

# BRITISH EDITORIALS PORTRAYAL OF TURKEY DURING THE 2000S: AN ANALYSIS OF THE GUARDIAN, THE FINANCIAL TIMES, AND THE DAILY TELEGRAPH

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## ABSTRACT

A leading article or editorial is an opinion piece written by the editorial staff of a newspaper and represents the opinion of the publisher. This study examines the portrayal of Turkey as presented within the broad context of political media discourse in the leading articles of three influential British quality newspapers: the Guardian, the Financial Times, and the Daily Telegraph, between 2005 and 2010. The aim is to find out what arguments/issues the editorials cover in favour of or against Turkey, and whether Turkey's multi-dimensional East-West transformation has influenced the political discourses and the nature of news in the British press. A qualitative content analysis was performed on three newspapers' leading articles. Findings indicate that although editorial staff of British conservative, labour, and liberal press had a great deal to talk about apparently different subjects that constitute comments on Turkey's turbulent relationship with the European Union, or its human rights record, unending debate on secularism versus Islamist politics or lack of ethnic minority rights domestically; at the same time, they had created a rather positive, constructive and consistent political image of Turkey, by portraying the country as a rather democratic, secular, Muslim state that can create a bridge between the West and the Middle East in international affairs.

**Keywords:** *Newspaper Analysis, Politics, Representations, the British Press, Turkey, Discourse*

## 2000'LERDE TÜRKİYE'NİN İNGİLİZ BAŞYAZILARINDA TASVİR EDİLME BİÇİMLERİ: THE GUARDIAN, THE FINANCIAL TIMES VE THE DAILY TELEGRAPH İNCELEMESİ

### ÖZ

Başyazı ya da editoryal, bir gazetenin yazı işleri personeli tarafından yazılmış bir fikir yazısıdır ve yayıncının görüşünü temsil eder. Bu çalışma, İngiliz basınında etkili üç gazetenin -the Guardian, the Financial Times ve the Daily Telegraph- 2005 ve 2010 yılları arasında, başyazılarında yer alan siyasi medya söylemlerinde Türkiye'yi tasvir etme biçimlerini incelemektedir. Amaç, Türkiye'nin lehinde veya aleyhinde hangi argümanları/konuları kapsadıklarını ve Türkiye'nin çok boyutlu Doğu-Batı dönüşümünün İngiliz basınındaki siyasi söylemleri ve haberlerin doğasını etkileyip etkilemediğini bulmaktır. Muhafazakâr, emekçi ve liberal basının temsilcisi üç gazetenin önde gelen başyazıları üzerinde nitel bir içerik analizi yapılmıştır. Bulgular İngiliz basınının editör kadrosunun, Türkiye'nin Avrupa Birliği ile çalkantılı ilişkisi, insan hakları sicili, İslamcı siyasete karşı laiklik veya ülke içinde etnik azınlık haklarının eksikliği hakkında yorumları oluşturan görünüşte farklı konular hakkında çok fazla konuşmaya yer vermesine rağmen; ülkeyi oldukça demokratik, laik, uluslararası ilişkilerde Orta Doğu ile Batı arasında köprü oluşturabilecek bir Müslüman devlet olarak tasvir ederek Türkiye'nin olumlu, yapıcı ve tutarlı bir siyasi imaja sahip olduğunu yansıtmışlardır.

*Anahtar Kelimeler:* Gazete Analizi, Siyaset, Temsil, İngiliz Basını, Türkiye, Söylem

### INTRODUCTION

Research on Turkey's image has shown that historically negative discourse has recently been evolving into positive and constructive political and populist discourses (see, for example, Paksoy & Negrine, 2016). One way of understanding this is through the logic of media's facilitation in using myths, stereotypes, and prejudices when constructing an image of "other" nation. There is no doubt that media becomes a forum where viewpoints about "other" nations are presented and argued more than ever. As important social institutions, media are one of the most significant sources of information (Bell, 1998), which help us shape our perceptions on international and foreign policy issues (Vreese &

Boomgaarden, 2006: 421). Media institutions tell us where we are in the world; what authorities to defer; what events to treat respectfully; and what topics to regard as significant (Manoff & Schudson, 1986). Given political institutions are deeply intertwined with media institutions (Schudson, 2003), journalists heavily rely on “governmental officials, leaders of political groups, and large bureaucratic organization as routine, predictable sources of information” (Covert & Wasburn, 2007: 67). Journalist’s shape, re-produce, and re-circulate the images of foreign countries in their papers, by referring to the opinions of their political institutions. As an alternative to this tradition, British quality papers have an old habit to cover leading articles/editorials which apart from being outside traditional news storytelling practices, such articles enjoy the power of directly reflecting newspaper’s biased opinion as a commentary. To a certain degree, these comments have a unique character of spin-doctoring effect on events they cover. The degree of the effect is directly related to the newspaper’s identity, the viewpoint that determines which political language to use and what meaning to attach to certain events (Richardson, 2007; Van Dijk, 1998). Departing from this line of thinking, this study focuses on the broader political image of Turkey, as presented, and commented in the leading articles of British quality press in the 2000s.

There are mainly three indispensable reasons that make the analysis of Turkey’s image in the British press crucial. Firstly, Turkey is a fundamental political player in the Middle East where Great Britain has significant strategic and economic interest in yet volatile and unsettled greater region. The two countries’ diplomatic relations and cooperation have a vital role to play for the future political stabilization of the Middle East. Partly this is one of the reasons why – during its European Union (EU) Presidency in 2005 – the British government supported Turkey’s EU membership ambitions and pushed harder to stop some EU member states from blocking its commitment. This footstep positioned Britain equally crucial for Turkey because Turkey had gained the right to begin entry negotiations in October 2005. Secondly, especially in the last decades, there is a widespread – though might be overinflated – consent on Turkey’s attempt to reconcile the coexistence of secularism with moderate Islam and democracy. Despite bad historic relations, for the first time, we cannot deny Arab countries close attention toward Turkey. As Lombardi (2005) has indicated, Turkey unavoidably has positioned itself at the heart of many pressing international issues. Signing several agreements with neighbouring countries (e.g., abolishing visa requirements with Russia, Iran, Lebanon, and Syria), and increasing the trade volume with them additionally boosted Turkey’s visibility. Despite these facts, there is no empirical and comprehensive study that questions if these – to name achievements – had created new political realities over time in foreign

media discourse and if existing pessimistic discourses somehow are debunked or disqualified. Lastly and most significantly, despite a long array of research on the mainstream political perception of Turks and Turkey in European Union focused studies, the review of scarce media literature proves that - besides its EU accession - what other politically embedded topics journalists debate about Turkey remains as a relatively recent date.

“Analysis of what we say about them (foreign news) are not as common as studies of domestic news,” says Wasburn (2002: 1). It is not surprising, then, to see that literature analysing the evaluation of Turkey’s representation in the foreign press is limited in density. These studies largely focus on Turkey’s EU accession negotiations reports (see Paksoy, 2011; Wimmel, 2009; Aksoy, 2009; Negrine, Kejanlioglu, Aissaoui & Papathanassopoulos, 2008; Negrin, 2008; Aissaoui, 2007; Koenig, Mihelj, Downey & Gencel Bek, 2006; Öktem, 2005; Hülse, 2006). This is in part due to the fact that scholars dealing with reporting of Turkey select the most popular single case, which is Turkey’s EU membership talks, and omit to look at different angles of political realities that can change over time. This article intends to adopt a dynamic approach that focuses on other political realities about Turkey, besides its EU accession talks. By so doing, the article looks at how foreign newspapers contribute to the imagining of Turkey. The study looks at what the foreign press says about Turkey’s secularism, democracy, political, economic, and foreign affairs. To evaluate what editorials write about Turkey; why they cover certain topics and/or why not others; do they represent Turkey in favourable or with opposing arguments; what structures of discourses they construct; and lastly, to underline contested polarisations between newspapers, if any, a qualitative content analysis (CA) is applied. CA is a research technique “for making replicable and valid inferences from texts to the contexts of their use” (Krippendorff, 2019: 24). As an empirically grounded method, it enables us to read, interpret and make valid inferences about the manifested content of leading articles in a systematic way. The argument that is aimed to explore in this article raises three sets of interrelated research questions that are of particular interest:

- *Thematic dimension:* (RQ1) What British quality commentators select to debate about Turkey in their leading articles?
- *Opinion dimension:* (RQ2) What arguments did they put in favour or against Turkey? And to what extent are the opinions of the newspapers similar or different?
- *Textual dimension:* (RQ3) What kind of language and rhetoric do journalists use to attach meaning to Turkey’s political image?

In doing so, the article aims to contribute to the body of journalistic research by offering a concrete empirical case study, which highlights how British commentators construct political reality about Turkey. While looking answer to this question, the article benefited from theoretical classifications of news construction and facilitation of media to construct political reality (as in Tuchman, 2002; Tuchman, 1978; Schudson, 2007; Schudson, 1995; Van Dijk, 1998; Van Dijk, 1991; Van Dijk, 1983). These theories offer an understanding of seeing how news is selected, covered, rhetorically narrated, and articulated through various mainstream political and popular discourses that the intended audience is familiar with. These theories also help us to see how shared common knowledge and discourses are used to shape and create the most effective editorial content. The data is analysed according to the aforementioned theories, because among many actors – who contribute to the imagining of Turkey – are news media and their editors who have the power to construct images of foreign nations. To answer the above-mentioned research questions (RQ1-RQ3), the political image of Turkey is evaluated as reflected in the leading articles of three influential British quality newspapers the *Guardian*, the *Financial Times*, and the *Daily Telegraph* published between 2005 and 2010.

Before the method and findings are discussed in detail, the article begins with mapping the academic literature on existing opposing versus constructive political discourses about Turkey in the European media context. Next, to show that the press is fed by such existing similar and divergent discourses on Turkey, the press coverage of three influential countries reporting on Turkey's EU accession is summarised: France, Germany, and Britain respectively. In the final section, the article critically evaluates the analysis drawn from the selected body of text with a connection to the theoretical framework of media's power to construct political reality about foreign nations.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW: REASONING BEHIND EUROPEAN POLITICAL DISCOURSES ABOUT TURKEY**

European political discourse on Turkey has received ample attention from scholars, but it is obvious that in debating Turkey most of the commentators have focused purely on Turkey's EU membership. These works either debated the negative consequences of Turkey's EU accession or possible optimistic outcomes. Herewith, these prevailing discourses are shared, as they also influence and shape Turkey's political representation in European media discourse.

### **Negative discourses: Culturally different, large, poor, and Muslim**

Two decades ago, the former French President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing declared that Turkey was not a European country; permitting Turkey to join the European

Union would mean “the end of Europe” (BBC News (2002). ‘Turkey entry ‘would destroy Europe’’. In <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/2420697.stm>, last accessed September 4, 2021). In line with this thought, a whole array of scholarly work has developed, trying to advocate opposing scholars’ voices against Turkey’s EU accession by referring to their empirical evidence in different forms (Gangloff, 2008); (Aissaoui, 2007). These studies pejoratively depict that Turks are socio-cultural different from the Europeans, claiming that Turkey is a populous and predominantly poor Muslim country that will be a threat to the EU. Like many scholarly views, anti-Turkish sentiments also took place in the European public sphere. For instance, a popular opinion poll called Eurobarometer demonstrates that most of the EU citizens find Turkey culturally too different from Europe (in Hülse, 2006). The words Turk and Turkey also have negative connotations for most Europeans (Karlsson, 2006). Turks are not considered as European, especially for the fact that they do not fit on specific standards in policies, economic relations, and societal norms. That is why it is not surprising to see that public opinion towards Turkey’s EU accession is overwhelmingly hostile, especially in France, Germany, and Austria. In this respect, Aissaoui’s claim becomes convincing: “Turkey has a poor image in the subconscious of Europeans, including in countries that did not suffer under the Ottoman past of the Turks” (2007, p. 7). But what other consequences do these types of beliefs bring?

Unavoidably, Turkey being a Muslim country does not fit into Christian Europe and its large population makes things even worse. There is no doubt that Islam and hence, Muslims have a sympathetic image, neither in the European public sphere nor in the European media discourse (Poole & Richardson, 2006; Poole, 2002). Terror attacks, bombings, Islamic extremism, or religious fundamentalism reflected through the media, in one way or another increases the tension toward Turkey as well. Far-right parties in several European countries are also successfully playing on fears of Muslim immigration. Millions of Muslim Turks are seen as a source of unwanted migration. For instance, in the European elite discourse those who are the keenest advocates of rejecting Turkey’s EU membership, today alarmingly argue that the EU cannot absorb a new large and impoverished country (Karlsson, 2008). These opposing inclinations not only contribute to imagining Turkey as an anti-modernized even uncivilized nation beyond the borders of the European continent, but they have also constituted serious obstacles to Turkey’s integration into Europe. What these authors most stridently show from a remarkably narrow perspective is that Turkey is “the sick man of Europe” (Gangloff, 2008; Lombardi, 2005; Swallow, 1973) – a European attribution for the Ottoman Empire in the 19<sup>th</sup> century that has survived in the European political discourse.

Though mostly accurate observations until the end of the 80s, such descriptions do not correspond with contemporary Turkey as these beliefs have by and large simply neglected the changing realities over time. This brings to wander on what these transformations are. The next part explicates what arguments are debunked, disqualified, or reframed constructively regarding Turkey's political image in continental Europe.

### **Positive discourses: Secular, Muslim, economically tempting**

It is generally recognised that Turkey is an emerging multiregional power; an important actor in the Western and Eastern world; a rising economic market; a NATO member with large military capacity; and a secular, democratic, modern Muslim nation (e.g., Aksoy, 2009; Kirişci, 2008). One way of explaining these arguments is to look at how Karlsson positions the country: "Turkey is a strategically important partner which by itself would enhance the role of Europe in global politics more than the new ten members combined" (2008: 100). This shows that the geo-strategic location of Turkey is optimistically propagated as a bridge between the Western world and the Middle East (Aksoy, 2009; Kirişci, 2008; Gangloff, 2008; Lombardi, 2005). There is no doubt that Turkey is reframed for some as an example, a success story or a model to the wider Middle Eastern region, to Caucasian countries, or Central Asia. Whether Turkey wants and can achieve to be a model or whether this is only a theoretical fantasy is open to discussion, but here we want to stress the changing dimensions of negative discourses. For example, regarding Turkey's demographic leverage, Chislett suggests that "Turkey's young population can be seen as an asset, not a liability for the EU's greying labour market" (2008: 73). Other scholars repeat that Turkey's large population can open a tempting market for European entrepreneurs (Kirişci, 2008; Grigoriadis, 2006). One last optimistic reframing is about religion: the anti-Islamic discourse is disproved by scholars who believe that Christianity and Islam can co-exist. Although it is difficult to give a precise figure, today an estimated number of 30 to 40 million Muslims live in Europe. For Karlsson (2008), it should be regarded as a mainstream religion. In the same vein, Grigoriadis (2006) criticises religious discourse by insisting that Islam should be considered as an opportunity that encourages tolerance to different religions rather than a threat. Therefore, it is discredited with the idea that Islam can encourage multiculturalism and debunks the clash of civilizations thesis in Europe. As opposing discourses do, these positive discourses also attach some new political realities to the understanding of Turkey's image; they are equally re-used and re-produced in the European news media constantly.

### **Opposing vs. Constructive Arguments in the European press**

Recent studies evaluating press reporting of Turkey in European press prove that above mentioned negative and positive political discourses are increasingly pervaded within the European media. Although these studies are limited in range, they feature how a European country treats Turkey in their media coverage by using existing discourses (e.g., poor, large, Muslim). Here, three of the influential countries that have a substantial say on Turkey's EU track: France, Germany, and Britain are reviewed.

The studies of Negrine et al. prove that especially French newspapers have the highest distribution of news coverage about Turkey's bid for the EU accession; compared to German and British press (Negrine, Kejanlioglu, Aissaoui, & Papathanassopoulos, 2008). According to French Commentator Moisi (2006), Special Adviser to the French Institute for International Relations, "For the average Frenchman a Turk is an Arab" (2006: 161). One way of understanding this perception could be looking at how the French press covers Turkey. Not surprisingly, the study of Koenig and his colleges (2006) reveals that the French press focuses mainly on Turkey's EU candidacy and covers a wide variety of news to propagate Turkey as culturally, geographically, and religiously different from any EU member state. The study shows that the portrayal of Muslim Turkey versus Christian Europe is strongly dominant; while possible benefits of Turkey's entry into the EU were largely absent in the French press (Koenig, Mihelj, Downey & Gencil Bek, 2006). Similar analysis carried in French press describes two leading newspapers, *Le Figaro* and *Liberation*, positions as hostile to Turkey's EU membership (Negrine, Kejanlioglu, Aissaoui & Papathanassopoulos, 2008). A parallel finding is reported by Aissaoui (2007), who emphasizes that conservative *Le Figaro* has published significantly more articles against Turkey's accession than the centre-left *Liberation*. Furthermore, the transformative power of history is also highly visible in the French press: Aissaoui (2007) concludes that the press covers a large proportion of news predominantly oriented to demonstrate that Turkey is not geographically, culturally, and historically part of Europe. Wimmel (2009), similarly, demonstrates how *Le Figaro* attempts to prove that possible Turkish accession would destroy the required cultural-religious identity of the politically integrated EU. He concludes that only *Le Monde* has a moderate alternative voice since the newspaper focuses on the fact that the EU represents a secular project; so, the religious difference between Christian Europe and Muslim Turkey must not have a potentially harmful influence on Turkey's membership (Wimmel, 2009).

German press covering Turkey partially carries similarities with the French press. It is known that "Turks out" is one of the famous slogans of the extreme right in Germany (Müftüler-Bac, 2000). This notion becomes visible in media as



well. For instance, Negrine et al.'s (2008) study makes a significant contribution by stressing that opposing opinion poll results on Turkey's EU accession are extensively covered in the German press. This perspective is proven by the study of Koenig and his colleagues; they argue that "much of the debate in Germany was about the question of how far Turkey is culturally and/or historically different from (or similar to) other European nations" (Koenig, Mihelj, Downey & Gencel Bek, 2006: 159). The authors also emphasize that ethno-nationalist variation between 'Islamic Turkey' and 'Christian Europe' was predominantly influential in the German press; while possible benefits of Turkish membership were largely absent (Koenig, Mihelj, Downey & Gencel Bek, 2006). Apart from *Frankfurter Rundschau*, a left-wing paper that occupies some middle-ground coverage regarding multiculturalism, Koenig et al.'s (2006) study shows that German press editorial, for instance, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung (FAS)* and *Die Welt*, put forth that Turkey should be denied membership because it does not belong to Europe geographically, historically, or culturally.

The major advancement in understanding this media discourse can be related to the Turkish migrant population in Germany and France. In the early 1960s, the largest numbers of ethnic Turks – who migrated to Western European countries during the Labour Force Agreement – were settled in Germany, France, Netherlands, Austria, and Belgium respectively (GreenPaper, 2008), and not in Britain. These labourers or temporary guest workers came largely from the rural areas of Anatolia with low education and few qualifications (Akgündüz, 1993). Völker (1976) claims that the majority of these emigrants never returned to Turkey and instead brought in their family members and settled in ethnic enclaves. Lately, Völker (1976) addresses a significant issue by describing that most of the first and second-generation unemployed, uneducated migrants rejected to integrate into the host country, thus perceived as dangerous and uneducated Muslims that threaten their society. Migrants in these countries consequently stirred hostile feelings among many Europeans (Müftüler-Bac, 2000). Thus, it is not surprising to see that Turkey is widely covered with biased, critical, and hostile narratives, while positive arguments or Turkey's possible contributions to the European Union are largely excluded or missing in both the French and German press.

In contrast to provocatively mainstream narratives of German and French press, literature acknowledges that political discourse on Turkey's EU membership accession is substantially different in the British press. Media evaluations on this issue provide evidence that Britain vehemently positions Turkey as a vital player and a strategic bridge between Christian West and Muslim East. Moreover, the British government and its press hold a more supportive or neutral position on Turkey's aspirations to join the EU; therefore, anti-Turkey sentiments found

no place in British journalists' arguments. This view is advocated in Wimmel's study, which observes that when the British press debates Turkey "commentators strongly and almost unanimously support Ankara's request" (2009: 223) for membership. Furthermore, the author says that the cultural and religious differences of Turkey are vehemently rejected and not accepted as legitimate obstacles to oppose Turkey's EU membership. In his conclusion, Wimmel acknowledges: "Independent of their political orientations, all journalists of the English newspapers declared themselves as Turkey supporters, vehemently rejecting the culture and identity arguments" (2009: 238).

Koenig et al. (2006) and Negrine et al. (2008) indicate that British papers largely highlight the idea of Turkey being culturally different may either be tolerated or even celebrated. Especially left-wing newspapers, such as the *Guardian* and the *Independent*, emphasize the right to be different (Koenig, Mihelj, Downey & Gencel Bek, 2006). Both papers rigidly criticize religious arguments about a possible clash of civilization between Christians and Muslims. A *Guardian* leader column simply puts it: "Turkey is a secular state and no longer the sick man of Europe, and that the EU is not an exclusively Christian Club" (Negrine, Kejanlioglu, Aissaoui & Papathanassopoulos, 2008: 64). Unlike the French and German press, the authors argue that the British press is largely in support of Turkey's accession due to economic benefits and its contribution to multiculturalism in Europe. Negrine et al.'s (2008) study claim that the British press neither covers so many issues related to Turkey's EU membership bid nor reports any public opinion polls testing British attitudes on the matter. What these authors most stridently show is that oppositional voices do not appear in the majority of the broadsheet British media. Only right-wing newspapers give considerable space to non-British oppositional voices. Moreover, any representation of British public opinion on Turkey's EU membership is invisible in the media discourse. Negrine describes this absence of critical political dissent as "a silent watchdog" (2008: 640). He explains that the press coverage positions Britain away from the EU, by overemphasizing "'they' have a problem with Turkey, 'we' do not" (Negrine, 2008: 642).

Departing from such constructive framing, these findings lead us to look at the British press's tendency to construct the broader political reality of Turkey by using other topics, besides the EU accession of Turkey. If such constructive framing dominates British coverage of Turkey's EU bid and if Britain has proven its enthusiastic support for Turkey's EU membership, how is this positive approach, then, reflected in a broader political context in the leader columns? What do lead article commentators propagate about Turkey's domestic politics, economic growth, and foreign affairs? And finally, what kind of political discourses are

articulated to construct the representation of Turkey in British quality press? These questions are explored in the analysis below.

## METHODOLOGY AND FINDINGS

In seeking some answers to the research questions, five years of editorial coverage have been chosen for analysis, between 1 July 2005 and 30 September 2010. Those periods involve timeline of several pressing political happenings in Turkey, such as (1) Britain runs the EU presidency (July-December 2005), which benefited Turkey to start accession talks with the EU; (2) JDP/AKP (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (AKP) is the largest central right political party with Islamic roots in Turkey) had announced the nomination of Foreign Minister and one of the founding leaders of AKP Abdullah Gül, against vehement opposition from the Kemalists in the upcoming presidential election at that time; (3) AKP received almost half (%47) of the votes during the general elections and Abdullah Gül was elected as the 11<sup>th</sup> President of the Turkish Republic in 2007; (4) Turkish troops held a military operation against PKK (The Kurdistan Workers' Party) inside the Iraqi border; (5) the problematic civil-military relations started to normalize with the impact of Ergenekon (Ergenekon refers to the 'deep state' in Turkey, where many trials have been started against country's Kemalist nationalists, military, and security forces) trials; and lastly (6) Ahmet Davutoğlu became the Foreign Minister. During the selected period there were distinctive domestic and international happenings in Turkey. The country was struggling, on the one hand, with EU accession talks and domestic reforms towards liberal democracy and relations with its neighbours, while on the other hand, developing a vision-based new foreign policy with an aspiration to become a global player.

By using the Lexis-Nexis (Search conducted in Lexis-Nexis database on April 5, 2021. Advanced search screening: 'Leading article' within 10 words of 'Turkey', 'Turkish', where there can be 0-9 words between *leading article* and *Turkey/Turkish*. The terms can appear in any order) engine, all items that contained the generic term 'leading article' in combination with 'Turkey' and 'Turkish' were identified in three quality newspapers – the *Daily Telegraph*, the *Guardian*, and the *Financial Times*. But editorial items which are not London edition (e.g., European, Asia, or American) are excluded. Leading articles were selected for analysis, as these articles have a unique character to express the opinion of the newspapers on Turkey in an unsigned column, as an editorial (op-ed). Rather than the actual news narration, these editorials provide observations on the topics, and they assess and comment on events as they happen (Bell, 1998). Thus, they involve judgemental values that lead to evaluate Turkey as positively or negatively or sometimes controversially. As Van Dijk (1998) has described these editorial opinions may vary considerably in their ideological presuppositions, depending

on the political stance of the newspaper. Three national daily newspapers which hold distinctive leanings in the British political spectrum were selected. The *Guardian* is identified with a centre-left liberalist point of view and represents the mainstream left of the British political spectrum. The *Financial Times* is a liberal international business newspaper, advocating business and features from a free-market economy and globalization-friendly perspective. Lastly, the *Daily Telegraph* is a centre-right paper, holding a pro-conservative Euro-sceptical approach to journalism. As it is set out in Table 1, the initial screening produced a total of 48 opinion articles, where the *Guardian* published nineteen, the *Financial Times* eighteen, and the *Daily Telegraph* eleven leading articles directly related to Turkey (also see Appendix I for a comprehensive list of leading articles).

**Table 1.** The Number of Leading Articles Screened (Period July 2005–September 2010)

| Newspaper                  | Type                   | Political Spectrum                             | Circulation<br>(Circulation data in this table are based on the monthly report of the independent Audit Bureau of Circulations (ABC), which monitors all UK newspapers, April 2021.) | Leading Articles Screened |
|----------------------------|------------------------|--|--|---------------------------|
| <b>The Guardian</b>        | Quality/<br>Broadsheet | Labour/<br>Liberal<br>Democrat/<br>Centre-left | 108,687  | 19                        |
| <b>The Financial Times</b> | Quality/<br>Broadsheet | Liberal/<br>Finance/Pro-<br>globalisation      | 97,069   | 18                        |
| <b>The Daily Telegraph</b> | Quality/<br>Broadsheet | Pro-<br>Conservative/<br>Centre-right          | 317,817  | 11                        |
| <b>Total</b>               |                        |  |  | <b>48</b>                 |

Firstly, each leading article is categorised in terms of basic themes they address. Through this method, it is aimed to expose – besides EU membership talks –

what other events and opinions British journalists *select* to debate in the selected forty-eight-leading article. As Table 2 shows, this analysis elaborates that over the five years Turkey had been debated around four interrelated clusters of key arguments in the leading articles. Firstly, and expectedly, with nineteen articles, arguments on *Turkey and EU relations* thus talks on Turkey's impressive but still fragile programme of applying EU laws, reforms, and deficiencies in freedom of speech and minority rights found a considerable place within the leading articles. In the second cluster, seventeen articles covered *domestic political issues*, such as presidential and parliamentary elections, demonstrations, secularism versus Islam debate. The third cluster, with six items, discuss issues related to Turkey's *conflict with its neighbours*, such as relations with Israel and Iraq or the fight against terrorism. The last cluster looks at the statements that praise *Turkey's foreign affairs success* as a beacon for the Muslim world. In six of the article's journalists put constructive comments on Turkey as a growing influence in the region. This relative enthusiasm is not surprising since, as mentioned before, previous research proves that the general tendency in the British media has a leaning to cover positive arguments about Turkey. What is indeed surprising is that even though papers have different political ideologies, the range of conflicting views in four of the clusters is relatively narrow. While journalists acknowledge Turkey's shortcomings with mainstream arguments in general the conclusions do not differ profoundly because they positively affirm the country's rapid development with a reference to the current AKP government's achievements. Another surprising figure appears in the distribution of articles. Considering that the *Financial Times* is a heavily business reporting newspaper, it is interesting to see how much weight the paper attaches to political issues, as they are also related to the economic interest of the country.

**Table 2.** The Main Themes in the Leading Articles

| Main Arguments              | The Guardian | The Financial Times | The Daily Telegraph | Total     |
|-----------------------------|--------------|---------------------|---------------------|-----------|
| Turkey-EU relations         | 6            | 10                  | 3                   | 19        |
| Domestic politics in Turkey | 7            | 7                   | 3                   | 17        |
| Conflict with neighbours    | 3            | 0                   | 3                   | 6         |
| Turkey as a success story   | 3            | 1                   | 2                   | 6         |
| <b>Total coded</b>          | <b>19</b>    | <b>18</b>           | <b>11</b>           | <b>48</b> |

### Arguments on Turkey and EU relations: “Turkey needs the European Union and the EU needs Turkey”

With more than six decades of candidacy background, Turkey's long-lasting EU

ambition continues to trigger the press responses in the British leading articles. It is well known that the British government is “a long-time advocate of Turkish membership” (*Daily Telegraph*, 2005, 1 October, p.29). Thus, several striking points require closer attention in the texts debating Turkey’s EU accession. Firstly, as previous research has proven (Paksoy & Negrine, 2016), this research also provides evidence that leading journalists do not talk about any form of British public or political elite’s opinion on the topic. There was no reference at all discussing opposing or positive opinions from a British perspective. Perhaps more curious is the fact that journalists do not ask where the British public or political opinion stands on the topic. While journalists to a certain degree put forward their paper’s view on Turkey’s EU accession, the possible role of Britain was dismissed. Secondly, what is remarkably common about the three papers’ reporting is that leading article commentators only use imported mainstream arguments from well-known politicians in France, Germany, Austria, and the Netherlands (e.g., Nicolas Sarkozy, Angela Merkel, Olli Rehn, or Pope Benedict), who alarmingly insist that a poor, Muslim country like Turkey does not belong to the EU. Thirdly, despite the differences of political viewpoints, three newspapers converge in their key statements on Turkey’s EU accession; thus, controversial arguments did not take place. Another striking fact is that parallel to Negrine’s (2008) findings, unexceptionally leading article journalists construct their texts with a political language that distantly positions Britain as an independent entity apart from the European Union, even though it was an official EU member at that period, thus membership talks take place between Turkey and the EU, but not with Britain. Therefore, following Negrine’s argument on “‘they’ have a problem with Turkey, ‘we’ do not” (2008: 642), is additionally approved in this cluster.

Divergence, however, only appears in the intensity of the coverage. In the Eurosceptic *Daily Telegraph*, journalists avoid constructing thorough comments on Turkey joining the EU. The partial similarity is seen in labour supporter the *Guardian*, which largely evaluates ‘why the EU has to allow Turkey’, then ‘what Turkey needs to fulfil’ to achieve EU membership’. For the *Guardian*, none of the reforms on EU laws are seen as insurmountable, though they remain mostly on paper. The only publication that constructs all its leading articles (with one exception) to discuss this issue is the *Financial Times*. Even when the paper talks about domestic politics in Turkey, most issues in one way or another (e.g., AKP’s success, the alleged Armenian genocide, constitutional reforms, secularism versus Islam) are linked with Turkey’s EU accession. The newspaper reflects cautious and conditional support on Turkey because, on the one hand, it clearly describes ‘what Turkey needs to fulfil’ to achieve EU membership about the deficits of the country; on the other hand, it propagates positive sides of this membership and describes why the EU must allow Turkey to enter the Union.

Another thematic divergence between newspapers appears in the Cyprus dispute. The conservative *Daily Telegraph* linked all its EU-based statements to the Cyprus issue, while for other papers Cyprus dispute was not on top of their agenda. The silence is striking, as it is well known that Britain was the former colonial power and still is one of the guarantor powers on the island. Then, we need to think how acceptable it could be to take for granted the British political elite's and journalists' acting as passive observers on the Cyprus problem. The only common argument here is the political reality that some EU countries use – among other religious and cultural arguments – Cyprus dispute to block Turkey's EU membership. The argument fostered by the *Financial Times* editorial is a case in point: “The challenge for the EU meanwhile is how to settle the Cyprus dispute it has imported - and arguably worsened” (2005, 4 August, p.14).

Unlike the conservative *Daily Telegraph*, the *Financial Times* and the *Guardian* discuss a highly debated issue on lack of freedom of speech concerning minority rights (e.g., Article 301). Under this penal code, prominent Turkish writer Elif Şafak, Nobel Prize winner Orhan Pamuk, and an Armenian descent editor Hrant Dink are accused to insult Turkishness by denouncing the mass murder of Armenians in the late Ottoman Empire. A characteristic example can be found in the *Financial Times* which reads: “In the real world, it is inconceivable that Turkey will ever enter the EU if it cannot face up to this blood-sodden chapter of its history” (2005, 5 September, p.16). A virtually identical argument appeared in the *Guardian* as well, especially after the assassination of Dink in 2007. Two extracts from the labour paper strongly argue that the Turkish government continues to reject the “genocide” label” but insists that outside Turkey there is a broad consensus that the Armenian massacre was nothing else than genocide.

Coming back to British journalists' strong criticisms toward lack of minority rights and freedom of speech, the dichotomy begins when a constituent of these criticisms is disregarded and mitigated again with other critical statements toward continental European countries. Journalists repeatedly position Britain at a distance and suggested instead of populism and prejudice, EU governments must persuade their voters that Turkish membership is a good thing and will bring a wider zone of prosperity and security for all. It is important to note that the British voter's stance is not even the case here. The following piece remarkably reflects the positive stance of the British press as it is published a day after Britain facilitated Turkey's EU accession talks:

“Full membership for Turkey in the EU would be an extraordinary achievement, of huge benefit to both sides. It would demonstrate that the Union is not an exclusive Christian club, but is capable of accepting

an overwhelmingly Muslim nation (...) Opening the door to Turkey is an essential step, and one to be welcomed, not begrudged.” (*Financial Times*, 2005, 4 October, p.20)

With a reference to popular pro-Turkey jargon in political rhetoric, these spinning comments and opinions toward Turkey strongly illustrated journalists’ support for Turkey, but also further EU enlargement. That is why, in none of the leading articles collected for this study, journalists mention the concern of disintegration of the Union, as most French and German political élites have alarmed in previous studies. Any oppositional concerns about losing European identity also have found no place in the British press, while multiculturalism arguments appear to be more respected. The *Financial Times* and the *Guardian* commentators passionately deny some member states for blocking multiculturalism efforts and increasing anti-Turkish, anti-Muslim, and anti-immigrant feelings of their voters locally. The same two papers evaluate the positive dimension of Turkey’s EU accession; whilst the Eurosceptic *Daily Telegraph* avoids attaching deeper meaning to the topic.

What does this cluster say, then, about the British press? Commentaries provide arguments with negative valence on what Turkey needs to fulfil to achieve EU membership, whilst they relatively propagate the support to a country with a different race, religion, and identity. The *Guardian* (2010, 28 July), the *Financial Times* (2009, 7 April), and the *Daily Telegraph* (2009, 7 December) fervently demonstrates expected gains associated with Turkey’s membership by claiming that much of the EU do not realise, but Washington and London are aware of how important a strategic power Turkey has become. It should be noted that in contrast to some continental European countries’ stance, the absence of denigrating Turkey as a poor country conveys intentional reasons. Britain interprets the geographically advantageous position of Turkey economically as an opportunity and strategically as a bridge. Firstly, as a supporter of free trade, Britain has an economic interest in Turkey, because in recent years it attracts many foreign investments from the Middle East to the Caucasus and Central Asia. Secondly, the geostrategic position of Turkey is interpreted as a bridge, as Britain supports future EU enlargement mainly for security and stability reasons in the region (Lippert, Hughes, Grabbe, & Becker, 2001). These strategic interests also could explain why there is a lack of British political dissent on Turkey’s EU accession. With no exception, British political elite discourse toward Turkey remains constructive and this is reflected via their press. It makes no difference whether the Conservative party or the Labour party governments hold the cabinet, both governments have strong diplomatic ties with Turkey. And lastly, like Turkey,



Britain also has special political relations with Washington. That is why, at that time, the press publishes several identical arguments that demonstrate President Obama's 'deliberate' choice of Turkey for his first state visit to a Muslim country, in 2009. All these convergences can contribute to the establishment of British exceptionalism toward Turkey's EU accession.

### **Arguments on domestic politics in Turkey: Democracy and secularism versus Islam**

Accounts on the tension between Islamists against Kemalist secularists, rising conservative Anatolian entrepreneurs (e.g., Anatolian Tigers) against modernist urban elites, and elected officials (politicians) against appointed (mostly military, but also civilian) officials represents main domestic political issues debated by British commentators on Turkey at that time. Newspapers frequently provide references on secular, democratic, and new Muslim Turkey □ which is branded by AKP. Achievements of AKP are shared with a demonstrative tone, which imminently positions newspapers □ stance as heavily in favour of the government in power. While this positioning is relatively common among the three papers; in contrast, any political viewpoint towards secular Kemalist or nationalist parties remains absent. This is confirmed in two incidences: (1) in 2007 when debating the nomination of Abdullah Gül as a candidate for the presidency of Turkey by AKP, and (2) in 2008, when debating the court case for closing down AKP and banning party leaders from politics.

In April 2007, thousands of staunchly secular Kemalist Turks against alleged Islamist policies of the AKP government participated in the demonstrations and protests against Gül □s nomination. Although these demonstrations prove that there is a serious ideological struggle between the conservative AKP and the Kemalists who think that AKP will destroy Atatürk □s secular legacy; the demonstrations are only marginally commented on the leading articles. In contrast, support toward Gül was remarkably obvious. The *Daily Telegraph*, for example, proudly declares its position as "long-standing friend of Turkey" and with a mandatory tone confirmed that Gül □s candidacy cannot be questioned:

"First, election results should stand. Second, states ought not to be in the business of telling their citizens how to dress. Third, if generals want to get involved in politics, they should resign their commissions and stand for election. There is no question that Mr Gul should be president: we wish him every success." (2007, 30 April, p.23)

A similar viewpoint is reflected in the *Financial Times* and the *Guardian*. Both newspapers highlighted that Gül is emblematic of a newly confident Muslim middle class and an economically dynamic central Anatolia. Editorials of both

papers link Gül's candidacy with the success of the popular and liberal ruling party AKP. British commentators exaggeratedly describing AKP as a pioneer political party that pulled the country out of a deep financial crisis and doubled the income of Turks; triggered significant, though uncompleted, reforms and legislation that underpin human rights; ban the torture and allow Kurdish language broadcast; normalize civilian-military relations; re-launch moves to widen ethnic and religious freedoms; moderated its policies on Cyprus; work on a new and less authoritarian civilian constitution, and lastly strengthen its links in the Middle East and become a bridge between the West and the Islamic world. Even more importantly, according to British journalists – with its dynamic and entrepreneurial nature – AKP become the representative of the modern face of political Islam, which cannot be underestimated. This latter narrative almost wholly describes the immeasurably positive evaluations of British editorials. These arguments refer to an early European narrative toward Muslim Turkey, as continental Europe was insisting that Turks are different. For the first time in history, this difference becomes visible on religious grounds and a pro-Islamic Turkish president is elected, with a wife wearing the Islamic headscarf (which was officially banned in the state buildings and universities at that time in Turkey). This was Muslim Turkey that Europe wants to see.

Similar debates are followed by a second confrontation in 2008 when Turkey's Constitutional Court announced the court case of closing down the ruling AKP and banning party leaders from politics. British journalists find it unacceptable and aggressively denied secularists' suspicion that AKP had a secret agenda to Islamise Turkey. The *Guardian* and the *Financial Times*, for instance, highlighted Prime Minister Erdoğan's good domestic and international records by referring to the above-mentioned attempts of the AKP government. In this second cluster, thus, it is obvious that Britain has a vital interest in the survival of Turkey's elected AKP government. That is why; President Gül and Prime Minister Erdoğan are both optimistically framed; whilst any alternative arguments against AKP remain silent at the selected period of study. Oppositional parties' opinions which represent half of the Turkish population, equally, find no place in the British leading articles which discuss Turkey's domestic issues.

### **Arguments on Turkey's conflict with the neighbours: Turkey, Iraq, and Israel**

Only striking different motive between the three newspapers appears in the cluster of debating Turkey's problematic relationship with its Middle Eastern neighbours as one of the papers, *Financial Times*, has covered no opinion at all concerning this topic. None of the *Financial Times* editorials refers to the tension between Turkey and Israel. Even there was no opinion about conflict in northern Iraq, fight

against Kurdish Worker Party (PKK), and terrorism, which at least since the early 1980s continue to create tension and threaten the civilians in Turkey. One way of explaining this absence could be looking at how the *Financial Times* interprets Turkey geographically. As mentioned in the previous parts, Britain sees Turkey as an ideal bridge and a strategic actor that can mediate relations between the West and the East. Thus, any destructive opinion against this notion might have been ignored in this paper.

In contrast to the *Financial Times*, Conservative and Labour newspapers covered some comments about Turkey's potential military defence operation against PKK in northern Iraq. For instance, the *Daily Telegraph* describes PKK, at its core, as a "brutal terror organisation", a "violent separatist" group, "a domestic guerrilla movement" or a "self-governing Kurdish enclave that represents one of the few post-Saddam success stories". A leading article in the *Daily Telegraph* commented: "When a sovereign state faces attack from terrorists operating with apparent impunity in a neighbouring country, no one should hinder its right to self-defence" (2007, 18 October, p.27) and continues to argue that Mr. Erdoğan deserves the world's support. A typical example of this type of reasoning also took place in the *Guardian*, which reads: "Turks are robust enough to react calmly to the threats from a breakaway Kurdish group" (2006, 31 August, p.34) and concludes with stressing on Turkey's international role: "Doubters should take note that by agreeing to send troops to the expanded UN monitoring force in south Lebanon, this NATO ally has again demonstrated that it is prepared to shoulder weighty international responsibilities" (2006, 31 August, p.34). One can think that this emphasis could be supportive of a possible Turkish military operation against PKK. However, both papers conflict when they stress the possible consequences of any Turkish incursion. The *Daily Telegraph* argues that such an attempt could add fuel to destabilizing Iraq's fragile political infrastructure and could cause more chaos inside Iraq. And the *Guardian* says, "Military operations alone will never solve this conflict" (2008, 28 February, p.34). Thus, again similar dyadic language which took place in the first cluster becomes visible in this cluster as well.

Looking at the main actors, it is striking that the journalists of the *Guardian* and the *Daily Telegraph* refer to Washington officials' statements, while few arguments from British political leaders (e.g., Tony Blair and Gordon Brown, both former British Prime Ministers) took place at the end of the lines. Even European Union officials' opinions do not exist in the pieces debating Turkey and Iraq relations. Hence, the *Guardian* appears to be the only newspaper in the sample, that mentions the fragile Turkey and Israel relationship. In 2010, the killing of nine Turkish nationals in the assault on the Gaza aid flotilla increased

the tension between the two countries. Turkey immediately cut economic and military ties with Israel to a minimum. In that single piece, the *Guardian* confirms that Turkey's international position can no longer be taken for granted and despite its previous criticisms on Turkey's EU accession, it concluded with a strong claim: "Turkey is certainly changing. It has many cards in its hand. But the rest of the world should work with those changes and not fear them" (2010, 5 June, p.40). This substantially positive framing refers to the regional power arguments, which were mentioned in the first cluster, but also largely covered in the last cluster. In conclusion, limited density (6 items) in this cluster can be interpreted as a fact that British journalists do pay less attention to Turkey's problematic relations with its Middle Eastern neighbours. In any circumstance, quality journalists position Turkey as a strategic political actor in the region and neglect to see its problems with the neighbours.

### **Arguments on New Turkey: A quiet revolution**

Applying a relatively constructive approach, the last cluster talks about how the British editorials describe the changing environment and dynamism of Turkish political discourse. There is no doubt that the term "Turkish model" (Altunisik, 2005: 45) start to be used after AKP took over power in 2002. This terminology is mainly derived from the synthesis of Prime Minister Erdoğan and an academically intellectual Foreign Minister Davutoğlu, who aim to create a new discourse on Turkey's global perception. In the British press, three pillars of the Turkish model – political Islam, secularism, and democracy – are narrated more like a success story and a beacon to neighbouring regimes (e.g., Iran, Iraq, Egypt, and Syria) than as a model. When we consider the spirit of the time, the "Davutoğlu effect" (Sözen, 2010: 103) becomes much visible in all the success stories. In these arguments, a large emphasis took place on the geographic truth of the country with substantial optimism. Three British newspapers narrated how important regional power Turkey has become. They depict Davutoğlu as a hyperactive foreign minister who is the pioneer of new Turkish foreign policy. To put this in perspective, Turkey's indispensable role in the occupation of Iraq is emphasized; it is positioned as a key player in the arc of instability that runs from North Africa to the Hindu Kush. The *Guardian* and the *Daily Telegraph*, for example, both criticise the EU to keep Turkey at the door to accession and stress that Turkey geographically is 'a vital player' and can contribute to a change in the world's most unsettled region. This piece from the *Guardian* shows how much weight Britain assign to the security concerns about the region:

"Turkey has signed accords with Syria and Iraq. It defended the Sudanese president Omar al-Bashir as a good Muslim. Along with Brazil, it brokered an agreement to transfer half of Iran's supply of low-enriched

uranium abroad - an offer that could still form part of the solution to the crisis. Turkey has transformed its relations with Russia and was the first to rush to Kyrgyzstan after the attempted ethnic cleansing of Uzbeks in the south.” (2010, 28 July, p.32)

These hard power arguments, further, are linked with soft power arguments, where quality newspapers describe Turkey’s ability to establish a majority Muslim bridgehead to the Middle East, the Caucasus, and Central Asia. Turkey’s recent foreign policy success is promoted as a strategic asset to the EU, which will prove that Islam and democracy can co-exist, and Muslim Democrats can emerge, like Christian Democrats. The constant growing economy of Turkey is similarly propagated in the last cluster. At that time, Turkey was one of the 20 major economies – a member of the G20. Therefore, although the three newspapers have different ideological standpoints, with no polarisation of opinion, it is certain that British journalists widely propagate the economic benefits of Turkey with constructively reframed arguments. One piece in the *Guardian* summarised:

“It is using its soft power effectively. (...) It is not just that Turkey has a fast-growing economy or that it has a youthful workforce. It is because, with the failure or stagnation of so many key US and EU policies in the region, we could really do with the help.” (2010, 28 July, p.32)

It is important to emphasize that the British press also draw a positive picture of Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. In mid-2007 the parliamentary elections resulted in a victory for the incumbent AKP. Three newspapers covered exaggeratedly complementary arguments toward Erdoğan by describing him as a “reformist”, “charismatic leader”, who is “the right man for the job”. In contrast, there was a serious absence of opinion to raise the voice of the Kemalist secularists (Republican People’s Party-CHP) or the republicans (Nationalist Movement Party-MHP) leaders. This stance again proves that Britain supports the AKP government and sees its surveillance as indispensable. Whether this model can be operationalized, legitimised, and applied to neighbouring regimes is yet open to discussion.

## CONCLUSIONS

Turkey is a complex country, hard to understand; secular and Muslim, Western and Eastern, modern, and traditional (Gangloff, 2008; Wimmel, 2009). In this comprehensive analysis of the British quality newspaper’s editorial coverage of Turkey, this study argues that during the 2000s the British coverage of Turkey concentrates around four interconnected clusters reflecting the newspapers’ political representation of Turkey in general. The first cluster covers Turkey

and the EU relations, the second cluster focuses on domestic politics in Turkey, and the third cluster concentrate on Turkey's fragile relation with some Middle Eastern neighbours. The last cluster has a different perspective as it propagates – with substantial optimism – Turkey as a democratic, secular Muslim state, which could build a bridge between Europe and the Middle East.

The textual analysis to three quality newspapers – the *Financial Times*, the *Guardian*, and the *Daily Telegraph* – produced confirmative evidence to the literature that evaluates the representation of Turkey's bid to join the EU (Müftüler-Bac, 2000; Negrine, 2008; Negrine, Kejanlioglu, Aissaoui, & Papatthanassopoulos, 2008; Öktem, 2005). The data show that this issue is reported with similar emphasis on how the British stance toward Turkey's EU membership is supportive but equally destructive. Although the content analysis implies that British journalists constructed a rather optimistic image of Turkey, and even though they position continental European countries opposing stance as unacceptable and regrettable, still Turkey's difference and lacking reforms continued to run through some of the editorial texts of the *Financial Times* and the *Guardian*. Hence, two papers suggested that the EU must honour its promise to Turkey, but Turkey must honour its commitment to freedom of speech or human rights violations. By contrast, the *Daily Telegraph* intentionally ignores to debate any argument concerning the lack of EU laws or other reforms in Turkey.

It is rather surprising to see that coverage did highlight a significant difference between the first and other remaining clusters, as in the second cluster such critical and mainstream sentiments entirely disappeared. The editors of the Conservative, Labour, and Liberal press positively affirm the country's rapid development with an over-emphasis on the achievements of ruling Neo-Islamic AKP in general, and Prime Minister Erdoğan in particular. Even though the three newspapers have different political and historical traditions, they had a strong consistency. Especially in the second clusters, the conclusions of the coverage do not differ profoundly in the editorials of the three papers.

Bell (1998) suggests that ideologically different newspapers provide distinctive observations on different themes. If this reading of the selected body of text has some justification, a theoretical critique is provided to the assumption that ideologically different newspapers have different ways of interpretation and storytelling techniques and that they re-produce conflicting discourse that does not thoroughly converge with each other. In this study, the empirical findings suggest that when debating the local political atmosphere in Turkey the three newspapers almost entirely converge with their arguments and created a rather consistent and constructive coverage regarding international and local

achievements of the ruling party AKP and Prime Minister Erdoğan. To a certain degree, this substantial optimism shows that ideologically different newspapers can converge when national interests are much stronger to transcend different political stances of the newspapers. This argument is already proved in the work of Chomsky and Herman (1988), and Herman and Chomsky (2002), who claim that in the case of foreign reporting, press objectivity weakens: newspapers are willing to give up professional norms to national interests (Nossek, 2004). This attitude also can demonstrate, in part, the long-shared history (e.g., Crimean War, battle of Gallipoli) between modern-day Turkey and Britain. The lack of conflict historically has built mutual respect that might remain in the consciousness and social memory of the British quality press. British editorials which are largely influenced by the British political elite's opinion, in this case, contributed to the re-creation and re-production of a one-sided political media discourse directly toward AKP and Erdoğan and indirectly toward Turkey for economic benefits and security reasons.

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### **Appendix I:** Newspaper, Headlines, Data, Page, and Themes

| #  | Title   | Newspaper          | Date               | Page | Theme                          |
|----|---|--------------------|--------------------|------|--------------------------------|
| 1. | Leading Article:<br>Listen to Turkey                                | Daily<br>Telegraph | 7 December<br>2009 | 25   | Turkish<br>model               |
| 2. | Leading Article:<br>Turkey's time has<br>come                       | Daily<br>Telegraph | 7 April 2009       | 21   | Turkish<br>model               |
| 3. | Leading Article:<br>Turkey's secularism                             | Daily<br>Telegraph | 29 July 2008       | 19   | Domestic<br>issues             |
| 4. | Leading Article:<br>Turkey must show<br>restraint over the<br>Kurds | Daily<br>Telegraph | 23 October<br>2007 | 25   | Problems<br>with<br>neighbours |
| 5. | Leading Article:<br>Turkey and the Kurds                            | Daily<br>Telegraph | 18 October<br>2007 | 27   | Problems<br>with<br>neighbours |

*BRITISH EDITORIALS PORTRAYAL OF TURKEY DURING THE 2000S: AN ANALYSIS OF THE GUARDIAN, THE FINANCIAL TIMES, AND THE DAILY TELEGRAPH*

|     |   |                 |                  |               |                          |
|-----|---|-----------------|------------------|---------------|--------------------------|
| 6.  | Leading Article: In Turkey, a reminder of non-Islamist terrorism  | Daily Telegraph | 29 August 2006   | 21            | Problems with neighbours |
| 7.  | Leading Article: Britain persuades the EU to talk Turkey  | Daily Telegraph | 4 October 2005   | 27            | Turkey's EU membership   |
| 8.  | Leading Article: Yet another obstacle to Turkey's EU plans  | Daily Telegraph | 1 October 2005   | 29            | Turkey's EU membership   |
| 9.  | Leading Article: Let the Turks decide   | Daily Telegraph | 3 May 2007       | 27            | Domestic issues          |
| 10. | Leading Article: Turkish distractions   | Daily Telegraph | 30 April 2007    | 23            | Domestic issues          |
| 11. | Leading Article: The EU's hypocrisy   | Daily Telegraph | 14 December 2006 | 23            | Turkey's EU membership   |
| 12. | Leader: Turkey's riven soul; Judicial battles do not bode well for settling differences                                   | Financial Times | 24 February 2010 | 12 London Ed. | Domestic issues          |
| 13. | Leader: Turkey is in crisis; and the EU must abandon its dithering over accession   | Financial Times | 3 July 2008      | 14 London Ed. | Domestic issues          |
| 14. | Leader: A contest to decide Turkey's future credibility of country's institutions at stake in elections                   | Financial Times | 19 July 2007     | 12 London Ed. | Domestic issues          |
| 15. | Leader: Turkey needs early elections, not army time for a democratic debate about Islam and secularism second stand first | Financial Times | 1 May 2007       | 12 London Ed. | Domestic issues          |
| 16. | Leader: Turkey's president Erdogan's decision not to stand is a wise move   | Financial Times | 25 April 2007    | 14 London Ed. | Domestic issues          |

|     |   |                 |                   |               |                        |
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| 17. | Leader: Turkey gives its EU ambitions a chance a last-minute olive branch offers hope of avoiding disaster    | Financial Times | 8 December 2006   | 16 London Ed. | Turkey's EU membership |
| 18. | Leader: Turkey and EU held hostage by Cyprus too much is at stake to allow this obstruction to continue       | Financial Times | 1 December 2006   | 16 London Ed. | Turkey's EU membership |
| 19. | Leader: Turkey on track for a collision with the EU far too much is at stake to allow entry talks to fail now | Financial Times | 1 November 2006   | 14 London Ed. | Turkey's EU membership |
| 20. | Leader: Turkey's penal code commitment to free speech must mean repeal of Article 301                         | Financial Times | 22 September 2006 | 16 London Ed. | Domestic issues        |
| 21. | Leader: Turkey's travails the EU could help by being a little less stand-offish                               | Financial Times | 22 May 2006       | 20 London Ed. | Turkey's EU membership |
| 22. | Leader: Stalling Turkey political courage is needed to sell the EU enlargement story                          | Financial Times | 4 October 2005    | 20 London Ed. | Turkey's EU membership |
| 23. | Leader: Talking Turkey but there must be real reform along Ankara's road to the EU                            | Financial Times | 1 October 2005    | 10 London Ed. | Turkey's EU membership |

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| 24. | Leader: EU must honour its promise to Turkey but Turkey must honour its commitment to free speech | Financial Times | 5 September 2005  | 16 London Ed. | Turkey's EU membership   |
| 25. | Leader: Moving the goalposts De Villepin's opportunism on Turkey is highly inopportune            | Financial Times | 4 August 2005     | 14 London Ed. | Turkey's EU membership   |
| 26. | Leader: Turkish challenge; Ankara must display quiet and responsible diplomacy                    | Financial Times | 13 April 2009     | 8 London Ed.  | Turkey's EU membership   |
| 27. | Leader: Rebuilding bridges; Obama hits right notes in speech to Turkish parliament                | Financial Times | 7 April 2009      | 12 London Ed. | Turkish model            |
| 28. | Leader: Turkish horizons - Ankara should stick with the reforms needed for EU entry               | Financial Times | 7 November 2007   | 16 London Ed. | Turkey's EU membership   |
| 29. | Turkish democracy Gul has every right to stand for the presidency                                 | Financial Times | 15 August 2007    | 10 London Ed. | Domestic issues          |
| 30. | Leading article: Turkey: A quiet revolution   | The Guardian    | 14 September 2010 | 30            | Turkish model            |
| 31. | Leading article: Turkey: A vital player   | The Guardian    | 28 July 2010      | 32            | Turkish model            |
| 32. | Leading article: Turkey: Not lost but found   | The Guardian    | 5 June 2010       | 40            | Problems with neighbours |
| 33. | Leading article: Turkey: Bridging the divide  | The Guardian    | 7 April 2009      | 30            | Turkish model            |

|     |   |              |                  |    |                          |
|-----|---|--------------|------------------|----|--------------------------|
| 34. | Leading article:<br>Turkey: Close shave                       | The Guardian | 31 July 2008     | 32 | Domestic issues          |
| 35. | Leading article:<br>Turkey: Democracy and the law             | The Guardian | 2 July 2008      | 32 | Domestic issues          |
| 36. | Leading article: Public fury, private accord: Turkey and Iraq | The Guardian | 28 February 2008 | 34 | Problems with neighbours |
| 37. | Leading article:<br>Turkey: Making difficult situations worse | The Guardian | 12 October 2007  | 40 | Turkey's EU membership   |
| 38. | Leading article:<br>Turkey: Islam and democracy               | The Guardian | 22 August 2007   | 30 | Domestic issues          |
| 39. | Leading article:<br>Turkey: A mandate for modernisation       | The Guardian | 24 July 2007     | 30 | Turkish model            |
| 40. | Leading article:<br>Turkey: The democratic solution           | The Guardian | 3 May 2007       | 34 | Domestic issues          |
| 41. | Leading article:<br>Turkey: Tension turns into crisis         | The Guardian | 30 April 2007    | 30 | Domestic issues          |
| 42. | Leading article:<br>Turkey: Haunted by the past               | The Guardian | 23 January 2007  | 28 | Turkey's EU membership   |
| 43. | Leading article:<br>Turkey: Europe closes the door            | The Guardian | 1 December 2006  | 40 | Turkey's EU membership   |
| 44. | Leading article:<br>Turkey: Toughing out terror               | The Guardian | 31 August 2006   | 34 | Problems with neighbours |
| 45. | Leading article:<br>Turkey: Veiled threats to democracy       | The Guardian | 20 May 2006      | 36 | Domestic issues          |
| 46. | Leading article:<br>Turkey and the EU: Back from the brink    | The Guardian | 4 October 2005   | 30 | Turkey's EU membership   |

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| 47. | Leading article: EU enlargement: Time to talk to Turkey | The Guardian | 30 September 2005 | 34 | Turkey's EU membership |
| 48. | Leading article: EU and Turkey: Anchoring Ankara        | The Guardian | 9 September 2005  | 25 | Turkey's EU membership |