

# **Understanding the Influence of Political Parallelism in the British Media:**

A case study on journalists' view about how  
Turkey's EU bid is covered\*

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## **Abstract**

*This study seeks to unveil how the journalists view the influence of political parallelism on the British coverage of Turkey-EU relations. In order to find an answer to this query, the research was conducted by employing an interviewing method. This empirical part of the study focuses on the journalists' view on the media coverage of the Turkish issue and the British politicians' approach to the same topic. Therefore, the research sample consists of the journalists who work or had worked for the British media and had published news items about Turkey's EU bid. The data was analysed by using qualitative analysis techniques and the raw data was evaluated within the limits of individual and extramedia level analyses of Shoemaker and Reese's (1996) hierarchical model.*

**keywords:** *The EU, Turkey, the UK, the British media, political parallelism, news production*

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## Résumé

**Comprendre l'influence du parallélisme politique dans les médias britanniques:** Une étude de cas sur le point de vue des journalistes sur comment est couverte la candidature de la Turquie à l'UE

*Cette étude cherche à comprendre comment les journalistes constatent l'influence du parallélisme politique sur la couverture britannique des relations entre la Turquie et l'UE. Pour ce faire, la recherche se sert d'une méthode d'interview. Cette partie empirique de l'étude se concentre sur le point de vue des journalistes sur la couverture médiatique de la question turque et sur l'approche des politiciens britannique envers le même sujet. C'est pourquoi l'échantillon de recherche se compose des journalistes qui travaillent ou ont travaillé pour les médias britanniques et avaient publié des nouvelles sur la candidature de la Turquie à l'UE. Les données ont été analysées en utilisant des techniques d'analyse qualitative et les données brutes ont été évaluées dans les limites de l'analyse du niveau individuel et du niveau extramedia du modèle hiérarchique proposé par Shoemaker et Reese (1996).*

**mots-clés :** L'UE, la Turquie, le Royaume-Uni, les médias britanniques, le parallélisme politique, la production de nouvelles

## Özet

### **Birleşik Krallık Medyasında Siyasi Paralelliğin Etkisini Anlamak:**

Türkiye'nin AB'ye üyeliği hakkında yazılan haber metinlerine gazetecilerin nasıl baktığıyla ilgili bir durum çalışması

*Bu çalışma, Türkiye'nin AB'yle ilişkileri hakkında Birleşik Krallık medyasında yayımlanan haberler üzerinde siyasi paralelliğin (political parallelism) etkisini gazetecilerin görüşlerini inceleyerek ortaya koymayı hedeflemektedir. Araştırma karşılıklı görüşme tekniği kullanılarak gerçekleştirilmiştir. Çalışmanın ampirik bölümü Türkiye'nin AB'ye üyeliği konusunda çıkan haberlerle ilgili gazetecilerin görüşlerine ve aynı konuda Britanyalı siyasetçilerin nasıl tavır aldığına odaklanmaktadır. Araştırma örneklemini Britanya medyasında çalışan veya daha önce çalışmış ve Türkiye-AB ilişkileri hakkında haber yayımlamış gazetecileri kapsamaktadır. Elde edilen veriler nitel analiz yöntemleriyle çözümlenmiştir. Ham veriler incelenirken Shoemaker ve Reese'nin (1996) hiyerarşik modelindeki 'medya çalışanlarından kaynaklanan etkiler' (individual level) ve 'kurum dışından gelen etkiler' (extramedia level) adlı iki basamağın kapsamı içinde kalınmıştır.*

**anahtar kelimeler:** AB, Türkiye, Birleşik Krallık, Britanya medyası, siyasi paralellik, haber üretimi

## 1. Introduction

'Party-press parallelism' (Seymour-Ure 1974; Blumler and Gurevitch 1975) and its adaptation *political parallelism*<sup>1</sup> in Hallin and Mancini's study (2004) are two concepts that can help to explain how the British media distinctly reveals its political tendency. When the Liberal (i.e. the Anglo-American) model of mass media is evaluated, it is seen that "[...] [i]n the U.S., Canada and Ireland political neutrality has come to be the typical stance of newspapers. The British press, on the other hand, is still characterized by external pluralism" (Hallin and Mancini, 2007: 28). What they mean by 'external pluralism' is "the existence of a range of media outlets or organizations reflecting the points of view of different groups or tendencies in society" (Hallin and Mancini, 2004: 29). Thus, they argue that this situation leads to a *political parallelism* in the British media and they claim that "it is no coincidence that the concept of 'party-press parallelism' was developed in Britain, where [...] the press has always mirrored the divisions of party politics fairly closely" (Hallin and Mancini, 2007: 28). Similarly, Negrine (1994: 40) claims that the British newspapers transfer the ideology of political parties to the readers. He asserts that British newspapers and British political parties, historically, have connection. Because of the degree of this connection, he uses the broad concept 'parallelism' in order to explain the relationship between a news organization and a party political discourse.

As an example, just before the 1997 elections in the UK, the *Daily Mirror* placed the slogan "Loyal to Labour, Loyal to You" on its banner (Hallin and Mancini, 2004: 211). "Even the page three girl was mobilized in the [*Daily Mirror's*] campaign effort: each day a different 'Blair Babe' appeared to say why she was voting Labour" (Hallin and Mancini, 2004: 211). This is not significantly different for British broadsheets. Distribution of readers' sympathy to each political party shows the British paper's main political orientation. For instance, according to a study conducted in 1997 in the UK, 67 per cent of *The Guardian* readers support the Labour Party while only eight per cent is in favour of the Conservative Party. The picture is the opposite among *The Daily Telegraph* readers as 57 per cent of its readers support the Conservatives (Scammell and Harrop, 1997: 161).

An event, which shows the degree of the British media's distinct political tendency and the tradition of announcing which party they are going to support in the elections, recently caused a controversy in Turkey. *The Economist* advised Turkish people to vote for the Republican People's Party (CHP), the second biggest political party of Turkey, in the Turkish General Election in 2011.

1 In Negrine (1994: 52), 'parallelism' is "a concept which explores the extent to which newspapers reflect or fail to reflect the breadth of the party political discourse". According to Hallin and Mancini (2004), while 'party-parallelism' refers to a direct relationship between a news organization and a political party, a broader term 'political parallelism' is related to the general approach of a news organization in political issues and how parallel it is with political parties or other kinds of institutions (Hallin and Mancini, 2004).

The Turkish ruling party the AK Party's leaders, including the PM Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, harshly criticised *The Economist* because of its advice to Turkish voters. Following this, *The Economist* wrote "Mr Erdogan has accused *The Economist* of acting in concert with 'a global gang' and taking orders from Israel. This may win him votes at home, but it will hardly add to his credibility in the West" (*The Economist*, 2011).

All in all, it can be claimed that there is some degree of *political parallelism* between the British news organizations and the British political circles. When the overall tendency in the British press is examined, it is seen that the right-of-centre in British politics has more supporters within the British media (Anderson and Weymouth, 1999: 60-61). However, the existence of *political parallelism* does not mean that only a few political orientations are available in news content of the British media (Hallin and Mancini, 2007: 29). Moreover, it should also be underlined that the political stance of other news organizations in continental Europe may not be seen as less distinct than the British (Hallin and Mancini, 2007).

In the light of the discussion above, this study looks at what the above overview on *political parallelism* means in practice. Firstly, *political parallelism* in the British media in the context of Turkey's EU bid *per se* will be analysed. This will then be followed by an analysis of the impact of the UK's special relationship with the EU on the content of coverage. In brief, the study seeks to unveil whether there is a *political parallelism* between the British media and the British Government concerning Turkey's EU bid. This will be conducted within the limits of individual and extramedia level analyses of Shoemaker and Reese's (1996) hierarchical model while focusing on the journalists' views. Therefore, the main research question of the study is "how do the journalists view the influence of *political parallelism* on the British coverage of Turkey-EU relations?" The question will be answered in the findings section following the explanation of research method and sample below.

## 2. Research method and sample

The selection of the journalists for the interviews was made according to specific criteria. The aim was to talk to the journalists who had written news items about Turkey-EU relations in the British media. In total, the names of 62 different journalists were listed. Emails, telephone calls, and connecting with gatekeepers helped the researcher to contact these journalists. However, it was not possible to reach or get positive replies from all of them due to a variety of reasons. Some journalists had changed their career. Some had moved away or were no longer interested in the Turkish membership. Many journalists were always busy and some of them refused to talk. There was no response at all from 14 journalists and, unfortunately, one of them had passed away.

Using the snowball technique was usually not possible due to the constraints imposed by the selection criteria in the research sample. The aim of the project was not to talk to any journalist who had, at one point in time, written about Turkey-EU relations; the aim was to talk to the journalists who had written the news items while the issue was on a peak between 1999 and 2006, particularly in the context of specific events<sup>2</sup> which were selected for the sample of the study. Finally, 21 journalists agreed to participate in the interviews. In order to keep them anonymous, the journalists will be referred to by their code names only throughout the article (e.g. J1).

Journalist	Posting while writing about Turkey
J1 ( <i>The Guardian</i> )	Brussels
J2 ( <i>The FT</i> )	Istanbul-Ankara
J3 ( <i>The Telegraph</i> )	Brussels
J4 ( <i>The Telegraph</i> )	Istanbul
J5 ( <i>The Guardian</i> )	London
J6 (BBC News)	Istanbul
J7 ( <i>The Guardian</i> )	Paris
J8 ( <i>The Telegraph</i> )	Brussels-London
J9 (BBC News)	Brussels-Istanbul
J10 ( <i>The Guardian</i> )	London
J11 ( <i>The Guardian</i> )	London
J12 ( <i>The Guardian</i> )	Istanbul
J13 ( <i>The Guardian</i> )	London
J14 ( <i>The Mirror</i> )	Brussels
J15 (BBC News)	London
J16 (BBC News)	London
J17 ( <i>The FT</i> )	London
J18 ( <i>The FT</i> )	Paris
J19 ( <i>The Guardian</i> )	London
J20 ( <i>The Guardian</i> )	London
J21 ( <i>The Telegraph</i> )	London
TOTAL	

Table 1: Distribution of the interviewees and their media organizations

2 See Appendix for the list of events.

### ***Performing the analysis***

Analysing the data gathered from the fieldwork is as significant as conducting the interviews. However, finding the most appropriate way to do the qualitative analysis on the interviews is not an easy task. Qualitative research is usually inductive and it does not offer a broadly established strategy to analyse the data (Gray, 2009: 494). Richards (2005: 70) argues that there is no specific technique which can help researchers to deal with their data in qualitative analysis. She claims that after having gained experience, researchers can improve their own approach to work on data. However, it is immensely useful to get help from the methodology literature about qualitative analysis while improving a specific technique.

### ***The data transcription and coding***

The interview analysis in this study is grounded on four steps which are transcription, coding, post-coding, and interpreting. As a first step, all the digitally recorded data were transcribed by the researcher. Although it was a very lengthy job, transcribing the data made the researcher more familiar with what kind of data were collected (Gray, 2009: 496). Thus, it can be said that the analysis started while transcribing as that process had an initial impact on building the categories.

The second step is coding. 'Raw' data cannot be easily interpreted or connected with other points within the data. For this reason, conceptualising the data is a crucial step of the analysis. "By breaking down and conceptualizing we mean taking apart an observation, a sentence, a paragraph, and giving each discrete incident, idea, or event, a name, something that stands for or represents a phenomenon" (Strauss and Corbin, 1990: 63). Therefore, coding is required in order to conceptualise the material.

Richards (2005: 88) uses three different terms to explain different kinds of coding which are 'descriptive', 'topic', and 'analytical'. While descriptive coding deals with the general information about the speaker such as gender, age, and job, topic coding simply designates the main topics of the document or passage. Both of them require little interpretation which is not the case for analytical coding. Analytical coding, which was used in this study, cannot be as automatic as 'descriptive' and 'topic' coding. It deals with explanation and reflection on meaning which is different from the other two. Besides, analytical coding produces categories and extracts new thoughts about the elements in documents (Richards, 2005: 94).

In contrast to survey research, performing qualitative research is not sequential between research design and results. The aim in qualitative research is to learn something from the data and to employ the learned material in

the whole research (Richards, 2005: 80). In order to learn from the data, the researcher needs to revisit the material until it is completely comprehended (Richards, 2005: 86). Revisiting is much easier and the data are better organized when they are coded in software. In this research, qualitative coding was performed with the help of NVivo, qualitative analysis software.

Having explained the research method and sample, the section below presents what was explored in research findings concerning British politics and the British coverage about Turkey-EU relations.

### **3. Research findings: *Political parallelism* in the British media concerning Turkey's EU bid**

As one of the indicators of *political parallelism* can be "manifested in *journalistic role orientations and practices*" (Hallin and Mancini, 2004: 28), this section seeks to investigate the journalists' views on the degree of an interaction between the British media and the British Government, and who influences who in Turkish membership discussions. Although journalists' overall view suggests that there is a remarkable amount of interaction between politicians and journalists in the issues which are directly related to the UK, it was found that the politicians' influence on the British media is limited in the discussions regarding Turkey's bid to join the EU. Some journalists believe that to some extent there is a correlation between what the British media say about Turkish membership and what the Government thinks on the same issue. While looking at this correlation, the political stance of each paper is significant. J6 (BBC News) thinks that to some degree media follow political parties' policy. He says "[the *Daily Mail* and *The Daily Telegraph*] are always trying to push the Tory Party to become even more Eurosceptic than it already is". J11 (*The Guardian*) has a similar view. He argues that media people and politicians spend a lot of time talking to each other. The views held by *The Guardian* have quite an influence on what happens inside the Labour Party and vice versa. J4 (*The Telegraph*) also emphasises the significance of journalists' meetings with politicians. She says:

"The leader writer probably speaks to the Foreign Secretary about Turkey's EU membership when they are sitting at a gentleman's club. This is very normal. They don't use force. They think about Britain's benefits. [...] How can they write their commentaries without communicating with politicians?"

This communication is not always limited to an interaction. In some cases, influences become stronger. Even though there are not many, some journalists think that there is a significant influence by politicians which shapes the British media's view on Turkish membership. For instance, J17 (the *FT*) thinks that both the Government and the main opposition party are in favour of Turkish membership and this has an important influence on the media. His view is a crucial example of *political parallelism* as he argues that if the Government was

hostile to Turkish membership, the media would be less favourable to Turkey's bid to join the EU. J21 (*The Telegraph*) explains the influence through a different perspective. According to his view, *political parallelism* of the British media in the Turkish case is pertained to the insignificance of Turkey-EU relations for the British media. He thinks that Turkish membership is not one of the main events of the political and public agenda. Thus, it is possible to see that the media is following the Government in the Turkish membership case. He thinks that the discussions regarding Turkey's bid to join the EU is not a big enough issue for the media to campaign on it. He also adds that there is a consensus within the foreign policy establishment regarding the Turkish issue and it is accepted by most political parties. J20 (*The Guardian*) claims the opposite of what J21 (*The Telegraph*) suggested. He says "I think [the media is] driving [the issue]. If it was an issue that was important enough, it would be the other way around. In this case it is [driven] by experts". Similarly, J14 (the *Mirror*) claimed that if it is about something that the public is not very aware of, then the media will have their own approach and it will be very much driven by individual newspapers and newspaper editors.

It was also highlighted in the interviews that foreign policy issues tend to be less politicised. Thus, Turkish membership discussions could be less tense in terms of the mutual influence between the British Government and the British media. J12 (*The Guardian*) said:

"*The Daily Telegraph* is a very conservative newspaper as you know but when it comes to foreign policy, it is really not that different from any other newspapers. Foreign policy is less party politicised unless it is something very specific to British. What *The Daily Telegraph* thinks about Tunisia isn't going to be very different from what *The Guardian* thinks about Tunisia. Or about Turkish membership. Because it is not a domestic story. Unlike Germany where Turkey is a domestic story".

Therefore, it is not easy to say that the Turkish issue might cause clashes within the British political parties.

Almost all journalists think that there is no formal correlation between what the Government thinks and what the British media say about Turkish membership. They think that the media and the Government are fairly separate. According to J10, *The Guardian's* view on Turkish membership is not related to the British Government and the similar line with the Government on this issue is just a coincidence. Some journalists are remarkably sensitive in emphasising that their coverage is not influenced by state power. They think that intellectual dialogue between British journalists from the established papers and the Foreign Office or people from 10 Downing Street does not mean that the journalists follow the official view. J2 (the *FT*) says: "Certainly, our coverage of Turkey in the *FT* has no relation whatever with the thinking in the British Government. [...] It is purely news driven, policy driven. It is driven by events in Turkey and Europe".

Two journalists tried to demonstrate the weakness of the Government's influence on the media coverage about Turkish membership through expressing the differences in Government's and media's approach. J13 (*The Guardian*) underlines the existence of various approaches in the British media about Turkey. She thinks that the Government does not have an influence on the British media because "different newspapers end up in different places on [the Turkish issue]. [...] There is a kind of variety of opinion".

J9 (BBC News) also highlights the difference between the British media and the Government concerning their approach to the Turkish issue. He said that, to some degree, Islamophobia plays a part in some negativity towards Turkish accession in the British media. Such negativity is not reflected from the Government. Also, he thinks that the British media is more sceptical than the Government in overall issues regarding Turkey's EU bid. J9's comment is important because several studies underline that the British coverage represents Turkey as the Other or 'a *positive* Other' while the British politicians' view in the same media coverage portrays Turkey as an integral part of the European Self (Öktem, 2005; Christensen, 2006; Baştürk-Akca and Yılmaztürk, 2006; Koenig et al., 2006; Negrine, 2008; Negrine et al., 2008; Aksoy, 2009; Bryce, 2009a; Bryce, 2009b; Schneeberger, 2009; Wimmel, 2009; Paksoy, 2011; Paksoy, 2012; Papathanassopoulos and Negrine, 2011; Arcan, 2012). This point is probably related to the British media's critical stance regarding any type of issue, *negativity* as a news value (see O'Neill and Harcup, 2009: 166), and Euroscepticism in the British media which is discussed in the following section.

#### **4. The influence of the UK's special relationship with the EU on the media representation of Turkey's EU bid**

The UK has a different relationship with the EU when it is compared with other major European countries such as Germany and France (Ash, 2001; Anastasakis, 2004; Öktem, 2005; Wimmel, 2009). Accepting that the British Government's overall approach to the EU has a reflection on the British media (Anderson and Weymouth, 1999) as part of existing *parallelism*, this study considers whether the journalists think that the UK's special relationship with the EU, as a source in the extramedia level, also have an influence on how Turkey's EU bid is represented in the British media.

##### ***The Eurosceptic approach is happy with Turkey's EU bid***

Almost all journalists think that the special relationship between the UK and the EU definitely has an influence on the media coverage of Turkish accession to the EU. J6 (BBC News) thinks that the Eurosceptics in the British media are happy with the idea of having countries coming in which would maybe slightly shift the centre of gravity away from the Franco-German axis in the EU. He argues that the Eurosceptics are in favour of the idea of seeing the EU as an

internal market and a free trading bloc, and Turkey can help the UK to transform the EU into such an organization. J9 (BBC News) has a similar view. He says:

“[The UK’s special relationship with the EU] probably adds to some newspapers’ enthusiasm for Turkey. Because those newspapers themselves are sceptical and they understand the process of bringing Turkey [...] would almost certainly halt further integration within the European Union”.

Also J17 (the *FT*) thinks that the British media is sceptical and hostile towards the integrationist Franco-German view, and the idea of ‘United States of Europe’. Thus, the British media tends to favour the plan of widening Europe in order to dilute the integrationist view. J3 (*The Telegraph*) argues that Britain’s awkward relationship with the EU is at the heart of all discussions while explaining how Britain and the British media approach Turkish membership. Therefore, he argues that the British media, through politicians’ speeches, usually employs Turkey in explaining its own problems with Europe. Similarly, J20 (*The Guardian*) clearly claims that the British politicians are not able to express their support for Turkey without indicating Britain’s own problems with the EU. He gives the example of David Cameron’s speech in Ankara in 2010. He says:

“[Cameron] quoted from de Gaulle ‘Britain can never become a member of the EU’, and he explained how ‘never’ never means anything in politics and how he was angry. What Cameron was doing was positioning himself not in the Turkish debate but in the EU debate. So, in a sense that is exactly an example of how the two are inseparable. You can’t discuss Turkey’s bid to the EU without discussing Britain’s [relations] with the EU...”

Among the interviewees, only one journalist, J2 (the *FT*) was not sure that this kind of awkward relationship between the UK and the EU could have an influence on Turkey’s EU bid representation in the British media. Although he believes that the main reason for the UK’s support for Turkish membership is related to the UK’s Eurosceptic approach and awkward relationship with the EU, he is not very sure whether this Eurosceptic approach of the British elite influences the British media coverage of Turkey.

### ***Insufficient coverage***

Another influence of the UK’s special relationship with the EU on the media representation of Turkey’s EU bid is about the insufficiency in the coverage. The interviewees think that the Eurosceptic approach of the UK could have negative influence on the amount of coverage concerning Turkish membership. As the Eurosceptic approach is powerful in some circles of the UK and the British media, EU affairs have less importance in the media when compared to other EU Member States. The journalists who had worked in Brussels argued that editors in London are not significantly interested in European affairs. J1 (*The Guardian*) says: “European Union [issues] is not like reporting from Washington

where [editors in London] are interested in everything. [...] So, there is a problem about writing stories and getting space in the paper. It is not with pro-Turkey or anti-Turkey". Similarly, J14 (the *Mirror*) argues that any EU issue actually is more widely covered in France and Germany and "their citizens are more up to speed on EU events" whereas the British media tend to invest very little in their coverage of the EU. She claims that much of the politics is driven by the domestic agenda and EU affairs are not always significant for the British media. Therefore, it can be argued that the British media's general reluctance on EU affairs inevitably influences how and how much Turkey-EU relations are covered.

## 5. Conclusion

This article dealt with an investigation on a *parallelism* between the British media and British politics in the context of Turkey-EU relations. According to what most interviewees said, politicians' influence on the coverage is limited in the Turkish case. The journalists accepted that there is strong communication between them and politicians but they do not think that there is a *parallelism* between the British media and the British Government concerning the Turkish issue. However, some journalists believe that the media would have had a different stance if the Government was against Turkish membership. Therefore, it can be argued that there are various views concerning either the media or the politicians drive the other one in the Turkish case. One view suggests that the discussions on the Turkish issue are expert-driven. Therefore, this view argues that the media has an influence on politicians concerning the debate on Turkey's EU bid. Another group of journalists think that Turkey's EU bid is not controversial in the British media. Therefore, they claim that the media do not have a decisive position on the issue which can drive the discussions. This view also underlines that there is a consensus of support for Turkish membership among different political parties and the media in the UK. Interestingly, it was found that when there is a debate concerning the problematic sides of Turkish accession, the discussions in the news content are mainly boosted by employing the opposing views from continental Europe (e.g. Giscard d'Estaing; Jacques Chirac; public opinion polls). Thus, these issues cannot become significantly tense within the limits of British politics.

It was also found in the interviews with the journalists that the relatively modest interest of the British news organizations in EU affairs unavoidably influences the coverage of Turkey's EU bid in the British media. This, at least, causes a quantitative under-representation of Turkish membership and other EU affairs in the British media (also see Anderson and Weymouth, 1999). The journalists said that this is not a direct attitude towards the Turkish issue but Turkey is significantly influenced by the British media's cold manner regarding the EU.

It would be useful at this stage to focus on the connection between the results of this study and the reasons for Turkey's representation as the Other or 'a *positive* Other' in the British media (Öktem, 2005; Christensen, 2006; Baştürk-Akca and Yılmaztürk, 2006; Koenig et al., 2006; Negrine, 2008; Negrine et al., 2008; Aksoy, 2009; Bryce, 2009a; Bryce, 2009b; Schneeberger, 2009; Wimmel, 2009; Paksoy, 2011; Paksoy, 2012; Papathanassopoulos and Negrine, 2011; Arcan, 2012). It was discovered that there is a difference between the stances of British politicians and the British media concerning Turkey's EU bid although they are both in favour of its accession. Moreover, it is a fact that the Conservative Party, the Labour Party and the Liberal Democrats in the UK all strongly support Turkish membership of the EU. They see Turkey as a full partner of European or, in a more inclusive grouping, Western powers. Similarly, the literature shows that the majority of the British media is in favour of Turkey's EU bid. However, it is still possible to see many examples in the British coverage where Turkey is represented as the Other of Europe. This point is not the same when the British politicians' view is considered. This research claims that the critical view in the coverage can only explain the media representation but not the UK's official political stance. It is extremely rare to see a critical view on the Turkish issue from a British politician quoted in the British media. It can even be argued that the British politicians evaluate Turkey as an indisputable member of the European Self instead 'the European Other' or 'a *positive* Other'. For these reasons, even though there is a *parallelism* in the sense that the media follow the political positions of those in power especially when they are all in agreement, it can be argued that an exact *political parallelism* between the British politicians' general view on Turkey's EU bid and the British coverage on the Turkish issue did not fully appear in this research's analyses.

The reason behind the difference between both sides' stances could be because of their different aims and duties in the context of Turkey's EU bid. British journalism did not have the responsibility of persuading other EU Member States in order to start the membership negotiations on 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2005 while the British Government, especially during its Presidency of the Council of the EU, made a great deal of effort to stop the Austrian and Cypriot objections. Another reason could be the quotations in the British coverage from opposition leaders and the media in other EU Member States (Paksoy, 2012).

Furthermore, the research findings also put forward that Turkey's representation as 'a *positive* Other' in the British context was influenced by the individual journalists. This can be deduced from the journalists' views concerning the production of news items which were analysed within the individual level of Shoemaker and Reese's hierarchical model. Moreover, the analysis on the individual level and the extramedia level influences also revealed that the difference between the coverage and the politicians' view is related to the British media's critical approach to any issue and journalism's general tendency to set out the problematic aspects while communicating an event,

i.e. *negativity* as a news value (see O’Neill and Harcup, 2009: 166). Regarding a significant example on this issue, J9 (BBC News) stressed that the British coverage is sometimes influenced by Islamophobia while the British politicians never link this issue with Turkish accession.

All in all, the findings cannot claim that there is a complete *political parallelism* between the British media and the British Government on Turkey-EU relations. What it can argue is that there is a *parallelism* concerning both sides’ approach to the EU affairs in general and this is doubtlessly influential on the media representation of Turkey’s EU bid.

## Appendix

Events’ date	Events’ content	The period added to the research sample
10 <sup>th</sup> – 11 <sup>th</sup> December 1999	Turkey became an official EU membership candidate at the Helsinki Summit.	From 02-12-1999 until 20-12-1999
3 <sup>rd</sup> August 2002	The Turkish Parliament abolished capital punishment and gave broadcasting rights for different mother tongues and dialects, including Kurdish in order to meet EU standards.	From 26-07-2002 until 12-08-2002
12 <sup>th</sup> – 13 <sup>th</sup> December 2002	In the European Council Summit in Copenhagen, it was declared that a decision for ‘Turkey – EU negotiations starting date’ would be made in December 2004.	From 04-12-2002 until 21-12-2002
16 <sup>th</sup> - 17 <sup>th</sup> December 2004	In the European Council Summit in Brussels, the Commission’s report, which recommended start of membership negotiations with Turkey, was accepted.	From 08-12-2004 until 25-12-2004
3 <sup>rd</sup> October 2005	Turkey started membership negotiations with the EU.	From 24-09-2005 until 11-10-2005
29 <sup>th</sup> November 2006	Because of a lack of compromise on the Cyprus issue, namely the port problem between Turkey and Cyprus, the EU Commission froze some of the negotiation chapters with Turkey.	From 21-11-2006 until 07-12-2006

Table 2: Distribution of the selected events in the research sample

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