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Media framings of the issue of Turkish accession to the European Union: A European or National Process?

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Introduction

In 2003, Jürgen Habermas and Jacques Derrida put aside their philosophical differences to protest against what they saw as the unwarranted aggression of the United States of America and its allies in the invasion and occupation of Iraq and appeal for the creation of a Europe capable of resisting effectively US foreign policy. In order to act as a counterweight to the USA and as a force for transnational democracy and social justice, they argue, Europe needs to become strong and to be strong it needs to become more united through citizens of individual European nations extending their notions of solidarity to citizens of other European nations, thus developing a sense of European citizenship. The prospects for this, however, are far from clear. On the one hand, Habermas and Derrida point to the deep divisions concerning the war within Europe itself between the between 'old' and 'new' Europe, between those who opposed the invasion and those who supported it. On the other hand, they express the hope that the anti-war street protests on February 15, 2003 in London, Rome, Madrid, Barcelona, Berlin and Paris (*sic*) may in the future be seen as a signal for the birth of a European public sphere (Habermas and Derrida, 2003: 33f).

Habermas and Derrida are not alone in seeing the development of a European public sphere as something intrinsically positive. The construction of a European public sphere is often seen to be a 'good thing' for democracy (for example, Koopmans and Pfetsch, 2003: 3), and many authors see it as essential for addressing the 'democratic deficit' both within European nation-states and within the European Union. While the European Union is

regularly presented as the leading example of cosmopolitan citizenship, it is also commonly asserted that a democratic deficit exists in the EU because system integration has greatly outpaced social integration. One way in which this democratic deficit might be addressed, it is claimed, is if media institutions could play a similar role in the development of the EU as they did in the development of nation-states i.e. through helping to construct an *imagined community* of Europeans (Eder, 2000; Gerhards, 1992; Kevin, 2003).

Constructing an imagined community is always a process of inclusion and exclusion - communities form when there is a shared, mediated sense of who belongs and who not. Clearly Habermas and Derrida believe that a 'good' European sense of identity can be forged in opposition to what they see as the arbitrary power of the USA. The USA is, of course, not the only possible Other that may be used by 'Europeans' to construct their identity. The development of a European identity may prove to be just as exclusionary and uncivil as national identities have been historically. Besides, currently popular narratives of European unity usually conceal the fact that in the past, the drive towards unity has always been closely associated with the eastern frontier and it has ultimately proved to be a divisive force (Delanty, 1996). Arguably, a European communicative space based on an exclusivist European identity would hardly merit to be labelled *public*. The existence of such a collective identity would inhibit individuals to see others as individuals with rights and responsibilities and imagine them as at least potential partners in critical-rational dialogue - a precondition essential for a public sphere as defined by Habermas (1989).

Such considerations are often absent from the growing industry of empirical studies which are searching for evidence of a developing European public sphere (for an exception see van de Steeg *et al.*, 2003), as is a careful consideration of what actually makes a public sphere *European* (and not, for example, global or universal). Or, to put it differently, many studies seem to assume the existence of a European public sphere without giving enough thought to the question of whether the 'sphere' they are dealing with really extends to all European countries, whether it is actually limited only to Europe, and whether it can justifiably be considered as a public sphere. In the light of these thoughts, the paper engages in a critical revision of existing conceptualisations and empirical studies of the European

public sphere, and then examines newspaper coverage of an issue that presents a veritable test of Europe's openness: Turkey's accession to the EU.

For centuries, Islam has played the role of one of the main Others against which a common European identity was defined (Hay, 1957), and Ottoman Empire in particular figured as the arch-enemy of Europe and the Christian West, despite the fact that this is at odds with the historical record (Goffman, 2002). The December 2004 decision made by the European Council of Ministers and Turkey to begin accession discussions in October 2005 may be seen in the future as a key moment in the early development of a reborn Europe as a more cosmopolitan society and less of a fortress. Yet if we examine the ways in which the mass media framed Turkey's accession to the EU, it becomes clear that the old, exclusivist perceptions of Europe are still very much alive. At the very best, Turks may be acknowledged as being *in* Europe, but as long as they are Muslims, they are not accepted as being *of* Europe. The assumption that Turks are somehow alien to Europe is shared even by some of the liberal-minded individuals, and is discernible in their calls for a 'coexistence' of Europeans and Muslims. However, as Talal Asad (2002: 213) points out: "it is precisely because Muslims are external to the essence of Europe that 'coexistence' can be envisaged between 'us' and 'them'."

This case study is based on a sample of articles published in daily newspapers in Turkey, Slovenia, Germany, France, the UK, and the USA in the days following the publication of the European Commission Progress Report on Turkey in early in October and the decision made by the European Council in December 2004 to open membership negotiations with Turkey in October 2005. The method of analysis consists of an innovative variety of frame analysis combining qualitative and quantitative approaches.

What makes a media sphere 'public' and 'European'?

While proponents of an actually existing European public sphere based on traditional institutional criteria are difficult to find, due to the absence of supranational European-wide media institutions and the generally low profile of European news in national media institutions, there are some who argue for the existence of a fledgling European public sphere of *Europeanized* national media spheres. It is this notion of a *transnational* rather than

supranational European public sphere that Habermas sees as in its infancy (2001: 17-19). He is influenced here by the work of Philip Schlesinger who argues that while “national editorial values influence coverage and [...] national governmental sources are still of key importance for journalists covering European Union issues” (1999: 27), elements of a European civil society have begun to emerge, particularly within political and business elites. He believes that the development of the European Union has led to the emergence, for example, of an *Economist*-reading transnational European political and business elite that indicates how a European public sphere, or more precisely, a complex sphere of connected national publics, might develop. To become mature, according to Schlesinger, such a sphere of publics would have to have three essential properties: the dissemination of a European news agenda, that such an agenda would become an important part of everyday media consumption, and that the audiences living within the EU begin to think of their citizenship to a certain extent “as transcending the level of the member nation-states” (1999: 277). He recognizes that a European agenda is likely to be *domesticated* in different ways according to nation, region or language but argues that such domestication does not rule out the transcendence, to a certain extent, of exclusively national identities.

Schlesinger’s third criterion of assessment depends to a certain extent on how national media frame their account of events, as individuals will only be encouraged to see themselves as belonging to a European community if media institutions, together with other cultural institutions, provide such a way of organising the world. However, it is often overlooked that for the world to be seen from a European perspective, transcending purely national perspectives is not enough. Apart from the possibility of a nationalization and Europeanization of an issue, there is also the possibility of a universalization of an issue and the possibility of a regionalisation based on another regional unit, e.g. the Mediterranean. Does one for example frame the London February 15 march as essentially national event aimed against the Labour government that brought together the British left and many socially conservatively inclined British Muslims in remarkable numbers? Or does one see it as a march belonging to the birth of a distinctly European public sphere? Or does one interpret the march as part of a transnational protest against the war that brought together protesters in Europe (and not just Western and Southern Europe), North America, Africa,

Australasia, and Asia? Or, should it be a combination of two or three of these interpretations? In other words, for the question of a European public sphere, universalization and alternative question of a European public sphere, universalization and alternative regionalization is a problem as well as nationalization. There can be too much transcendence of the national as well as not enough.

A number of recent empirical studies working in a manner similar to the approach suggested by Schlesinger claim a degree of movement towards a Europeanization of institutionally separate public spheres within the European Union (Van de Steeg *et al.* 2003; Eder and Kantner 2000; Trenz 2004). This transnationalist and culturalist approach claims that a European public sphere exists if the same topics are discussed “at same time with the same intensity and structure of meaning” in the institutionally separate national public spheres (van de Steeg *et al.* 2003). Although we think that it is also important to follow the development of the institutional underpinnings of media discourses, we would agree that such measurement is suitable for the concept of a European public sphere on two conditions: first, since democratic deliberation requires a 'thin' collective identity, i.e. the association of citizens through communicative practices (Habermas, 1992: 372), the structures of meaning must be logically compatible with the notion of a *European* public sphere i.e. they must employ a European frame; second, they must be compatible with the idea of a *public sphere* i.e. they must encourage individuals to see others as individuals with rights and responsibilities and imagine them as at least potential partners in critical-rational dialogue. Setting out with these transnationalist criteria, we now pose the question of whether media debates concerning the possibility of Turkish accession to the European Union provide evidence of the existence of a European public sphere.

Sample and Method

Our sample included all articles published that mentioned the accession debate in the periods between 7 and 14 October 2004 and 17 and 24 December 2004. The articles were retrieved either from the LEXIS/NEXIS database or from newspaper's own on-line archives using the search string 'Turkey'. Subsequently, all articles not dealing with Turkey's accession were excluded from the sample. We aimed to replicate the print media structures

in the different countries to some extent; thus including several local papers in the French and German samples (Hallin & Mancini, 2004: 150; Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, 2006) and tabloids from the UK and Germany (Hallin & Mancini, 2004: 211), even though our sample is biased towards quality papers, as it is thought that these are the main carriers of an emerging European public sphere (Trenz, 2004). Naturally, the papers are not homogenous at the national level, either. But for our analysis, differences in style and political orientation bear little relevance, as we are interested in frames, basic schemes of cognition, which operate across these differences, and the intensity of the debate, which also is independent of the style of the debate: It may very well be that advocacy journalism, like in *die tageszeitung* or *L'Humanité*, will present a very different picture of the debate from the one produced through the Anglo-Saxon version of professional journalism, championed for example by the *New York Times* or to a lesser extent by *Frankfurter Allgemeine*, with its objectivity rituals. But these differences do not affect the frames used, but the *valence* of these frames, which we do not set out to measure.

Table 1 Newspaper Sample

	Newspapers	No. of articles
Turkey	<i>Hürriyet, Sabah</i>	465
Slovenia	<i>Delo, Dnevnik, Večer, Finance</i>	86
Germany	<i>Die Welt, Frankfurter Allgemeine, Süddeutsche Zeitung, Frankfurter Rundschau, die tageszeitung, Financial Times Deutschland, Handelsblatt, Westdeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung, Lausitzer Rundschau, Bild</i>	846
France	<i>La Nouvelle Republique du Centre Ouest, La Croix, Le Monde, Le Figaro, Paris-Normandie, La Tribune, Le Telegramme, Les Echos, Liberation, L'Humanite, Sud Ouest,</i>	465
UK	<i>The Times, Daily Telegraph, Guardian, The Independent, The Scotsman, Daily Mail, Daily Mirror, The Sun</i>	89
USA	<i>New York Times, Los Angeles Times, International Herald Tribune</i>	14

Our analysis consisted of five main steps:

- (1) the identification of assumptions that underpin the statements about Turkey's accession to the EU;
- (2) the clustering of these assumptions into frames;

- (3) the generation of keywords that are used as indicators for the existence of particular frames;
- (4) the coding of data with the help of qualitative data analysis software;
- (5) the validation of the framing model via latent class analyses of the coding matrices.

The first two steps were carried out on small (30-40 articles) saturation samples of articles that were drawn for each of the countries and periods under scrutiny. These two steps were largely overlapping, but will be described separately. The remaining three steps were applied to the whole sample of articles.

Step 1: Identifying Assumptions

We defined frames as sets of loosely connected assumptions, including beliefs and values. In line with Gitlin's (1980: 6) definition of frames, we assumed that such sets of assumptions provided the basis for the selection, emphasis and presentation of arguments about Turkey's EU membership. The selection, emphasis and presentation of a particular argument can, of course, be based on a wide range of assumptions. However, not all of them were equally relevant for our analysis. For example, a statement such as "Turkey's membership would be a big financial burden for the EU" (Delo, 08/10/2004), is based among others on four assumptions: (a) there is an EU, (b) Turkey is being considered for EU membership, (c) the financial costs are an important issue to be taken into account when considering Turkey's membership, and (d) nation-states and supra-national (e.g. regional) units are the primary units for costing. However, only the last two assumptions were considered relevant for our analysis, since they reveal a particular understanding of what are the relevant criteria for the European Union membership.

Working on small samples of articles, each analyst drafted a separate list of assumptions for each of the analyzed countries. These assumptions were then discussed and compared, and clustered together into frames.

Step 2: Clustering Assumptions into Frames

While we were trying to work as closely with the materials as possible, the identification (as well as labelling) of frames was inevitably guided also by our previous knowledge of the

scholarly literature on framing as well as the various bodies of relevant literature on issues such as European integration, nationalism and globalization. Recent approaches to frame analysis have aimed to systematize framing research by developing a typology of frames. One of these typologies distinguishes *content frames* from *structural schemes* (Benford, 1997: 413) or *generic frames* (de Vreese, 2002: 27ff). *Content frames* have been found to often draw on more abstract frames (sometimes referred to in the literature as *master frames*). Three such abstract frames repeatedly surface in the literature:

- the *ethno-nationalist* frame, which presupposes the existence of ontological (quasi-)primordial groups based on criteria such as religion, culture, or blood relationships (Billig 1995; Eder, 1995: 4; Eder and Schmidtke, 1998);
- the *liberal-individualist citizenship* frame, which postulates the individual freedom and equality of all humans vis-à-vis the state (Eder, 1995: 4; McAdam, 1996: 347);
- the *harmony with nature* frame, which assumes the existence of different realms of culture and nature and attributes to nature an intrinsic worth (d'Anjou and van Male, 1998; Eder, 1996: 191; Gamson, 1992: 136).

In the materials, we only found a negligible amount of articles that would draw on a pure liberal-individualist frame. Instead, liberal arguments were regularly combined with assumptions characteristic of the ethno-nationalist frame.

After struggling to find an appropriate label for such a frame, we have decided to label it *multiculturalist frame*, since its assumptions roughly correspond to those discussed in the literature on multiculturalism (Kymlicka 1995, Parekh 2000, Barry 2001). In addition, we have realized that arguments sharing the assumptions characteristic of the ethno-nationalist frame could vary substantially: some presupposed only the existence of nations, while others assumed also the existence of larger groups comprising more nations but still sharing a similar culture/civilization or religion. The multiculturalist frame, for example, belonged to the latter category. However, we also found ample evidence of arguments that assumed the existence of larger groups sharing a similar culture/civilization or religion, yet unlike the multiculturalist arguments supposed that such groups are fundamentally incompatible and cannot share a common political roof. Since this set of assumptions echoed the much-debated thesis by Samuel Huntington (1993), we decided to label them as the *clash of civilizations frame*. The analysis also showed that this frame had two varieties: the ethno-nationalist and the 'liberal' one.

Apart from the content frames, we also found ample evidence of the *economic consequences* frame, which couches issues in terms of the consequences they will have economically on an individual, group, institution, region, or country (Semetko and Valkenburg, 2000: 95f), and can be combined with any of the above listed content frames. This frame cannot be adequately described only in terms of content, and is usually treated as one of the *structural schemes* (Benford, 1997: 413) or *generic frames* (de Vreese, 2002: 27ff).

Table 2 Frames present in the newspaper coverage on the issue of Turkey’s accession to the EU.

Frames		Assumptions		
Clash of Civilizations Frame (CC)	(Ethno-) nationalist variety (CC+N)	Humanity is divided into populations which differ according to culture, customs, beliefs, values, religion etc.	Different cultures and/or civilizations do not share any common values and cannot share a common political roof. This should be taken into account when considering Turkey’s membership.	The clash is between Christian and Muslim civilizations
	‘Liberal’ variety (CC+LI)			The clash is between secular and Muslim (inherently anti-secular) civilizations
‘Pure’ (Ethno-) Nationalist Frame (N)			The interests of our nation should be taken into account when considering Turkey’s membership.	
Liberal Multiculturalist Frame (LM = N+LI)			Despite differences, diverse cultures and/or civilizations share some common values and can share a common political roof. This should be taken into account when considering Turkey’s membership.	
‘Pure’ Liberal-Individualist Frame (LI)			The interests of individuals should be taken into account when considering Turkey’s membership.	
Economic Consequences Frame (EC)		The economic costs and benefits should be taken into account when considering Turkey’s membership.		

Step 3: Identifying Keywords

Given the size of the sample, analyzing the entire sample of articles in this way would be infeasible. We therefore followed approaches that demand that frames should correspond to "identifiable conceptual and linguistic characteristics" (de Vreese *et al.*, 2001: 108) and thus allow for a fairly fast management of large amounts of data. Several studies in this tradition use multi-scale items to code data (d’Haenens and de Lange, 2001: 853; Semetko and Valkenburg, 2000; de Vreese *et al.* 2001), while others employ keywords to identify frames (Entman, 1993: 53; Miller and Riechert, 2001: 61ff). Pure keyword measurement, while being fairly rigid and least interpretative, offers even greater reproducibility and is also much

faster in the coding of large data sets. Since we already used quite open interpretative techniques in the first two steps of the analysis, we adopted the keyword approach.

We started by identifying several keywords (including particular Boolean combinations thereof) that seemed characteristic of particular frames. After identifying the search strings in the initial sample, we looked at further random finds in the whole sample to check whether they could be used as a reliable means of distinguishing one frame from another. It became apparent that many keywords that seemed to be characteristic of a particular frame were appearing also in arguments supporting entirely different frames and thus could not be used as reliable means of distinguishing between frames. After a careful consideration of different occurrences of keywords we excluded the ambiguous ones and retained only those that could be used as truly unambiguous indicators of particular frames.

A typical example of a keyword for a multiculturalist framing of the debate was "Christian Club", a term that was exclusively used in a pejorative manner to debunk the idea that the European Union would build upon a common cultural inheritance that would exclude Islam:

"These views coincided with the visceral belief, still widespread in conservative heartlands of Europe, that the EU should remain fundamentally a Christian club."
(*International Herald Tribune*, 08/10/04, p. 8)

Another, slightly more ambivalent keyword, this time for the liberal clash of civilizations framing was "human rights". Human rights are, of course, a quintessentially liberal-individualist idea with universal applicability. However, both opponents, who would argue that Turkey and "Islamic culture" would steadfastly violate human rights, and supporters of accession to the EU, who expect Turkey to improve or stabilize its human rights regime within the EU, would conceptualize human rights as something specifically or at least traditionally Western. A more ethno-nationalist framing of human rights, would thus claim that:

"Christianity is not only, as some vulgarly retarded modernity would like to have it, crusades and witch hunts. The uniqueness and inviolability of every human being is a Christian accomplishment." (*Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung* 10/10/04, p.14)

Even such unusual framing of the human rights issue gives, though, precedence to the question, whether Turkey has or can implement an effective human rights regime, rather

than putting forward a straightforward culturalist argument. We therefore decided to keep "human rights" as a keyword for liberal nationalism.

An additional consideration that had to be taken into account in the identification of keywords was the different meanings attached to the same words in different languages and contexts (Koenig, 2006). In some cases, keywords appearing in one country or context would be virtually absent in another, or would be invested with importantly different meanings. An example for this type of difficulty in our data was the notion of the German 'Rechtsstaat', which is often translated into English as 'the rule of law', although their conceptual histories and current meanings are very different. Due to all these variations, separate lists of keywords had to be developed for each country.

Step 4: Coding

After identifying the frames and corresponding keywords, the full data set was coded for the presence or absence of the identified frames. This was done with the help of the QDA Miner software.¹

Step 5: Validation of Frames

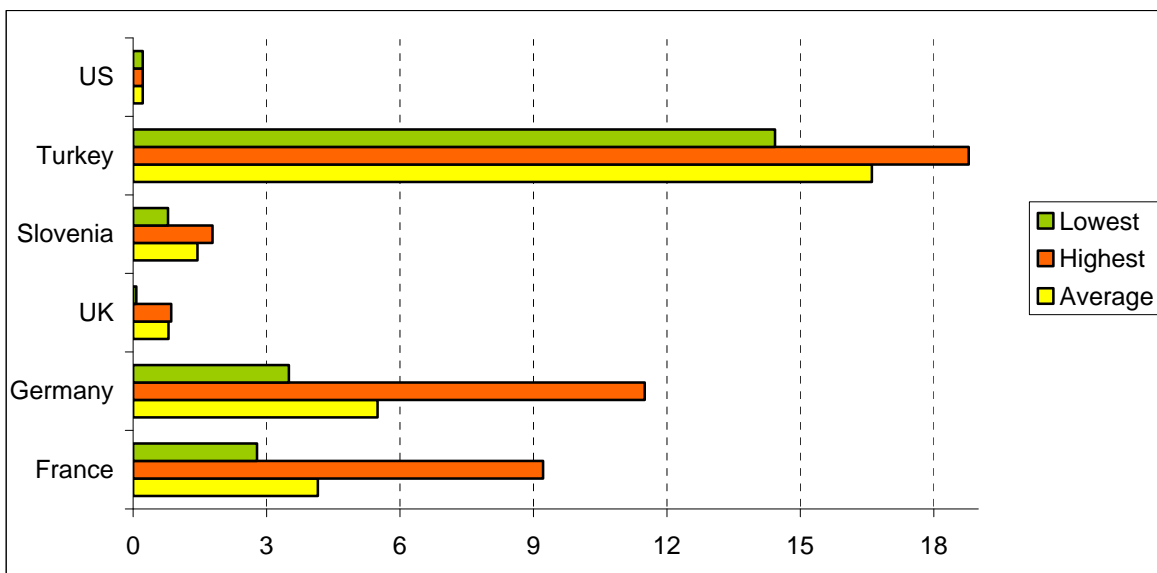
The final step of the analysis involved the validation of frames through a statistical analysis of the coding matrices with the help of latent class analysis (LCA). Basically, LCA is the equivalent of factor analysis for categorical variables (McCutcheon 1987: 7). It examines whether a set of observable indicators can meaningfully be projected onto a smaller set of latent, i.e. unobservable classes. Most theoretical concepts, among them frames, do not translate into easily empirically observable (that is: measurable) indicators. LCA expressly works with latent, i.e., unobservable, variables (Lazarsfeld, 1950: 363) and is therefore superior to other log-linear models that operate exclusively with observable data. It is ideally suited to test ideal-typical concepts such as frames (Hagenaars and Halman, 1989).

The validation of the model is straightforward. In the first step, LCA of the coding matrix for all keywords across all languages that represent a single frame was performed.

¹For a more detailed technical discussion of the coding process, see Koenig, 2004. For purely textual data, MAXqda and QDA Miner are currently the most suitable programs (Koenig, 2005).

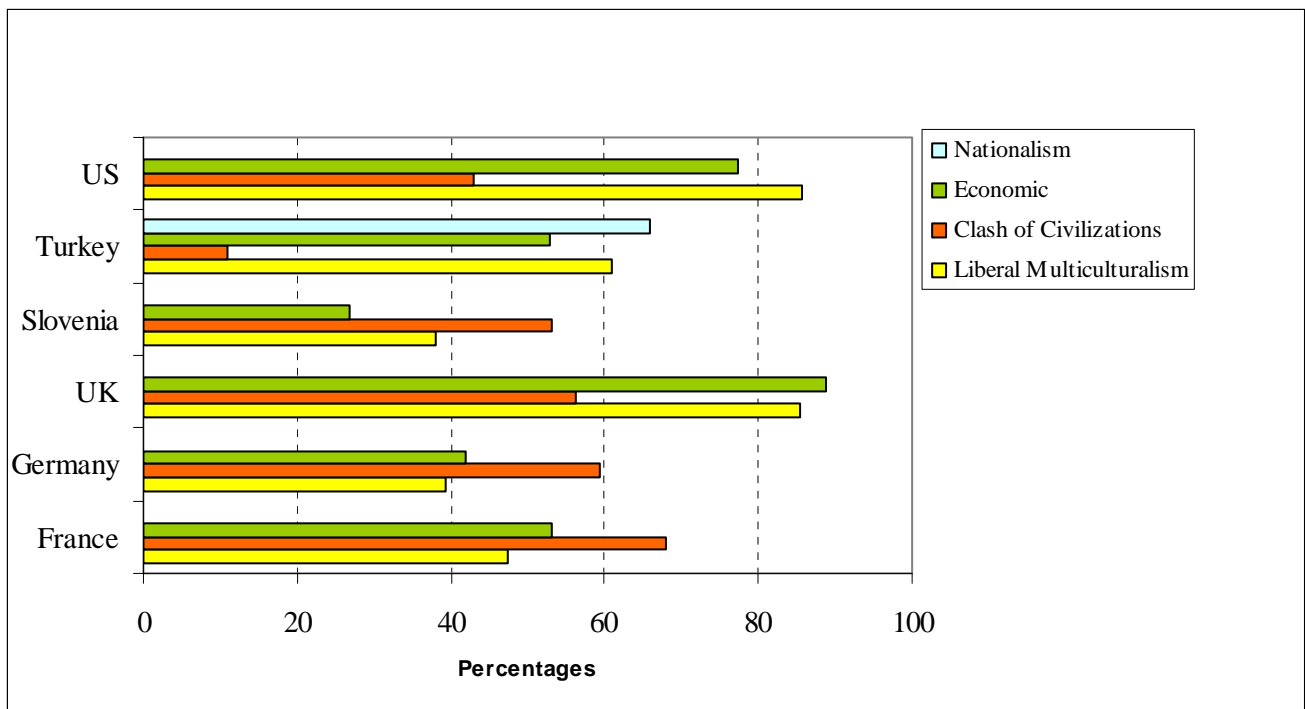
Since there is no theoretical justification that the repetition of a keyword would increase the salience or strength of a frame, the number of occurrences was recoded into a binary variable (present/absent). The optimal model, i.e. the model with the lowest *Bayesian Information Criterion* (Raftery, 1995), should contain *exactly* two classes with one class containing the higher local probabilities for each keyword. The class probability then gives an estimate of how frequently the frame in question occurs throughout the data. Finally, the coding matrix of all keywords was analyzed. Again, a series of latent class models was estimated and the most parsimonious model was selected.

Results and Discussion



Graph 1 Intensity of coverage (expressed in the number of articles per newspaper per day)

The comparison of the intensity of coverage across different countries clearly shows that Turkey's accession to the EU was obviously not discussed over our sampling period "with the same intensity" in the institutionally separate national public spheres. From the point of view of intensity, Germany and France can be grouped together with Turkey, while the situation in Slovenia and the UK resembles that in the USA, which clearly refutes European commonality.



Graph 2 Distribution of frames according to country (expressed in the percentage of articles supported by a particular frame)

Turning to the second criterion for the existence of a European public sphere – namely the existence of a shared structure of meaning – it again becomes apparent that there is hardly any evidence for the existence of a European public sphere. Turkey’s accession to the EU was obviously not discussed “with the same [...] structure of meaning” in the institutionally separate national public spheres (van de Steeg *et al.* 2003). For example, the liberal multiculturalist frame was significantly more widespread in the UK than in the remaining three EU member-states. Judging from the distribution of frames, the ‘structure of meaning’ of the debate in the UK was actually more similar to that in the US than to that in Slovenia, Germany or France, which raises the question of what – if anything – was specifically *European* about these debates. Finally, the negligible amount of unambiguous liberal individualist framing and the high proportion of clash of civilization arguments raise serious doubts about the *public* character of the debates. Ironically, the proportion of clash of civilizations framings was lowest in Turkey, whose Europeanness was disputed.

Clash of Civilization Framings

The proportion of clash of civilization framings was high (over 40%) in all analyzed EU member states, but clearly dominant in Germany, France and Slovenia. The only significant

exception to the rule was Turkey, where the clash of civilization framings appeared in only 11% of the sample. Furthermore, even when these framings appeared, this was largely due to the fact that Turkish newspapers were reporting about or disputing clash of civilizations arguments coming from EU member states. The Turkish opposition virtually never resorted to clash of civilization (i.e. Islamist) arguments. Instead, its arguments against Turkey's accession were largely underpinned by nationalist framings.

Two main varieties of the clash of civilizations framings can be discerned: an ethno-nationalist and a 'liberal' one. The first one draws explicitly upon the clash of civilization rhetoric, arguing that Europe ought to be a white, Christian civilization, and sees Islam in general and Turkey in particular as a civilization that is incompatible with that of Europe. One can see this as an ethno-nationalist form of the clash of civilization thesis. In France, such an understanding of Europe was supported by the far right (*Front National, Mouvement pour la France, Union pour un mouvement populaire*). According to the UMP, "Turkey is not European, neither geographically, nor culturally, nor historically". They see a civilizational conflict that has lasted over a thousand years and that will inevitably be continued in the future (*La Nouvelle Republique du Centre Ouest, 21/12/2004, p.2*).

The ethno-nationalist variation of the clash of civilization thesis was particularly influential in Germany. Given the predominantly ethnic, counter-state conception of the nation in Germany (Brubaker, 1992; Greenfeld, 1992), this is hardly surprising. As in other European states, the understanding of Europe in Germany "comes in national colours" (Risse and Engelmann-Martin, 2002: 288): the criteria for belonging to Europe are clearly based on the criteria for belonging to the German nation. Consequently, 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. According to an editorial in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung* (17/10/04, p. 15), Turkey should be denied EU membership, "because it belongs neither geographically, nor historically, nor culturally to Europe. Apart from that, such a country would hardly be Turkey any longer, but a rootless, artificial construct, which only coincidentally is located at the centre of the Ottoman Empire." Among German political elites, the ethno-nationalist variety of clash of civilization arguments – in particular the belief that Turkey is incompatible with Europe since the latter

shares common Christian roots – was most often propounded by representatives of CDU. This can be seen as a continuation of CDU's long-standing tradition of associating Europe with Christianity (Risse and Engelmann-Martin, 2002).

The same variety of clash of civilization framing of Turkey's accession was dominant also in Slovenia. This is certainly entirely in tune with the prevalent conception of nationhood in Slovenia, which is, just as in Germany, largely ethnic (Bajt 2005), as well as with Slovenia's tradition of a highly exclusive understanding of Europe (Mihelj, forthcoming). On the other hand, taking into account the almost unanimous support for the start of the accession among the Slovenian political elites, the prevalence of clash of civilization framing is certainly surprising. However, it needs to be taken into account that in Slovenia, Turkey's accession did not arouse a substantial public debate. Most of the newspaper coverage of the issue therefore consisted of reports on discussions taking place in other EU countries, and it is within this frame that most of the clash of civilization arguments were presented.

In Turkey, the clash of civilization framing was far less widespread than in other analysed states, and when it appeared, it took the form of the (ethno-)nationalist variety. Furthermore, even when these framings were present, they were not fostered by the Turkish leaders and press themselves, but appeared – similarly as in the case of Slovenia – in articles reporting on or reacting to clash of civilization ideas professed by the opinion-leaders in the EU. Even the Turkish opposition only exceptionally resorted to clash of civilization (i.e. radical Islamist) arguments, and if it did, these views were not covered in the mainstream press.

The ethno-nationalist variety of clash of civilization arguments, most notably the idea that accession would water down the imagined cultural homogeneity of both Turkey and the EU, was by no means limited to the political right. In Germany, for instance, the president of the Heinrich Böll Foundation, sponsored by the Green party, claimed that Turkey's accession would “speed up the Americanization of the EU: A multiethnic, multi-religious community with a dynamic market and large regional, social and cultural inconsistencies” (*Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagzeitung*, 10/10/04, p. 2) would emerge. In Slovenia, a similar view was expressed by Aleš Debeljak in an interview published in *Delo's* widely read Saturday

supplement (18/12/04): “we need to be aware that an enlarged European Union with Turkey will be similar to a regional UN that is a nominally representative an inclusive, yet practically almost entirely inefficient organisation. [...] But who would profit if Europe becomes only a regional UN? The Americans.” It is important to note that this sub-variety of the ethno-nationalist clash of civilization thesis operates with a different European Other in mind – the U.S.A. According to this view, Turkey should not remain outside of the EU only because it is culturally, socially and religiously different, but chiefly because its inclusion would make Europe too similar to the U.S.A.

In France, the concern expressed was not that that Turkey’s accession would make the EU too similar to the US but rather too different – that it would prevent the development of a federalist Europe and that this would leave Europe weak and divided and subject to American power. As Gilbert Lazard wrote in *Le Monde* (24/12/2004), a supra-national, federal Europe “is possible if it unites peoples who in their diversity share the same past, the same culture, the same way of life, of feeling and thinking. Turkey is not evidently at home here with its old Oriental culture, masses of Muslim peasants imbued with blind faith and a galloping demography.” This introduces a second variety of the clash of civilization thesis that is best understood as a contradictory compound of liberalism and ethno-nationalism, of universalism and particularism, in which ethno-nationalism is dominant. This position sees the EU as an essentially secular liberal polity, where church and state should be and are clearly divided. It also sees Islam, however, as a faith that denies such a separation of the political and the spiritual and, therefore, as fundamentally incompatible with European values. While the first version of the clash of civilization sees a clash between Christianity and Islam, the second sees a clash between secularism and Islam. It should be noted that this position tends to overlook both the secular character of Turkish society since Kemal (indeed French legal secularism is less than two decades older than Turkish secularism) and the strong links between church and state in current EU states (for example, the established church in Denmark and the UK). It draws on liberal arguments concerning democracy but is fundamentally illiberal in the sense that it sees Islam as a homogenous and reactionary culture in opposition to the values of liberty and equality of French, European and Western culture. Rather than seeing Turkish citizens as individuals they are seen as representatives of

a repressive culture and European citizens are seen as representatives of an emancipated culture.

This variety of the clash of civilization thesis was particularly strong in France and could be found across the French political spectrum from moderate right to left although it enjoyed comparatively greater acceptance from the moderate right. Jean Pierre Raffarin, Chirac's prime minister, for example, in an article written for the *Wall Street Journal*, spoke of the difficult prospect of the "river of Islam" flowing into the "riverbed of secularism" (*Le Figaro*, 08/10/04, p. 6). The best way to understand the appeal of this version of the clash of civilization thesis in France and consequently the intensity of the French debate is to set it in the context of the *affaire des foulards* that has been a recurrent issue in French life since 1989, and the history of French republicanism (Freedman, 2004; Thomas, 2000). The debate about Turkish accession is largely a continuation and extension of this broader debate about what the internal character of France (and Europe) should be. Or, as Robert Frank (2002: 311) argues: "A French discourse on Europe is always a discourse on France."

Potential Turkish migrants to France are placed in the same discursive position as French Muslims and Muslims living in France (that includes but is not restricted to a substantial Franco-Turkish population) who are seen as a problem by much of the right and some of the left because they are deemed to be impossible to assimilate. Cultural sameness or similarity is a critical component of French republicanism stemming from revolutionary values and enshrined in laic law in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. For many people in France there is an intrinsic connection between anti-monarchism and anti-clericalism as Catholicism was seen as the key ideological support of monarchy. The separation of church and state, therefore, is commonly seen as an act of liberation against the forces of reaction. Forbidding Muslim schoolgirls to wear the *hijab* is then often viewed as an act of liberation in keeping with the French revolutionary tradition rather than say as a repressive, anti-liberal act. According to Brubaker, "While French nationhood is constituted by political unity, it is centrally expressed in the striving for cultural unity. Political inclusion has entailed cultural assimilation for regional cultural minorities and immigrants alike" (1992: 1). Ironically, the same views are widespread also in Turkey, in accordance with the secular Kemalist principles, yet this was virtually never acknowledged in the debates.

It is also possible to observe the presence of a liberal clash of civilization thesis in the UK that has grown in popularity since the late 1980s and the Satanic Verses affair. The most recent impetus to this way of thinking stems from interpretations of events in continental Europe, particularly Holland. The murders of Fortyn and van Gogh are interpreted as signaling the failure of liberal multiculturalism as Dutch society is imagined as being the epitome of such a society. Martin Woollacott writing in *The Guardian* (18/12/04, p. 20) argues that the agreement to start accession talks should not “conceal from us the collisions between different values, and between the aims of decision makers and the instincts of their peoples”. The collisions referred to, however, are not between Christianity and Islam but between liberal Europe and conservative Islam. Woollacott argues that the fact that liberals wish to admit conservative Turkey is a “contradiction”. What is interesting about this is that Woollacott raises the differences between “liberal Europe” and “conservative Islam” to one of competing logics rather than seeing it as a political struggle between more liberal and more conservative ways of thinking that occurs within European democracies on an almost daily basis. What would be contradictory would be for liberals to exclude individuals simply on the basis of their beliefs. The fact that these individuals may not be liberal may be a political problem for liberals wishing to make societies more liberal but it is not a contradiction.

In Germany, where churches have been strongly entrenched in the polity, the secularization argument occurs much less frequently than in France or the UK (in less than 2% of the articles) and with a different twist: Accession opponents bemoan secularization, which they consider a distinct feature of Europe culture: “Europe has dumped its religious heritage into the shed and looks at other religions with the mild eyes of culturalist folklore. [...] The Christian heritage urges caution,” (*Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung*, 10/10/04, p. 14). Not only are Muslim, Jewish, pagan, or atheist cultural elements purged from any ‘European’ heritage, but Turkey’s Kemalist tradition and its secular principles are likewise completely ignored by this argument.² Instead, Turkish society is imagined as deeply

² The principle of secularism, which was incorporated into the Turkish Constitution in 1937 together with other Kemalist principles, was designed as a constituting part of the modernization and Westernisation processes. In

religious, while vice versa the Christian churches' involvement in several of the EU member states is ignored.

Multiculturalist Framings

In contrast to the variety of the clash of civilization thesis popular in France, the multicultural frame popular in the UK, the USA and Turkey emphasizes the right to difference: cultural differences may be either tolerated or celebrated and are seen primarily as relatively minor cultural differences set against a shared background of political values. The liberal multiculturalist position, as with the 'liberal' clash of civilization position, is a compound of liberal individualist and ethno-nationalist positions, but here liberalism is in the ascendancy. While individuals are seen as belonging to different cultures there are thought to be universal values that transcend particular cultures and thus provide a way of gluing together different cultures and adjudicating between cultural disputes. Bhiku Parekh (2000: 282-292), for example, a leading British liberal multiculturalist and chair of the 2000 Commission on the Future of Multi-ethnic Britain, argues against polygamy on the grounds that it is inconsistent with equality between the sexes. Cultural differences are accepted and celebrated, therefore, as long as they do not impinge upon universal values. When they do, they are not tolerated.

While this position is relatively uncommon to find in France, it is hegemonic amongst political elites across the political spectrum in the UK and USA. Tony Blair's response to the decision to begin accession talks is a case in point: according to him, this decision "shows that those who believe that there is a clash of civilizations between Christians and Muslims are wrong." (*Sunday Express*, 19/12/04, p. 19) Obviously, this response assumes that there are two more or less compatible civilizations that can be brought together under a liberal human rights framework.

accordance with this principle, in addition to the introduction of the new alphabet, the legal system was changed: the Swiss civil code was adopted; the political rights of women were recognised; the caliphate and Islamic law and courts were abolished; religious shrines, convents, religious education centres were closed down; the weekend holiday was changed from Friday to Sunday; the calendar and measures were adapted according to the Western model (Toprak, 1992: 244, Akural, 1984: 127).

Germany occupies some middle ground with respect to multiculturalist arguments. They surface more frequently than in France, but less frequently than in the Anglo-Saxon countries, from where they have presumably been imported. Altogether, multiculturalist figures featured in about one third of all articles. This frame is mainly put forward as the antithesis to a 'Christian Club' Europe. Thereby it implicitly draws more heavily than UK frames on the idea that pre-Turkey-accession Europe would be culturally homogenous. A typical example for this type of reasoning is a statement, in which a young German explains his dissenting opinion about Turkey's accession:

"With globalization, different cultures would become adjusted. Therefore, he could not comprehend why Turkey should not belong to Europe. Also, the hypocrisy would be apparent: to buy in Turkish stores and to eat a Kebab at the local Turkish grill, but not want to have Turks in Europe." (*Frankfurter Rundschau*, 15/10/04)

Besides the interesting parallel to the exaggerated valorisation of ethnic food in Anglo-Saxon multiculturalism (Hage, 2000: 120), it becomes apparent that Turks are considered culturally different.

Much as in the case of clash of civilizations arguments, the liberal multiculturalist arguments appearing in Slovenian newspapers most often constituted a part of reports about other EU countries, usually the UK. However, liberal multiculturalist arguments were explicitly fostered also in a considerable proportion of commentaries. For one of *Dnevnik's* commentators, the decision to start the accession talks was a "devastating defeat" for those who saw Europe as "an exclusive Christian club, a fortress of Western Christianity that protects its members from the onslaught of Orthodox and Muslim 'barbarians from the East'". According to him, the beginning of the accession talks bring "the first serious assurance that civilizations can coexist in peace" (*Dnevnik*, 18/12/04).

In Turkey, liberal multiculturalist arguments were – similarly to the UK and the US and unlike France, Germany and Slovenia – clearly among the dominant ones. The characteristic points of reference for these arguments were the Copenhagen criteria and the various changes to the Turkish legislation introduced in response to them, such as the legal provisions securing the development of Kurdish language broadcasting, support for Christian religious schools and institutions dedicated to the expression and preservation of Alevi identity. Arguably, much of the liberal multiculturalist framing arises in direct

response to the democratisation agenda which is predetermined by the EU rather than originating within Turkey itself. Still, an important shift can be observed with regard to the Turkish press coverage of the EU in 1999. At that point, the expected gains associated with Turkey's membership in the EU were primarily economic, while the Copenhagen criteria were represented as a 'condition' and 'imposition' (Gencel Bek, 2001). In 2004, democratization is represented in a more positive way. It is no longer seen as merely an unavoidable step needed to achieve the real goal, namely economic liberalization, but as an important aim in and of itself.

Nationalist Framings

Explicit nationalist framing of the issue of Turkish accession to the EU were present only in Turkey. They were repeatedly used by the Turkish opposition to the EU accession, which consisted of the radical right-wing Nationalist Movement Party (MHP), the social democrat party Republican People's Party (CHP), which is the main opposing party in the cabinet, and some more marginal parties such as the Turkish Workers' Party. It is important to note that the nationalist opposition was strengthened by the introduction of 'special conditions' for Turkish membership and suggestions to offer Turkey a 'privileged partnership' rather than full membership, as well as by the uncertainty over the start date of the negotiations and the increasingly sceptic estimations of when would Turkey actually achieve full membership. In the light of these, the Turkish opposition to accession became even more vocal in accusing the Turkish government of surrendering to the EU.

Most characteristic examples of nationalist framing could be found in the columns written by Emin Çölaşan, published in *Hürriyet*, and in public declarations of oppositional leaders such as Devlet Bahçeli and Doğu Perinçek. For example, when commenting on the European Commission Progress Report on Turkey, published in early in October 2004, Emin Çölaşan argued that the report includes "humiliating items which have never been phrased for any other candidate" (*Hürriyet*, 07/10/04), and argued that these items are "unacceptable, unreal and humiliating for the Turkish republic" (*Hürriyet*, 08/10/04). Although being generally in favour of EU accession and agreeing that Turks should "enter the EU", "use the EU resources" and "reach the contemporary civilizational level," he insisted that the this

should not be done “through our humiliation and oppression” or through “begging them in front of their doors” (*Hürriyet*, 09/10/04).

Finally, it should be noted that the absence of nationalist framings in the analysed EU member states cannot be seen as evidence of an absolute lack of nationalist framings in the analysed articles published in these countries. The debated issue itself was obviously inviting arguments pitting the existing EU as a whole, rather than individual nation-states, against Turkey. Yet rather than being entirely absent, the nationalist framings in the analysed EU member states were present in more *banal* varieties (Billig, 1995). However, the chosen version of frame analysis was not sensitive to these varieties.

Economic Consequences Framings

The economic consequences frame is somehow ‘orthogonal’ to the frames discussed so far, and can therefore be combined with any of them. It was particularly often present in the UK and the US, but fairly widespread also in all the other analysed countries with the exception of Slovenia, where it appeared in only 27% of the analysed articles.

In Germany, this frame was mainly with a negative valence. Rather than stressing the entrepreneurial opportunities, which arise from the inclusion of a largely underdeveloped economy into the EU, opinion-leaders were presenting Turkish accession as a financial burden for the EU. Consequently, economic consequences frames would often stand side by side with clash of civilizations arguments. As a prominent CSU politician wrote in a guest commentary for *Die Welt* (13/10/04, p. 9):

“The citizens of Germany would not understand that the EU would have to pay yearly up to 28 billion Euro and Germany up to 6 billion Euro to Turkey, while our country already now has less and less money. Turkey is also decidedly different from our culture and our value system.”

Discussion of the economic consequences of Turkish accession in France was remarkably similar to those in Germany. Economic factors rarely arose separately in debates and were mentioned usually as part of an overarching argument against the desirability of Turkish accession. As well as the costs of Turkish entry in terms of structural funds the Turkish economy was often presented as an unwanted source of competition to the French economy either in terms of offering more attractive sites of location for production, cheaper products,

or cheaper labour. The possible benefits of Turkish entry either to the EU-European or the French economy based on neo-liberal theories of trade and comparative advantage were largely absent. This is in contrast to the UK where the economic benefits of Turkish accession were mentioned in the context of an overarching argument in favour of accession – neo-liberal economic arguments worked in tandem with liberal multicultural political arguments in favour of accession. Roger Bottle in *The Sunday Telegraph* stated this most clearly: “The narrow economic argument is that we all gain by our neighbours being prosperous. This means that they will be better able to supply us with goods and services and their market for our exports will also grow correspondingly” (*City*, 10/10/04, p. 4).

The expected gains associated with Turkey’s membership in the Turkish press were often economic, and closely resembled those mentioned in the representations of the EU in the Turkish press during the Helsinki Summit in 1999: financial support, credits, increased competitiveness of Turkish agriculture and the service sector; increased foreign capital investments, development of tourism, banking etc. (Gencil Bek, 2001: 132-133). When comparing the characteristic keywords used to identify the economic consequences frame in Turkey to those used in the analysis of the EU member states, one of the most striking differences is the virtual absence of any reference to poverty in the Turkish press. This can be interpreted as an indication of a neo-liberal conception of economy which has achieved a dominant status in Turkey after the military coup in the 1980s and is seldom contested. One of the recognizable features of this conception of economy in Turkey is also the perception of state – and with that also one of the principles of Kemalism, namely *statism* – as one of the main obstacles to the further economic development of Turkey. The arguments fostered by Erdal Sağlam, published in *Hürriyet* (09/10/2004), are a case in point: according to him, “we need to put ‘statist mentality’ aside so that foreigners can come”.

Liberal Individualist Framings

The amount of articles clearly and unambiguously drawing on liberal individualist arguments was negligible across all the analysed states. While many articles were discussing issues that could be framed in liberal individualist (or universalist) terms, the prevalent framing was liberal multiculturalist. For example, the issue of human rights was, as a rule,

reduced to the question of collective rights for Kurds and Alevis rather than being discussed in terms of universal rights of individuals regardless of collective membership. When liberal individualist framings appeared, they were largely used to confront clash of civilization arguments rather than being distinguished from liberal multiculturalist arguments.

A characteristic example can be found in an interview with Zlatko Šabič, a social scientist interviewed for *Večer* (08/10/04). According to him, the EU “champions equality, democracy and the rights of the individual. With its decision to become a candidate member, Turkey accepted these norms and will adapt to them.” Also in France and Germany one can see this line of thinking. Raffarin, for example, appeared to change discourse positions with respect to Turkish accession. After initially suggesting that Turkey should not join because of the incompatibility of Islam with secularism, he argued for the beginning of accession negotiations under the condition that Turkey undergo a ‘révolution européenne’ (*Le Monde*, 23/12/04). What is being suggested here is not a liberal multiculturalist co-existence between two civilizations but rather that Turkey adopts liberal, secular forms and methods of government. The separation of this position from the liberal clash of civilization frame is based on ideas concerning the potential for social, political and cultural change in Turkey. A virtually identical argument appeared in the Turkish press as well. According to arguments presented in an article published in *Hürriyet* (07/10/2004), for example, the most important thing was “the fact that European standards [...] – firstly human rights and democratisation, animal rights, children rights, the equality of men and women, the struggle against corruption – will enter Turkey. What matters is that ‘European values’ enter Turkey rather than Turkey entering the EU”.

Conclusion

The intensities of the public debate concerning Turkish accession to the European Union were remarkably different in the countries investigated. Issues that were passionately debated in France, Germany and Turkey were barely registered in the UK, USA, and Slovenia. The ‘structures of meaning’ were also importantly different, and most importantly, the meaning frames were shared not just within the European Union but also outside. Indeed this is because there is nothing distinctly European about either the liberal

multicultural or the clash of civilization frames. These frames are not just trans-European, they are transcontinental.

Advocates of the existence of a European public sphere may argue that the widespread, if unevenly dispersed, presence of both the clash of civilization and liberal multicultural frames provides some evidence for the existence of a European public sphere. However, if we move on to examine the content of the meaning frames, we find that they are at variance with a liberal individual conception of the public sphere. In both the liberal multiculturalist and clash of civilization frames individuals are seen as belonging to distinct civilizations. In the former case, civilizations are seen as potentially harmonious whereas in the latter they are seen as being in perpetual conflict. In neither case, however, are readers encouraged to see individuals as individuals first and foremost, as citizens bearing the same rights and responsibilities, as potential partners in critical-rational-dialogue but rather as members of more or less distinct cultures.

What does this case mean then for the notion of a European public sphere? Can we say that there are unambiguous signs of the birth of a European public sphere in the aftermath of the UK and USA invasion of Iraq as Habermas and Derrida hoped for? Are solidarities between Europeans more apparent than cleavages between nations, cultures and peoples? First, national public spheres appear to exhibit stronger tendencies towards nationalization and globalization rather than Europeanization even when the issue under discussion is whether a country should join the European Union. Second, there is a predominant tendency within national public spheres to talk in civilizational ways whether arguing in favour or against Turkish accession rather than in liberal individualist ways. This does not encourage the development of a European public of individuals, of a European public sphere, but something at odds with the idea of a European public sphere – a Europe of different cultures and peoples who may or may not be in conflict with one another. Whether or not Habermas and Derrida misrecognised the street protests on February 15 2003 as a birthmark of a distinctly *European* public sphere, it is clear that subsequent national media debates concerning Turkish accession to the EU were neither specifically European nor public in character.

Having said that, we should not forget that the concept of a public sphere is an ideal types in the Weberian sense. As such, it always will remain empirically elusive; after all national public spheres do not meet the homogeneity criteria either: One extreme case in point is German-published version of *Hürriyet*, which does not radically differ in content from its Turkish mother publication, and thus offered a view of the debate, which was very different from the German speaking press. But we don't even have to consider such extremes: each and every paper has its own debate style, contributing to a fragmented public sphere. Still, the differences at national level pale in comparison to the European level.

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