct these boundaries through mediated notions of difference is important for the understanding of the formation of European identity. Cohen's (1994) hypothesis, "You know who you are, only by knowing who you are not" (p. 1), supports the argument that analysing differences in contrast to an opposing Other can provide answers to one's identity.

Mediated notions of difference are manifested in the construction of excluded Others which very often contribute to defining the entity they are excluded from. European unity has been formed historically in contrast to, and even in defence against the Eastern frontier (Delanty, 1995). Islam in its role as the main Other against the *Imperium Christianum* helped define a common European identity in the past (Hay, 1957). The relationship between Europe and Islam today is often still perceived as "a kind of continuation or renewal of the (historical) clashes between Christianity and Islam" (Cardini, 2001, p. 1).

The enduring relevance of the Eastern Other is an important factor in European identity formation today, as argued by Neumann (1999) who notes "'The East' is indeed Europe's other, and it is continuously being recycled in order to represent European identities. … The question is not whether the East will be used in the forging of new European identities but how this is being done" (p. 207). Turkey's progressing EU membership has intensified ongoing discussions about the EU's current and future identity. Does Turkey, as the embodiment of a continuation of the Islamic Other in Western perceptions, function as a focus point against which a common European identity is defined today? If so, what are the ways in which media narratives form such a European identity through mediated notions of difference? These questions are the starting points for this article, which seeks to explore mediated Othering in forging a European identity through an empirical study of British newspaper texts centred on Turkey with a European dimension, in particular Turkey's bid to join the EU.

Turkey's accession to the EU poses an interesting case for analysing European identity, as it is expected to have a crystallising effect, revealing perceptions of European identity by framing Turkey as being distinct from being European. The media salience of the issue started to increase over time after Turkey received the status of an EU candidate country in 1999 and continued to gain visibility in public discussions, as a more concrete, final decision on Turkey's EU membership became apparent (Wimmel, 2005). Other

studies analysing Turkey's bid to join the EU in the European and Turkish press have focussed on selected time periods before and after major EU events in connection with Turkey's membership prospects from 1999 to 2005 (Wimmel, 2005; Koenig, Mihelj *et al.*, 2006; Negrine, Kejanlioglu *et al.*, 2008). Results show that exclusivist perceptions of Europe and and "clash of civilisations" framings dominate media narratives (Koenig, Mihelj *et al.*, 2006). These research findings confirm the relevance of modes of differentiation in European identity formation modelled in contrast to Turkey. The exact nature and content of these forms of mediated difference and how they are employed, however, calls for further analysis.

This study seeks to expand the focus of previous studies with a broader analysis of different contexts before and after the start of EU accession negotiations in 2005, giving special attention to mediated differences in the construction of European identity. A quantitative content analysis of the British newspapers *The Times* and *The Guardian* comparing the years 2002 and 2007, analyses different topical aspects associated with Turkey and how these are evaluated to explore the range of contexts in which Turkey is positioned vis-à-vis Europe. Further, the analysis explores points of reference that are used as sources of similarity or difference in EU-Turkey relations and investigates how British print media represent Turkey.

This article proceeds by first locating the study of identity construction in media and communication research. Then, the article will examine the role of an opposing Other in identity formation, followed by a conceptualisation of European identity. After arguing that identity is constructed to a significant degree through difference in contrast to an opposing Other, the article concludes by exploring empirical evidence of mediated differences and how they position Turkey vis-à-vis Europe.

MEDIA NARRATIVES AND IDENTITY FORMATION PROCESSES

Media are part of the complex processes involved in the construction of meaning by informing the ways we make sense of the world. Silverstone (1999) illustrates this point by arguing that the media influence how we see and live by the way "they filter and frame everyday realities through their singular and multiple representations, producing touchstones, references, for the conduct of everyday life, for the production and maintenance of common sense" (p. 6). This all-encompassing nature of the media that permeate our experiences and perceptions is best described in Livingstone's (2009) words "yes, everything is mediated" (p. 5).

Media narratives are a powerful force in structuring our ways of thinking. Bennett and Edelman (1985) outline the scope of their impact by arguing "the narrative shapes people's views of rationality, of objectivity, of morality, and of their conceptions of themselves and others" (p. 159). At the same they put

this impact into perspective when noting that the reception of a narrative also depends on the recipients' individual situation and cognitive condition. It is the media narratives' potential to shape perceptions of ourselves and others that make them most relevant for the formation of identities in today's mass-mediated world.

Media, political elites and social activists all play a part in creating narratives of cultural identities (Derman & Ross, 2003; Loseke, 2007). It is the media, however, that have the power to change narratives authored by other public actors (Gamson & Wolsfeld, 1993, quoted in Loseke, 2007). Media narratives, in turn, are formed within certain cultural contexts. Loseke (2007) argues that these particular contexts "influence what stories and characters likely will be evaluated as believable and important and what moral evaluations likely will be attached to those stories and characters" (p. 663). In the case of this article it is Western media, exemplified in British newspaper texts, which form the context to analyse moral evaluations of Turkey in representing the Eastern Other vis-à-vis Europe.

Graham and Hart (1999) describe identity formation as a "situated and relational socially constructed narrative, capable of being read in conflicting ways at any one time, and of being transformed through time" (p. 264). Similarly, Camauer (2003) also conceptualises identity as the construction of a narrative. The media are central to the construction of such identity narratives. This is highlighted by Sjursen (2006) who argues that "identities are malleable and they are shaped and reshaped through communicative processes" (p. 14).

Georgiou (2006) makes the link between media and identity formation more explicit by arguing that "media as means/technologies/contexts for communication in specific locations and beyond, have become institutions and organised mechanisms of great significance for constructing identities in local, national and transnational contexts within modernity" (p. 11). She explains that circulating media narratives and cultural symbols produce and reproduce imagined belonging (Georgiou, 2006, p. 151). Derman and Ross (2003) make a similar reference to the formation of identities in media narratives by arguing that "the media tell stories … Whatever criteria, ideology and approach are used, the process and the outcome is the same: there is something to be said (mediated) and this mediation has first to define and categorise identities in order then to paste them into a whole" (p. 1). This further illustrates the transforming power of media narratives to categorise and construct identities.

Cohen (1994) argues that the media function as one of the main "frontier guards" of national identity since they "seek to influence the ideological and legal parameters of nationality, citizenship and belonging" (p. 2). This structuring capacity of the media is further illustrated by Gellner (2006, pp. 121-122) who sees the media as an important contributor to identity formation and argues that it is not the content but the media as a form of institutionalised

communication that is at the core of the reproduction of national identity.

Since transnational European media, such as the multilingual news channel *euronews*, are the exception rather than the norm, national media are still the main arena for identity formation. This means that other collective identities such as European identity are also likely to be constructed within the parameters set out by national media. An advancing European integration process, however, has changed the focus of news organisations from national to supranational levels of governance (Semetko, De Vreese *et al.*, 2000). This highlights that the degree of Europeanisation of national news content contributes to the progression of a European identity. This is supported through research by Bruter (2003; 2005) who argues that news coverage on Europe influences levels of European identity among citizens. Results of his experiments with focus groups show that positive news coverage on Europe modifies people's perceptions and "clearly influences their likelihood of identifying with Europe" (Bruter, 2005, p. 126), while negative news coverage has the opposite effect.

The above illustrates that media play an important part in influencing our perceptions of the world, how we see ourselves in relation to this world and how we see others. This supports the argument that mediated notions of difference influence our sense of European identity and perceptions of Turkey. The power of media narratives to transform other narratives underpins the significance of the media for the construction of identities. By communicating national and European culture, the media take part in the identity formation process and provide political communities with the "deep codes for distinguishing between self and other" (Schlesinger, 2003, p. 9). Similarly, Loseke (2007) argues that narratives of identities are surrounded by symbolic codes containing "images of the rights, responsibilities, and normative expectations of people in the world, and of the expected affective responses to these people" (p. 666). She further notes that "symbolic codes in the Western world typically construct one identity in contrast to another … often as binary opposites" (Loseke, 2007, p. 666). This duality in the construction of Western identity makes the analysis of mediated notions of difference a crucial part in analysing European identity. The following part of this article explores the mechanisms of identity formation processes and will conceptualise European identity.

EUROPEAN IDENTITY FORMATION AND DIFFERENCE

Media narratives contribute to the construction of identities through the circulation of cultural codes that define the boundaries of one identity to another. In this sense, inclusion and exclusion are comparable to two sides of one coin that both form essential parts of the identity formation process. Melucci (1996) describes this duality as inherent to the concept of identity by arguing that "the paradox of identity always consists of the fact that difference, in order to be affirmed and lived as such, presupposes a certain equality and a degree

of reciprocity" (p. 74). This exemplifies that identity consists of both a sense of belonging and difference. This paradox is also being addressed by Calhoun (1994) who notes that identity always refers to "common frames of significance" despite the emphasis on difference (p. 25). According to this understanding, countries like the United Kingdom or France distinguish themselves through cultural difference but share a common recognition to accept each other as nation states.

Treating inclusion and exclusion as parts of the identity formation process leads to the conceptual distinction between identification and identity. Unlike identity, identification is "constructed on the back of a recognition of some common origin or shared characteristics with another person or group, or with an ideal, and with the natural closure of solidarity and allegiance established on this foundation" (Hall, 1996, p. 2). Identities, in contrast, are the product of difference and exclusion with people establishing their identity to a large part by defining what they are not (Shore, 1993). This conceptual distinction refers to inclusion as a positive identification with something or someone, and exclusion as a negative difference in contrast to an opposing Other.

Identity applies both to individuals and groups but is there a distinction to be made between individual and collective level that is conceptually relevant? Other than individual identity, collective identity applies to a group of people that recognises itself as a community. Schlesinger (1993, p. 7) summarises four main characteristics that exemplify collective identities which include 1) the creation and sustenance of a self-identifying community through cultural symbols; 2) dual processes of inclusion and exclusion to distinguish the collective consciousness from others; 3) selective memory and amnesia to create specific versions of history to support the collective identity over time, and 4) locality that situates collective identity in a national territory. He argues that it is vital to consider the origins, evolution and contextual setting of a social group when looking at constructions of collective identities. What can be noted here is that both individual and collective identities are relational.

Melucci (1996) defines collective identity as "an interactive and shared definition produced by a number of individuals (or groups at a more complex level) concerning the *orientations* of their action and the *field* of opportunities and constraints in which such action is to take place" (p. 70, original emphasis). These "action systems" are created and sustained through interpersonal and mediated communication channels. Melucci (1982) argues that a distinction between individual and collective level does not affect the concept of identity since "what changes is the system of relations to which the actor refers and with respect to which his recognition comes" (quoted in Schlesinger, 1991, p. 154). This highlights that an understanding of identity as a process is more important conceptually than a distinction between different levels. A similar point is being made by Calhoun (1994) and Mennell (1994) who argue that it is

more helpful to understand identity as a project than to focus on the distinction between macro- and micro levels.

While national identity represents a specific form of collective identity (Schlesinger, 1991, p. 151), European identity, as a supranational identity, is not easily accommodated alongside national collective identity conceptions. The question then, is how to distinguish between the two, and what kind of different features and construction mechanisms can be identified. Smith (1991) defines national identity and nation as "complex constructs composed of a number of interrelated components – ethnic, cultural, territorial, economic and legal-political. They signify bonds of solidarity among members of communities united by shared memories, myths and traditions" (p. 15). This definition highlights the main elements of national identity that include political and cultural components to form a sense of belonging and unity. Similarly, European identity is seen to be based on a common history, values and people that can be fostered by unifying symbols such as the EU flag or Europe Day – a view largely shared among policy makers. This, however, is contrasted by arguments not to conceptualise European identity as a homogeneous unity based on the nation state model but "as an institutional arena within which diversity and multiple connections among people and organizations can flourish partly because they never add up to a single, integrated whole" (Calhoun, 2001, p. 38). This is a view shared by Spohn (2005) as well as Schlesinger (2001) who concludes that "despite the rhetorical claims, the EU does not have a transcendent common culture and identity analogous to the national cultures and national identities of its component states" (p. 99). If European identity cannot be defined in terms of the nation state model, how else does it materialise? Sjursen (2006) suggests to locate European identity in the concept of constitutional patriotism as a state of "in between-ness" (p. 213).

The discussion above partly suggests that national identities tend to be more consistent constructs, manifested in national culture and institutions, while European identity is a vaguer concept that finds expression in liberal values, transnational institutions, and diversity. This makes it hard to distinguish empirically between the two and leads to the question 'to what degree can identity features be attributed to national identity or traces of European identity?' For now, this remains an unresolved problematic. What can be said is that empirical results will show an interpretation of European identity through a British perspective. This perspective will also reflect Britain's troubled relationship with the EU and its characterisation as a stranger in Europe (Wall, 2008).

What can be identified as a common denominator in both national and European identity formation is the role of an opposing Other. It emerges as a main and general feature in all identity formation processes. Hall (1996) argues that even the concept of identification requires boundaries by noting

that it "requires what is left outside, its constitutive outside, to consolidate the process" (p. 3). He continues to highlight the importance of the Other by arguing "that it is only through the relation to the Other, the relation to what it is not … that the 'positive' meaning of any term – and thus its 'identity' – can be constructed" (Hall, 1996, pp. 4-5).

In the case of national identities, this means that other nation states as well as internal groups function as defining Others around which identity is constructed. In the British example, Kershen (1998) argues that enemies such as "the French in the eighteenth century, the Russians in the mid-nineteenth century and the Boers at the beginning of the twentieth century" (p. 4) have fostered national unity across regional borders and defined British identity. In the case of European identity formation, the Eastern Other is the defining element (Hay, 1957; Delanty, 1995). In this context, Morley and Robins (1995) note that Europe is "an idea inextricably linked with the myths of Western civilisation and grievously shaped by the haunting encounters with its colonial Others" (p. 5). Describing the complex power relations and somewhat ambivalent ties between Europe and its Islamic Other, Said (2003) notes that "the Orient is not only adjacent to Europe; it is also the place of Europe's greatest and richest and oldest colonies, the source of its civilisations and languages, its cultural contestant, and one of its deepest and most recurring images of the Other. In addition, the Orient has helped to define Europe (or the West) as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience" (pp. 1-2). This marks two important aspects of European identity that illustrate its ambivalent nature: the interconnectedness of Europe and the East through joint historical origins, and the transformation of the East into an image of the Other.

The notion of the division between East and West is part of a whole set of European dualistic modes of thinking: "It seems clear that an integral part of the European cultural heritage, the European way of thinking, is related to dualism. Dualism appears in other cultures too, but in the European cultural heritage and in the European mind it seems to have a surprisingly central role. …. It seems natural to confront radical with reactionary, past with present, private with public, true with false, us with them, friends with enemies, good with bad" (Harle, 1990, p. 2). Binary codes are essential for the creation of meaning (Bocock, 1996, p. 159) in general but become particularly interesting in the context of European identity formation. This dualistic thinking which has been described in theoretical considerations is likely to be reflected in empirical identity constructions of "us" and "them" which will be addressed in the following analysis section.

METHOD AND ANALYSIS

The sample for this analysis included all articles published in *The Guardian* and *The Times* in the year 2002 and 2007 that mentioned Turkey with a European

dimension, in particular Turkey's bid to join the EU. The search string "EU OR Europ! AND Turk!" was applied to the News Search of the NEXIS UK database to identify relevant articles. These search criteria ensured that all articles were included that hold references to Turkey's bid to join the EU and articles about Turkey with references to an EU or European dimension. The EU dimension describes news coverage linking Turkey to the EU institutional framework. This includes references to people, bodies, treaties, legislation, etc. related to EU institutions such as the European Council or European Parliament. The European dimension is more open and describes news coverage linking Turkey to broader European issues such as European culture, values or history.

A further article selection criterion included a 150-word rule for salience which determined that the title or first 150 words of the text body of an article must mention Turkey's bid to join the EU or Turkey in connection with a link to an EU and/or European dimension. Exceptions to the 150-word rule were articles that covered Turkey as the main topic with a European dimension in the overall text body. This ensured that all articles on Turkey were included where references to an EU or European dimension appeared later in the body of the text.

The selected years 2002 and 2007 represent time periods before and after the official start of EU accession negotiations with Turkey on 3 October 2005. These time periods were chosen for comparison to see whether and how news coverage about Turkey has changed after it became an official EU candidate country. The main events in these two years of news coverage were the Turkish national elections. Further events include the 2002 decision of the Copenhagen European Council of Ministers to review Turkey's European course in December 2004 and the re-opening of accession negotiations with Turkey in 2007 after their suspension in 2006 due to a failure to apply to Cyprus the Additional Protocol to the Ankara Agreement. The total number of articles was 183 with a total of 89 articles in *The Times* and 94 articles in *The Guardian* (2002: *The Times* n=48, *The Guardian* n=53; 2007: *The Times* n=41, *The Guardian* n=41).

The content variables for this analysis comprised two object variables (i.e. "Topical aspects" and "Sources of similarity or distance") and two evaluation variables (i.e. "Evaluation of topical aspects" and "Degree of similarity or distance"). The object variable "Topical aspects" identified different topical aspects in discussions about Turkey. Examples of topical aspects include Turkey's political stability or Turkey's respect for human and civic rights. The object variable "Sources of similarity or distance" identified reference points that were used to describe resemblance or disparity in the relationship between Turkey and the EU. Examples include Turkey's proximity to Islamic political movements or human rights. In case multiple topics or sources of similarity or distance were mentioned in one article the most salient one was selected for analysis (i.e. the most dominant, indicated by headline and presence in the

text).

The variable "Evaluation of topical aspects" measured manifest positive or negative assessments in the news text on a scale ranging from minus two to plus two. The scale points represent expressions of criticism (i.e. -1 = fairly negative, -2 = very negative), expressions of support (i.e. 1 = fairly positive, 2 = very positive), or a combination of both expressions of criticism and support (0 = ambivalent). Topical aspects without any manifest evaluations (9 = neutral) where excluded from the analysis. Similarly, the evaluation variable "Degree of similarity or distance" measured the degree of similarity or distance in the relationship between Turkey and the EU. Negative scale points (i.e. -1 = some distance and -2 = high distance) represent sources of distance, positive scale points (i.e. 1 = some similarity, 2 = high similarity) represent sources of similarity and a combination of both represents an ambivalent degree (0 = ambivalent). The scale points -1 or 1 were used to describe normal language use and -2 or 2 were used to describe emphasised language use (i.e. use of adjectives or superlatives).

Topical aspects in newspaper coverage of EU-Turkey relations.
The most dominant topical aspect discussed in connection with EU-Turkey relations was Turkey's political stability which accounted for 41% of the overall news coverage. This topical aspect mainly derived from news coverage about Turkey's political situation before and after the national elections in 2002 and 2007. Other featured topics included Turkey's respect for human and civic rights (18%), Turkey's EU membership (12%), Turkish-Cypriote relations (9%), Turkey's minority rights (7%), Turkey's demography and Muslim population (7%), followed by Turkey's strategic location and military power (4%) and Turkey's economic development with three percent.

A comparison between newspapers showed that the topical aspect of Turkey's political stability featured notably more dominantly in *The Times* with a 19% point difference from *The Guardian*. More than half of all newspaper articles in *The Times* (51%) covered Turkey's political stability as the most prominent topical aspect, compared to 32% in *The Guardian*. However, Turkey's respect for human and civic rights was more present in *The Guardian* (22%) than in *The Times* (14%), and Turkey's EU membership also featured more prominently in *The Guardian* (17%) than in *The Times* (6%). In all other topical aspects, there were no differences between *The Times* and *The Guardian*.

A comparison of time periods showed that Turkey's political stability was much more frequently discussed in 2007 (50%) than previously in 2002 (34%). Similarly, Turkey's minority rights had a greater salience in 2007 (10%) than in 2002 (5%). Turkey's EU membership (17%) became a more important point of discussion in 2007 (+10% point difference) after the official start of EU accession negotiations in October 2005. In contrast, Turkey's respect for

human and civic rights was given much less attention in 2007 (13%) than in 2002 (22%). Compared to 2002 (16%) Turkish-Cypriote relations had very little relevance in the overall newspaper coverage in 2007 (1%). This can be explained by the heated discussions and diplomatic negotiations between the UN, the EU, Northern- and Southern Cyprus and Turkey about the potential re-unification of Cyprus prior to its EU membership in 2002. After the failure of negotiations and the decision to only grant Southern-Cyprus EU membership the newspaper coverage decreased. Turkey's strategic location and military power had almost no relevance in 2007 (1%) as compared to 2002 (6%). Table 1 gives an overview of the topical aspects in discussions about EU-Turkey relations across newspapers and time.

	Newspapers		Years		
	Times	Guardian	2002	2007	Total
Turkey's political stability	51% (45)	32% (30)	34% (34)	50% (41)	41% (75)
Turkey's respect for human and civic rights	14% (12)	22% (21)	22% (22)	13% (11)	18% (33)
Turkey's EU membership	6% (5)	17% (16)	7% (7)	17% (14)	12% (21)
Turkish-Cypriote relations	10% (9)	9% (8)	16% (16)	1% (1)	9% (17)
Turkey's minority rights	7% (6)	7% (7)	5% (5)	10% (8)	7 (13)
Turkey's demography and Muslim population	6% (5)	7% (7)	8% (8)	5% (4)	7% (12)
Turkey's strategic location and military power	6% (5)	2% (2)	6% (6)	1% (1)	4% (7)
Turkey's economic development	2% (2)	3% (3)	3& (3)	2% (2)	3% (5)
Total	100% (89)	100% (94)	100% (101)	100% (82)	100% (183)

Table 1: Comparison of topical aspects
Note: Figures may not add exactly due to rounding. N in parentheses

The key findings of this analysis were that Turkey's political stability (41%) and Turkey's respect for human, civic and minority rights (25% combined) accounted for 66% of aspects addressed in the overall news coverage in both years. *The Times* (65%) gave the two main aspects Turkey's political stability and Turkey's respect for human and civic rights greater attention in its news coverage than *The Guardian* (54%). A comparison of the years 2002 and 2007 showed that these two most frequently featured aspects became more relevant over time, increasing from 64% of the overall newspaper coverage in 2002 to 73% in 2007. When combining the categories of Turkey's respect for human and civic

rights with Turkey's minority rights, results show that these aspects remained important issues over time with only a slight decrease from 27% in 2002 to 23% in 2007. Interestingly, Turkey's demography and Muslim population played an even smaller role in progressing EU negotiations (5%) than it did before the start of EU accession talks (8%), which lends support to the assumption that the relevance of Turkey's religious identity component has decreased over time.

Evaluation of topical aspects in EU-Turkey relations.
A comparison of evaluations of topical aspects in connection with Turkey showed that four out of eight aspects received a negative evaluation, followed by three categories that had an overall positive evaluation and one category that was classified as ambivalent. The most negative evaluated category was Turkey's minority rights (-0.67). This was followed by Turkey's political stability which received a similarly negative evaluation (-0.59). Turkey's respect for human and civic rights and Turkish-Cypriote relations were given negative evaluations of -0.47 and -0.33 points. The positive evaluated categories were Turkey's strategic location and military power (1.00), Turkey's economic development (0.60) and Turkey's EU membership (0.33). Turkey's demography and Muslim population received an ambivalent evaluation. The overall evaluation of all aspects in connection with Turkey received a negative evaluation of -0.38 points.

Topical aspects	Newspaper	Mean	Cases (N)	Percent (%)
Turkey's political stability	The Times	-.41	34	34.7%
	The Guardian	-1.08	12	12.2%
	Total	-.59	46	46.9%
Turkey's respect for human and civic rights	The Times	-.67	9	9.2%
	The Guardian	-.30	10	10.2%
	Total	-.47	19	19.4%
Turkey's EU membership	The Times	.50	2	2.0%
	The Guardian	.00	1	1.0%
	Total	.33	3	3.1%
Turkish-Cypriote relations	The Times	-.33	3	3.1%
	The Guardian	-.33	3	3.1%
	Total	-.33	6	6.1%
Turkey's minority rights	The Times	-.40	5	5.1%
	The Guardian	-1.00	4	4.1%
	Total	-.67	9	9.2%
Turkey's demography and Muslim population	The Times	.00	4	4.1%
	The Guardian	.00	3	3.1%
	Total	.00	7	7.1%
Turkey's strategic location and military power	The Times	1.00	2	2.0%
	The Guardian	1.00	1	1.0%
	Total	1.00	3	3.1%
Turkey's economic development	The Times	1.50	2	2.0%
	The Guardian	.00	3	3.1%
	Total	.60	5	5.1%
Total	The Times	-.28	61	62.2%
	The Guardian	-.54	37	37.8%
	Total	-.38	98	100.0%

Table 2: Evaluation of topical aspects among newspapers
Data basis: n = 98 (Exclusion of n = 85: neutral evaluation)
Scale: -1, -2 = negative, 1, 2 = positive, 0 = ambivalent

A comparison of the topical aspects evaluations in the two newspapers showed that *The Guardian* (-1.08) was more critical of Turkey's political stability than *The Times* (-0.41). In contrast, *The Times* (-0.67) had a more critical view on Turkey's respect for human and civic rights than *The Guardian* (-0.30). While *The Guardian* had an ambivalent stance on Turkey's EU membership (0.00), *The Times* had a positive evaluation (0.50). Turkey's minority rights were another example of polarised evaluations between the newspapers, with *The Guardian* (-1.00) having a much more negative position than *The Times* (-0.40). There were no differences between the newspapers regarding the evaluations of Turkish-Cypriote relations (-0.33), Turkey's demography and Muslim population (0.00) and Turkey's strategic location and military power (1.00). The most noteworthy difference between the newspapers was the evaluation of Turkey's economic development which *The Times* saw as very positive (1.50) while *The Guardian* was ambivalent.

Overall, *The Guardian* had more critical news coverage than *The Times*. Table 2 gives an overview of the evaluations of topical aspects among newspapers.

A key finding was that the majority of aspects received a negative evaluation with the most frequently discussed aspects among those with the most negative evaluations. This means that the weight of the most frequently mentioned aspects, namely Turkey's political stability and Turkey's respect for human and civic rights featured as major points of critique against Turkey. Aspects with positive evaluations featured less prominently in the overall news coverage. Another important finding was that *The Guardian* (-0.54) is generally more critical than *The Times* (-0.28), particularly regarding Turkey's political stability and

Topical aspects	Year	Mean	Cases (N)	Percent (%)
Turkey's political stability	2002	-.83	23	23.5%
	2007	-.35	23	23.5%
	Total	-.59	46	46.9%
Turkey's respect for human and civic rights	2002	.00	9	9.2%
	2007	-.90	10	10.2%
	Total	-.47	19	19.4%
Turkey's EU membership	2007	.33	3	3.1%
	Total	.33	3	3.1%
Turkish-Cypriote relations	2002	-.40	5	5.1%
	2007	.00	1	1.0%
	Total	-.33	6	6.1%
Turkey's minority rights	2002	-1.00	3	3.1%
	2007	-.50	6	6.1%
	Total	-.67	9	9.2%
Turkey's demography and Muslim population	2002	-.17	6	6.1%
	2007	1.00	1	1.0%
	Total	.00	7	7.1%
Turkey's strategic location and military power	2002	1.00	3	3.1%
	Total	1.00	3	3.1%
Turkey's economic development	2002	.00	3	3.1%
	2007	1.50	2	2.0%
	Total	.60	5	5.1%
Total	2002	-.42	52	53.1%
	2007	-.33	46	46.9%
	Total	-.38	98	100.0%

Table 3: Evaluation of topical aspects over time
Data basis: n = 98 (Exclusion of n = 85: neutral evaluation)
Scale: -1, -2 = negative, 1, 2 = positive, 0 = ambivalent

minority rights.

A comparison of evaluation means between 2002 and 2007 showed that Turkey's political stability was less critically rated in 2007 (-0.35) than it was in 2002 (-0.83). Evaluations also improved over time regarding Turkish-Cypriote relations and Turkey's minority rights. Other changes included improved evaluations regarding Turkey's demography and Muslim population (from -0.17 to 1.00) and Turkey's economic development (from 0.00 to 1.50). Evaluations for Turkey's respect for human and civic rights, however, dropped drastically from an ambivalent evaluation to a considerably negative one (-0.90) in 2007. Overall, evaluations for Turkey slightly improved from 2002 to 2007 to a less critical stance. Table 3 gives an overview of the evaluations of topical aspects in the two time periods.

The key findings of this part of the analysis included that the evaluations of a majority of categories improved over time. In contrast, evaluations for Turkey's respect for human and civic rights as the second most common topical aspect, decreased from an ambivalent to a negative level in 2007. Overall, the evaluations of Turkey changed only slightly to a less critical level in 2007.

Sources of similarity or difference in EU-Turkey relations.
Results show that proximity to Islamic political movements (27%) was the most frequently used source of difference in EU-Turkey relations. Frequencies of other sources of difference included secular democracy (12%), human rights (11%), religion (9%), negotiations over Cyprus (7%), culture (4%), geographic location (3%) and economic performance (3%). The most frequently used source of similarity was commitment to reforms (22%) which was used as the second most frequent source in EU-Turkey relations (frequencies mentioned in this paragraph are not reported in the tables).

A comparison of evaluation means showed that human rights were the major source of difference in EU-Turkey relations (-0.75). Other sources of difference include negotiations over Cyprus, geographic location, and economic performance (all -0.50). Further sources of difference were religion (-0.33), proximity to Islamic political movements (-0.31), and to a lesser degree culture (-0.17) and secular democracy (-0.14). The only major source of similarity in EU-Turkey relations was commitment to reforms (0.11). Historical relations between Greece and Turkey were also evaluated positively (0.50) but are not statistically relevant as they were only based on two cases.

A comparison among newspapers (see Table 4) showed that *The Times* was more critical regarding economic performance (-0.67/0.00), proximity to Islamic political movements (-0.44/-0.07) and human rights (-0.86/-0.67) than *The Guardian*. In contrast, *The Guardian* had a much more critical stance than *The Times* regarding negotiations over Cyprus (-1.00/-0.25), secular democracy (-0.50/0.00) and to a lesser degree to religion (-0.50/-0.20). There were little differences in

Sources of similarity or difference	Newspaper	Mean	Cases (N)	Percentage (%)
Proximity to Islamic political movements	The Times	-.44	25	22.7%
	The Guardian	-.07	14	12.7%
	Total	-.31	39	35.5%
Commitment to reforms	The Times	.09	11	10.0%
	The Guardian	.14	7	6.4%
	Total	.11	18	16.4%
Secular democracy	The Times	.00	5	4.5%
	The Guardian	-.50	2	1.8%
	Total	-.14	7	6.4%
Human rights	The Times	-.86	7	6.4%
	The Guardian	-.67	9	8.2%
	Total	-.75	16	14.5%
Religion	The Times	-.20	5	4.5%
	The Guardian	-.50	4	3.6%
	Total	-.33	9	8.2%
Negotiations over Cyprus	The Times	-.25	4	3.6%
	The Guardian	-1.00	2	1.8%
	Total	-.50	6	5.5%
Culture	The Times	.33	3	2.7%
	The Guardian	-.67	3	2.7%
	Total	-.17	6	5.5%
Geographic location	The Times	-.50	2	1.8%
	Total	-.50	2	1.8%
Economic performance	The Times	-.67	3	2.7%
	The Guardian	.00	1	.9%
	Total	-.50	4	3.6%
Support by U.S.A.	The Times	.00	1	.9%
	Total	.00	1	.9%
Historical relations with Greece	The Times	.50	2	1.8%
	Total	.50	2	1.8%
Total	The Times	-.28	68	61.8%
	The Guardian	-.31	42	38.2%
	Total	-.29	110	100.0%

Table 4: Degrees of similarity or difference in EU-Turkey relations among newspapers
Data basis: n = 110 (Exclusion of n = 73: neutral evaluation)
Scale: -1, -2 = negative, 1, 2 = positive, 0 = ambivalent

the evaluations regarding commitment to reforms, geographic location and historical relations between Greece and Turkey.

The most considerable difference between the newspapers could be found in the category culture which featured as a source of similarity in *The Times* while it was seen as a source of difference in *The Guardian* (0.33/-0.50). Overall, *The Times* and *The Guardian* had an equivalent negative evaluation that accounts for more sources of difference than similarity in EU-Turkey relations.

Key findings included that the proximity to Islamic political movements featured as the most prominent source of difference (27%) which was followed by secular democracy (12%), human rights (11%) and religion (9%). Human rights were the source of difference that was most negatively evaluated (-0.75). Religion and proximity to Islamic political movements were in the category of third most negative evaluated sources of difference. A newspaper comparison showed that the categories economic development, political Islam and human rights were more negatively evaluated in *The Times* while culture, negotiations over Cyprus, secular democracy and religion were more critically evaluated in *The Guardian*. Contrary to the different evaluations of topical aspects, the newspapers both showed similarly negative evaluations of sources of difference or similarity.

A comparison of time periods (see Table 5) showed an improvement of evaluations over time regarding proximity to Islamic political movements

(-0.57/-0.16), commitment to reforms (0.07/0.33), human rights (-1.00/-0.60), culture (-0.25/0.00), and economic performance (-1.33/2.00). A negative change over time could be testified for secular democracy (0.50/-0.40), religion (-0.20/-0.50) and negotiations over Cyprus (-0.40/-1.00). Overall, newspaper coverage has become slightly less critical in 2007 (-0.23) than in 2002 (-0.34).

The results show the following trends: Firstly, political aspects dominate the topics that locate Turkey vis-à-vis Europe. This supports claims that the U.K. sees the EU mainly as a political and not a cultural or geographic entity and evaluates prospect member states according to political principles that can be acquired over time. Secondly, the newspaper bias shows no consistent ideological cluster which supports the argument that the issue of Turkey's EU membership permeates the ideological spectrum both from left to right.

Sources of similarity or difference	Year	Mean	Cases (N)	Percent (%)
Proximity to Islamic political movements	2002	-.57	14	12.7%
	2007	-.16	25	22.7%
	Total	-.31	39	35.5%
Commitment to reforms	2002	.07	15	13.6%
	2007	.33	3	2.7%
	Total	.11	18	16.4%
Secular democracy	2002	.50	2	1.8%
	2007	-.40	5	4.5%
	Total	-.14	7	6.4%
Human rights	2002	-1.00	6	5.5%
	2007	-.60	10	9.1%
	Total	-.75	16	14.5%
Religion	2002	-.20	5	4.5%
	2007	-.50	4	3.6%
	Total	-.33	9	8.2%
Negotiations over Cyprus	2002	-.40	5	4.5%
	2007	-1.00	1	.9%
	Total	-.50	6	5.5%
Culture	2002	-.25	4	3.6%
	2007	.00	2	1.8%
	Total	-.17	6	5.5%
Geographic location	2002	-1.00	1	.9%
	2007	.00	1	.9%
	Total	-.50	2	1.8%
Economic performance	2002	-1.33	3	2.7%
	2007	2.00	1	.9%
	Total	-.50	4	3.6%
Support by U.S.A.	2002	.00	1	.9%
	Total	.00	1	.9%
Historical relations with Greece	2002	.50	2	1.8%
	Total	.50	2	1.8%
Total	2002	-.34	58	52.7%
	2007	-.23	52	47.3%
	Total	-.29	110	100.0%

Table 5: Degrees of similarity or difference in EU-Turkey relations over time
Data basis: n = 110 (Exclusion of n = 73: neutral evaluation)
Scale: -1, -2 = negative, 1, 2 = positive, 0 = ambivalent

Thirdly, despite the overall negative evaluations, the trend over time shows an improvement of evaluations regarding both topical aspects and sources of similarity or difference. This puts the negative media outlook of Turkey's membership prospects as outlined in other studies into perspective (Koenig, Mihelj *et al.* 2006; Negrine, Kejanlioglu *et al.* 2008).

CONCLUSION

The lack of clear boundaries that demarcate Europe have made discourses and practices of differentiation particularly important for defining European

identity formation (Rumelili, 2004). Media, which have been described as the frontier guards of identity, are powerful inventors of narratives in the construction of discourses of differentiation. Their ability to influence how we see ourselves and others make the media an important factor in altering our perceptions of Turkey and understanding of European identity.

The empirical results have confirmed theoretical considerations that European identity is largely constructed through symbolic boundaries and that Turkey serves as an important reference point against which these boundaries are defined. In comparison to other studies that have analysed news coverage of Turkey's EU accession process, the results of this study verify that the British press tends to focus more on specific issues such as human rights and to a much lesser degree on abstract notions of identity and the meaning of Europe (Negrine, Kejanlioglu *et al.*, 2008) to locate Turkey vis-à-vis Europe. The absence of explicit references to EU identity or manifest definitions of "us" and "them" in British media coverage, however, does not mean that identity formation processes are not taking place. The drawing of boundaries through a majority of sources of difference in the news texts is a clear indicator of mediated Othering. The predominant use of differences in news coverage about EU-Turkey relations illustrates that identification only plays a minor role in EU identity formation.

An interesting example of the definition of European identity through a British perspective is that religion as a source of difference only plays a minor role in British news coverage. This, however, depends on the contextual setting. While religion in a cultural context forms a marginal source of difference, the opposite is the case when it comes to violations of secular democracy through religion. Or, put differently, while Britain might tolerate religious diversity in a cultural sense, it strongly opposes violations of the separation of state and religion. This is illustrated by the negative evaluation of the proximity to Islamic political movements which feature as the most prominent source of difference in EU-Turkey relations.

What is noticeable, however, is that even the most prominent and incidentally also most negative sources of difference such as human rights and proximity to Islamic political movements are of a temporary and therefore inclusive nature with a chance for Turkey to improve them over time. The way Turkey is represented in British media highlights that, although sources of difference dominate the news coverage, the characteristic of these notions does not form permanent difference (see Rumelili, 2004, p. 37). Sources of difference that establish permanent difference and exclusion, such as Turkey's geographic location or culture, are given only minor consideration. This lends support to the argument that European identity through British eyes is communicated as an inclusive identity. What we can learn about European identity from this British point of view is that states can become European by acquiring the principles of democracy and human rights. Trends over time have revealed changes in news

content that show an improvement of negatively evaluated topics and sources of difference. These changes in media coverage are likely to also result in the changing of people's perceptions.

On the one side, the British press contribute to the notion of an Europeanised Turkey by highlighting its committed efforts to reforms. On the other side, Turkey continues to be portrayed in media narratives in connection with earlier more exclusivist representations. Negrine *et al*. (2008) describe this problematic by noting that "even Turkey's efforts to 'modernize and westernize' have not eroded the sense of difference" (p. 51). British media are only one example of several national media spheres in Europe that will shape the public's sense of belonging to Europe and views of Turkey. Countries like Austria or Germany are likely to communicate a more exclusivist interpretation of European identity based on their past and present relations with Turkey. An analysis of other countries would expand the scope of this study to contribute to a clearer picture of an evolving and changing European space by analysing how European identity is constructed vis-à-vis Turkey in other national media narratives.

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