

Effects of the Media on Public Opinion:

The News Coverage of Three French Newspapers During the

Completion of the EU-Turkey Customs Union

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by

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ABSTRACT

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The aim of this study is to investigate the position of three French newspapers, namely Le Figaro, Le Monde and Libération, over the completion process of the EU-Turkey Customs Union and to see what kind of a position or image was attached to Turkey within the general framework of Turkey-EU relations.

The study begins with an overview of the basic concepts such as the relationship between the media and public opinion as well as the general Turkey-EU relations until the conclusion of the Customs Union in 1996. In the second part, the study continues with the presentation of the research and the findings.

The main hypothesis of the study is that the French press, represented by three French dailies, would attribute a favourable image to Turkey during the completion of the EU-Turkey Customs Union by underlining favourable changes in Turkish

domestic politics rather than her shortcomings for becoming a partner of the European countries. Related to this, the French public opinion would become more favourable concerning the general Turkey-EU relations and Turkish membership to the EU.

The results showed that the French press had in fact a favourable attitude towards Turkey. However, it continued to underline the shortcomings of Turkey, especially human rights violations, inadequate democratization and repression of minorities.

ÖZET

Medyanın Kamuoyu Üzerindeki Etkileri:

Türkiye-AB Arasındaki Gümrük Birliği'nin Üç Fransız Gazetesi
Tarafından Ele Alınışı

Özlem Danacı

Bu çalışmanın amacı , Türkiye-AB arasındaki Gümrük Birliği'nin tamamlanış sürecinde, Le Figaro, Le Monde ve Libération adlı üç Fransız gazetesinde Türkiye'ye yakıştırılan imajı incelemek ve buna bağlı olarak genel Türkiye-AB ilişkileri kapsamında Fransız kamuoyunun Türkiye'ye bakışı hakkında fikir sahibi olmaktır.

Çalışmanın ilk bölümünde medyanın kamuoyu oluşturmadaki rolü ve Gümrük Birliği anlaşmasının yürürlüğe girişine kadar olan dönemde Türkiye-AB ilişkilerinin gelişimi gibi temel kavramlar kısaca ele alınmıştır. İkinci bölümde ise araştırmanın yöntem ve teknikleriyle bulgular sunulmuştur.

Temel hipotez, Fransız basınının seçilen süreç içinde özellikle Türk iç politikasındaki olumlu gelişmelerin altını çizerek Türkiye'ye olumlu bir imaj

yakıştırdığı ve böylece Fransız kamuoyunda Türkiye'nin AB üyeliği konusunda olumlu bir izlenim oluştuğudur.

Sonuçlar göstermektedir ki, araştırmanın yapıldığı dönemde Fransız gazeteleri gerçekten Türkiye'ye karşı olumlu bir tavır almışlardır. Fakat esas olarak değindikleri konular, Türkiye'nin AB üyesi ülkeler arasında yer almasını engelleyen insan hakları ihlalleri, demokratikleşme eksikliği ve azınlıklar üzerindeki baskı gibi unsurlardır.

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Introduction

"What is happening in the world today that I should know about as a citizen (an investor, an intellectual, a sports fan or an art lover) of my community, nation and world?" This is the basic question that we have in mind when we tend to buy a newspaper or sit down in front of a television set with different preoccupations as a citizen or investor. We seek to find responses or solutions to the already existing problems of our daily lives and to be informed about new events happening around us or beyond our frontiers in the specially divided parts of the mass media which correspond to our differentiated fields of interest. Democratic theory also has some part in our desire to be informed. One foremost statement of democracy underlines that a good citizen is an informed citizen. At that point, we realize that it is hard to picture the contemporary world without a legitimate, specialized institution of journalism or generally speaking the mass media, which is considered one of the infrastructures of modern social, economic and democratic life.

Every opinion is a marriage of information and predisposition: information to form a mental picture of the given issue and predisposition to motivate some conclusion about it.¹ Accordingly, we depend on information sources in order to hold a certain opinion. But variations in the information carried by our sometimes unseen or unknown sources of information, individual differences in attention to this information as well as individual differences in political values and other predispositions are expected to determine the contours of public opinion. The different kinds of news sources about political events, for example, include politicians, higher-level government officials, some activists, many kinds of experts or policy specialists and journalists. Receiving information from such different sources, even about the same issue, citizens of the same country, expected to have the

¹ Zaller, J. (1992). The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 6.

same values and predispositions, may not have the same opinion; even if they only depend on, let say, local media which interpret the issue in different ways. The latter brings us to say that information carried in the news, maybe indirectly, is a social force.

What makes the difference in gathering and presenting the same information can be explained with a number of factors. Instead of trying to define these factors in political, financial or institutional terms, we can shortly state that news is a form of culture. The news, produced throughout exchanges between sources and journalists within the structure of representative political system, private news-gathering enterprises and capitalist economy, is a cultural product.²

There is no consensus on whether this cultural product more often follows rather than leads the public or *vice-versa*. It is generally accepted that it does both. In other terms, the media form their agenda following the public interest and expectations. There are also other sources of influence on the media content such as political elites, special interest groups or real world events. On the other side, the public agenda is considered as basically set by the media being part of the background through which and with which people think and form opinions. At the starting point of this study, the main idea was centered on the impact of the news, or the media in general, on audiences. However, it is not less important for us to know that the media reflect the general view in public while forming our hypothesis.

The *sine qua non* of democracy is the consensus of public opinion over the desirability of a democratic system.³ Democracy needs free elections and voting procedures which already are basic indicators of such consensus. The public has a chance to formulate and express its opinion during these elections. As in the case of

² Schudson, M. (1995). The Power of News. Cambridge, Massachusetts, London: Harvard University Press, p. 3.

³ Bektaş, A. (1996). Kamuoyu, İletişim ve Demokrasi. İstanbul: Bağlam Yayıncılık, p. 241.

the media-public opinion interaction, democracy needs public opinion as much as public opinion needs democracy for its free expression. The issues which take important place in the public agenda (shaped by the media agenda or not, which is not the point in this case) gain importance in the policy agenda of elite decision makers. In this case, the media become a bridge between the public and political decision makers, transferring data from the masses to political elites while it is time to take a decision about a given issue and in turn, informing public about the latest decisions of government to form a feedback for the public's new political opinion. Thus, besides the consensus of public opinion, existence of uncontrolled (free) media is also a must for a democratic system. What we also had in mind at the starting point of our study was this function of the media: Being an influential actor in defining policy agendas and general political atmosphere as a reflector of public opinion.

Since the early days of the new Republic, Turkey has never abandoned its western vocation. Every Turkish membership of the European organisations such as the Council of Europe, the OECD or the NATO, was considered as solid steps taken in the modernization or westernization process of the country. On July 31st 1959, just fifteen days after the Greek application, Turkey expressed its official wish to be part of the European Union (EU), then European Economic Community (EEC), one of the most powerful poles in today's new world order characterized by political globalization and economic polarization, where it is important to be a side. Even though this aim of Turkey is pronounced by almost every government and can be called as state policy, in the hearts of Turks lies a hidden fear that the West does not see Turkey as bearing the same standards and will never accept her as an equal partner in political, economic and cultural terms. This is why the completion of Customs Union in 1996 was taken as a milestone in the process of moving Turkey closer to Europe. It is important for the Turks to be aware of the general political atmosphere in Europe about membership to Customs Union that would eventually

complete one step towards full membership to the EU, and to see if their aspirations are shared by the West.

We have chosen Turkey-EU relations as a subject of our case study in order to better understand the effects of the media on public opinion. However, we had to limit our study in the framework of a master's thesis and were contented with only the study of French public opinion. We believe that three French newspapers, namely *Le Monde*, *Libération* and *Le Figaro*, are important sources of reference to see the dominant political atmosphere in France. The study of these widely read newspapers with the method of content analysis during the vivid period of negotiations about the conclusion of the Customs Union, will help us to understand how Turkey-EU relations in general are seen by the French.

It is important at the outset to clarify one possible criticism that evaluating public opinion through the media, especially concerning foreign affairs, is not meaningful. We were thinking that foreign news were in the special interests of limited number of readers who already had notions or information background about the issue, giving them temptation to seek additional information. However, research findings and opinion polls show that the "traditional" media are basic sources of information about world events for both the limited number of aware readers that we may define as "foreign news readers", as well as readers who want to get information about the issue and form their opinion. As such, the size of public interested in foreign news is not negligible contrary to expectations and this public is bound to be influenced by the content of their primary sources of information.

This study was designed to test the main hypothesis that the French press attributes a favourable image to Turkey during the completion of the EU-Turkey Customs Union and related to this, the French public opinion has become more

favourable concerning the general Turkey-EU relations and Turkish membership to the EU.

To test this hypothesis in the general theoretical framework of the effects of the media on public opinion, the study consists of two main parts. Following the introduction, in the first part, we try to define the basic concepts giving birth to the study. The first chapter is devoted to study the interaction between the media and public opinion. The second chapter is a brief summary of EU-Turkey relations. This part is followed by the presentation of the research design and the findings of the case study. Finally, by way of conclusion, the results of the study are discussed.

PART I

SETTING THE FRAMEWORK

CHAPTER 1. PUBLIC OPINION AND THE MEDIA

"The mass media may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers *what to think about*".⁴ Research on the media effects and their agenda-setting function may be considered as stemming directly from this notion suggested by Cohen in 1963. In other words, even though the media may not be very successful in telling us what opinions to hold, they are quite effective in telling us what to have opinions about (or what not to think about). Based on this idea, impressive empirical studies have been carried out to study media agendas, public agendas and the relationship between them. Most agenda setting studies have focused on the effects of media agendas on the agendas of the public and decision makers, as well as the public's effect on decision makers' agenda.⁵ Among other types of agenda setting processes such as the effects of decision makers' agenda on the media agenda or on the public agenda, the reason for studying mostly media-to-public direction of agenda setting can be found in the persistent debate on media effects.

Since this study takes as its starting point the media-to-public relationship, we should see in the first place the concepts of this process. We begin with a brief definition of a familiar concept, public opinion, and then continue with a short "tour d'horizon" on the findings of the studies of media effect on public opinion.

⁴ Cohen, B. (1963). *The Press and Foreign Policy*. Princeton, NJ.:Princeton University Press, p. 13.

⁵ Brosius, H.B., & Weimann, G. (1996). Who sets the agenda?: Agenda-setting as two-step flow. *Communication Research*. 23 (5), 561-580.

The Concept of Public Opinion

When we begin by asking the question of what exactly is meant by public opinion, we realize that there is no single, clear definition of the concept. Studies on public opinion have covered the entire ground of social inquiry, from psychology, sociology, history, political science to communications research. The research literature on public opinion is vast, continually growing and marked by theoretical debates of the researchers who are divided in their conceptual approaches, even in their definition of public opinion itself.⁶

The word "public" has two definitions as an adjective and as a noun. As an adjective, the word "public" indicates what is open, what is freely available rather than private in terms of access and ownership, what is collective and held in common rather than what is individual and personal.⁷ According to the second definition as a noun which particularly interests us here, the word refers (according to social and political theory) to an informal, voluntary, autonomous and interacting set of citizens who share and pursue objectives and interests, especially in respect of forming opinion and advocating policy.⁸ A necessary condition for the existence and activity of a public in these terms is of course the availability of adequate means of communication. We notice, even simply by the definition of the word public, that it is not easy to consider public opinion without the existence of mass media because people need to communicate and to be in relation with each other in order to form a "public".

As for the definition of the word "opinion", we should note that it has again two different connotations: First, it is used for distinguishing a matter of judgement from a matter of fact, or something uncertain from something known to be true either

⁶ Price, V. (1992). Public Opinion. Newbury Park-London-New Delhi:Sage, p. 2.

⁷ McQuail, D. (1993). Media Performance. Newbury Park-London-New Delhi:Sage, p. 2.

⁸ Ibid.

by demonstration or by faith.⁹ Besides this epistemological definition, the second sense of opinion equates it with manners, morals and customs. Here the emphasis is on the role of popular opinion as a kind of informal social pressure and social control.¹⁰ This second meaning is more connected to its modern connotations and used in the definition of public opinion.

Even though one accepted definition of the concept does not exist as we mentioned above, we can admit that the combination of "public" and "opinion" into a single term refers to collective judgements outside the sphere of government that affect political decision making and occurs following several large scale social, economic and political trends.¹¹ The French are most often viewed as the inventors and exporters of the concept in this sense since its first appearance in France about the middle of the 18th century.¹² Noelle-Neumann credits Rousseau with first using the term "l'opinion publique" around 1744, employing it in the second sense of opinion defined above as a reference to the social customs and manners of society. By 1780, French writers were making extensive use of public opinion to refer to a political rather than a social phenomenon often in conjunction with "general will" ("volonté générale"), "public spirit" ("esprit public"), "public conscience" ("conscience publique"), and other related terms.¹³ We should also note that unanimity is not necessary to public opinion and a majority is not enough.¹⁴ Then we shall seek the essential elements of its existence in the expression of the common will (concerned only with the common interests, not the same as the will of all) as Rousseau points out, and in its ability to be effective, that is to say, its ability to reach decision makers to force them to decide how to react to it.

⁹ Price, (1992). *op. cit.*, p. 6.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

¹² Champagne, P. (1990). *Faire l'opinion*. Paris: Minuit, p. 44.

¹³ Price, (1992). *op. cit.*, p. 8.

¹⁴ Lowell, A. L. (1913). Public opinion. In B. Berelson, & M. Janowitz, (Eds.). (1966). *Reader in Public Opinion and Communication*. Second Edition. (pp. 20-26). N.Y.:The Free Press.

The advent of printing in the 15th century allowed dissemination of literature which gained strength in the 16th century with the growth of merchant and business classes and an expansion of reading public created by the Protestant Reformation.¹⁵ The professionalization of the arts, particularly literature, replaced the earlier patronage system with one in which authors and artists depended for their sustenance on popular support. The importance of the Reformation, beyond its effect on the circulation of literature, lied at the core of Protestant teachings which contained a new and individualistic conception of the person, claiming that individuals should be free to follow their own preferences in all aspects of life (religious, economic and political).¹⁶

At the end of 17th and the beginning of the 18th centuries, new social institutions such as the coffee-houses of England, the "salons" of Paris and the "table societies" ("tischgesellschaften") of Germany became gathering places where free exchange of information and critical, open reasoning were possible through the circulation of political literature.¹⁷ With the exception of Jurgen Habermas, few scholars have recognized the political, literary and religious discussions in these new institutions as critical to the development of public opinion.¹⁸ Habermas argues that although the salons might be seen as vehicles for the development of the bourgeoisie by engaging the middle class in the critical analysis of governmental affairs, they might also be viewed as a critical part of the public opinion infrastructure of mid 18th century in France. With the growth of a politically active public sphere, public opinion emerged as a new form of political authority, with which the bourgeoisie could challenge absolute rule.

¹⁵ Price, (1992). *op. cit.*, p. 8.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10.

¹⁸ Habermas, J. (1989). The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry Into a Category of Bourgeois Society. Cambridge: MIT Press.

So the concept of public opinion is mostly a product of the period of the Enlightenment. In spite of references in classical works (e.g., Plato, Aristotle) to phenomena that resemble public opinion, the modern distinctions between the state and society and between specialized officials and the general public were not actually part of the political philosophy of Athens.¹⁹ The combination of the terms "public" and "opinion" into one concept appears later, in the liberal and democratic theories of the 1700s.

Habermas emphasizes the features of public opinion during the Enlightenment.²⁰ First, it is seen as emanating from active conversation and debate. This debate is "public" in the sense that it aims at determining the common will or general good. The debate is open, the process is "public" in the sense that open participation is desired. It is sovereign and egalitarian, it operates independently from social and economic status, giving way to the merits of ideas rather than to political power. Finally, the debate must be enlightened through full publicity of political affairs and their consequences. While defining the concept of public opinion, we use these features that we owe to Habermas.

Other key aspects of our contemporary conception of public opinion, when referring to its political impact, find their origins in later writings on representative democracy.²¹ For example, English utilitarian philosophers, Bentham and Mill, defined public opinion as the expression of the agglomerate interests of the men of the community because people had their own desires and interests to satisfy and a mechanism was needed for harmonizing these different interests (utilitarian

19 MacBride, S. (Ed.). (1993). Birçok Ses, Tek Bir Dünya. Çev: Ertuğrul Özkök. Ankara: UNESCO Türkiye Milli Komisyonu, p. 218.

20 We deduce these features from the definition of the public sphere which is taken to be *an arena, independent of government and also enjoying autonomy from partisan economic forces, which is dedicated to rational debate (i.e. to debate and discussion which is not interested, disguised or manipulated) and which is both accessible to entry and open to inspection by the citizenry. It is here, in this public sphere, that public opinion is formed.* Quoted in Webster, F. (1995). Theories of the Information Society. London and N.Y.: Routledge, pp. 101-102.

21 Price, (1992). op. cit., pp. 12-14.

democratic model). Hence these writers attributed a more formal political role to public opinion, included in the constitution of the rule by the majority established by regular election. They also stated the importance of a free press in their model for the regular publicity of all government activities as a safeguard against abuses of power.

Today, social science inquiry deals with the question of the function and powers of public opinion in society, the means by which it can be modified or controlled, and the relative importance of emotional and intellectual factors in its formulation. This line of inquiry has its roots in political aspect of the concept of public opinion. The latter becomes evident by the concentration of the studies of the concept in attitude change researches, propaganda analysis, political behavior and mass communication research. However, efforts at integration of research findings are uncommon in the public opinion field.²² Researchers explain, say, voting in presidential elections separately from voting in congressional elections (in the case of the U.S.) or foreign policy attitudes separately from all other attitudes. Only certain general topics such as political attitude changes are addressed in the context of agenda setting or political popularity studies. The result of this is the waste of efforts in theorizing about public opinion. This is why, in the frame of this study, we made use of the findings of attitude change as well as agenda setting studies in order to be able to understand the concept in a more general approach and we made use of the terms interchangeably. Obviously, the history of public opinion research is not separable from the history of attitude and agenda setting research. Public agenda setting is related to public opinion because what we think about forms a basis for what we think.

While trying to explain what we understand as public opinion, we may also mention a theoretical system that integrates, as much as possible, the dynamics of public opinion made clear by different researches that have been directed by

²² Zaller, (1992). *op. cit.*, p. 2.

different preoccupations in the field as mentioned above. For that reason, we find it convenient here to review briefly the model articulated by John Zaller.²³ The ideas necessary to accomplish an integration are few and simple: First, citizens vary in their habitual attention to politics and hence in their exposure to political information and argumentation in the media.²⁴ The second is that people are able to react critically to the arguments they encounter only to the extent that they are knowledgeable about political affairs.²⁵ The third is that citizens do not typically carry around in their heads fixed attitudes on every issue on which a pollster may inquire, rather they make up opinion statements as they confront each new issue and use them later if they are placed near the top of their head.²⁶ The last is that, in constructing their opinion statements, people make greatest use of ideas that are most immediately salient to them.²⁷

The survey responses that people make within the proposed model may reasonably be described as attitudes or opinions; they represent people's true feelings at the moment of answering a given survey question. These opinions, as conceived in four-axiom model, are the outcome of a process in which people *receive* new information, decide whether or not to *accept* it. Then, to be more simple, we may say that the formation of opinion involves a two-step process: first, reception of persuasive communications and second, acceptance or non-acceptance of their contents. In this simple process, we should also add individual-level variables (such

²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 40-51.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 42. (**Reception axiom:** The greater a person's level of cognitive engagement with an issue, the more likely he or she is to be exposed to and comprehend political messages concerning that issue.)

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 44. (**Resistance axiom:** People tend to resist arguments that are inconsistent with their political predispositions, but they do so only to the extent that they possess the contextual information necessary to perceive a relationship between the message and their predispositions.)

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 48. (**Accessibility axiom:** The more recently a consideration has been called to mind or thought about, the less time it takes to retrieve that consideration or related considerations from memory and bring them to the top of the head for use.)

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 49. (**Response axiom:** Individuals answer survey questions by averaging across the considerations that are immediately salient or accessible to them).

as awareness and values) as well as message-level variables (such as intensity and familiarity) as factors affecting the formation of opinion.²⁸

As we have seen in the previous paragraphs, the role of communication in the public opinion formation process is essential, whether at the level of the dynamic between individual and society on which Noelle-Neumann articulates her famous theory of the "spiral of silence"²⁹, or at the level of the dynamic between society and decision makers. This study finds its roots in this *communicative* nature of public opinion: People simply need to receive information about a given issue in order to have opinion concerning this issue. In this study, among our various sources of information that we use for the formation of our opinions, we only deal with the media whose effects are studied in the following pages.

We would like to terminate this section by stating one concluding remark for future studies: Although scholars from history, political science, sociology, and other fields have long studied the history of public opinion, few have emphasized the role of technology in shaping notions of the public. To the extent that publics might be viewed as bodies formed through communication, more attention to changes in communication technologies should be paid.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 118-155.

²⁹ Salmon, C. T. & Moh, C.-H. (1992). The spiral of silence: Linking individual and society through communication. In J. D. Kenamer (Ed.). *Public Opinion, the Press and Public Policy*. (pp. 145-161). Westport, Connecticut: Praeger.

Effects of the Media on Public Opinion: Relevant Theories and Studies

"The only feeling that anyone can have about an event he does not experience is the feeling aroused by his mental image of that event. That is why until we know what others think they know, we cannot truly understand their acts."³⁰ As Walter Lippmann argued 70 years ago in his classic, *Public Opinion*, our opinions and behavior are responses not to the world itself but to our perceptions of that world. It is the "pictures in our heads" that shape our feelings and actions, and these pictures only reflect the world that surrounds us. It is also important to note that our experience of the world is largely indirect. "Each of us", Lippmann wrote, "lives and works on a small part of the earth's surface, moves in a small circle, and of these acquaintances knows only a few intimately. Of any public event that has wide effects we see at best only a phase and an aspect... Inevitably our opinions cover a bigger space, a longer reach of time, a greater number of things than we can directly observe. They have, therefore to be pieced together out of what others have reported."³¹ The "others" on whom we depend, directly or indirectly, for information about the world are persons who devote themselves full-time to some aspect of public affairs. Indeed, already in Lippmann's time, and even more in our own, "reports about the world" come primarily through the mass media.

The mass media are the means (all the instruments and methods) by which the members of a public communicate. At the beginning, with the invention of Gutenberg's press, we were only talking about the printed works, but nowadays the term "media" covers all printed, audio-visual and electronic means of communication including internet and they become more and more important in today's society where significant changes are being signalled. These changes are due to technological

³⁰ Quoted by Gilens, Martin. (Winter 1996). Race and poverty in America: Public misperceptions and the American news media. *Public Opinion Quarterly*. 60, 515-541.

³¹ Quoted by Zaller, (1992). *op.cit.*, p. 6.

advances in the traditional mass media of press and broadcasting and handling of information, but they also reflect important social and economic changes in society. Since the new social order commonly described as "information society" refers to a form of society where there is a high and increasing dependence of individuals and institutions on information and communication in order to be able to function effectively in almost every sphere of activity,³² the role and importance of the media become undeniable. In line with this definition, we may easily say that there is an increasing public interest in communication and information.

However, it is important at the outset to clarify what do we mean by the media in the context of this limited study: During the study, the term "media" should be understood as the daily print media, that is to say, newspapers.

Basically, the functions of the media that are an integral part of the routines and rituals of everyday life, can be summarized as follows:

- 1- informing
- 2- influencing
- 3- entertaining
- 4- providing a marketplace for goods and services.³³

Lasswell identifies also the principal functions of the media which are closer to the terminology and aims of this study.³⁴ According to him, first of all, the media carry out a *surveillance* function for their audiences. As surveillance agents, journalists try to alert public to problems. They bring news about several aspects of events gathered from several differentiated sources. This look-out function of the press is perhaps the most prominent public service attributed to the news media and this is what we simply call "informing" (collection and distribution of information).

³² McQuail, (1993). *op.cit.*, p. 1.

³³ De Fleur, M. & Denis, E. (1985). Understanding Mass Communication. Second edition. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, p. 157.

³⁴ Price, (1992). *op.cit.*, pp. 80-81.

Journalism also carries out a *correlation* function for the attentive public by helping to coordinate its own internal responses to the political environment. That is to say, the news media bring together contrasting ideas and views to an attentive public, report to its members what others think, and help to organize its collective reaction.

Journalism performs these same two functions for political elites as well.³⁵ Media characterizations of opinion within the attentive public are a means of surveillance for the ruling elites. Actors pay attention to the news to see how well they are doing. Political elites use the media not only to communicate with their supporters or opponents in the attentive public, but to talk among themselves as well. So the media are not only a bridge from the top down (between political elites and public), they also have an horizontal function at all levels. At this point, we assume that there is no need to rearticulate the relationship between a democratic system and public opinion and the existence of free press.

Assuming that opinion or attitude change (that we use interchangeably in the context of this study in order to benefit from the research findings in the field) has been formed in response to communications and that opinion has formed in accordance with the reception-acceptance model, we may then discuss the persuasive role or in other words, the effects of the media. Some talk about the power of the media over the masses while others consider their effects as minimal. The outcomes of various studies in the field present a diversity: Lasswell thinks that the media have powerful effects while Merton supports him only by saying that the media reinforce the *status quo*. Cazeneuve argues that the media reinforce the already existing opinions and Debbasch and Pontier think that television may play an important role in forming new opinions only if the public had no previous opinion or prejudgements about the newly presented subject.³⁶ The latter proposition is in accordance with the

³⁵ *Ibid.* -

³⁶ Ünsal, A. (1996). *Les médias et la politique*. Unpublished lecture notes on "Introduction à la science politique", Galatasaray University, Istanbul, pp. 110-123.

conclusions of message-level variables of our theoretical reception-acceptance model. According to one of the two message-level variables which is familiarity, messages on more familiar subjects produce less attitude change. In other words, a higher proportion of attitude change on more familiar issues (compared to less familiar issues) is among less aware persons.³⁷ What may seem contradictory here is our acceptance of the fact that the greater the public's concern and initial knowledge about the issue (awareness and values: individual-level factors), the more people notice and comprehend additional information. However, it is not necessary that this additional information leads to a change in their opinion.

While trying to understand the process of opinion formation and the role of the media as the principal conductor and interpreter of the issues in this process, we must also stress the fact that the public is not a passive audience. The public mind is not a *tabula rasa* waiting to be written on by the media.³⁸ Media messages are transformed by people's personal experiences, their motivations and interests in seeking additional information. What people know depends also on other factors, such as the accessibility of the media and public's exposure to them.

Studies on the media influence have shifted away from direct behavior changes to cognitive effects, as seen in much of the agenda setting studies which tend to indicate that the most important effect of the media is to establish the topics of concern and conversation for the public (public agenda). Lazarsfeld, Berelson and their colleagues started with the demonstration of the limited ability of media messages to change political attitudes or candidate preferences in their works entitled *The People's Choice (1948)*, *Voting (1954)*, and *Personal Influence (1955)*. Following Lazarsfeld's famous Erie County study, we may say that the media activate the indifferent people (14%), reinforce the idea of the partisans (53%) and in a very

³⁷ Zaller, (1992). *op.cit.*, p. 155.

³⁸ McCombs, M., Eisendel, E., & Weaver, D. (1991). *Contemporary Public Opinion. Issues and the News*. Hillsdale, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, p. 65.

few cases convert the doubtful people (8%).³⁹ Later, Cohen's observation in *The Press and Foreign Policy* (1963) that the media may not tell us what to think but tell us what to think about, is at the root of recent studies on agenda setting. This important distinction between what we think about (cognitions) and what we think (opinions) has then directed new studies about the agenda setting function of the media. In fact, the media have been found in numerous studies during the past two decades to play an important role in setting the public agenda. Beginning with the publication of McCombs and Shaw's initial work (1972, *The Agenda Setting Function of Mass Media*, Public Opinion Quarterly, 36, 176-187) until 1993, more than 200 articles about agenda setting in the social science literature can be identified.⁴⁰ McCombs and Shaw compared the issues presented by newspapers, television and newsmagazines during the 1968 presidential election with the rankings of these same issues by undecided voters. They interpreted their findings as suggesting that mass media may have little direct effect on political opinions and attitudes, but that they have a significant effect on which issues voters have opinions about.

More recent studies have focused on individual or audience differences, differences in media news coverage and presentation, effects of different news sources and the role of opinion leaders as early recognizers mediating between the public and the media in the formation process of public opinion.⁴¹

Thanks to agenda setting studies, we notice that the links between agenda setting and public opinion have become clear. This is why we proposed earlier in the

³⁹ DeFleur, & Denis, (1985). *op. cit.*, p. 314.

⁴⁰ Brosius, & Weimann, (1996). *op. cit.*

⁴¹ See, for example, Brosius, & Weimann, (1996). *op. cit.* ; Weaver, D., & Drew, D. (1995). Voter learning in the 1992 presidential election: Did the "non-traditional" media debates matter?. Journal of Mass Communication Quarterly. 72 (1), 7-17. ; Erbring, L., & Goldenberg, E. N. (1980). Front-page news and real- world cues: A new look at agenda setting by the media. American Journal of Political Science. 24 (1), 16-50. ; Kim, J., & Rubin, A. M. (1997). The variable influence of audience activity on media effects. Communication Research. 24 (2), 107-135.

study to consider agenda setting and public opinion formation interchangeably. Increased attention by the news media and following increased public concern is sometimes associated with more favorable public opinion and sometimes with more negative public opinion.⁴² The strongest evidence for a direct link between agenda setting and public opinion was demonstrated in 1987 by an analysis of the content of television which showed a high proportion of aggregate changes from one survey to another in U.S. citizens' policy preferences.⁴³ Influence of the media on public opinion can be more clearly observed if the media agenda coincides with public agenda, which may be considered as a second step since in the first place media demonstrate which issues are important and on which issues people should think about.

It is predictable, however, that while mass media play their important role between "the world outside" and "the pictures in our heads", they can never present the public a picture of the world as it is. The information that reaches the public is never a full record of important events and developments in the world. It is a highly selective view of what has taken place. The selection of information proposed to the public, the way it is presented, the space accorded to this information, the dramatization or the banalization etc., are part of the agenda theory which describes the *gatekeeping* process.⁴⁴ This gatekeeper function of journalists is also worth studying in order to see what is presented and how, with which effect and why it is presented. Yet this is one reason why we call news as a form of culture, since this function is in close relation with the culture of the society in which a journalist works.

⁴² McCombs, Eisiendel, & Weaver, (1991). *op. cit.*, p. 18.

⁴³ Page, B. I., Shapiro, R. Y., & Dempsey, G. R. (1987). What moves public opinion?. *American Political Science Review*. 81 (1), 23-43.

⁴⁴ Reynié, D. (1992). La fonction de "gate-keeper" des journalistes. *La Communication. Cahiers français*. 258, p. 65.

In sum, this discussion emphasizes that even if the media are central in our political and cultural life, estimates of their power nevertheless remain uncertain. Although the evidence that media deeply change attitudes is not conclusive, the evidence is stronger that people learn from the information presented by the media. Our unique certain conclusion that the formation of public opinion needs a division of labor between citizens and the news media is in accordance with Lippmann's observation: The world is of out reach, out of mind and out of sight, so it has to be *explored, reported and imagined*.⁴⁵ Our claim here is that exploring and reporting (media's task), in other words, distributing information, have visible and measurable effects on what we imagine, even on what we think (citizens' task). Hence the media are a "cause", and merit to be studied as an indicator of public opinion.

⁴⁵ Quoted in McCombs, Eisiendel, & Weaver, (1991). *op. cit.*, p. 5.

CHAPTER 2. TURKEY AND THE EUROPEAN UNION

A major political power or a regional economic group? An open trading partner or a protectionist bloc? The European Union (EU) means different things to different countries, depending on whether their links with the Union are economic, diplomatic, cultural or strategic. For example, the USA seems to consider Europe as an ally that shares its values and yet also sees it as a commercial and technological rival. The developing countries may see the Union as their main market, not only because of its size, but because their industrial and agricultural products have special access benefiting from "régime préférentiel" guaranteed by clauses concluded between these countries and the EU.⁴⁶

For Turkey, Europe does not only mean an economic entity. Relations with the EU, besides being important economically or politically, are primarily part of the Turkish concern with her "identity".⁴⁷ Since the 19th century and in particular since the foundation of the Turkish republic, Turkey has already proved that she considers her future as tied with the future of other Western European countries. Turkey has always considered the form and intensity of relations with Europe as one of the criteria of success in the modernization of the country. This vision has become a state policy that almost every government in power included in its official program.

At present, we shall attempt to describe briefly what is EU and how Turkey-EU relations developed until the conclusion of the Customs Union. This review seems us necessary in order to seize better the results of the case study.

⁴⁶ Fontaine, P. (1995). Europe in Ten Lessons. European Documentation Series. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, p. 36.

⁴⁷ Tekeli, İ., & İlkin, S. (1993). Türkiye ve Avrupa Topluluğu I. Ankara: Ümit yayınları, p. 32.

Brief History of European Integration

The current stage of European integration is the result of the gradual community-building process begun in the 1950s by the six European countries, namely France, the Federal Republic of Germany, Belgium, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands. The essential aim of the founding-fathers was to bring member countries closer together, first by economic cooperation and integration, leading later to greater political cooperation on a whole variety of issues. The preamble to the EEC (European Economic Community) Treaty spoke as early as 1957 of "creating an ever closer union among the peoples of Europe".

After the Second World War, on the ruins of the war, the answer to the question of what was to become of Europe was integration. Pronounced in 1946, shortly after the war, Churchill's vision of a "United States of Europe" was part of the dream and could be considered as the first step towards the establishment of European organizations, such as the Council of Europe (1949), Organization for European Economic Cooperation (OEEC, 1948) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO, 1949).⁴⁸

The basis of the European Community was launched by the famous declaration of May the 9th, 1950 of French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman, who presented in fact the original idea of Jean Monnet. The vocalized Schuman Plan became reality on 18 April 1951 with the Treaty establishing the *European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC)*, designed to create a common market for coal and steel, allowing common control, planning and exploitation of these raw materials and products.⁴⁹ The Treaty of Paris establishing the ECSC was signed by the Six, and

⁴⁸ Weidenfeld, W., & Wessels, W. (1997). Europe from A to Z. Guide to European Integration. European Documentation Series. Belgium: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, p. 7.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 8.

came into effect on 23 July 1952. This comprehensive economic integration of the national coal and steel industries was intended to lead eventually to political union.

The negotiations on integration were continued after the failure of the European Defence Community (EDC), an idea suggested by the French Prime Minister, René Pleven, who was advocating the establishment of a common European army under a European Defence Minister. At the conference of Foreign Ministers in Messina, in June 1955, the Six charged a commission with the study of the integration possibilities in two further areas. Paul Henri Spaak, the Belgian Foreign Minister and the President of the commission disclosed the Spaak Report in May 1956, which led to the signing on 25 March 1957 of the Treaties of Rome (that came into force on 1 January 1958), establishing the *European Economic Community (EEC)* and the *European Atomic Energy Community (EURATOM)*. Within the framework of the EEC, the six founder states of the ECSC wanted to set up a customs union. Another aim was formulated, namely, the creation of a common market to allow the free movement of persons, services and capital. EURATOM was designed to encourage the development of the nuclear industry in the six member states.⁵⁰

The Merger Treaty of 8 April 1965, which came into force on 1 July 1967, amalgamated the institutions of the ECSC, the EEC and EURATOM, and the *European Community (EC)* was born.

The Hague summit of 1-2 December 1969 gave new impetus to the integration process. Besides the agreement on enlargement, it was also decided to introduce economic and monetary union by 1980, to reform institutions, to hold direct elections for the European Parliament and give it additional powers. The negotiations with Denmark, Ireland, Norway and the United Kingdom that had

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10.

started in 1970 were concluded with the signing of the accession treaties on January 1972, coming into effect as of January 1973. The decision of the House of Commons and the results of referendums held in Denmark and Ireland were favourable for accession. Only the Norwegian electorate rejected the membership.⁵¹

Following the establishment of democracy in Greece, Portugal and Spain, they presented their application to the EC. The Community expanded southwards with the accession of Greece in 1981, and Spain and Portugal in 1986. These enlargements made it more imperative to implement structural programmes designed to reduce the disparities between the Twelve in terms of economic development.⁵²

One of the cornerstones of continued integration was the *Single European Act*, which after being discussed at the Luxembourg summit in 1985, came into effect at the same time as the accessions of Spain and Portugal. The principal aim of this act was the completion of the common (single) market by 1 January 1993, as laid down in the treaties establishing the Communities.

The consequences of the single market, as well as the collapse of Berlin Wall followed by German unification, have increased the need for effective decision making both for internal and foreign policy. The member states agreed on the completion of monetary union by 1999, new common policies, European citizenship, diplomatic cooperation and common defence, and internal security in Maastricht by the signing of the *Treaty on European Union* on 7 February 1992. This important Treaty in the history of the EC, which then became EU, came into force on 1 November 1993 after troublesome ratification processes in the member states, and set

⁵¹ Documentation Européenne. (1990). L'unification Européenne. Luxembourg: Office des Publications des Communautés Européennes, pp. 15-16.

⁵² Fontaine, (1995). op. cit., p. 6.

them an ambitious programme with the most comprehensive reform of the Treaties of Rome.⁵³

On January 1995, the Union expanded again with the accession of Finland, Austria and Sweden and now comprises 15 member states. However, the problem of deepening or widening is still present and is becoming more and more urgent with the applications of eastern European countries attracted by the benefits that the Union would secure them. This raises an important question: How can a community of states so politically, economically and culturally heterogenous be organized and achieve the goals set up by the Maastricht Treaty? The general will within the context of the realization of political union, common foreign and security policy, economic and monetary union and the single market, is to adjust the structures of a union of 15 members to enable it to face up to its new tasks, to prepare the Union for a further enlargement without limiting the scope and undermining the resources of the great political project of the founding-fathers.⁵⁴

In the EU Commission documents declared in July 1997, Turkey was not mentioned among the eleven candidates for membership. There are five plus one country in the first accession "wave": Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Estonia and Cyprus. What is vital for the Union is that the ambitious targets set in Maastricht must be accepted and can be realized by these prospective members. This is why the EU institutions do not seem to hurry to conclude the negotiations with these countries. It would be ironic indeed if the arrival of new members were to threaten the traditional Community approach to integration just when it has proved its worth by uniting its current members into a strong homogeneous whole.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 7.; Weidenfeld, & Wessels, (1997). *op. cit.*, pp. 16-17, 138-139.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

Turkey-EU Relations and the Customs Union

As is recently expressed by the Turkish Foreign Minister, İsmail Cem, Turkey has always considered herself a European country which does not need to be ratified by anyone. "It is not one of the possible identities for Turkey, it is rather an historical, geographical and cultural reality" said Cem.⁵⁵ The second part of this press declaration needs, however, to be clarified. After the Second World War when Europe started to organize itself, Turkey hastened to become a member of these organizations and every membership was considered as "occidentalization" (or "europeanization") of the country.⁵⁶ It became one of the first member states of the Council of Europe in 1949, founder member of the OEEC (then, OECD) in 1948 and later, member of NATO in 1952 by assuming a responsibility in the defence and security of Europe.

We may then say that Turkey's wish to become part of the fifteen today is old and deep. Turkish authorities officially formulated the wish to associate with the EEC on 31 July 1959, just one and a half years after the coming into force of the Treaty of Rome and fifteen days after the Greek application. The negotiations that lasted four years, ended on 12 September 1963 with the signing of the *Ankara Agreement*.⁵⁷ The Agreement which came into force on 1 December 1964, intended to prepare Turkey (especially in the economic field) for full membership of the EEC. It foresaw three main stages in the EEC-Turkey association:⁵⁸

1- Preparatory stage, which came into force on 1 December 1964, aimed at the reinforcement of the commercial relations with Turkey.

⁵⁵ See Pular, Hasan. Biz Türküz Abicim!. *Milliyet*. 20 July 1997, p. 3.

⁵⁶ Vardar, D. (October 1993). Batı Avrupa Kurumlarına Katılışın Simgesel Yönü. *Toplumbilim*. 2, 31-36.

⁵⁷ T.C. Başbakanlık Hazine ve Dış Ticaret Müsteşarlığı. (1991). *Avrupa Topluluğu ve Türkiye*. Ankara, p. 104.

⁵⁸ Gönen, E., & Serdaroğlu, S. (1996). *Avrupa Birliği ve Bütünleşmesinin Vardığı Nokta: 1996 Hükümetlerarası Konferansı ve Türkiye'nin Bu Gelişimdeki Yeri*. İKV: 137. İstanbul: İKV Yayınları, pp. 45-46.

2- *Transitory stage*, which began on 1 January 1973 with the Additional Protocol, aimed at the gradual establishment of a Customs Union with Turkey. This stage ended with the conclusion of the Customs Union in December 1995.

3- *Final stage*, depending on the procedures of the Customs Union, aimed at the coordination of economic policies and the realization of conditions for full membership.

Although at the beginning political motivations were more important for the two sides, the economic motivations were not absent in their mind. By association to the EEC, Turkish authorities were hoping to benefit from the financial aid of the Community in order to build the infrastructures of the economy and intensify the industrialization of the country; the continuation of Turkish agricultural exports to Europe (threatened by Greece); and the employment possibilities for the surplus of Turkish labour in the EEC countries. However, implementation of additional measures in economic and financial areas, envisaged for example by various Financial Protocols, have often been hampered by political factors such as the Greek veto. On the other side, besides underlining the political importance of the Turkish membership to the EEC, Europe was also very much aware of the promising perspectives of the Turkish economy and its national market even though it was not occupying a considerable place in world-wide economy at the time.⁵⁹ Turkey features, since 1990, among the top twenty trading partners of the EU.

The relations between Turkey and the Community were somehow frozen by the military intervention in Turkey in 1980 and this situation continued until 1987. Nevertheless, in that year Turkey, though not in the framework of the Treaty of Ankara, but as did other candidate countries for the enlargement, made an application

⁵⁹ Akagül, D. (1987). Association CEE-Turquie: A la Recherche d'une Nouvelle Dynamique. Revue du Marché Commun. 303, 3-13.

for full membership invoking Article 237 of the Treaty of Rome ("Every European country can ask for becoming a member of the community").⁶⁰ The Commission pronounced its view on 18 December 1989, finding Turkey qualified, but not ready for such membership. Its report compromised a number of propositions for the fortification of the integration process:⁶¹

- a. accomplishment of the Customs Union
- b. revitalization of financial cooperation
- c. deepening of political dialogue
- d. development of economic cooperation.

However, this programme has never been carried out. The disintegration of the Soviet Union and the Gulf War in 1991 happened to prove once again Turkey's importance for Europe which hence made steps for the intensification of relations. The Association Council meeting held in 8 November 1993 reconfirmed the Turkish goal of the completion of Customs Union and set up a programme framework. The year 1994 passed with negotiations, and 1995 will be remembered as an important year in EU-Turkey relations. On 3 March 1995, Greece finally gave in to the pressures exerted by her 14 partners in the EU and opened the way for more intense relations between the EU and Turkey. Then, on 6 March 1995, the EC-Turkey Association Council, against the will of the European Parliament expressed in a resolution of 16 February 1995, agreed by Decision 1/95 which laid down rules of implementation for the final phase of the Customs Union between Turkey and the EU, as foreseen in Article 2 of the Ankara Agreement of 1964. The implementation started on 1 January 1996 after the European Parliament gave its consent on 13 December 1995, followed by long discussions.⁶²

⁶⁰ Missir, L. (1989). Réflexions sur l'adhésion de la Turquie aux Communautés Européennes. Rivista di Studi Politici Internazionali. 222, 230-244.

⁶¹ Gönen, & Serdaroglu, (1996). *op. cit.*

⁶² Kramer, H. (1996). The EU-Turkey Customs Union: Economic integration amidst political turmoil. Mediterranean Politics. 1 (1), 60-75.

The approval of the EU-Turkey Customs Union by the European Parliament has brought Turkey to the last stage of economic integration with the EU except full membership. The Customs Union has also a far-reaching political importance. Paradoxically, the strengthening of political ties between the EU and Turkey could lead to growing distance in the future, given that the Turkish view of the Customs Union as a final step before membership of the EU is not shared by the Union.⁶³ European concerns about democratization, human rights violations, macro economic imbalance and the Kurdish problem persist and continue to be the reference criteria of negative reports pronounced by the institutions of the EU about Turkish membership.⁶⁴ Forthcoming EU enlargements, especially the accession of Cyprus, threaten to disturb the new Turkey-EU relationship. Although the discussions over European Parliament's acceptance of the Customs Union are over, the real test for EU-Turkey relations will come over the next few years.

What this study seeks to answer is whether the positive decision of the European Parliament in December 1995 was an outcome of the prevailing public opinion and whether European governments acted in accordance with their public.

⁶³ *Ibid.* -

⁶⁴ See, for example, the latest reports called "Reflection Paper" or "Agenda 2000" of the EU Commission.

CHAPTER 3. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Laswell's proposition dating 1946, that communications research might be described as an inquiry into "*who says what, through what channels of communication, to whom with what effect*"⁶⁵ resumes well the framework of this study.

Pre-discussed relationship between the media and public opinion has persuaded us to evaluate the existing French public opinion about Turkey and the issue of her membership to the Customs Union through representative examples of the French daily press. So the purpose of the current study is to respond whether the French public opinion is favourable to Turkey and Turkey's integration to Europe and whether the favourable changes in Turkish domestic politics are underlined by the French press during the completion process of the Customs Union.

It is certain that public opinion is one of the major pressure sources on the policy preferences of political decision makers. It is not surprising therefore that European governments do not neglect, *inter alia*, to hold opinion polls among their citizens about various issues concerning either domestic or foreign politics. For instance, when the inhabitants of the 15 EU member countries were asked concerning the enlargement policy of the Union through an Eurobarometer survey at the beginning of 1996, we learnt that 36% were in favour of Turkey's becoming part of the EU in the future ⁶⁶ which is not a bad omen. However, we should notice that the uncertainty behind the words "in the future" is in conformity with the Union's policy towards Turkey.

⁶⁵ Quoted by Klapper, J. (1960). The effects of mass communication. In Berelson, & Janowitz (Eds.). (1966). *op. cit.*, (pp. 473-486).

⁶⁶ Eurobarometer 45. (Spring 1996). Brussels: European Commission Publication, p. 65.

Given the fact that public opinion occurs mainly by virtue of the interactions between policy makers and citizens, we may then assume to seize the general political preference of French policy makers concerning Turkey's EU membership by evaluating French public opinion.

Although we would like to evaluate the general public opinion about Turkey in Europe, the contours of a master's dissertation allows us to study only the French public opinion. The combination of two facts, one general and another more specific to France, rendered the evaluation of French public opinion by the daily print media meaningful. First, the information provided about Turkey in Europe is primarily through the newspapers (57,91%).⁶⁷ Secondly, 31% of the French people read a daily newspaper as a source of information which is a considerable amount since the general percentage for the EU inhabitants is 45%.⁶⁸

The reason why Turkish people attribute a great importance to understand whether European countries consider Turkey as their eventual partner becomes clear in terms of the commitments that Turkish people have done for the completion of this ideal. The belief of Turkish people in the continuation of this undulating dialogue between Turkish political elites and the EU depends on the Europeans' perceptions of Turkey. If Turkish people realize that Western European criticism of Turkish domestic politics is sincere and serious and intends to prepare Turkey for the final accession to the Union, then there will be more enthusiasm and goodwill to ameliorate Turkey's domestic situation with respect to democracy, human rights and the Kurdish problem both on the public's and government's sides.

⁶⁷ 1995 Yılı Dış Basın Değerlendirmesi. (Nisan 1996). Ankara: T.C. Başbakanlık Basın-Yayın ve Enformasyon Genel Müdürlüğü, p. 10.

⁶⁸ Eurobarometer 43. (Autumn 1995). Field work April/May 1995. Brussels: European Commission Publication, p. 57.

However, far from being stable, the European policy *vis-à-vis* Turkey may be defined as "carrot policy". Because of Turkey's geopolitical importance (which was even strengthened by the collapse of the Soviet Union and foundation of new Turkic republics in Central Asia) and its economic potential as a market for exports and foreign investment, European countries refrain from giving outright negative responses to the Turkish application for membership.

Hence, Turkey may be caricaturized as standing in front of the door of the EU waiting for it to be opened after having knocked several times. European institutions have produced over the years various obstacles to Turkish membership, among which economic and political reasons of "rejection" may be qualified as objective: The unstable economic performance, violations of human rights, rupture of the democratic system several times by military interventions. However, there are other reasons which are not as explicitly voiced, such as the fact that the majority of Turks are Muslims, the culture as well as the population of the country.

The completion of the Customs Union in 1996 was an important step taken in Turkey-EU relations for both sides. For the first time, the EU was accepting to conclude a customs union with a non-member country of the Union. The fulfilment of a contractual obligation that both sides undertook more than 30 years ago could mean that favourable changes in Turkish domestic politics and economy which satisfied European exigencies have occurred during the last few years.

The above expectation combined with the assumption that public opinion is in close relationship with the government's policy preferences made us think that French public opinion would eventually become more favourable towards Turkey. Because among the Turkish public, it is generally assumed that Western public

opinion is anti-Turkish⁶⁹ and that consequently Turkish membership in the European construction would meet with resistance.

⁶⁹ For a detailed study of the historical and cultural background of this belief, see: Güvenç, B. (1993). Türk Kimliği. Kültür Tarihinin Kaynakları. İnsanlık Tarihi Dizisi 2. Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları 1549.

PART II

RESEARCH DESIGN AND ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

CHAPTER 4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The main objective of this study is to investigate the position of three french newspapers, Le Monde, Libération and Le Figaro, over the completion process of the EU-Turkey Customs Union and to see what kind of a position or image was attached to Turkey within the general framework of Turkey-EU relations.

We kept in mind during the course of the study that the media content, whether it forms or reflects the existing public opinion, provides as a whole a reliable source of the evaluation of public opinion. Our selected newspapers were studied by the method of content analysis about which a brief introduction is given below.

Content Analysis Methodology

The most visible and accessible evidence of the functioning of the mass media is the content of what is produced and transmitted. As such, it has attracted more attention than any other aspect of the media from both researchers and commentators. This vast, diverse and changing body of material is conventionally referred to as mass media content.⁷⁰

Media content is studied as evidence of several facts which give us cues about the society in which it is produced. For example, media content may be an object of study for understanding society and culture (remember that we previously

⁷⁰ McQuail, D. (1991). Mass Communication Theory. An Introduction. Second Edition. London: Sage Publications, p. 175.

called news as cultural products), the communicators and their organization, possible effects or effectiveness in reaching some goal, receptive audience profile, etc. Here, our purpose of the content analysis is to see its effects on those who consume it. However, we are aware of the fact that content can never be conclusively related to effect, but a good content analysis would lead to propositions about possible effects.

In the previously mentioned Laswell's classic sentence identifying the process of communication, content is the *what*. The most widely practised methodology for the study of *what is said* is either discourse analysis or content analysis, although in recent years new qualitative research methods have been applied to mass communications research.⁷¹ Because it is the most adequate methodology for our present purpose, this study will employ the content analysis method as a tool for measuring public opinion.

The "traditional" content analysis technique has been used since the early decades of the century and several definitions have appeared since then. The most commonly quoted definition was given by Berelson as a *research technique for the objective, systematic and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication*.⁷² As we may deduce from this definition, what is lacking in content analysis is the analysis of the latent content, an area which can be said to be the prime aim of discourse analysis. In other words, while content analysis deals for the most part with the question of "what is said", discourse analysis addresses itself to that of "why the content is the way it is".

⁷¹ For further reading on qualitative methodologies, see: Jensen, K. B., & Jankowski, N. J. (Eds.). (1991). A Handbook of Qualitative Methodologies for Mass Communication Research. London and N.Y.: Routledge.

⁷² Berelson, B. (1952). Content analysis in communication research. In B. Berelson, & M. Janowitz (Eds.). (1966). *Reader in Public Opinion and Communication*. Second Edition. (pp. 260-266). N.Y.: The Free Press.

The basic approach for applying the content analysis technique is to: 1) choose a universe or sample of content (e.g. media type); 2) establish a category frame of external referents relevant to the purpose of the enquiry (e.g. a set of countries or political parties); 3) choose a "unit of analysis" from the content (e.g. word, sentence, picture); 4) match content to category frame by counting the frequency of the references to items in the category frame; 5) express the result as an overall distribution of the total universe or sample in terms of the frequency of occurrence of the sought-for referents.⁷³

As such, content analysis is held to be reliable (reproducible) and not unique to the investigator. McQuail aptly suggests that the method produces a statistical summary of a much larger field and it has been used for many purposes, but especially for extracting from content frequency distributions of references to things with a known frequency in social reality, for instance, occupations, crimes, political behaviours, opinions and so on.⁷⁴ Hence the method lends itself well to purposes of comparing media with reality, the study of social and cultural indicators and certain kinds of effect research.

Lastly, we should make explicit certain assumptions that the definition of the methodology implies. Content analysis assumes that study of the manifest content and its quantitative description are meaningful. It also assumes that the link between the external object of reference and the reference to it in the text is reasonably clear and unambiguous, and that frequency of occurrence of chosen references validly expresses the predominant meaning of the text in an objective way.⁷⁵

⁷³ McQuail, (1991). *op. cit.*, p. 183.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 184.

⁷⁵ Berelson, (1952). *op.cit.*

Selected media: French Newspapers

If we are to give the appropriate theoretical and operational definitions used in this study, we should first begin with the media. The mass media used for this study are three French newspapers.

When we have a general look on the media in France and the tendencies in media usage, we notice that the French are mediocre readers of daily newspapers in the world, as we have previously mentioned. However, we should note here that this is the global trend: Today, the audio-visual means of communication largely overshadow the printed press. Newspaper reading demands effort in terms of time and money, whereas radio and television appear as easily accessible and free of charge. Nevertheless, we may still say that principal sources of information in France are newspapers and weeklies.⁷⁶ Newspapers such as *Le Figaro*, *Le Monde* and *Libération*, try to compete with television by diversifying their content, multiplying their supplements, etc. in order to be able to respond to the needs of most of their readers.

Another significant point about the media in France is the considerable importance of the regional daily print media in the total number of circulation: National newspapers represent only 31.9% of the daily circulation, and they mostly bear general political information.⁷⁷ There exist 74 regional or departmental newspapers and 8 newspapers at national level in a total of 82.⁷⁸ Reserving important space to political information and international news, 5 newspapers out of 8 are the principal actors in the press market with the quality of information they present, addressing primarily the better educated readers. Our selected media in this

⁷⁶ Balle, F. (1992). *Médias et sociétés*. Paris: Montchrestien, p. 287.

⁷⁷ Cayrol, R. (1991). *Les Médias. Presse écrite, radio, télévision*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, p. 200. Source SJTI (Service juridique et technique de l'information).

⁷⁸ *Information dans le monde*. (Avril 1989). Paris: Editions du Seuil, p. 212.

study, namely *Le Figaro*, *Le Monde* and *Libération*, are part of these 5 "haut de gamme" dailies, including as well *Le Quotidien de Paris* (disappeared in 1994, today *Le Parisien* may be taken in its place) and *La Croix*. Our main concern for choosing them is that they address a considerable amount of national newspaper readers⁷⁹ having politically differentiated positions.

1. Le Figaro

The actual *Le Figaro*, which succeeded the weekly *Figaro* created in 1826, was founded as a weekly in 1854 and became daily in 1866.⁸⁰ It may be taken as the ancestor of the French national newspapers.

Being the organ of expression of the grand bourgeoisie, *Le Figaro* is serious and documented, but does not neglect photography and drawn images. It provides an open arena of discussion for different conservative views and addresses in particular the classical right. *Le Figaro* also successfully covers international events by maintaining reporters in various corners of the world.

After the death of its editor, Pierre Brisson, in 1964, the newspaper fell into several years of trouble because of the polemic existing between the editorial staff and the owners concerning decision structures. The conflict finally ended in 1971 with the creation of a council of surveying and the transfer of the major shares in 1975 to the Hersant Group by the owner. The Hersant Group modernised the management and succeeded to raise sales. The modernisation policy and diversification of supplements have further augmented the daily circulation of *Le*

⁷⁹ 1 205 903 was the total circulation of 5 "haut de gamme" newspapers in 1990, which represented approximately 62% of the total circulation of 8 national newspapers (1 931 131). Calculated depending on the scores given by Balle, (1992). *op. cit.*, p. 304.

⁸⁰ Cayrol, (1991). *op. cit.*, p. 203.

Figaro from 336 000 in 1982 to 366 000 in 1985, and 423 993 in 1990.⁸¹ The latest circulation we get is the annual average of the year 1996, which was 491 737.⁸²

As for the content, the newspaper has adapted itself well to the changes in the country: It became slightly shaded "chiraquien" approaching the 1986 elections and then during the "cohabitation" period with the socialist President of the Republic and the presidential campaign, Le Figaro, feeling the failure of the right (and because of the criticisms evoked by its mostly moderated and young public), became closer to a new type of formulation that may be identified as "Washington Post à la française".⁸³

Le Figaro has always been credited for doing a good job in covering national and foreign news and other issues related to the specialized fields such as science, art, etc.

2. Le Monde

Le Monde was introduced to the French readers on 18 December 1944 by Hubert Beuve-Méry, ex-director of the juridical and economic section of the French Institute of Prague. The launching of the newspaper was also facilitated by the de Gaulle government which wanted to see launched in France a prestigious daily, considered as serious and well documented.⁸⁴

Le Monde was an immediate success. However, the internal quarrels concerning the management of the editorial from 1980 onwards undermined its circulation which fell from 445 000 in 1980 to 357 000 in 1985.⁸⁵ The recovery plan

⁸¹ Balle, (1992). *op. cit.*, p. 304.

⁸² The latest circulation which can be made public by the Le Figaro's Advertising Department in August 1997.

⁸³ Cayrol, (1991). *op. cit.*, p. 204.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 205.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

was severe and partly efficient: Limitation of the staff, increase in the newspaper's price, renewal and rejuvenation of the editorial staff and the newspaper's dummy, and sale of the building that was in the city center (rue des Italiens) were some of the principal measures taken. Besides, Le Monde launched a new editorial policy reserving more place to investigation, to interview, to articles concerning current events, and it began to offer supplements. As a consequence, its circulation raised to 386 103 in 1990 ⁸⁶ and 368 000 in 1993.⁸⁷ The average circulation of the first eight months in 1997 was 505 840.⁸⁸

In spite of the competition of other "haut de gamme" dailies, Le Monde managed to stay above all, not maybe in terms of circulation but in quality, as being *the* newspaper of the managing (ruling) elites, university graduates and students. This is probably because of its seriousness and quality of its content which gives a wide range coverage to world events and commentaries from its own reporters. Being a serious newspaper, Le Monde rarely publishes photographs, a policy which is strongly backed by three fourth of its readers. However, it grants place to political cartoons.

Although some sources designate its political attitude as "independant liberal",⁸⁹ Le Monde's attitude in favor of the left is not neglectful. Moreover, its core and attached readers are from the center left of the political spectrum. Today, it has as much importance in the world press as it does in France and favorably competes with such global newspapers as the Financial Times or the New York Times.

⁸⁶ Balle, (1992). *op. cit.*

⁸⁷ Bertrand, C. J. (1995). *Médias. Introduction à la presse, la radio et la télévision*. Paris: Ellipses, p. 78.

⁸⁸ Latest circulation obtained from Le Monde's Advertising Department in August 1997.

⁸⁹ *Information dans le monde*. p. 212.

3. Libération

The newspaper which embraced gradually diverse tendencies of the extreme left and protest movements originated in May 1968 was first launched on 18 April 1973.⁹⁰

Constituting a platform for the extreme left of the 1970s, and interpreting events through strongly ideological eyeglasses, *Libération* was providing an original but marginal voice in the French press. However, financial difficulties led to the interruption of its publication several times in 1980 and 1981.

When the newspaper reappeared in 1981, it changed its former "maoist" image. However, it remains faithful to its initial principles: The treatment of current events under the "society" column; the thorough modification of the newspaper's structure every time general trends in society render it necessary; deliberately modern and familiar tone charged with cultural references of the '70s, which differentiates it from the neighbouring press; peculiarity of the page lay-out, vigour and strangeness of the titles; cultural pages where original or marginal events of everyday life can be found; treatment of sports as an entire field; small ads giving chance to the young and to people who identify themselves as marginal to find a convenient place for their commercial exchanges, search for small jobs and to create occasions of meeting each other.⁹¹

Today, its editorial policy may rather be defined as leftist, and it also carries in depth reporting on foreign political issues and keeps close track of world affairs.

⁹⁰ Cayrol, (1991). *op. cit.*, p. 206.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 207.

Progressively, Libération has become the leading daily for the advertisers and the businessmen in the communications field aged less than 40, who often appropriate the newspaper as their generation's. The newspaper had a circulation of 182 183 in 1990⁹² and 174 000 in 1993.⁹³ In 1996, it raised its annual average circulation to 250 000.⁹⁴

⁹² Balle; (1992). *op. cit.*

⁹³ Bertrand, (1995). *op. cit.*

⁹⁴ Latest circulation obtained from Libération's Advertising Department in August 1997.

Assumptions and hypotheses

Our assumptions and hypothesis are derived from the theoretical framework indicating that:

1. The media provide a location (or arena) where the affairs of public life are played out, both nationally and internationally. As such, their effects on public life are certain but not definitely measurable. An overview of the studies of communication effects enabled us to accept the early conclusion of Berelson dating 1948: "Some kinds of *communication* on some kinds of *issues*, brought to the attention of some kinds of *people* under some kinds of *conditions*, have some kinds of *effects*."⁹⁵
2. The three traditional forms of media (newspapers, television and radio) are still the principal sources of information through which Europeans inform themselves on the Union, that is to say its activities, specific field policies, foreign policy to non EU countries and its enlargement.
3. Interpretations about the relationship between content and effect can validly be made, or the actual relationship can be established by the use of content analysis, which is often carried out to identify the presumable effects of the content upon the attention, attitudes, or opinions of readers.
4. The "foreign news readers" imply, on the one hand, the aware readers who deliberately seek and receive information and, on the other, insufficiently informed readers who want to get informed easily from their primary sources.

⁹⁵ Quoted by Klapper, (1960). op.cit.

Depending on these assumptions and keeping in mind the arguments for the purpose of this study, our research was based on the following hypotheses:

1. The French press would have a favourable attitude towards Turkey.
2. While attributing a favourable image, the French press would underline the favourable changes in Turkish domestic politics rather than her shortcomings for becoming a partner of the European countries.

CHAPTER 5. METHOD AND PROCEDURES

This study was designed to test the hypotheses cited above, using the content analysis method. The data was formed by gathering related articles from the newspapers and coding them under appropriate categories.

Sampling

When we formulated the aims of our inquiry, the sampling design was partly determined. We had already limited our data according to source, type of medium and period.

The universe of relevant materials, regardless of the definition of research hypotheses, is unattainable. A feasible way of obtaining data is selecting a sample which is considered to be representative of the universe.

In the first step, we should select the communication media. The factors which led us to test our hypotheses by studying the French press are clear. France is one of the European countries that has always been in close relations with Turkey since the period of the Ottoman Empire. Moreover, it is one of the core countries in the European integration process pursuing politically moderate policies. We believe that French public opinion, though not representative, would give us an idea of the European public opinion. The reason of preference of *Le Figaro*, *Le Monde* and *Libération* as representative of the whole French press, can be clarified in terms of circulation and their readers' differentiated political positions.

In the second step, according to our hypotheses, we selected to study the issues between the dates of December 1, 1994 and December 31, 1995. The

beginning date corresponds to the beginning of the month prior to the unrealized entry into force of the Customs Union by 1 January 1995, as foreseen in the original timetable laid down in the Additional Protocol of 1970 to the Ankara Agreement. The closing date corresponds to the end of the month in which the European Parliament definitively approved the coming into force of the Customs Union by 1 January 1996.

Our next task was the data selection from the content of these newspapers published during these thirteen months. We constructed a straightforward and simple test to extract sample data: We looked into 396 issues of each of the three newspapers⁹⁶ and selected the sample data from the articles which had "Turkey, EU, CU" in their title or in the body of the article, regardless of their size and page. As a result, we kept 84 articles, the content of which held with the specified above terms.

⁹⁶ Since all these newspapers are daily, from 1.12.1994 to 31.12.1995, we looked into 396 days * 3 newspapers = 1188 newspaper issues in total.

Category Selection and Units of Analysis

One of the main problems in a research design is category selection and definition. The success of content analysis depends on its categories. Categories are needed to be clearly adapted to the question and to the content. If categories have no or little relevance to the research inquiry, it would be meaningless to discuss the main aspects of content analysis. Therefore, while determining the general categories in this study, we paid close attention to the following general principles: Does the category reflect the purpose of the research? Is it exhaustive? Are there clear boundaries between these categories? Are categories mutually exclusive?

According to our hypotheses, we have defined two main attribute categories: favourable and unfavourable. We avoided to define a third category as neutral for two reasons. Basically, it was not required in our research inquiry. Secondly, there is a theoretical expectation that foreign policy oriented articles are hardly ever value free.

On the other hand, we constructed appropriate thematic categories by a thorough examination of our sample articles considering our research hypotheses. As in many content analyses, standard categories or ready-made classification schemes related to research purpose are not available. Thus, we thought useful to formulate ten thematic categories which would lead us to meaningful conclusions concerning our research hypotheses. We also added another category as to the dates of articles to enrich our research findings.

After categorizing, the next question was to determine the units to be coded. The recording unit is the segment of the content to be placed in one of the categories. In this study, we have taken the theme of an article as the recording unit, which required intensive and attentive work since the researcher must reduce the article to

its basic (main) theme in order to place it into a proper category. We did not choose a word or symbol as recording unit because it was, compared to the theme, less appropriate for finding an answer to our research hypotheses.

In order to place the theme under proper attribute categories, again, we did not choose any defining word as recording unit, since it was clear from the tone or the style of the article whether it should be taken as favourable or unfavourable. For, favourable and unfavourable direction could not be solely understood without a reference to the context of the recording unit.

By coding, the raw data were systematically transformed into units. Units permit precise description of relevant content characteristics. We have taken 84 articles as units of measurement and coded them as favourable and unfavourable under proper thematic categories. Coding schemes for each newspaper are presented in appendix. While coding, we asked relevant questions such as: Is Turkey mentioned in favourable or unfavourable terms? / What is the general tone of this article? / What is the main theme of this article? / What is this article basically talking about?

Theoretical and Methodological Limitations

The present study will obviously carry some of the limitations of the content analysis method.

In categorizing, we were aware of the fact that the requirements of the categories to be exhaustive and exclusive could not be fully met. Indeed, such a task is almost impossible to accomplish in content analysis.

Can every relevant item in the sample articles be easily placed into one of the categories? The realistic answer to that question is no. This is another reason why we might also be criticized for being subjective in the coding process. Mutual exclusiveness for favourable and unfavourable categories seemed to us to be self evident; therefore, we did not even feel the necessity to define the favourable and unfavourable. In regards to the thematic categories, it is extremely difficult to assign a theme into a single category because of the nature of the categories which is not as clear as dichotomous categories and we may be faced with overgeneralizing. To solve such a problem, if any such theme were present, it was judged according to its close relevance to any of the categories.

Although themes are valid over time and space within an ideological framework, the policy of the press which depends on the independent variables of economic and other interests may easily change. Thus, the attitude of the press as well as public opinion about Turkey-EU relations also change. Bearing this in mind, we would like to underline that our study is limited to specific economic and political conditions of both sides. As such, it cannot be generalized to other situations, even if the other situations represent similar characteristics. It is specific in itself.

The study may also seem to some as the test of the obvious. Obvious is obvious only in the eyes of the observer, and it may not be obvious to others or it may mean a different kind of obvious.

We believe that the data gathered and analyzed by the method as explained above in this present chapter, though "obvious", would provide helpful insights to the issue. We will now see the general findings, followed by a discussion of each hypothesis and findings.

CHAPTER 6. FINDINGS

At the outset, we may underline the fact, by simple consideration of the number and the intensity of the articles appeared during thirteen months, that the CU is not perceived by the French with the same enthusiasm as in Turkey. The three French newspapers' interest in Turkey-EU relations or in the completion process of the CU was not considerable enough through 1 December 1994 to 31 December 1995 to indicate serious media attention. Considering that total number of news presented in a newspaper is between 80 and 100 per day⁹⁷, 84 articles on the subject appeared during nearly 400 days (precisely 396) made it implausible to claim that the issue had really gripped the public mind.

Results of the analysis of the data are presented in tables and figures.

Table 1 shows the themes (thematic categories) and their monthly distribution regardless of the newspaper. We observe a high concentration of news in three monthly periods, namely February 1995, March 1995 and December 1995. The newspapers seem to have preferred to inform the public on the subject occasionally, that is to say, when there was a reunion or a session held to discuss the implementation procedures of the CU between Turkey and EU. On 6 March 1995, Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the 15 voted favourable for the CU after long negotiations to overcome the Greek opposition in the previous month. The European Parliament (EP), in its session held on 13 December 1995, finally voted for the agreement to be in effect starting January 1, 1996.

⁹⁷ Average number obtained from Le Monde's News Desk in August 1997.

TABLE 1. GENERAL DISTRIBUTION OF THEMES ACCORDING TO DATES

Sum of TOTAL THEME	DATE														Grand Total
	12/94	1/95	2/95	3/95	04/95	05/95	06/95	07/95	08/95	09/95	10/95	11/95	12/95		
A1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
A2	2	0	17	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	22
A3	3	1	3	3	0	1	6	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	19
A4	1	0	6	1	1	0	0	3	0	1	0	3	1	17	
A5	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	
A6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	7	10	
A7	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	
A8	0	0	0	4	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	
A9	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	
A10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	
Grand Total	7	1	27	16	3	1	6	4	0	1	0	8	10	84	

A1	Economic benefits of CU (Mutual trade relations and European monetary credits to Turkey)
A2	Greek opposition to CU (Problem of Cyprus)
A3	Turkish desire to be part of the West (Economic or political efforts of amelioration)
A4	Shortcomings of Turkey for concluding CU (Bad human rights record and democratization)
A5	Signature of the CU by EU-Turkey Association Council
A6	Approval of the CU by the EP
A7	Advantages of the CU for EU countries
A8	Intervention of Turkish Army in Northern Iraq (Human rights violations)
A9	Condemnation of some Kurdish origin B7deputies
A10	Advantages of the CU for Turkish interior politics (Çiller's political discourse)

TABLE 2. DISTRIBUTION OF THEMES ACCORDING TO THEIR TONE

NEWSPAPER	Data	THEME										Grand Total
		A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6	A7	A8	A9	A10	
SARO	Favorable	1	3	6	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	13
	Unfavorable	0	5	2	5	0	1	0	2	0	0	15
MONDE	Favorable	0	4	5	3	2	4	0	0	1	0	19
	Unfavorable	0	2	0	4	0	2	0	3	1	0	12
GENERATION	Favorable	0	5	5	0	1	2	0	0	0	2	15
	Unfavorable	0	3	1	5	0	0	0	1	0	0	10
Total Favorable		1	12	16	3	4	7	1	0	1	2	47
Total Unfavorable		0	10	3	14	0	3	0	6	1	0	37

Our first hypothesis was that the French press had a favourable attitude towards Turkey. In order to test this hypothesis, the themes were assigned under either favourable or unfavourable categories. Table 2 shows the total distribution as well as the distribution according to each newspaper of the themes under two attribute categories. On the whole, we see that the themes were presented in more positive terms than negative. Of the 84 articles, 47 (56%) carried favourable and 37 (44%) unfavourable tones. The result confirms our hypothesis.

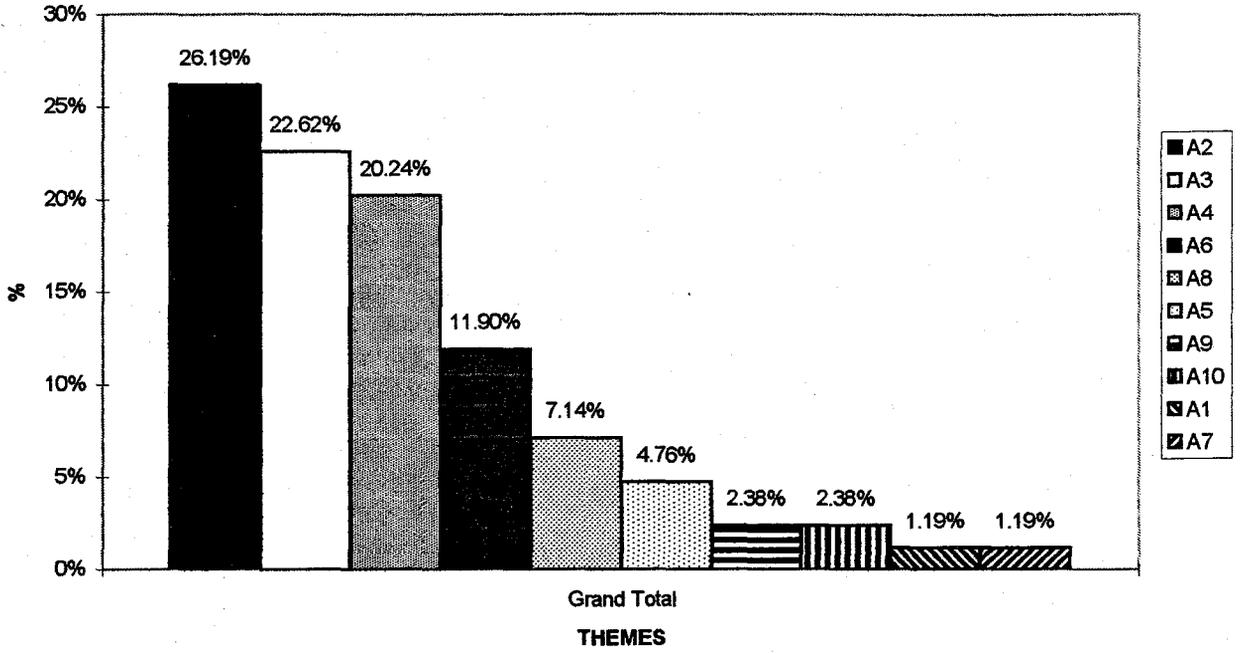
If we are to discuss this finding with a detailed examination of Table 2, we should add that the numerical superiority of the favourable category is clearly due to theme A3 in which we coded articles concerning Turkish desire to be part of the West and the efforts that Turkish governments undertook for this end. It might be expected that these articles carry favourable attributes in order not to discourage Turkish policy makers as well as the public.

As we have mentioned, the specific politico-economic conditions of the research period may be at the roots of the confirmation of our hypothesis. It is expected to end up the research period with a positively oriented treatment of the news concerning a country with which the European countries including France decided finally to conclude CU. One should also note the fact that, during this period, Turkey was attempting to give a different image to the outside world with her first woman Prime minister trying hard to eliminate the obstacles in front of Turkish membership.

Our second hypothesis maintained that the French press, while treating the news about Turkey positively, basically underlines the favourable changes in Turkish domestic politics rather than her shortcomings. In order to test this hypothesis, we calculated the frequency of each thematic category shown in Figure 1 and the result does not confirm our hypothesis. By the examination of Figure 1 and also Table 1, we found out that the theme mostly appeared was the Greek opposition to the completion of CU, taking its origin from the Cyprus problem. Besides the Greek opposition, articles concerning Turkish desire to be part of Europe and her efforts for the realization of this ideal took second place of importance. The politico-economic context of the research period renders this ranking expectable, as it was the case for the confirmation of our first hypothesis. In the third place we notice the articles criticizing Turkey's shortcomings, particularly human rights violations and democratization. Another two thematic categories should be added to this category in order to confirm the relatively high proportion of the articles stressing Turkey's shortcomings: The intervention of the Turkish Armed Forces in Northern Iraq and the trial of Kurdish deputies. These articles were in fact underlining human rights violations in Turkey.

For long time, the Cyprus problem between Turkey and Greece, human rights violations and other problems of Turkish democracy, Turkey's economy, her demography and Islam have been discussed as obstacles for Turkey, preventing her from being an equal partner of the European countries. What is new in the latter finding is that Turkey's poor economic record, population size or the religion of the people were not treated as elements of her shortcomings. The newspapers studied were insisting on democratization and human rights violations. Le Monde's article of 18 February 1995 entitled "European Parliament advances conditions to conclude CU with Turkey", is typical: "Regardless of the result of the negotiations between Greece and its European partners concerning the conclusion of CU with Ankara, the European Parliament advances some conditions for its final approval. It does not

FIGURE 1. FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF THEMES



intend to give its consent to the CU as long as human rights and democratic principles are better respected in this country."

As well known, the major source of the Greek opposition concerns the Cyprus problem. Except Le Figaro, other newspapers treated this opposition in a favourable tone for Turkey, underlining the capricious attitude of Greece towards Turkey and her opportunism to use the Customs Union in order to initiate and accelerate negotiations between Cyprus and the EU.

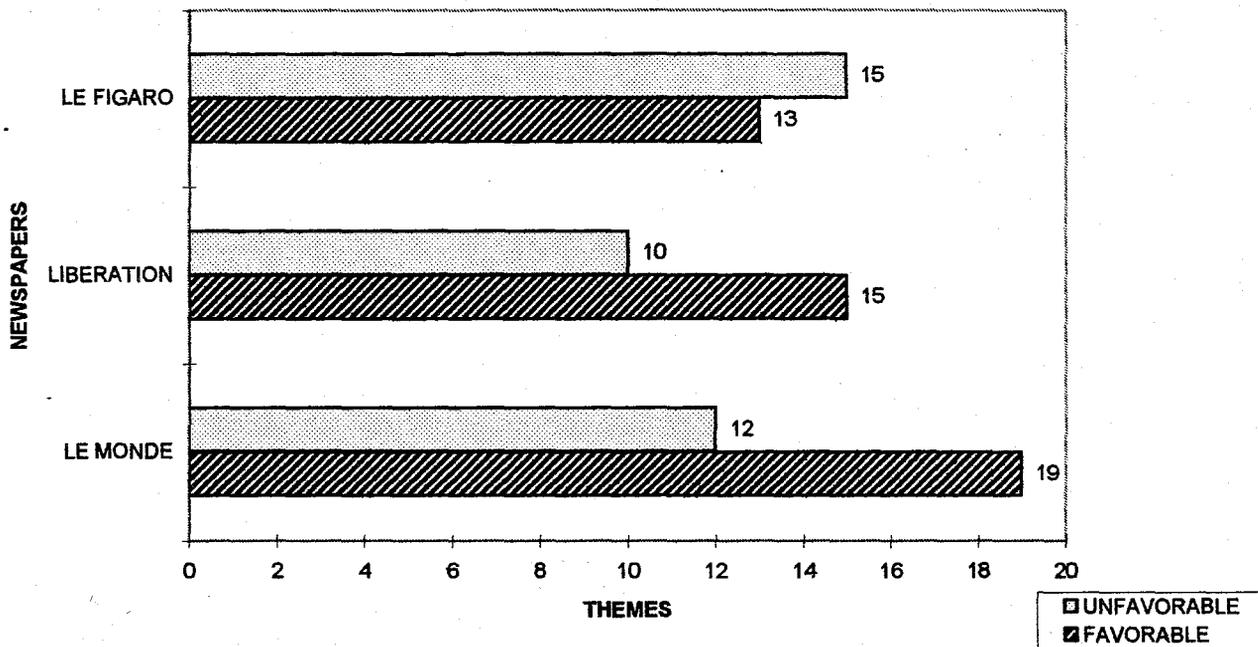
"Europe: Greece alone against all. Crisis in Brussels." (Le Figaro, 16 February 1995). Maybe this title is enough to give an idea about how the Greek opposition is considered in the articles, even though Le Figaro is the newspaper that treated the subject in a more unfavourable tone for Turkey. Libération, on 10 February 1995, stresses the changing attitude of Greece: "Greece replay the spoilsport between Turkey and the Fifteen. Greek government rejected yesterday the compromise elaborated last Monday according to which Greece would stop to exercise its veto on Customs Union with Turkey in exchange for discussions of accession negotiations for Cyprus. Evangelos Venizelos declared that 'the position of Greek government is negative as long as the opening date of negotiations' for the accession of Cyprus is not clearly defined. In the text, the formulation *may start* should be replaced by *will start.*' (...)"

As for the thematic category concerning the Turkish desire to be part of the West, we do not notice a significant concentration in any specific period in any newspaper. An article signed by Tansuğ Bleda, Turkish ambassador in Paris, found itself a place in Le Figaro dated 8 March 1995 and stands as a good example for this category. In its heading, it says "Turkish walk towards Europe. All the generations who wanted to extend Atatürk's main work, pursued the orientation of Turkey towards Europe." Another article in the same newspaper, dated 24 July 1995,

qualifies as a reform the amendment of the 1982 Constitution realized by the Turkish National Assembly, extending union rights to civil servants; allowing university professors and students to be involved in politics; and reducing the voting age from 21 to 18. This amendment is interpreted by the newspaper as a positive effort made by the Turkish government, which satisfies the requirements of the European Parliament concerning democratization.

A common-sense assumption that conservative circles have more unfavourable approaches to new entries into the EU is sustained. In Figure 2, we observe that *Le Figaro*, a rightist newspaper, treats the themes in more unfavourable tones than the other newspapers. Table 2 clearly indicates that this position of *Le Figaro* is due to thematic categories A2 and A4, which successively comprise articles concerning Greek opposition and Turkey's shortcomings. By advancing these themes negatively, *Le Figaro* wants to influence its public that Turkey does not bear the standards for becoming an associate in the near future.

Le Monde (center leftist) and *Libération* (leftist) treat the news in more favourable tone. They do not seem to reject Turkey's desire to be part of the West and seem to support her efforts. *Le Monde's* editorial on 15 December 1995, published just after the approval of the CU by the European Parliament, reflects clearly this view. It is entitled "Bet on Turkey": "By its repeated violations of human rights, a bloody repression policy towards the Kurds in Anatolia, where the military still exercises torture and puts on fire villages, its occupation of the northern territory of Cyprus in contempt of the United Nations' resolutions, the government in Ankara has transgressed for long time the basic rules of democracy... However, a "no" given in response to Turkey would be more detrimental at this point. Fundamentalist Islamic movements would find themselves alone on the scene... It is to Mrs. Çiller to protect the fine balance of the country between tradition and modernism, Europe and Asia, democracy and dictatorship. (...)"

FIGURE 2. DISTRIBUTION OF FAVORABLE & UNFAVORABLE THEMES

There is, indeed, no significant difference between the newspapers as regards to dates. The treatment of themes by three newspapers on distinct dates generally coincides with each other. By a close examination of Tables 3a/3b/3c, we observe that they show almost the same concern to their coverage about Turkey during this period. All the newspapers stress the same issues at the same time except a unique article in *Le Figaro* discusses the economic facet of the CU. Moreover, the difference between the total of the articles they present about Turkey in a given timespan does not alert us for making noteworthy interpretations.

TABLE 3a. DISTRIBUTION OF THEMES IN FIGARO

THEME	NEWSPAPER		DATE												Total
	FIGARO		12/94	01/95	02/95	03/95	04/95	05/95	06/95	07/95	08/95	09/95	10/95	11/95	
A1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
A2	1	0	6	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8
A3	1	0	2	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	8
A4	0	0	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	5
A5	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
A6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
A7	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
A8	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
A9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
A10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	2	0	12	6	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	2	2	28

TABLE 3b. DISTRIBUTION OF THEMES IN LE MONDE

THEME	NEWSPAPER		DATE												Total
	LE MONDE		12/94	01/95	02/95	03/95	04/95	05/95	06/95	07/95	08/95	09/95	10/95	11/95	
A1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
A2	1	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
A3	1	0	0	1	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
A4	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	2	1	7	
A5	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	
A6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	4	6	
A7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
A8	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	
A9	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	
A10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Total	3	0	6	5	2	0	3	1	0	1	0	5	5	31	

TABLE 3c. DISTRIBUTION OF THEMES IN LIBERATION

THEME	NEWSPAPER		DATE												Total
	LIBERATION		12/94	01/95	02/95	03/95	04/95	05/95	06/95	07/95	08/95	09/95	10/95	11/95	
A1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
A2	0	0	6	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8
A3	1	1	1	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
A4	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
A5	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
A6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2
A7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
A8	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
A9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
A10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	
Total	2	1	9	5	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	1	3	25

Conclusion

One of the most prominent themes to emerge from our study is the close connection of public opinion with processes of discussion, debate, and collective decision making. This connection was traced, in Chapter 1, back to public opinion's origin and early history as a political-philosophical concept. The linkages to discussion and debate were retained through public opinion's subsequent adaptation and elaboration both as a sociological and psychological construct. Given these linkages, public opinion -whether viewed in philosophical, political, sociological or psychological terms- remains fundamentally a *communication concept*. We may then suggest that public debate, in other terms public opinion, occurs mainly by virtue of interactions between elite political actors and their attentive spectators, which is facilitated in several important ways by *the media*.

The democratic foundations of the concept of public opinion are indisputable; so are the democratic foundations of daily political decisions. Decisions relying on public opinion are made through publicity and communication. Here communication is as much a tool for persuasion as for information gathering and, as potentially useful for managing opinions as for soliciting them. This line of reasoning inevitably leads us to the ongoing debate, which is both academic and popular, concerning the role of the media: Does the media "form" or "reflect" public opinion? This inquiry can also be put in other terms: Does the media "guide" or "follow" public opinion?

Although survey research is the most common method of observing and studying public opinion, the analysis of mass media content also plays an important role in public opinion research. Naturally occurring byproducts of public debate provide analysts with fruitful observations from several angles (i.e. processes of the production of media messages, work practices of journalists, behavior of political actors). In conformity with the above debate, the content of the media can be

investigated as persuasive stimuli that shapes public reactions to issues or, as inputs to policymaking. In the present study, we take advantage of this double facet of the analysis of the media content.

The second theme which emerged as a consequence of the analysis of the content of three French newspapers is that the French public opinion is favourable to Turkey and Turkey's integration to Europe although it is still doubtful about the prospects of Turkey to overcome her shortcomings. This study might well be seen as a complement to the investigations realized in other fields (e.g. marketing, social psychology) about Turkey's image or perception in other countries.⁹⁸ For instance, Güliz Ger found out, in a survey of one hundred and nineteen French graduate business students, that Turkey appeared to be perceived as a country entangled between "East" and "West", and considered within the "non-European" group with her negatively evaluated Islamic religion, economy, and domestic political problems (human rights violations, inadequate democratization, repression of minorities). Furthermore, her findings also suggested that a country's image depends on the context, which is to say that the focus of attention and perceptions are manipulated favourably or unfavourably by the circumstances present in the context.

The results of our research confirm and complement in several ways the latter findings. Three French dailies present Turkey in generally favourable terms as to the completion of the EU-Turkey Customs Union. In total, Turkey is mentioned favourably by 56% of the news articles. This finding underlines the importance of the context in the perception process.

Another finding is that Turkey's shortcomings that place her ranking in the "non-European" group in the eyes of the French, are still perceived as valid by the

⁹⁸ See, for example, Ger, G. (1991, January). Country image: Perceptions, attitudes and associations, and their relationship to context. In R. R. Dholakia, & K. C. Bothra (Eds.). Proceedings of Third International Conference on Marketing and Development. New Delhi, India. (pp. 390-398).

French press. However, what may be considered as a contribution of the present study is that Turkey's shortcomings and their ranking have changed over the years. The Islamic religion, the unstable character of the Turkish economy, and the high rates of population growth do not appear anymore in the content of the French press as bases of Turkey's handicaps to become a partner of European countries. This latter finding renders us hopeful concerning the future of Turkey-EU relations, confirming the positive results of the efforts realized by Turkish political elites.

If we are to talk in terms of the "new world order", a concept first used by George Bush, then President of the USA, referring to two important developments at the time, the collapse of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the Gulf Crisis, it is crucial for Europe to be integrated in order to be a powerful bloc before enlarging the Community. This integration process, sharply set up by the Maastricht Treaty in 1992, is not easy and without complications. Nowadays, public opinion in various European countries has been very much preoccupied with the Union's future, enlargement, and the realization of ideals such as a common currency unit.⁹⁹

Perhaps, this is one of the reasons why Western Europe, after the establishment of the CU in 1996, does not particularly seem to interest itself in Turkey's future concerning her EU membership. Given Turkey's not negligible importance for European economy (e.g. the EU's share of total foreign capital invested in Turkey is about 60%, and slightly under 50% as regards the number of Turkish firms with foreign capital participation), EU countries have concluded the CU with Turkey. However, the CU decision was presented as a stand not only about the future of European-Turkish relations but also about Turkey's future in general, affected by the arguments of Tansu Çiller who maintained that a "No" vote from the EP would inevitably strengthen the Islamic anti-Western and anti-European forces in

⁹⁹ Vergau, H. -J. Top Türkiye'nin Sahasında. Translated article published in Milliyet, 29 August 1997, p. 20.

Turkey, and thus contribute to the weakening of Turkey's bonds with the West. This over-politicization of the issue as a result almost completely pushed into the background the proper substance of the CU which is essentially of an economic nature.

At present, it depends on Turkey to get benefits from her unique position (being a non-member country which is institutionally most strongly integrated with the EU) in order to strengthen her political ties with the Fifteen. The start of the CU should not by any means be interpreted as signifying the vanishing of differences between Turkey and the EU concerning democratization, human rights and the Kurdish problem, as well as the problem of Cyprus. We know that Turkey would not become an ideal western-style democracy overnight. But Turkey should continue to underline her historical relationship with Europe and intensify her efforts to ameliorate domestic problems with her democracy. There is no doubt that Europeans are aware of Turkey's strategic position at the crossroads of the Caucasus, the Balkans, the Middle East and Central Asia, which gives her a role of major importance, supported as well by the US administration.

LE FIGARO

	Themes / Dates	12/94	01/95	02/95	03/95	04/95	05/95	06/95	07/95	08/95	09/95	10/95	11/95	12/95
A1	Economic benefits of CU (Mutual trade relations and European credit to Turkey)	+		1										
		-												
A2	Greek opposition to CU (Problem of Cyprus)	+		2	1									
		-	1	4										
A3	Turkish desire to be part of the West (Economic or political efforts of amelioration)	+	1	1	1			1	1				1	
		-		1			1							
A4	Shortcomings of Turkey for concluding CU (Bad human rights record and democratization)	+												
		-		3	1								1	
A5	Signature of the CU by EU-Turkey Association Council	+			1									
		-												
A6	Approval of the CU by the EP	+												1
		-												1
A7	Advantages of the CU for EU countries	+			1									
		-												
A8	Intervention of Turkish Army in Northern Iraq (Human rights violations)	+												
		-			1	1								
A9	Condemnation of Kurdish deputies	+												
		-												
A10	Advantages of the CU for Turkish interior politics (Çiller's political discourse)	+												
		-												

LE MONDE

	Themes / Dates	12/94	01/95	02/95	03/95	04/95	05/95	06/95	07/95	08/95	09/95	10/95	11/95	12/95
A1	Economic benefits of CU (Mutual trade relations and European credit to Turkey)	+												
		-												
A2	Greek opposition to CU (Problem of Cyprus)	+		4										
		-	1	1										
A3	Turkish desire to be part of the West (Economic or political efforts of amelioration)	+	1		1			3						
		-												
A4	Shortcomings of Turkey for concluding CU (Bad human rights record and democratization)	+							1				2	
		-		1		1					1			1
A5	Signature of the CU by EU-Turkey Association Council	+			2									
		-												
A6	Approval of the CU by the EP	+											2	2
		-												2
A7	Advantages of the CU for EU countries	+												
		-												
A8	Intervention of Turkish Army in Northern Iraq (Human rights violations)	+												
		-			2	1								
A9	Condemnation of Kurdish deputies	+											1	
		-	1											
A10	Advantages of the CU for Turkish interior politics (Çiller's political discourse)	+												
		-												

LIBERATION

Themes / Dates		12/94	01/95	02/95	03/95	04/95	05/95	06/95	07/95	08/95	09/95	10/95	11/95	12/95
A1	Economic benefits of CU (Mutual trade relations and European credit to Turkey)	+												
		-												
A2	Greek opposition to CU (Problem of Cyprus)	+		4	1									
		-		2	1									
A3	Turkish desire to be part of the West (Economic or political efforts of amelioration)	+	1		1	1			2					
		-		1										
A4	Shortcomings of Turkey for concluding CU (Bad human rights record and democratization)	+												
		-	1		2				2					
A5	Signature of the CU by EU-Turkey Association Council	+				1								
		-												
A6	Approval of the CU by the EP	+											1	1
		-												
A7	Advantages of the CU for EU countries	+												
		-												
A8	Intervention of Turkish Army in Northern Iraq (Human rights violations)	+												
		-				1								
A9	Condemnation of Kurdish deputies	+												
		-												
A10	Advantages of the CU for Turkish interior politics (Çiller's political discourse)	+												2
		-												

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