ORIENTALISM IN THE MEDIA: A CASE STUDY OF EUROPEAN NEWS COVERAGE OF TURKISH ACCESSION TO THE EUROPEAN UNION

by

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(Under the Direction of Leara Rhodes)

ABSTRACT

Media imagery used to portray a “self” and an “other” as being distinct, in opposition or in cooperation, reflects, reinforces and changes opinions about neighboring countries. The establishment and expansion of the European Union symbolizes the new European identity, and discourse surrounding its development represents the struggle by its leaders and their publics to define Europe. This study examines the Western media’s representation of negotiations surrounding Turkey’s possible accession to the European Union. A discourse analysis of news items regarding Turkish accession in major European newspapers forms the foundation of scholarship. Findings show several prominent themes within the text which can be traced back to a body of ideas, beliefs, and clichés about the East known as “Orientalism,” concepts made up of human effort to affirm relationships of power and identify the “other.”

INDEX WORDS: Orientalism, Turkey, European Union
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B.A., The University of Georgia, 1999

A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of The University of Georgia in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

MASTER OF ARTS

ATHENS, GEORGIA

2006
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May 2006
DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the students and faculty of the Javkhlant School in Uliastai, Mongolia, who helped me to see the world as it truly exists. The bonds of humanity are far stronger than those of religion, ethnicity or nationality. Our similarities outweigh our differences.

In this spirit, I have undertaken research which illuminates the disturbing trends in international media which divide rather than unite peoples across borders. As is written in the Quran, *wa ja‘alnakum shu‘uban wa qaba‘ilan li‘ta‘arifu:* ‘And I have created peoples and tribes so that they could get to know each other.’

_The Ballad of the East and West_  
By Rudyard Kipling

Oh, East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet,  
Till Earth and Sky stand presently at God's great Judgment Seat;  
But there is neither East nor West, Border, nor Breed, nor Birth,  
When two strong men stand face to face,  
Tho' they come from the ends of the earth!
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my major professor Dr. Leara Rhodes for her patient encouragement and unwavering support. She has illuminated my path throughout undergraduate and graduate school as a teacher, mentor, and friend. I would also like to thank Dr. Janice Hume for her academic rigor and enthusiasm and Dr. Tudor Vlad for his expertise in Eastern Europe, his homeland. These three professors have kindly served on my thesis committee.

I would also like to thank Dr. Carolina Acosta-Alzuru for introducing me to critical cultural studies, Dr. Jay Hamilton for pulling Said’s *Orientalism* off his bookshelf when I asked for his advice, and Dr. Han Park for his irresistible irreverence and gentle guidance. The University of Georgia should be commended for attracting such a diverse and awe-inspiring faculty.

Last, but certainly not least, I would like to thank my family for their immeasurable support and encouragement. Without the loving foundation they have provided, I cannot imagine accomplishing much of anything.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Turkey and the European Union held a brief ceremony on October 4, 2005 that formally opened negotiations on Turkey’s bid to join the Union. The ceremony, which began just after midnight following a prolonged and intense debate, set in motion a process that would probably take a decade or more but could end with the European Union extending its borders eastward into Asia. After keeping Turkey waiting for nearly forty years, as it restructured its legal system and economy to meet European standards, the EU finally granted Turkey candidacy status. Once a candidate country starts accession negotiations, membership is considered to be merely a matter of time (Kirisci, 2005). (For more details on Turkey and EU negotiations, please see Chapter 2).

“This is a truly historic day for Europe and for the whole of the international community,” said Jack Straw, Britain’s foreign secretary and chairman of the negotiations. He said Turkey’s membership would “bring a strong, secular state that happens to have a Muslim majority into the EU—proof that we can live, work and prosper together” (Smith, 2005).

Negotiating Turkish accession to the European Union is a challenge for both the Turks and the Europeans. By the time it could be expected to join, Turkey’s current population of 70 million people would probably have grown to outnumber that of Germany, now the largest European state. That would give Turkey the most seats in the European Parliament under current rules (Smith, 2005). With only a toehold in the European continent, many argue Turkey is not
geographically suited for membership in the EU. Yet, since 1945, and in the context of the Cold War, Turkey’s foreign policy priority has been to achieve affiliation with western institutions. Since then, Turkey has been a force in the European economy and the western security framework (Park, 2000).

Despite the economic foundations of the EU, the debate over Turkish accession has been dominated by political-cultural concerns rather than political-economic ones (Kubicek, 2005). The fact that 99.5 percent of its population is Muslim appears to be the greatest impediment to Turkey’s EU membership (Radu, 2003). As will be demonstrated by this study, the fact that Turkey’s population is predominantly Muslim has been the most salient issue in European newspaper coverage of this debate.

Situated at the crossroad between East and West, Turkey offers the only example that Islam and secularism, and Islam and Westernization are not incompatible, and it stands the chance to become the only European state with a predominantly Muslim population. Because of its unique geopolitical, economic, and cultural position, Turkish accession has become one of the most politically contentious issues in Europe (Kubicek, 2005). The European public is wary of EU expansion into Asia, and support for Turkish membership has been less than 50 percent, according to public opinion polls (Kirisci, 2005, p. 71). “Turkey must win the hearts and minds of European citizens,” warned the European commission president, Jos. Manuel Barroso on the first day of formal accession talks (“Barroso fires EU,” 2005).

Coverage of Turkish accession has been dramatic and emotional. Perhaps this is due to mounting intolerance and xenophobia in Western Europe, much of it directed against Muslim immigrants from the Maghreb and Turkey (Karpat, 1996). Examples of this can be found in fiery debates surrounding head scarves in France, Turkish laborers in Germany, and cartoons
depicting Islamic fundamentalism in Denmark. Turkey appears along the fault line between apparently conflicting Western and Islamic civilizations and is continually described as either a “bridge” or a “barrier.”

An Orientalist discourse has sustained the belief that Islam is a coherent, transnational monolithic force engaged in a historical conflict with the West. This essentialist reading of history allows the myth of an inherent hostility between two polarized sides to be maintained (Poole, 2002). Huntington’s popular ‘clash of civilizations’ provides a contemporary example of the theory that Islam constitutes a real military, demographic, and socio-religious threat to the West. In *The New York Times* Bestseller, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, Huntington writes, “In the emerging era, clashes of civilizations are the greatest threat to world peace, and an international order based on civilizations is the surest safeguard against world war” (Huntington, 1996, p. 321). According to Huntington’s theory, the post-1990 world is one of competing civilizations, the Western and Islamic being two of the nine civilizations he identifies. Huntington writes about the inescapable historical tendency of conflict between the West and Islam. Contemporary conflicts between the two civilizations include weapons proliferation, human rights and democracy, control of oil, migration, and terrorism.

Huntington argues that Turkey has the attributes to become the core state of Islam, and that the only reason it has not assumed that role is because of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk’s legacy and its continuing status as a secular state. (See Chapter 2 for more information on Ataturk and the history of the Turkish Republic). Huntington defines Turkey as a torn country and notes the rise of Islamic tendencies eroding the Ataturk inheritance. He writes, “At some point, Turkey could be ready to give up its frustrating and humiliating role as a beggar pleading for
membership in the West and to resume its much more impressive and elevated historical role as the principal Islamic interlocutor and antagonist of the West” (p. 178-179).

Huntington’s theory perpetuates the age-old fallacy of the Orientalists. His theory mobilizes “fear, hatred, disgust, and resurgent self-pride and arrogance—much of it having to do with Islam and Arabs on one side, ‘we’ Westerners on the other” (Said, 1979, p. xvii). Many scholars reject the myth of a timeless essential truth about the West’s relationship with Islam. Said (1979), Halliday (1996), Hafez (2000), and Poole (2002) argue that current discourses regarding the confrontation between the West and Islam have their basis in contemporary needs and are sustained on both sides for political purposes. (For more on Orientalism, see Chapter 4.)

Western media coverage of Turkey’s possible accession to the EU provides an ideal opportunity to observe modern Orientalist discourse. According to newspaper accounts of the debate, the outcome of the negotiations will ultimately determine whether Turkey remains a “barrier” or becomes a “bridge” between the West and the East. The purpose of this study is to determine how European news coverage has framed this debate and whether or not the age-old beliefs and stereotypes of Orientalism have informed representation of this issue.

News discourse surrounding Turkish accession to the EU is important because the European public will ultimately decide whether or not Turkey can become a full member of the Union (Kirisci, 2005). Because public opinion, especially regarding foreign policy, is largely driven by the media, journalists and news organizations may actually influence the outcome of major international negotiations (see section on “Media Diplomacy” in Chapter 3).

In Europe, as in other regions of the world, the media are an important mechanism of public understanding and the establishment of collective identities (see Chapter 3). Imagery used to portray a “self” and an “other” as being distinct, in opposition or in cooperation, reflects,
reinforces and changes opinions about neighboring countries. This role of the media takes on
great significance today, as Europeans seek to establish a new political and cultural identity for
their region after the Cold War. The establishment and expansion of the European Union
symbolizes the new European identity, and discourse surrounding its development represents the
struggle of its leaders and their publics to define Europe (Kubicek, 2005). (For further discussion
on “Collective Identity,” see Chapter 3.)

As the power of the western media continues to grow as a result of globalization, studies
of international news coverage become all the more critical. Because modern societies are now
saturated in media in this “age of information,” the information disseminated reaches wider
audiences than ever before. Western media often contribute to the “clash” in the way stories are
chosen and framed. Consciously or not, the media perpetuate stereotypes which pit members of
different civilizations against each other, in order to maintain power structures.

The media often contribute to the naïve notion that international political struggles are
waged because “we” are somehow different from “them.” Journalists can choose very different
strategies of cultural deconstruction, promoting either “essentialist” positions, like Huntington’s
“clash of civilizations,” or “syncretist” positions, which highlight common cultural heritage and
humanist values. “By emphasizing one interpretation or the other, the mass media can become
either agents of international and intranational cultural conflict or of transcultural
communication” (Hafez, 2000, p. 38).

In the case of Turkish accession to the EU, the western media will act as either agents of
international conflict or agents of transcultural communication, and their actions may have huge
implications. Kirisci (2005) defines the negotiations as “Europe’s challenge” (p. 71). He asks,
“Will Europe be able to admit the centuries old ‘other’ into its ranks?” (p. 71). I think the media will play an important role in determining the answer to this question.

My thesis will examine the European media’s representation of Turkish accession to the EU to determine whether an Orientalist discourse informs the debate surrounding these negotiations. I hope this study will contribute to our understanding of the way the Middle East and Islam are reported in the West and the implications of such reportage.
CHAPTER 2
HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The history of the relationship between Turkey and Europe is long and complex. Although a full historical analysis of the issue of Turkish accession to the European Union is beyond the scope of this research, it is necessary to outline the events which led to the current state of affairs. Many of the news articles that will be analyzed (see Chapter 6) include references to this history. Therefore, a basic understanding of the historical context is a necessary component of this study.

This chapter will trace the cultural-religious premises of the relationship between Turkey and Europe. It will cover the rise of the Turkish Republic and its western oriented policies. The second section will cover a concise history of the European Union, its purposes for integration and enlargement, and the current status of the Union. The final section will give a timeline of important events in Turkey’s accession to the EU and will touch on the role the United States has played throughout the negotiations.

Turkey

Due to Turkey’s geopolitical situation, it has historically had the potential to shift the balance between major players in international politics. Because Turkey belongs neither to the Arab nor the Christian European culture, it has vacillated between the two civilizations.
(Muftuler-Bac, 1997). “Religion appeared from the very start as the key factor in distinguishing, for the West, “them”– the Turks– from “us”– the Christians,” writes Karpat (1996, p. 4).

The Ottoman-Hapsburg rivalry, which continued until the end of both empires in 1918, carried extraordinary significance for the history of Europe. The cultural-religious premises of the confrontation between the Turks and Europeans took on greater significance after 1541, when the Ottomans tried to conquer the city of Vienna. The scene of the struggle between the Hapsburgs and the Ottomans moved into Central Europe. Consequently, the papacy aligned itself solidly with the Hapsburgs, who portrayed the struggle with the Turks as the fateful encounter of Christianity with Islam (Karpat, 1996).

Europe’s progress in science turned the tables against the Ottoman Empire and led to a military imbalance. After suffering a final defeat during World War I, the Ottoman Empire completely dissolved. A young Turkish officer named Mustafa Kemal Ataturk set out to turn defeat into victory with the establishment of a modern republican state. Guided by the necessities and circumstances of the moment, Ataturk set out to “alter the mentality of his people” (Landau, 1984, p. xii). This entailed a total disestablishment of the religious empire. He abolished the caliphate and replaced the sultanate with a republican system of political authority. He decreed that Turkish would be written in Roman rather than Arabic script, replaced the traditional calendar with the Gregorian calendar, and formally disestablished Islam as the state religion. The Turkish Republic was founded on October 29, 1923 (Landau, 1984).

In what became known as the “Kemalist revolution,” Turkish society withdrew from the Ottoman Islamic framework and embraced secularism and modernization. It is difficult to trace the development of Ataturk’s ideology, but scholars tend to agree that he was guided by pragmatism rather than radicalism (Landau, 1984, Heper, 1993). At the time, westernization and
modernization were synonymous—there were no alternatives to westernization if a country wished to modernize. On the day the Republic was founded, Ataturk told the press:

“Our object now is to strengthen the ties that bind us to other nations. There may be a great many countries in the world, but there is only one civilization, and if a nation is to achieve progress, she must be a part of this one civilization… The Ottoman Empire began to decline the day when, proud of her successes against the West, she cut ties that bound her to the European nations” (Landau, 1984, p. 247).

Following the precedent set by some reformers in the Ottoman Empire, Ataturk recognized westernization to be the only viable course for his country. As such, secularism became a pre-requisite for westernization. Landau (1984) writes, “Secularism was the foundation stone on which all other Kemalist reforms were built” (p. 126).

The Turkish Republic inherited a tradition of a strong state and weak civil society from the Ottoman Empire (Muftler-Bac, 1997). The Republic was unable to overcome the nineteenth century European stereotype of “the sick man of Europe” (Heper, 1993, p. 1). Yet, Turkey slowly developed economically as western countries became increasingly interested in its geostrategic location, cheap labor force and natural resources.

Since 1945, and in the context of the Cold War, Turkey’s foreign policy priority has been to achieve affiliation with western institutions. Thus, Turkey joined the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development in 1948, the Council of Europe in 1949 and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 1952. Security considerations were the driving force behind Ankara’s post-1945 diplomatic and political relationships with the West. The United
States especially supported NATO membership for a country that lay on the southern flank of the Soviet Union, controlled access to the Black Sea, and linked Europe to the oil-rich Middle East (Park, 2000).

Three decades of democracy resulted in an ideologically and socially diversified Turkish society (Landau, 1984). After shifting from a one-party to a multi-party system, Turkey achieved NATO membership in 1952. The West provided billions of dollars of economic and security assistance, and the U.S. established military bases throughout the country, in order to prevent Soviet expansion towards the Mediterranean.

By the 1980s, Turkey’s Western-oriented elite sought membership in Europe as a means to further develop the economy. As Landau (1984) writes, “Turkish foreign policy is commonly said to be based on a realistic sense of national interest, without much concern for ideology” (p. 242). As other countries began to apply for membership in the EU, Turkey formally applied for membership in April 1987. Since then, the Union has approved applications from Austria, Finland, Sweden, Norway, Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovenia, Slovakia, the Baltic republics, Romania and Bulgaria, but Turkish membership has remained a distant possibility (Kirisci, 2005). (See last section for a return to the question of Turkish accession to the EU).

The European Union

In order to understand why Turkey aspires to EU membership, it is important to understand the European Union, itself, including its purposes, member states, and enlargement policies. This section will give a brief synopsis of the EU and its history.
World War II was the initial catalyst for European union. After two unprecedented deadly
crimes, European governments realized that integration and cooperation were the only way to
prevent future wars on the European continent. The division of Europe in the late 1940s
propelled Western Europe to define itself as an entity with common interests. In May 1949, ten
states established the Council of Europe (Dinan, 1998B, pp. 101-102). This first council led to
many subsequent agreements on European economic integration and development, including the
establishment of the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1952, the European Coal and
Steel Community (ECSC) in 1954, and the European Atomic Energy Community (EUROTOM)
in 1957. In November 1993, the Treaty on European Union came into force, and the European
Community (EC) became the collective name for these three communities.

European union became the final destination of the EC (Dinan, 1998D). The Treaty set
out the Union’s objectives:

1. To promote economic and social progress
2. To assert the EU’s identity on the international scene
3. To strengthen and protect the rights of EU citizens
4. To develop close cooperation on justice and home affairs
5. To maintain in full the body of existing Community law

In addition, one of the Treaty’s most commonly cited provisions states that the
EU “marks a new phase in the process of creating an ever-closer union among the peoples of
Europe” (Dinan, 1998D, pp. 225-226). The Treaty created European citizenship, strengthened
the power of the European Parliament, and generated plans for the Economic and Monetary
Union (EMU). Under the EMU, twelve EU member countries (Austria, Belgium, Finland,
France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, and Spain) adopted a common European currency, the “Euro.”

The EC/EU has seen five major enlargements. The six founding members of the EC—Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands—subscribed to the principle written into the Rome treaty of 1957 that “any European State may apply to become a member of the Community” (Rosenthal, 1998, p. 166). This opened up the way to four successive enlargements: Britain, Denmark, and Ireland in 1973; Greece in 1981; Spain and Portugal in 1986; and Austria, Finland, and Sweden joined the newly launched EU in 1995. The demise of the Soviet Union and the fall of the Berlin Wall dramatically changed Europe, making further enlargement possible. The European Council, which is composed of the heads of states and governments of EU members, declared at the Madrid Summit in 1995, “enlargement is both a political necessity and a historic opportunity for Europe” (p. 169).

Since 1995, the EU has grown to include 25 independent states. Members to join since then include Greek Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia. After signing the Treaty of Accession in April 2005, Bulgaria and Romania are set to join the EU on January 1, 2007 (European Communities, 2006).

In theory, for a country to be eligible for full membership in the EU, four preconditions must be fulfilled:

1. Stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights, and respect for and protection of minorities
2. Existence of a functioning market economy
3. Capacity to cope with competitive pressures and market forces within the EU
4. Ability to take on the obligations of membership, including adherence to the aims of political, economic, and monetary union (Dinan, 1998A, p. 1).

Successfully enlarging the EU is one of the major challenges facing Europe in the 21st century (Lippert et al., 2001). France and Germany have been recognized as the leading “engines” of European integration, as the earliest creation of the EC had much to do with overcoming Franco-German antagonism (Kirisci, 2002, p.2). During the 1990s, several member states expressed reservations about future EU enlargement, including France, Austria and Denmark. On the other hand, both Britain and Germany demonstrated fairly strong and consistent support for it. The enlargement process will move forward only if there is continued and determined support from large countries, because they hold the largest number of seats in the European Parliament (Lippert et al., 2001).

As the EU contemplates Turkish membership, it is forced to reevaluate what it means to be European. EU states must accept new members unanimously, and although every other candidate country to reach accession status has become a member in the past, Turkey’s future membership remains uncertain. Austrian and French opposition alone may be enough to halt the aspirations of Turkey, as both have pledged to hold referendums on whether it can join (Cook, 2005).

_Negotiating Turkish Accession to the European Union_

Turkey’s relationship with the European Economic Community (EEC) started in 1959, when the government applied for associate membership, resulting in the Ankara Association Agreement on September 12, 1963, calling for a gradual process of economic integration.
between Turkey and the EEC and raising prospects of eventual Turkish membership. After its transition to democracy and economic liberalization, Turkey applied for membership in the European Community (EC) in 1987. In its opinion declared on December 17, 1989, the Commission concluded that Turkey was not ready to be a member of the EC for economic, political, and social reasons.

The 1990s marked deterioration in EU-Turkish relations, as violence against the Kurdish population in southeast Turkey increased. Therefore, when the European Council met at the Luxembourg Summit in December 1997, Turkey was not included in its list of candidate countries for the next round of EU enlargement. In protest, the Turkish government broke off political dialogue with the EU.

At the December 1999 EU Summit in Helsinki, Turkey was finally granted candidate status. As an official candidate, Turkey was issued a list of political reforms known as the “Copenhagen criteria,” which had to be met before formal accession negotiations could begin. The decision to grant Turkey candidacy status opened up a bitter debate in Europe on Turkey’s eligibility and its “Europeanness.” At the December 2004 European Council on Turkey, the European Council (the highest governing body of the EU) decided to open membership negotiations with Turkey in October 2005 (Kirisci, 2005).

On October 4, 2005, Turkey and the European Union held a brief ceremony in Luxembourg that formally opened talks on Turkey’s bid to join the Union. After keeping Turkey waiting for 40 years, the EU set in motion a process that would probably take a decade or more but could end with the Union extending its borders eastward into Asia (“Europe embraces Turkey,” 2005).
Since it was granted candidacy status to the EU at the European Council (EC) Summit held in Helsinki on December 11-12, 1999, an international debate has raged over whether or not Turkey should be considered a part of Europe. Citing economic, human rights and cultural factors, many Europeans oppose Turkey’s membership, while supporters argue that political inclusion would strengthen the EU. This debate continually appears on the front pages of major European newspapers.

According to Kirisci (2005), the governments of the Mediterranean countries, Britain, the Netherlands, Germany, Finland and Sweden have argued that the EU must respect its previous decisions and must treat Turkey equally as all other previous and current candidates. The second group of countries, led by France and Austria, have openly opposed Turkish membership, often citing domestic opposition and fear that Turks may actually flood the Union’s labor market and aggravate immigration problems in Europe.

Because political and economic cooperation prevents instability, eastward enlargement of the EU is strongly motivated by security considerations. Britain’s motivations for supporting enlargement reflect a concern with establishing structures that will promote security and stability on the European continent. Germany’s major interests in enlargement include regional stability and new market economies (Lippert et al, 2001). Although the climate of public opinion has become increasingly hostile to further enlargement in all of the western European countries, the political elite have rarely allowed national political considerations to override the objectives set out in the Treaty on European Union (Holmes, 2001). The issue of Turkish accession may challenge this precedent, as several member countries have agreed to hold public referendums before they accept Turkey’s inclusion in the EU.
While public support for Turkish membership has remained low in most European countries, the data in Turkey suggests that the Turkish public has been continuously supportive of its country’s bid for membership. Over 60 percent of the Turkish people think that EU membership is a good thing, and 39 percent of the Turkish public characterize the EU accession process as moving too slowly. As indicated by Turkey’s 2002 presidential elections, the EU has become a critical factor in domestic politics (Avci, 2003).

The U.S. government has also remained supportive of Turkish accession to the EU. During the Gulf War of 1991, Turkey became an indispensable ally in the eyes of the U.S. administration. Despite objections from the Turkish public, the government allowed the U.S. to use Turkish air bases, and Turkey deployed more than 100,000 troops along the border with Iraq. When the second Bush administration decided to go to war in Iraq in 2003, the newly elected Turkish administration was more reluctant to aid the U.S. But, Turkey remained a critical ally, as Secretary of State Colin Powell’s visit to Ankara in April 2003 demonstrated. The U.S. has therefore supported Turkey’s bid to join the EU as a way to maintain Turkish cooperation vis a vis the Middle East (Altunisik & Tur, 2005).

A proper analysis of the politics of Turkish accession to the EU is well beyond the scope of this research. This chapter has provided a concise history of Turkish accession to the EU and the politics surrounding the issue. Based on the opinions of political scientists, historians, and journalists, there remains no general consensus regarding the question of Turkish membership in the EU. This is a complex issue that may take decades to be resolved. Rather than trying to resolve this issue in any way, this study merely seeks to determine how European news coverage has framed this debate and whether or not the age-old beliefs and stereotypes of Orientalism have informed the media’s representation of this issue.
CHAPTER 3
LITERATURE REVIEW

While chapter two provided the historical and political context for the issue of Turkish accession to the EU, the purpose of this chapter is to determine the western media’s role in these negotiations. This literature review will also help readers understand how the researcher arrived at a particular theoretical framework, which will be further discussed in chapter four.

Several relevant topics will be covered in this chapter, including the media’s role in the formation of collective identities, in the promotion of international understanding, and in media diplomacy. This chapter will also uncover the ways in which Turkey has been represented by western media in the past. As the researcher will show, representations of Turkey cannot be divorced from representations of Islam. Therefore, the chapter will conclude with a broader examination of the western media’s discourse on Islam.

The Media’s Role in the Formation of Collective Identities

Media researchers have become increasingly interested in the role that media might play in the formation of collective identities, especially nations (Tomlinson, 1991). In order to comprehend why the media’s representation of Turkey in news coverage of accession negotiations matter, it is necessary to understand the role of the media in promoting cultural cohesiveness. After all, some kind of cultural cohesion must exist among member states of the EU.
Schlesinger (1991) wrote, “In much recent debate it has been almost an article of faith that mass media must play a crucial role in the construction, articulation and maintenance of various forms of collective identity” (p. 302). This point was exemplified in the 1960s when a group called the New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO) challenged Western domination of world news. Schiller (1993) chronicles the post-colonial Third World states’ efforts to combat cultural imperialism. The NWICO proponent’s views have been summed up by Zimbabwean Prime Minister Robert Mugabe:

In the information and communication field, the Non-Aligned Nations and other developing countries are adversely affected by the monopoly which the developed nations hold over the world’s communications systems . . . The old order has ensured the continued dependence of our information and communication infrastructures and systems on those of the developed nations. Such dependence constitutes a serious threat to the preservation of our respective cultures and indigenous life-styles (p. 54-55).

One of four features of collective identity that Melucci (1989) identifies is the strategy of inclusion and exclusion: We are defined, at least in part, as being different from how They are. During the Cold War, the long-standing antagonisms on the European continent were frozen, and Europeans found a common identity in their ideological war against communism (Schlesinger, 1993). With the fall of communism, how will Europeans once again collectively define themselves?

Schlesinger (1993) points out that Europe illuminates the limitations of constructing a collective identity, due to its diverse languages and cultures. The search for a European collective identity took on great significance as Europeans tried to make sense of their societies
following World Wars I and II. In his essay on the topic, T.S. Eliot (1948) traced the evolution of European culture to its Christian heritage and concluded that culture cannot exist without religion. In a foreshadowing statement, Eliot wrote, “No political and economic organization, however much goodwill it commands, can supply what this cultural unity gives. If we dissipate or throw away our common patrimony of culture, then all the organization and planning of the most ingenious minds will not help us, or bring us closer together” (p. 127).

Without the Christian heritage of Europe, Turkish membership in the EU will compel Europeans to ask a fundamental question: What is Europe? Some will argue that Europe is a collection of secular nation states based on democratic principals. Others will fear, in the words of former French President Valery Giscard d’Estaing, that Turkish accession would be “the end of Europe” (Kubicek, 2005, p. 67). The media will not only carry the discourse surrounding this debate, it will contribute to the discourse and the subsequent construction of European identity.

*The Media as a Tool of International Understanding*

Just as the media help to create collective identities, news discourse also promotes understanding of other collective identities. In fact, international news functions as a great cultural emissary. In its programming, narrative and institutional contexts, it is less about providing information than about socialization. Since foreign audiences’ personal contact with each other is limited, stereotypical perceptions of peoples of different nations may be shaped in a significant way by exposure to media (Hafez, 1999).

As international communications scholar, Kai Hafez writes, “If ‘information’ is to be one of the most important resources of the next century, current artificial scantiness and fragmentation of international news must be considered a development project for the future”
Hafez presents a body of research, which reveals that the media have greater influence on public opinion in the field of international news than in the field of domestic news. As a result, he concludes:

There is an inherent danger that journalists promote a false understanding of cultural incompatibility as a result of their own biases, stereotypes and insufficient knowledge of cultural contests and that their reports reinforce the perception of historically grown antagonisms, for example, between Islam and the West, Chinese and Japanese culture, or between Hindus and Muslims, instead of emphasizing the shared meaning that exists between symbols of different cultures. Such constructions of cultural conflicts could fuel ideological disputes in international relations. A ‘transcultural’ search for meaning is necessary for globalization and for the standardization of values such as human rights (p. 56).

Despite the prevailing belief in active media audiences, media studies have re-emphasized the political-economic control of the international media by large multinational corporations, the power of the dominant media in the West to construct meanings, and the limitations of the “active audience” in decoding messages. It is reasonable to assume that exposure to western media might affect recipients’ perceptions of other cultures, of which they have had no direct personal experience (Willnat, He & Xiaoming, 1997, p. 739).

“The news is not a neutral reporter of international affairs but a participant in the process of international relations” (Oehlkers, 2000, p. 47). This places a heavy burden on international news outlets to provide fair and unbiased coverage of international issues. Journalists can choose very different strategies of cultural deconstruction, promoting either “essentialist” positions, like
Huntington’s “clash of civilizations,” or “syncretist” positions, which highlight common cultural heritage and humanist values. “By emphasizing one interpretation or the other, the mass media can become either agents of international and intranational cultural conflict or of transcultural communication” (Hafez, 2000, p. 38).

*Media Diplomacy*

Foreign policy and international diplomacy tend to be based on interests and perceptions. Interests are driven by obvious factors like economic resources, domestic considerations, or strategic location, while perceptions are driven by representations of “foreign” people, governments and actions (Hippler, 2000, pp. 68-69). These representations are most often created and presented by the media. Gilboa (2000) provides a theoretical framework for understanding the role of mass communications in international diplomacy. Diplomacy refers to “a communication system through which representatives of states and international global actors, including elected and appointed officials, express and defend their interests, state their grievances, and issue threats and ultimatums. It is a channel of contact for clarifying positions, probing for information, and convincing states and other actors to support one’s position” (p. 275).

Because a nation or a leader’s image help to determine status in the international community, the mass media in the age of globalization play an increasingly important role in diplomacy. Due to fundamental changes in international politics and global communication, there has been an effort to label this new form of mass mediated diplomacy. Scholars have coined the phrases “CNN Effect,” “teleplomacy,” and “media diplomacy,” yet the media’s expanding role in diplomacy has received little scholarly attention (p. 276).
Gilboa identifies three types of diplomacy – secret, closed-door, and open diplomacy. EU negotiations regarding Turkish accession can be defined as “open diplomacy,” because negotiations are open to the media and to public scrutiny and debate. In this model, “negotiators frequently conduct official press conferences, hold briefings, grant interviews, and even allow reporters access to conference rooms” (p. 286). Yet, even in the most open version of diplomacy, officials keep some information secret in order to allow room for maneuvers and media leaks. In all types of diplomacy, officials use the media to send messages to leaders and publics of other states as well as to their own public.

“Media diplomacy refers to uses of the mass media to communicate with state and nonstate actors, to build confidence and advance negotiations, as well as to mobilize public support for agreements” (pp. 294-295). Because media diplomacy requires close cooperation between officials and journalists, journalists sometimes play the role of diplomats, themselves. Other times, this cooperation leads to manipulation of the media for political purposes. Whatever the outcome, the media’s involvement in diplomacy is becoming increasingly important because leaders of state are using the media as a standard instrument for communication and negotiation.

Examining the role of media diplomacy throughout the Northern Ireland peace negotiations, Spencer (2004) found that television news played a central role in political exchanges throughout the peace process. He found media depictions “emotive, dramatic and simplistic … obscuring complications inherent in the policy-making process” (p. 606). On the other hand, Spencer concluded that in the case of Northern Ireland, media diplomacy helped to speed the negotiations along to a positive conclusion because of the pressure caused by international media attention.
Due to the importance of media diplomacy, journalists covering international negotiations must be ever mindful of their representations of the events as they unfold. In most cases, the media has significant influence over public opinion. In the case of media diplomacy, the media may actually influence the outcome of major international negotiations.

Representations of Turkey in Western Media

Examining news coverage of Turkish accession to the EU is an interesting case study because Turkey is a secular democracy, a member of NATO, and a country where the vast majority of its population is Muslim. To many outsiders, Turkey is a paradox. With a toehold in Europe, Turkey does not fall neatly into common western perceptions of the Middle East. Yet, like other countries in the developing world, Turkey is most likely to appear in the headlines of western newspapers following a natural disaster or civil strife (Hafez, 1999).

Due to its historically close diplomatic and military ties with the U.S., Turkey often makes U.S. news. When the Turkish government serves U.S. interests, the country is depicted in a positive light. When their actions fail to please the U.S. government, Turkey is represented in a more wary or negative tone. Chomsky (2004) criticizes the U.S. for bullying the Turkish government into providing bases for American troops during the build-up to war in Iraq, even though 95 percent of the Turkish population wanted no involvement.

Although Turkey is a strategically important country for the U.S., and it regularly appears in western newspapers, very few studies have analyzed international press coverage of this country. In fact, only one study was found that specifically focused on western news coverage of Turkey. In it, the author speculated that academics fall into the same trap as journalists by studying coverage of the Middle East only in the contexts of war, terrorism, or upheaval. His
purpose was to search for patterns of emphasis in newspaper articles from the U.S. and Britain, written the week following the November 2002 elections in Turkey, in which the center-right Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (AKP), a party with roots in “Islamist politics,” won a landslide victory. The researcher assumes that studying “the more day-to-day, nonsensational activities in Muslim nations . . . could add a great deal to the understanding of how these nations are presented in the press” (Christensen, 2005, p. 109).

In the U.S. and U.K. press coverage of the AKP victory, the most salient frame Christensen identified was the fact that the party had roots in “Islamic” and/or “Islamist” politics. He concluded:

The coverage reflected continuing problems in the presentation by the press of countries such as the United States and the United Kingdom of events in Muslim nations. The AKP was framed as an “Islamic” party, and the presence of Islam in Turkish politics was framed as a possible threat to Turkey’s “Western orientation” and security. These frames were not presented through an analysis of the AKP political platform or Turkish social/political history but through the *omission* of any analysis of such a platform or history (p. 126.)

His study demonstrates the problematic nature of western press coverage of issues involving Islam. Although there is scant research available on the western media’s representation of Turkey, there is a fast growing cannon of literature on representations of Islam in western media, most of it grounded in Said’s theory of Orientalism. Although Turkey has been a secular state since Ataturk introduced his series of reforms in 1923, its populace remains predominantly
Muslim (99.5 percent) (Radu, 2003). Therefore, media representations of Turkey and its people must be studied within the broader context of media representations of Islam.

Representations of Islam in Western Media

The bulk of literature on Islam and the West analyzes media representations within a wider examination of the international context of power relations. Because the media have superseded other institutions in the cultural production of knowledge, researchers have focused their attention on media texts and visuals. Said (1981) points out that the media form the “cultural apparatus” through which Europeans and Americans derive their consciousness of Islam (p. 43). The press presents a series of binary oppositions in which the West stands for rationality, humanity and modernity, while Islam is aberrant, undeveloped and inferior. By presenting ‘Islam’ as a collectivity, the media denies nations and individuals in the Middle East the opportunity to represent themselves, while representing Christianity as ‘the West’ is deemed problematic. For Said, the homogenization of Muslims works as an ‘ideological cover’ that contributes to ignorance about the “Other.”

Such ignorance is reaffirmed by modern Orientalist discourse on Islam and the Middle East. Poole (2002) discusses the major recurring themes in the western media’s representation of Islam. The overarching theme presents Muslim cultures as static and despotic– “the antithesis of modernity” (p. 45). By linking every conflict in the Muslim world to *jihad* and Islam, the media paints a threatening picture of the world’s fastest growing religion. “Fundamentalism” has become increasingly linked to Islam, while the media ignores the larger resurgence of political religious movements. The demonization of Islam occurs on both sides of the political spectrum.
(the patriarchal right and the feminist left) as a result of the depiction of Muslim women as victims.

Due to the influx of immigration from the Middle East, Islam is also depicted as an alien culture. Using the rhetorical device of ‘them’ and ‘us,’ ‘we’ are threatened by mass immigration. Although this discourse has long been applied to every ethnic minority group in countries all over the world, in Europe, the rhetoric is used mainly to describe the “Islamic invasion.” Because of its historical association with migrant laborers and its large population, Turkey is often described as an alien culture. This theme dominates media coverage of its possible accession to the EU.

Despite the consistency of themes in media representations of Islam, contradictory images abound. Although Islam is a threat, it remains inferior. Although Islam is monolithic, it is divided by vicious infighting between its various sects. Muslim cultures are unchanging, yet they use western technology to threaten the West. Muslims are terrorists, but they are also victims. “This ‘dual vision’ reveals the functional aspect of the discourse, which positions Islam according to desired needs” (Poole, 2002, p. 47).

The terminology and lexicon used to describe Islam are quite relevant, because the manner in which the information is presented influences readers’ and audiences’ knowledge of Islam. This point has been demonstrated in several studies on the topic. Poole’s quantitative analysis of the frameworks used for reporting British Islam in the British national press suggests that British Muslims are “known” to non-Muslims in the UK mostly through the media (p. 240). In their study of German mass media, Hafez, Horner, and Klemm (2000) discover that journalists covering Middle Eastern affairs are viewed as “experts” in the field by the German public.
As communication scholars begin to expose the misrepresentation of Islam in the media and its effects on the general public, they become increasingly critical of the manipulative power of language. As Carey (1989) notes in his analysis of media as a means of communicating culture, “language—the fundamental medium of human life—is increasingly defined as an instrument for manipulating objects, not a device to establish the truth but to get the others to believe what we want them to believe” (p. 83).
In reviewing the literature relevant to this project, the researcher discovered Edward Said’s theory of Orientalism at the root of every study of the western media’s representation of the Middle East. Therefore, his theory will provide the theoretical framework for this study, as well. This chapter will further explain the theory of Orientalism.

Although Turkey is variously referred to as a “bridge” or a “barrier” between Europe and the Middle East, culturally, it has much in common with the former territories of the obsolete Ottoman Empire. These commonalities, especially Islam, are salient frames of reference in western news coverage of Turkish accession to the EU. Meanwhile, politically and economically, Turkey has much in common with the Central and Eastern European states. Interestingly, these commonalities are largely omitted from the same news coverage. These frames of reference greatly affect the way journalists and readers understand the issue. To demonstrate, this chapter will conclude with a section on framing theory.

Orientalism

This study is grounded in Edward Said’s theory of Orientalism. Said (1979) argued that the term Orient and the concept of the West are fictitious; that each is made up of human effort to affirm relationships of power and to identify the “Other.” Said writes that the Orient provides the West with “one of its deepest and most recurring images of the Other” (p. 1). He defines
“Orientalism” as a body of ideas, beliefs, clichés, or learning about the East, including “its sensuality, tendency to despotism, aberrant mentality, habits of inaccuracy, backwardness, silent indifference, feminine penetrability, and supine malleability” (p. 205). One of the most important developments in nineteenth century Orientalism was the distillation of these essential ideas about the East.

Although Said’s thesis has been criticized for its anti-foundationalism (Mani and Frankenberg, 1985), and for confusing “reality” with “representations of representations” of reality (p. 273), any weaknesses do not invalidate his argument. As Poole (2002) explains, “The significance and value of Orientalism is that it describes the complex historical and cultural circumstances by which a set of institutions progressively developed a ‘suitable ideological superstructure with an apparatus of complicated assumptions, beliefs, images, literary productions, and rationalisations’ providing the ‘underlying foundation’ of ‘strategic vital interests’ about the Orient and Islam” (p. 31).

Orientalism is valuable because Said puts into words an idea that is so obvious, and yet because of the pervasive nature of Orientalism, itself, had never been fully recognized. The collective fear of Islam in the West is fueled by an Orientalist discourse that sustains the belief that Islam is a monolithic force engaged in a head-on confrontation with Christianity. This essentialist reading of history results in theories like Huntington’s (1996) “clash of civilizations,” where Islam constitutes a real military, sociological and religious threat.

The foundations of Orientalism are rooted in the earliest encounters of Christianity and Islam, and scholars argue that the clash of these two universalistic missionary religions led to global theories of Otherness. In an effort to limit the growth of Islam, medieval Christian texts described it as morally corrupt. With the secularization and modernization of the Enlightenment,
Islam was re-cast in a backwards and extreme light. The rise and fall of the Ottoman Empire in the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries transformed religious Orientalism into a geographical and political Orientalism.

Modern political factors that help explain the continuing antagonism between the West and Islam include European colonialism and neo-colonialism, the creation of the state of Israel, the oil crisis of the 1970s, and the Iranian Revolution (Poole, 2002). The Gulf War, the events and aftermath of September 11, and the ongoing war in Iraq have led to a revival in Orientalist discourse. Rather than seeking to uncover and explain the roots of Islamic political fundamentalism, western politicians have been able to employ the reductionism inherent in Orientalist polemics, and the media have followed suit.

Modern Orientalist rhetoric promulgates several myths about the Middle East. One of the myths most widely adhered to maintains that “the Middle East is, in some fundamental way, ‘different’ from the rest of the world and has to be understood in terms distinct from other regions” (Halliday, 2005, p. 19). Another common myth concludes that the Middle East has a “culture of violence,” and that the incidence of war in modern times is a continuation of historical wars and conquests (p. 26). According to the myth, this violent culture permeates every aspect of Middle Eastern societies and contributes to a certain mindset. Another legacy of Orientalism surfaces in the myth that all Muslims or, more specifically, Iraqis, Saudis, or Turks have a distinctive, identifiable mindset.

Orientalism greatly inspired the thinking behind Huntington’s “clash of civilizations” (1996). His theory has been widely accepted by politicians and journalists, who have concluded that we live in an age when international relations are dominated by a ‘clash of civilizations.’ The ‘clash’ is said to result from incompatible cultural values. Another myth Halliday (2005)
identifies maintains that “the condition of the Arab world is to be explained by the impact of traditional values and a ‘failure’ to respond to the modern world and its norms” (p. 78). This myth corresponds to the “changelessness” of Middle Eastern societies, a deeply-rooted Orientalist notion (Said, 1979). According to many western ‘experts’ on the Middle East, Islam does not allow for a separation of religion and politics, while secularism is firmly entrenched in the West. Islamic theocracy is especially problematic since the religion of the Middle East is deemed a “religion of war” (Halliday, 2005, p. 155).

Another myth of modern Orientalism concludes that “Muslims of the Middle East have, for religious reasons, a particular resistance to rule by or substantive interaction with non-Muslims” (Halliday, 2005, p. 166). Halliday explains that such resistance is not a result of religion but of the dominant Western secular ideology of nationalism. Nationalism claims that peoples are entitled to sovereignty and independence in a given area or territory. Such nationalism fuels European xenophobia of immigrants from the Middle East flooding their countries.

Hegemony and Framing Theories

The distillation and maintenance of Orientalism have been made possible by ideological hegemony. This concept, derived from Gramsci, refers to the process by which ruling elites secure consent to the established political order through the production and diffusion of meanings and values. According to Gramsci (1971), dominant groups and classes struggle to maintain their ideological hegemony as it evolves over time. Gramsci’s media hegemony thesis can be applied to the case of European public opinion regarding Turkey. Due to the ruling elites’ influence over the production of meanings and values by cultural institutions, including
churches, schools, and the media, the powerful elite of Europe have been able to maintain the idea that the Turks are different, and therefore, need to be controlled.

Framing is one way in which ideological hegemony is secured. As Carragee and Roefs (2004) pointed out, framing must be examined within the contexts of power. Framing is not as simple and innocent as the metaphorical “window” suggests. Entman (1993) explained that frames in news stories reveal “the imprint of power” (p. 53). Framing is one way by which the media (consciously or not) reinforce political legitimacy and social capital.

Framing is the way a story is told, and when a story is told in a particular way time and again, framing becomes the social construction of meaning. In a frequently quoted definition, Entman (1993) argued that “to frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described” (p. 52). For years, media scholars have used framing theory to study the salience of particular themes in news reporting. By tracing patterns of emphasis, interpretation, and exclusion, scholars have been able to identify the use of frames in the construction of meaning and values (Carragee and Roefs, 2004).

In order to study news framing, researchers must first learn to spot frames within texts by learning the many structures and devices used to create them. According to Entman (1991):

News frames are constructed from and embodied in the keywords, metaphors, concepts, symbols, and visual images emphasized in a news narrative. Since the narrative finally consists of nothing more than words and pictures, frames can be detected by probing for particular words and visual images that consistently appear in a narrative and convey thematically consonant meanings across media and time. By providing, repeating, and
thereby reinforcing words and visual images that reference some ideas but not others, frames work to make some ideas more salient in the text, others less so – and others entirely invisible (p.7).

Mass media set frames of reference that readers and viewers use to interpret and discuss public events (Tuchman, 1978). The effects of framing or ‘spin’ have been researched by Pan and Kosicki (1993) and Entman (1993). These researchers show that framing does, indeed, influence individuals’ judgments or inferences. Moreover, journalists are equally susceptible to the very frames they use to describe events and issues (Scheufele, 1999). Contrary to Tuchman’s (1978) claim that journalists construct news frames, these familiar storylines have been repeated throughout history. Although news frames serve modern political purposes, these frames of reference are rooted in a long, complicated history. Many of these storylines can be found in early Orientalist discourse about the East.

This study, undertaken within the theoretical framework of Said’s Orientalism, will identify frames of reference used to describe Turkish accession to the EU. The next chapter lists the research questions and examines the specific methodology employed in the analysis.
CHAPTER 5
RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND METHODOLOGY

Research Questions

1. How are Turkey and its people represented in the European media’s coverage of Turkish accession to the European Union?
2. Are the values inherent to Orientalism perpetuated by this coverage?
3. Do the European media promote western exclusion or global inclusion?

In-Depth Qualitative Discourse Analysis

This research is qualitative in nature, with newspaper articles examined in detail. Qualitative analysis can be as reliable and valid as any analysis based on numbers, but the methods employed must be systematic and well-documented (Blank, 2004). Any analysis of foreign reporting must be considered a multidisciplinary endeavor (Hafez, 2000). A study such as this one requires knowledge in the areas of political science, history, communication research, and Middle Eastern studies.

Qualitative discourse analysis seeks to uncover the latent meanings of a text. In his comparison of qualitative discourse analysis and quantitative content analysis, Hall (1975) provided a useful way to approach this type of study. “Literary-critical, linguistic and stylistic methods of analysis are . . . more useful in penetrating the latent meanings of a text, and they
preserve something of the complexity of language and connotation which has to be sacrificed in content analysis in order to achieve high validation” (p. 15).

In-depth qualitative discourse analysis helps to reveal ideological underpinnings within a newspaper’s text. This study treats newspaper articles as texts: “literary and visual constructs, employing symbolic means, shaped by rules, conventions and traditions intrinsic to the use of language in its widest sense” (p. 17). Because every article is a structure of meanings and values in “linguistic and visual form,” it is a discourse (p. 18). Analyzing a discourse is a rather long and complicated process.

Materials Examined

Data were obtained from a detailed analysis of articles from prominent newspapers published in Europe. Using the Lexis-Nexis database, a search was conducted for articles on the subject of Turkish accession to the European Union written during the first week of formal negotiations (October 4-10, 2005). The one-week time frame was chosen to ensure that the articles dealt predominantly with the European Union’s historic decision to start official membership negotiations with Turkey. Articles were sorted by publication, and only articles published by Agence France Presse, Deutsche Presse-Agentur, The Guardian newspaper of London, The Economist, and The International Herald Tribune were selected, in order to include French, German, British and international sources. Following these parameters, 83 articles were gathered and sorted by publication.

It is necessary to note the practical rationale behind the researcher’s choice of materials. Because of language constraints, the researcher was confined to analyzing European newspapers written or translated in her native English. The researcher’s search for English versions of French
and German newspapers proved futile. *Le Monde*, the leading newspaper in France, no longer publishes an English version of its newspaper. Similarly, in Germany, there are no longer any foreign-language issues of the leading German newspapers. According to one communications officer at the Deutsche Presse-Agentur, the most popular German newspaper, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* no longer works with the *International Herald Tribune* to produce translations of their stories.

Therefore, the researcher was forced to gather wire stories from worldwide news agencies based in France and Germany. Headquartered in Paris, the Agence France Presse is the world’s oldest established news agency. With over 2,000 employees worldwide, the agency operates 36 news bureaus in Europe, alone. Providing news stories in Arabic, Russian, Portuguese, Spanish, German, English and French, the Agence France Presse reaches large and small news markets all over the globe (Agence France Presse, 2006). Headquartered in Hamburg, Germany, the Deutsche Presse-Agentur news agency reaches 95 percent of German daily newspapers. According to the agency’s Web site, “Europe and the Middle East are key zones of news-coverage due to the particularly dense networks of clients in those regions.” Moreover, “European integration and the Eastward expansion of the EU are major topics covered” (Deutsche Presse-Agentur, 2006).

The Agence France Presse news service released 52 wire stories regarding Turkish accession to the EU during the first week of formal negotiations, a number far outweighing the other sources. The Deutsche Presse-Agentur news service only released twelve wire stories, *The Guardian* newspaper of London published fourteen articles, *The Economist* published three feature stories, and *The International Herald Tribune* ran two articles in the same week. (See figure 1 in the appendix for a breakdown of newspapers and news types analyzed.)

For more in-depth international news reporting, the researcher analyzed articles published by *The Economist* and *The International Herald Tribune*. Now read by more than 3.7 million people around the world, *The Economist* is a weekly paper of news, analysis and commentary, covering business and the global political economy. According to the publisher’s Web site, “Because of its independent and international editorial perspective, it is read by more of the world's political and business leaders than any other magazine.” *The Economist* is printed in six countries and published on the Internet, and has more than 80 percent of its circulation outside the United Kingdom (The Economist Group, 2006). Owned by the New York Times Company, *The International Herald Tribune* is printed at 31 sites around the world and sells in more than 180 countries. In 2004, it had a circulation of 240,500. “*The International Herald Tribune* is the premier international newspaper for opinion leaders and decision makers around the world. In an era of information overload, those who both make and track decisions on the global level depend upon the IHT as the most complete, credible and concise daily newspaper in the world” (International Herald Tribune, 2006).

By selecting articles from many different prominent western sources for international news, the researcher was able to identify news frames which appeared in articles published by British, French, and German news publishers. This allowed the researcher to identify major,
overarching themes present throughout European reporting on Turkish accession to the EU during the first week of negotiations. This also enabled the researcher to identify themes which only appeared in certain sources, in order to determine any national biases in the reporting.

Analysis Process

The researcher’s first step in the analysis process was a “long preliminary soak” in the text of the articles (Hall, 1975, p. 15). The researcher noted and counted recurring themes in the news coverage throughout the first reading. After prominent frames had been uncovered and noted, each article was re-read closely with the intent of identifying discursive strategies and patterns. Headlines, narrative structure, tone, emphasis, and recurring phrases and words were noted. The purpose of this discourse analysis was to “uncover the unnoticed, perhaps unconscious, social framework of reference which shaped the manifest content” (p. 16). The final stage of the analysis involved the interpretation of findings within the study’s theoretical framework.

Methodological Issues and Limitations

It is important for researchers to contextualize their results and to recognize the nature of data imposes limits on conclusions. In the case of this research project, there are important methodological issues to be addressed: whether the number of articles examined (83) is large enough to reach any sort of meaningful conclusions, and whether examining the news product without also examining modes of production and consumption can be considered a valuable study.
The articles examined represent a substantial percentage of the total number of articles published in Europe on the subject of Turkish accession to the E.U. during the first week of formal negotiations. The preliminary search for data in the Lexis Nexis database uncovered a total of 148 articles published in Europe on the topic during the specified week. The researcher examined every article published by the justified sources. As Hall (1975) made clear, a low number of articles does not negate their importance or impact. This is especially true in the case of this data sample, as all the articles were published in “prestige newspapers” or “newspapers of record.”

It is beyond the scope of this study to determine the causes and effects of media coverage. To do so effectively would require the examination of the institutional orientations of the mass media, individual perceptions of the journalists, and modes of production and consumption (Hafez, 2000). Rather, this study is based on the premise that, in McQuail’s (1994) words, “the media have significant effects” (p. 327). Bearing this in mind, this study is simply an attempt to discover how the European media have framed Turkish accession to the EU and in what ways the country and its people have been represented within the texts of the news coverage.
CHAPTER 6
ANALYSIS

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a concise analysis of the researcher’s major findings. As discussed in the previous chapter, 83 news items were selected for analysis from five prominent western news sources based in France, Germany and the United Kingdom. The articles were published the week following the European Union’s start of official membership negotiations with Turkey (October 4-10, 2005). Every article covered some aspect of Turkish accession to the European Union.

Through an in-depth qualitative discourse analysis, the researcher uncovered several prominent themes and salient frames of reference. Many of the news frames identified expose an underlying Orientalist discourse, consistent with the stereotypes and clichés identified by critical media scholars like Said (1978), Halliday (1996), Hafez (2000), and Poole (2002). Many of the themes were overlapping and interconnected, while some were contradictory. There were few glaring inconsistencies identified in the coverage, despite the number of news sources analyzed. Due to the small number of exceptions or anomalies, the researcher will focus only on the most salient frames of reference in the ten sections that follow. The sections are:

1. Turkey: “A vast Muslim state”
2. The “Christian-Muslim divide”
3. “A Day of Tension and High Drama”
4. “Turkey must win the hearts and minds of European citizens”
Turkey: “A vast Muslim state”

The European Union’s start of official membership negotiations with Turkey made headline news in prominent European newspapers throughout the week of October 4-10, 2005. As “torchbearers of public opinion,” these newspapers shed light on the negotiations and framed them in ways that could be easily understood by the public. The first overarching theme to appear in the coverage was the fact that Turkey is a large, predominantly Muslim country.

In the early morning hours of October 4, the Agence France Presse proclaimed, “EU opens historic talks with Turkey.” The opening paragraph of the wire story reads: “The European Union opened landmark entry talks with Turkey early Tuesday, after clinching a last-minute deal to allay Austrian concerns over the terms for the negotiations with the vast mainly Muslim state” (“EU opens historic,” 2005).

Later in the week, the Deutsche Presse-Agentur ran a similar story: “Turkey began accession talks on Tuesday after resolution of eleventh-hour debate prompted by Austrian objections to full membership for the largely Moslem country” (“Roundup: EU commissioner,” 2005).
In the international section of *The Guardian*, one British journalist opined, “Whether or not predominantly Muslim, secular Turkey eventually achieves full membership, the row has caused considerable damage” (Tisdall, 2005).

The start of negotiations made front-page news in *The International Herald Tribune*. Reporting from Istanbul, Smith wrote, “The ceremony, which began just past midnight after an agreement was reached late Monday, set in motion a process that would probably take a decade or more but could end with the European Union’s extending its borders eastward into Asia to embrace a predominantly Muslim country” (Smith, 2005).

As these four examples illustrate, the fact that Turkey is a vast Muslim state is one of the most salient frames of reference in coverage of its accession to the EU. In fact, the words Muslim, Moslem, or Islamic were used as adjectives to describe Turkey in 67 of the 83 articles analyzed, and, therefore, the fact somehow becomes a most important issue in the debate surrounding Turkish membership in the EU.

The size of Turkey is an important factor to consider in the debate regarding Turkish accession to the EU. Its vast landmass of 769,604 square kilometers is larger than most current EU member states. Within that expansive landmass, there are 70.7 million Turkish citizens (European Communities, 2005). Currently, there are about 450 million EU citizens, so the population makeup of the EU would change dramatically if Turkey becomes a member. With a population of 82.4 million, Germany currently has the largest population of any EU member state (The World Factbook, 2006). Consequently, Germany occupies the highest number of seats in the European Parliament, the EU’s governing body with supreme veto powers. The population size of a member country helps to determine the number of seats it occupies in the European

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Parliament (Jacobs, 1998). Therefore, if Turkey were to gain full membership status, it would gain substantial voting power within the European Parliament.

Using the words large or vast to describe Turkey is not problematic. Relative to the rest of Europe, Turkey is a large country, and within the EU, size matters. The problem lies in the other prominent signifier—“Muslim.” Within the articles analyzed, not once are other countries described according to their predominant religions (i.e. Protestant Great Britain, Catholic Italy, or Orthodox Greece). Yet, Turkey is so often described as Muslim. If the EU is simply a political-economic bloc, why does the religious preference of the majority of Turkish citizens matter?

How really useful is “Muslim” as a concept for understanding Turkey? According to Said (1981), this “ideological label” is applied to countries in the Middle East for reasons of western political interest and power (p. x). He writes that although most westerners have no real knowledge of Islam, the term has become one of “unrestrained ethnocentrism, cultural and even racial hatred, deep yet paradoxically free-floating hostility” (p. xi). Said concludes:

“…there is a consensus on “Islam” as a kind of scapegoat for everything we do not happen to like about the world’s new political, social, and economic patterns. For the right, Islam represents barbarism; for the left, medieval theocracy; for the center, a kind of distasteful exoticism. In all camps, however, there is agreement that even though little enough is known about the Islamic world there is not much to be approved of there” (p. xv).

Although the majority of Turkish citizens are, in fact, Muslim, the Turkish Republic is a secular, democratic state. Interestingly, while Turkey is continuously defined as Muslim, the
word “secular” only appears within the text of the coverage eleven times. Because Westerners so often affiliate Islam with theocracy, dictatorships, or repressive regimes, omitting the fact that Turkey is a secular republic, and has been so since 1923, while describing Turkey as “Muslim” is problematic. As Entman (1991) showed, news framing does not only make some ideas more salient in the text– it makes others less so. In this particular news frame, not only is “Muslim” a salient signifier for Turkey, but “secular” is less so.

As Halliday (2005) explained, one of the most common myths about the Middle East is that Islam does not allow for a separation of religion and politics. Therefore, the salient news frame of “Muslim Turkey” is especially problematic in coverage of Turkish accession negotiations. Because the EU is a political union of secular democracies, anyone following this news coverage would understandably wonder why “Muslim Turkey” is even an EU candidate.

The “Christian-Muslim divide”

Many of the articles analyzed acknowledge the rift between the western and “Islamic” worlds. A corresponding frame of reference to the “Christian-Muslim divide” appeared in seventeen of the articles on Turkish accession to the EU. The headline of one wire story released by the Agence France Presse read: “British press welcome Turkey’s EU talks as way to heal Christian-Muslim rift” (Carmichael, 2005). Sure enough, the British press does emphasize the “divide” more so than sources from other countries.

In The Guardian Comment and Debate pages, one journalist opined:

“Advocates of Turkish entry were right to argue that the admission into the EU of a large Muslim democracy would represent the best possible proof that there need be no clash of civilizations: no longer will the jihadists be able to speak of the
Christian west pitted against the Muslim rest. Instead the EU, that quintessentially western club, will count as one of its biggest members – with a projected population of 80 million in 2015, the earliest possible year of entry – a nation now ruled by an Islamist government” (Freedland, 2005).

Freedland is not the only reporter to reference Huntington’s “clash of civilizations.” The clash appears eight times throughout the text of the coverage. According to Halliday (2005), one common Orientalist myth claims that we live in an age when international relations are dominated by a ‘clash of civilizations.’ The ‘clash’ is said to result from incompatible cultural values.

Freedland also mistakenly uses the word “Islamist” to describe the Turkish government. Islamist is a word that connotes theocracy based on Islam (Said, 1981). Given the fact that Turkey is a secular republic, this adjective should not have been used to describe its government, and yet Turkey is described as “Islamist” in four of the articles analyzed.

In the articles’ text, the leaders of both the EU and Turkey appeared to recognize the potential “clash of civilizations” and to use the Christian-Muslim divide to their political advantage. Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan was several times quoted as saying, “If the EU wants to become a global power, if it aims to eliminate the conflict of civilizations, the concert of civilizations must be achieved” (“EU opens historic,” 2005).

Despite the urgency invoked by the imagery of a potential “clash,” the coverage of Turkey’s possible accession to the EU maintains the divide between the Christian and Muslim civilizations. According to twenty of the articles analyzed, Turkish culture is simply “incompatible” with the EU’s common values. One of the primary Orientalist myths says that the
Middle East is fundamentally “different” from the rest of the world (Halliday, 2005, p. 19). Many newspapers carried French President Jacques Chirac’s warning that Turkey would need a “major cultural revolution” before it could join the EU. The opening sentence of one article published by The Guardian read: “Turkey will have to undergo a “major cultural revolution” if it is to realize its 40-year dream of joining the EU, Jacques Chirac warned yesterday” (Watt & Smith, 2005 B).

Along the same lines, the Agence France Presse explained, “Critics in Europe argue that the vast mostly-Muslim country, which straddles the border between Europe and Asia, is simply too economically and culturally different to join the rich European club, where Christianity remains the dominant faith” (“EU presses Turkey,” 2005). By emphasizing the divide between western and eastern cultures, these journalists unconsciously contribute to an essentialist understanding of the world. By choosing an essentialist strategy of cultural deconstruction, the western media promote international cultural conflict rather than transcultural communication (Hafez, 2000).

On the other hand, in some of the articles analyzed, the journalists acknowledge or even attack the very stereotypes and racial prejudice the media have appeared to promote. The EU, itself, was described critically as a “Christian Club” in five of the articles. One British reporter shook his head at the “xenophobia” and “Islamophobia” behind negative public opinion surrounding the issue of Turkish accession (Freedland, 2005). In another story published by The Guardian, a reporter lamented prejudice apparent in the negotiations. “It (the negotiations) has triggered the airing of ill-disguised racial prejudice” (Tisdall, 2005).

Many of the articles (eleven) call for a reconciliation of incompatible cultural values. Although their values remain essentially different, some reporters believe that harmonization is
possible. “The start of accession talks between mainly Muslim Turkey and the European Union has marked ‘the first real step’ towards a reconciliation of religions and cultures, Turkish Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul said here Wednesday” (“Turkey-EU deal,” 2005). The Agence France Presse quoted German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder: “A Turkey that shows that Islam and the values of European enlightenment can be consistent, would represent an enormous boost to the stability and security of Europe and beyond” (“Schroeder welcomes EU,” 2005).

“A Day of Tension and High Drama”

The European Council proceedings in Luxembourg on October 3-4, 2005, were often described as “a day of tension and high drama” (“E.U. to move,” 2005), and reporters carried this highly emotional tone into their stories. Austria was cast in the role of antagonist in this drama, because it delayed talks by demanding alternatives to full EU membership for Turkey. One especially dramatic telling of the events was published in a front-page article in The Guardian:

“There was nothing artificial about the drama of yesterday’s foreign affairs council in Luxembourg. The city that gives its name to a famous EU compromise formula saw a very real confrontation between 24 member states and one other. The 24 were ready to go ahead with historic negotiations on Turkey’s membership of the club. Austria was not. But by the time the 25 agreed among themselves, the rising anger in Turkey could no longer be contained. In the end, with nerves badly frayed all round, it took the intervention of the US and some deft British re-drafting to finalise it all” (“Turkey and the EU,” 2005).
Austria’s role in the highly contentious debate was a salient issue in the European media coverage of the accession negotiations. Austria was the antagonist in 52 of the articles analyzed. In a sense, the country became a scapegoat for the rest of the skeptical European community.

“The Austrians claimed to champion the cause of the European people, daring to say out loud what the French and the Germans thought privately,” one Guardian reporter commented (“This week: Tortuous,” 2005).

According to the newspaper coverage, Austria jeopardized the start of negotiations when it insisted that Turkey be offered a “privileged partnership” as an alternative to full membership in the negotiating framework (“Turkey’s integration with,” 2005). The Agence France Presse explained:

“Wrangling over the exact wording of the negotiating framework went right down to the wire, with Austria holding out for Turkey to be offered something less than full EU membership. In the event the text finally agreed conserves the original wording that ‘the shared objective of negotiations is accession.’ But it adds: ‘While having full regard to all (EU political criteria), including the absorption capacity of the Union, if Turkey is not in a position to assume in full all the obligations of membership it must be ensured that Turkey is fully anchored in the European structures through the strongest possible bond’” (“EU opens historic,” 2005).

It appears that, in the end, Austria’s cooperation was achieved by clearing the way for Croatia to open EU membership negotiations of its own. Croatia is an Austrian ally, and the government in Vienna had linked the Turkish issue with Croats’ stalled bid to start accession
talks. The EU had stalled on Croatia when it refused to cooperate in an international war crimes tribunal. “Austria moved when it became clear that Croatia would be given the green light for talks after the international war crimes tribunal ruled Zagreb was offering full cooperation” (“Europe embraces Turkey,” 2005).

Austria’s bargaining highlighted the political complexity of the European Union and the decision-making difficulties inherent in such a large political bloc. In much of the news coverage of the Turkish accession negotiations, reporters couched the debate in wider political and philosophic terms. For one British reporter, the row over Turkey symbolized “part of the bigger problem about where Europe is going” (Tisdall, 2005). Another British reporter made the issue central to the debate over whether the EU should be a commonwealth (preferred by the French) or a superstate (preferred by the British) (Ash, 2005).

“The European Union’s historic launch of membership talks with Turkey this week comes as the half-century old bloc grapples with fundamental questions over its whole future direction,” the Agence France Presse elaborated. “For some, the Turkey move is another example of the increasing dominance of a British-led vision of the EU, pushing economic reform and opening up markets rather than the French traditional stress on a European social model” (“Turkey green light,” 2005).

The overarching question underlying much of the coverage of Turkish accession to the EU was: What is the future of Europe? Essentially, the negotiations over Turkish EU membership represent negotiations regarding the collective identity of Europeans. Because the media play an important role in the formation of collective identities, it is natural that the underlying cultural negotiations would appear in the news coverage. Europe illuminates the limitations of constructing a collective identity, due to its diverse languages and cultures
Moreover, there seems to be a struggle between Europeans who desire wider expansion and those who desire deeper integration. “The obsession used to be ever deeper, federalist integration; now it is ever wider expansion,” said one Guardian reporter (Freedland, 2005). These overarching questions led one reporter to announce that the European Union is “mired in an identity crises” (Smith, 2005).

In the midst of this European identity crisis, Turkey offers Europeans a convenient ‘other’ against whom they can identify themselves. As Said (1981) pointed out, before the fall of communism, Western Europeans collectively defined themselves against the communist bloc countries. After the fall of communism and the subsequent expansion of the EU, the Middle East has, once again, become the European ‘other.’

“Turkey must win the hearts and minds of European citizens”

The outcome of Turkey-EU negotiations will be a determining factor in Europe’s future. News discourse surrounding the negotiations is important because the European public will ultimately decide whether or not Turkey can become a full member of the Union. The western media emphasize the fact that Europeans (read: not Turks) will ultimately decide whether Turkey can join the EU. In fact, 42 of the articles analyzed discuss European public opinion, while Turkish public opinion is only once accounted for. One headline read: “EU’s Barroso says Turkey must win over European public.” Within the text of the same wire story, European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso is quoted: “Turkey must win the hearts and minds of European citizens. They are the ones who at the end of the day will decide about Turkey’s membership” (“EU’s Barroso says,” 2005).
Public opinion polls in Europe demonstrate that most Europeans are opposed to Turkey joining the EU. “Europe-wide polling shows a clear majority against Turkish membership, with unambiguous opposition in Germany, France and the Netherlands, rising to 80% in Austria,” *The Guardian* reported (Freedland, 2005). According to *The Economist*, “Overall, just 35% of EU citizens support Turkish membership” (“Better late than,” 2005).

Despite low public support, European leaders forged ahead with the negotiations, but the media reminded everyone that the public will have the last word. The last word may come in the form of public referendums. In France and Austria, where more than 70% of the population have doubts about Turkish membership, the governments have promised their citizens referendums (“Europe: Turkish talks,” 2005). “Chirac said again on Tuesday that French voters ‘will have the last word’ on the issue, with a referendum to be held when membership negotiations between Ankara and Turkey are concluded” (“Roundup: Berlusconi, Chirac,” 2005).

Even though the media gave ‘the last word’ to the European public, ironically, they failed to include the opinion of average European citizens. Except for one letter to the editor published in *The Guardian*, regular Europeans were never granted a voice. The coverage was dominated by ‘opinion leaders’ (i.e. high-ranking government officials). The Turkish public received even less attention than the European publics. The Turkish prime minister, foreign minister, and former foreign minister were the only Turks given a voice. Moreover, there were no Turkish opinion polls mentioned in any of the articles. How do the Turkish people feel about EU membership and why aren’t they allowed to represent themselves in the western media’s coverage of accession negotiations?

In the European media coverage of the negotiations, Turkish accession to the EU is depicted as a European issue. Rarely does the coverage focus on how EU membership might
affect Turkey. Instead, the media’s primary concern is how Turkey’s inclusion might affect Europe. “Turkey must strive to break prejudices in Europe to succeed in joining the European Union,” the Agence France Presse reported (“Turkey must win,” 2005).

Even when stereotypes are acknowledged, Orientalist discourse makes the Middle East responsible for any stereotypes held against it. This rhetorical device renders the Middle East guilty of whatever accusations come at it from the West.

The ‘Islamisation’ of Europe

How would Turkey’s inclusion in the EU affect Europe? What is it that the European publics fear? According to this analysis of western media coverage, skeptics in Austria and elsewhere are reportedly afraid of a “huge wave of Muslim immigrants” that will flood into Europe if Turkey is granted EU membership. This imagery appeared in 33 of the news items analyzed. Words used to describe the feared mass immigration included wave, flood, or “hordes of Turkish job-seekers” (“Better late than,” 2005). “There is also the unspoken fear of up to 100 million Muslims – the country’s population will soar in the coming decades – joining the EU” (Watt & Smith, 2005 B), reported The Guardian. According to The International Herald Tribune, “Turkey’s membership would open the doors for a potentially huge wave of Muslim immigrants” (Smith, 2005).

Because of its historical association with migrant laborers and its large population, Turkey is often described as an alien culture (Poole, 2002). The imagery used to describe the Turkish immigration that might result from its accession to the EU was dehumanizing. The Turks were always compared with some natural disaster, or they were only spoken about in numbers, rather than in human terms (e.g. “this relatively poor country of some 72 million”).
Throughout the articles, the Turks appeared as some monolithic race, rather than as individuals. They remained nameless, faceless, in a word, dehumanized. They received the same treatment as “The Arab,” who Said (1978) writes, “Has an aura of apartness, definitiveness, and collective self-consistency such as to wipe out any traces of individual Arabs with narratable life histories” (p. 229).

Many reporters concluded that the European Commission would need to carry out an “absorption capacity” test to decide whether or not Turkey can fit into the EU (Watt, 2005). There were a few reporters who disagreed: “There is, in short, no reason for those who fear the ‘Islamisation’ of Europe, or a flood of low-wage Turkish labourers seeking work, to panic,” one reporter wrote (Carmichael, 2005). European fears of Turkish immigration are rooted in another myth of modern Orientalist discourse that Muslims resist rule or substantive interaction with non-Muslims (Halliday, 2005).

The Europeanization of Turkey

While Europeans reportedly have much to lose (e.g. jobs) in the ‘Islamisation’ of Europe, the Turks have everything to gain from its potential EU membership. Forty-eight of the articles analyzed contain substantial information on the reformation of Turkey. Much of the coverage focuses on the political reforms that must take place in order for Turkey to be accepted as a full EU member. Turkey must implement the Union’s Copenhagen Criteria which set legal, human rights, and economic standards. Reforms already completed include the abolition of the death penalty, language rights for Kurds, greater civilian control over the military, release of political prisoners, the start of economic reforms after customs union with the EU in 1995, a softened
stance on Cyprus by backing the UN-plan to unite the island, and adoption of competition laws in 1996.

Before it can hope to join the EU, Turkey still needs to complete the following reforms. The government must officially recognize Cyprus, loosen the military’s grip on the government, speed up judicial reforms, prove that human rights are on a par with those in the EU, write the 80,000 pages of the EU’s rulebook into Turkish law, scale down industrial subsidies, comply with EU environmental laws, and cut the budget deficit and inflation (“Europe: Turkish talks,” 2005). “There is still much to do to reach European standards,” EU enlargement commissioner Olli Rehn was quoted (“Roundup: E.U. commissioner,” 2005).

The Cyprus issue dominated discussion of reforms. Thirty-one of the articles called on Turkey to recognize Cyprus and open up Turkish ports and airports to Cypriot shipping and aircraft. Cyprus has been divided along ethnic lines since 1974, when Turkey seized its northern third in response to an Athens-engineered coup in Nicosia aimed at uniting the island with Greece (“Turkey’s failure to,” 2005).

According to Orientalism, “the condition of the Arab world is to be explained by the impact of traditional values and a ‘failure’ to respond to the modern world and its norms” (Halliday, 2005, p. 78). If Turkey succeeds in breaking this stereotype by implementing European reforms, EU membership may or may not happen. According to the European media coverage, the real goal of Turkish accession negotiations is Turkish reform. One journalist reported, “The optimists reckon the carrot of EU membership will persuade Turkey to keep on changing” (Freedland, 2005). According to these reports Turkey wins by changing, by becoming more European, but not necessarily by becoming a member of Europe. The benefits of Turkish reform are reported as largely economic. Twenty-three of the articles mention the economic
benefits of Turkish reform. “Turkish stocks soar on EU membership talks” read one Agence France Presse headline the day after talks began.

The European media dwelled on the economic as well as the political benefits of Turkish cooperation. “Other advocates, including the United States, say bringing Turkey into the European club would help spread democracy into the Middle East and increase regional security,” reported The International Herald Tribune (Smith, 2005). The idea that Turkey will help spread democracy is mentioned in 21 of the articles analyzed. In one Agence France Presse wire story, Turkey “represents the whole Muslim world.” According to the story, Turkey could help bring democracy to “350 million people.” (“Turkey could tip,” 2005).

The Geostrategic Implications of Turkish accession

Many of the European leaders quoted throughout the news coverage postulate that a strong European democratic state that reaches into the Middle East would enhance western security frameworks. It is interesting that none of the journalists questioned this assumption. How much influence does Turkey actually wield in the Middle East? According to Chomsky (2003), because of Turkey’s long-standing military alliance with the US, the country does not have too many friends in the region. He writes that the US-Turkey-Israel alliance is sometimes called “the axis of evil” in the Middle East (p. 159).

Nevertheless, the fact that Turkish accession to the EU would bring greater security to the region seems to be a “no-brainer.” Seventeen of the articles analyzed focus on the geostrategic implications of Turkish accession. One reporter quoted former German Vice Chancellor Joschka Fischer: “To modernize an Islamic country based on the shared values of Europe would be almost a D-Day for Europe in the war against terror” (Finkel, 2005). Seven of the articles quote
Turkish Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul: “The strategic decision Europe has taken has made it a global actor which will play a role at the world level” (“EU has become,” 2005).

The geostrategic implications of Turkish accession are especially salient in articles which mention American involvement in the negotiations. The American politicians heightened the urgency of negotiations and linked them to the “war on terror.” “For many politicians, particularly in light of the September 11, 2001 attacks in the United States, firmly anchoring a country bordering the Middle East would set a positive example in a volatile region,” reported the Agence France Presse (Cook, 2005).

When it first appeared that the negotiations might be delayed, the media warned that the Middle East might “tip into extremism.” In the U.S. edition of The Economist, the writer penned: “Muslims in Turkey and elsewhere would have concluded that Europeans bore a grudge against them because of their faith alone. This would have encouraged all those, from Osama bin Laden to the western world’s religious far-right, who long for a clash between Islam and the historically Christian world” (“Now make Turkey’s,” 2005). This coverage reflects the Orientalist idea that the Middle East has a “culture of violence” (Halliday, 2005, p. 26).

Although the US should theoretically stay out of EU negotiations, Condoleezza Rice was cast in the role of protagonist in eight of the articles. One Agence France Presse headline proclaimed, “US played key role in resolving Turkey-EU talks deadlock.” According to The International Herald Tribune, “The United States helped pave the way for agreement when Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice telephoned Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey to reassure him that the beginning of membership talks would not compromise Turkey’s role in NATO. The United States has long been a supporter of Turkey’s bid to join the EU” (Bowley, 2005).
US influence over the negotiations appeared to humiliate some in the European press. “The need to call in the Americans, who a month ago were being told to keep out of the EU’s talks with Turkey, is a worrying portent for the European’s ability to solve the Cypriot conundrum without transatlantic help” (“A chaotic start,” 2005). Still, there was a general consensus that the EU had “avoided disaster” by keeping Turkey “waiting at the gate.” Just as Turkey was shown to have the potential to bring security to the region, it was also shown to have the potential to bring chaos. One Agence France Presse headline read: “Turkey could tip into Islamic extremism if shut out of EU: Chirac.” “It was clear that a rebuff could risk a dangerous backlash,” said The Guardian (“Turkey and the EU,” 2005). The Economist warned against “Muslim fundamentalism or militaristic nationalism” that may result from the EU’s decision not to allow Turkish membership (“Now make Turkey’s,” 2005).

The paradoxical nature of Turkey’s position in Europe reflects a common tool in Orientalist discourse. Despite the consistency of themes in any Orientalist discourse, contradictory images abound. Although Islam is a threat, it remains inferior. Although Islam is monolithic, it is divided by vicious infighting between its various sects. Muslims are terrorists, but they are also victims. “This ‘dual vision’ reveals the functional aspect of the discourse, which positions Islam according to desired needs” (Poole, 2002, p. 47).

Turkey “waits at the gates” of Europe

“After four decades of knocking at Europe’s door, EU leaders meeting in December gave the vast Muslim country a date of October 3 to start membership talks” (“EU opens historic,” 2005). The imagery of the “doors” or the “gates” of Europe appeared in eleven of the articles analyzed. The “gates” may be an historical reference to the Gates of Vienna, where the Ottoman
Empire was stopped twice from advancing further into Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. One myth promulgated by Orientalist discourse claims that the incidence of war in modern times in the Middle East is a continuation of historical wars and conquests (Halliday, 2005).

The imagery of Turkey simply “waiting” wipes out any trace of modern Turkish history, and casts the country in a passive light. Nothing else seems to have taken place in Turkey in the last 40 years. It has simply been “waiting at the gates” or “knocking at Europe’s door.” According to Said (1979), this is a common theme in Orientalist discourse. The idea that people in the Middle East had centuries of experience but no wisdom to show for it first originated in the writings of Gertrude Bell, a famous turn-of-the-century British archaeologist. She described the Arabs as passive and changeless. Halliday (2003) writes, “The third mainstay of the orientalist position focuses on the supposed difficulty or even impossibility of change, particularly change in a direction that is liberal and secular, following what might be referred to in broad terms as the rational democracies of the West” (pp. 203-204).

The image of 70 million Turks simply waiting should evoke laughter and probably only belongs in cartoons lampooning the arrogance of the western press. In another recurring image, the Turks are depicted as marching towards Europe. Their “historic march” appeared in five of the articles. The opening of negotiations represent a “giant step” in Turkey’s “historic walk,” and the conclusion of the meeting in Luxembourg offers only a “sweet and sour climax to Turkey’s long march” (Watt & Smith, 2005).

The Turks’ “historic march” towards the EU insinuates that Europe represents the “end of history” for Turkey. If Europe is not Turkey’s final destination, than it certainly appears to be an important stop along the way. Reporters used the word “historic” to describe the start of
accession negotiations in sixteen of the articles analyzed. The Agence France Presse quoted the World Bank as saying, “This date will go down as one of the most important days in Turkey’s history” (“World Bank Hails,” 2005).

A “western embrace”

In several of the news items analyzed, Turkey is portrayed as moving forward into a “western embrace.” Although these exact words only appear six times throughout the articles, it is worth mentioning because Said (1978) pointed out this particular cliché about the East—“its sensuality, … silent indifference, feminine penetrability, and supine malleability” (p. 205). This cliché becomes apparent in the western news coverage of Turkish accession, when Turkey is cast in a feminine light. Turkey is actually referred to as a “she” three times, and five reports liken negotiations to a “love affair.” One reporter described the opening of formal negotiations as “a grudging engagement after a protracted love affair” (“Turkish press jubilant,” 2005), while another wrote, “For much of the day, it looked like the love affair was in real danger of ending in acrimony” (“Better late than,” 2005).

This is a subtle and perhaps unconscious way of maintaining Western hegemony by portraying the West as masculine and in charge, while the East is feminine and needs to be controlled. The Deutsche Presse-Agentur quoted Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi: “‘To reject Turkey would be unpardonable,’ Berlusconi said at a press conference in Paris following talks with Chirac. ‘To put it in human terms, it is intolerable to reject someone who comes to you with love. That love could then turn to hate’” (“Roundup: Berlusconi, Chirac,” 2005).
Turkey’s “long road ahead”

The final news frame uncovered was actually the second most salient identified throughout the European newspaper coverage of Turkish accession to the EU. The idea of Turkey’s “long road ahead,” which refers to the decades-long process of accession to the EU, appeared in 58 of the news items analyzed. One Agence France Presse headline read: “EU faces decade-long megahaggle with Turkey.” In a Deutsche Presse-Agentur wire story, “Turkey and the E.U. early Tuesday started landmark talks that could make the secular but predominantly Moslem country a member of the 25-nation bloc within 10 to 15 years” (“Roundup: Schroeder welcomes,” 2005).

The long road lies ahead, but there was never any mention of a roadmap. Yet there was general consensus in the European media that the EU’s credibility hinges on the final outcome of Turkish accession negotiations. As one British columnist opined: “We have promises to keep. For more than 40 years we have assured Turkey that it will belong to our European community. We have repeated, strengthened, made concrete these promises over the past decade. The example of Turkey, reconciling a mainly Islamic society with a secular state, is vital for the rest of the Islamic world – and not insignificant for the 15 to 20 million Muslims already living in Europe” (Ash, 2005).

“European Parliament president Josep Borrell said Tuesday that if the EU had failed to get a deal on Turkey’s accession talks it would have been a body blow for the 25-member bloc’s credibility” (“EU parliament chief,” 2005). Despite the European government leaders’ desire to save face, there remain no guarantees for Turkey. “The EU has long underlined that the fact of starting membership negotiations does not guarantee that Turkey will actually join” (Thurston, 2005). Unlike every other country to endure the accession process, Turkey is offered no
guarantee that the talks will lead to full membership. Twenty of the articles analyzed mention this fact. As Guardian reporters announced, “Turkey will face 10 to 15 years of grinding negotiations which may well end in failure” (Watt & Smith, 2005).

The exceptional nature of Turkish accession negotiations corresponds with the West’s exceptional treatment of the Middle East, in general. One of the most widely adhered myths of Orientalism maintains that “the Middle East is, in some fundamental way, ‘different’ from the rest of the world and has to be understood in terms distinct from other regions” (Halliday, 2005, p. 19). As a result of this common misconception, the EU will handle Turkey’s accession in a completely new and different manner. Although the recent accession of several Eastern European countries should provide a useful framework for the EU to follow, Turkey remains simply too “different” to follow any other countries’ footsteps.

An exception

As was mentioned in this chapter’s introduction, there were few exceptions or anomalies noted in this analysis. There was one letter published in The Guardian, in which the writer responded to the western press coverage of Turkish accession to the EU. The writer identifies many of the recurring Orientalist themes which have been identified by this research. He calls on the European press to overcome Orientalism and to focus on the political and economic origins and goals of the EU. He writes, “The EU talks bring the European subconscious to the surface again. Turkey is not the Ottoman Empire. The Turkish Republic, founded in 1923, is not an empire and not an Islamic state. Turkey is neither claiming to be European nor Middle Eastern, as it has cultural values from both regions.”
He goes on to point out that the EU is an economic rather than cultural community, and that the world should not be divided into civilizations based on religion. He claims that fundamentalists on both sides are driving this debate. He ends by writing, “Turkey wants to join the EU for business reasons. Europe should not turn this into an emotional affair” (Dincturk, 2005).
CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

Many of the salient frames of reference identified in the European newspaper coverage of Turkish accession to the EU during the first week of official negotiations expose an underlying Orientalist discourse. Several of the values inherent to Orientalism were prominent themes in the text of the newspaper articles. Despite the political-economic foundations of the EU, the debate surrounding Turkey’s possible membership in the bloc was dominated by political-cultural concerns.

The fact that the majority of its population is Muslim appears to be the greatest impediment to Turkey’s EU membership. The fact that Turkey’s population is predominantly Muslim was the most salient issue in European newspaper coverage of accession negotiations. According to my literature review, “Muslim” is an “ideological label” applied to countries in the Middle East for reasons of western political interest and power. Although most westerners have no real knowledge of Islam, the term has become one of “unrestrained ethnocentrism, cultural and even racial hatred, deep yet paradoxically free-floating hostility” (Said, 1981, p. xi).

The European newspaper coverage of accession negotiations also stressed the “Christian-Muslim divide” by emphasizing the incompatibility of Turkish and European cultural values. In Europe, as in other regions of the world, the media are an important mechanism of public understanding and the establishment of collective identities. Imagery used to portray a “self” and an “other” as being distinct, in opposition or in cooperation, reflects, reinforces and changes
opinions about neighboring countries. The establishment of the EU symbolizes the new European identity, and discourse surrounding its development represents the struggle of its leaders and their publics to define Europe. By claiming “Islamic” and “Western” values are distinct and incompatible, the media promote international cultural conflict rather than transcultural communication.

Newspaper coverage of Turkish accession was dramatic and emotional. Perhaps this is due to mounting intolerance and xenophobia in Western Europe, much of it directed against Muslim immigrants from the Maghreb and Turkey. The press echoed the overarching political sentiment that “Turkey must win the hearts and minds of European citizens” in order to gain entry into the EU. Yet, the media never allowed Turkey to represent itself. A polemic Orientalist discourse should not replace open, honest dialogue between Turkish and European citizens.

News discourse surrounding Turkish accession to the EU is important because the European public will ultimately decide whether or not Turkey can become a full member of the Union. The ‘clash of civilizations’ theory, prominent throughout the newspaper coverage, mobilizes “fear, hatred, disgust, and resurgent self-pride and arrogance—much of it having to do with Islam and Arabs on one side, “we” Westerners on the other” (Said, 1979, p. xvii). The collective fear of Islam in the West is fueled by an Orientalist discourse that sustains the belief that Islam is a monolithic force engaged in a head-on confrontation with Christianity.

Although negotiating Turkish accession is a real challenge for both the Turks and the Europeans, due to Turkey’s relatively large population, the imagery of a tidal wave of Turkish immigrants flooding the European labor market is dehumanizing. Since foreign audiences’ personal contact with each other is limited, stereotypical perceptions of peoples of different nations may be shaped in a significant way by media exposure. Due to the importance of media
diplomacy, journalists covering international negotiations must be ever mindful of their representations of the events as they unfold. In most cases, the media has significant influence over public opinion. In the case of media diplomacy, the media may actually influence the outcome of major international negotiations. The lack of any analysis or context for Turkish accession to the EU in newspaper coverage of the negotiations leaves readers with an over-simplified picture.

As the world becomes increasingly interconnected and complex through the process of globalization, the role the mass media plays takes on greater significance. Unfortunately, as this case study has shown, the media continue to paint an overly simplistic and stereotypical picture of the world, reinforcing the idea that a ‘clash of civilizations’ is imminent. The public must demand more from those whom we grant the office of guardian. “They (the media) do not stand above morality but have the obligation to respect human dignity, human rights, and fundamental values. They are duty-bound to objectivity, fairness, and the preservation of human dignity” (Kung, 1997, p. 112).

The media should recognize common human values, rather than claiming “Islamic” and “Western” values are distinct and incompatible and avoid using clichés or stereotypes when reporting international issues. The media should focus on overcoming differences by celebrating similarities. There is such a great interdependence of parts in today’s world that the only monolithic whole should include all humans living on earth. Journalists are obligated to question the power structure, rather than reinforce it. This means reporters should no longer rely on politicians to interpret world events. Finally, the media should avoid producing a simplified view of the world. In the case of Turkish accession to the EU, these are very complex negotiations between countries with long, historical relationships, and the outcome will have
great implications for the future of the region, and perhaps the world. This story cannot be reduced to the analogy of some poor Muslim outcast waiting at the gates of a rich, morally superior Western neighbor, begging to be let inside. As Said wrote,

“The terrible reductive conflicts that herd people under falsely unifying rubrics like “America,” “the West,” or “Islam” and invent collective identities for large numbers of individuals who are actually quite diverse, cannot remain as potent as they are, and must be opposed, their murderous effectiveness vastly reduced in influence and mobilizing power. We still have at our disposal the rational interpretive skills that are the legacy of humanistic education, not as a sentimental piety enjoining us to return to traditional values or the classics but as the active practice of worldly secular discourse. The secular world is the world of history as made by human beings. Human agency is subject to investigation and analysis, which it is the mission of understanding to apprehend, criticize, influence, and judge. Above all, critical thought does not submit to state power or to commands to join in the ranks marching against one or another approved enemy. Rather than the manufactured clash of civilizations, we need to concentrate on the slow working together of cultures that overlap, borrow from each other, and live together in far more interesting ways than any abridged or inauthentic mode of understanding can allow” (Said, 1979, xxix).

Recommendations for future research

This paper is one of the few studies that have analyzed international press coverage of nonsensational interactions between western and “Muslim” nations. Such studies contribute to
scholars’ understanding of how these nations are presented in the press in contexts other than those of war, terrorism, or upheaval. It is unfortunate that certain groups are only deemed worthy of consideration in the wake of some form of crisis, as such decontextualized coverage leaves readers with the impression that certain regions or religions are somehow intrinsically linked to unrest. But, as this study has shown, even nonsensational topics like Turkish accession to the EU are often reported out of context.

It would be interesting to apply this research to Turkish coverage of accession negotiations to determine whether an Orientalist discourse informed both sides of the media debate. Moreover, I think a more valuable study would examine a longer time frame to determine if the patterns of news frames have changed over time. Finally, I think media researchers should analyze modes of media production and consumption in order to determine the causes and effects of this type of news discourse.
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International Herald Tribune, p. 4. Retrieved February 20, 2006, from Lexis
Nexis Academic database.
Figure 1. Breakdown of Newspapers and News Types Analyzed

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Figure 2. Breakdown of News Items by Day

*News items were gathered from October 4, 2005 to October 10, 2005.*

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