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**EU Leadership attitudes towards Turkish EU membership and their
influence on national policy**

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This research paper will focus on leadership attitudes towards Turkish EU accession and membership in the administrations of three key EU states, Britain, Germany and France. It will attempt to show under what circumstances an analysis of the leadership profile of a national statesman can be most suitable as a lens through which to account for significant foreign policy changes or continuities. Nevertheless, as the analysis of a leader's individual beliefs, values and actions cannot constitute the sole means for explaining a particular state's stance towards an important policy issue, each case examination will be set within one or two predominant frames focusing on domestic and international factors that help to explain a country's stance towards Turkish EU membership.

In the German and French case where significant foreign policy change has occurred between the previous and current administration, this paper will apply a theoretic framework by Jacob Gustavsson that examines structural factors and political agency in foreign policy change. In the first section, the means for examining leadership attitudes will be established and Gustavsson's model will be presented. This section will also clarify the nature of domestic and international factors influencing national policy towards Turkish EU membership. The following three sections will each examine the respective cases of Britain, Germany and France. For reasons of brevity, in most cases only one national leader will be examined. Apart from sampling the rhetoric of national leaders, the degree of a country's support or opposition towards Turkish EU accession will also be measured against its overall conduct at key EU events and processes vital to accession negotiations as well as within domestic politics.

Lastly, the conclusion will set out a brief comparison of all three cases regarding the extent to which leadership attitudes were influential in shifting government policy towards Turkish EU membership. As will be seen in the case of Sarkozy, the structural factors shaping the issue of Turkish EU membership as well as his own views as well as his style of politics have provided him with more scope to shift national policy than in Germany or Britain.

Leadership profile and leadership change

In examining the extent to which the policy towards Turkish EU membership can be affected by national leaders and their alternation, various factors and dimension need to be considered. In characterizing a leader's personality it is important to take into account factors such as personal background, world views and ideological stances. As both Hudson and Kaarbo emphasize, an examination of a leaders' personality can help clarify under what circumstances 'leaders matter' or when their preferences have an impact on foreign policy output.¹ Other contextual factors determining a leader's capacity to affect foreign policy include the leader's overall interest in foreign policy, the leadership style, the division of power within the cabinet and whether one is leading a single-party or coalition government.² Evidently, coalition governments hamper a leader's ability to orchestrate foreign policy change on crucial issues. As to the importance of leadership alternation on foreign policy, Hagan posits 3 types of leadership change within democratic politics. He distinguishes between the simple rotation of the 'predominant leader', a 'major factional shift' within the

¹ Hudson, V. (2006) 'The Individual Decisionmaker: The Political Psychology of World Leaders', in Hudson, V. (ed.), *Foreign Policy Analysis: Classic And Contemporary Theory*, Rowman and Littlefield, pp.37; Kaarbo, J. (1997) 'Prime Minister Leadership styles in Foreign Policy Decision-making: a Framework for Research', *Political Psychology*, 18(3), p.560

² Hudson 2006: p.38

same ruling party or a 'regular exchange of power between contending, mainstream parties or groups'.³

As will be detailed, both Germany and France's position towards Turkish EU membership shifted dramatically from strong to moderate support to weak support if not outright opposition. Therefore it could be useful to map these developments within a model of foreign policy change. Gustavsson's framework of foreign policy change focuses on the effects of political and economic inputs on the domestic and external scale on the process of foreign policy decision making.⁴ The model privileges the political agency of decision-makers in these situations as well as the ability of periods of crises to act as 'windows of opportunities' which reform-minded policy-entrepreneurs can use in effectuating foreign policy change.⁵ As will be seen, the explicatory power of this framework is strongest when applied to circumstances in which political leaders have great freedom and flexibility in foreign policy decision-making. The model's amalgamation of both structuralist and agential emphases make it suitable for combination with an analysis of leadership attitudes towards Turkish EU membership.

The domestic level

It has become evident that certain factors act as potential domestic determinants in influencing national positions on Turkish EU membership. The degree of support that Turkish accession to the EU attracts within the party-political environment is crucial. In the

³ Hagan, J.D. (1994) 'Domestic Political Regime Change and Foreign Policy Restructuring: A Framework for Comparative Analysis', in Rosati, J.R., Hagan, J.D., Sampson III, M.W. (eds.), *Foreign Policy Restructuring*, University of South Carolina Press, p.145

⁴ See appendix 1

⁵ Gustavsson, J. (1999) 'How Should We Study Foreign Policy Change?', *Cooperation and Conflict*, 34(1), pp.85-86

UK, there is also cross-political support for Turkish EU membership.⁶ Secondly, one must ascertain what degree of public support the issue attracts.⁷ In recent years, especially after the 2004 EU expansion, polls have consistently shown that domestic constituencies in key EU states have undergone ‘enlargement fatigue’ and become opposed to Turkish accession.⁸ In this sense, domestic opposition can act as a structural constraint on governments to continue supportive positions towards Turkish accession. For instance, Soler i Lecha (2003: 3) argues that the absence of a public debate in Spain regarding Turkish EU membership enabled successive governments across the political spectrum to maintain a position of strong support for Turkey throughout the last 20-30 years.⁹

A third influential factor pertains to the size of the Turkish immigrant community, other immigrant communities and the degree of inter-communal integration and cohesion existing within the national society. In those countries where Turkey’s accession to the EU is perceived more as a domestic concern than an issue of foreign policy, sentiments both amongst the public and the party-political spectrum tend to be significantly less supportive and increasingly oppositional and hostile.¹⁰ In these cases, this issue also tends to be connected to such inter-related domestic concerns as national identity, economic insecurity and the direction in which the national society and culture is developing. In Germany and France, Turkish EU membership is connected and confused with issues pertaining to the

⁶ Whitman, R. (2007) ‘The United Kingdom and Turkish accession: The Enlargement instinct prevails’, in Tocci, N. (ed.), *Conditionality, Impact and Prejudice in EU-Turkish Relations: IAI-Tepav Report*, Istituto Affari Internazionali, p.124

⁷ For an overview of domestic opinion in key EU member states on Turkish accession see appendix 2

⁸ Tocci, N. (2007) ‘Unpacking European discourses: Conditionality, Impact and Prejudice in EU-Turkish Relations’, in Tocci, N. (ed.), *Conditionality, Impact and Prejudice in EU-Turkish Relations: IAI-Tepav Report*, Istituto Affari Internazionali, p.14

⁹ Soler i Fecha, E. (2003) *Spain: Turkey’s advocate in the EU?*, Observatory of European Foreign Policy, p.3

¹⁰ Barysch, K. (2007) *What Europeans think about Turkey and why*, Centre for European Reform, p.3

integration of Turkish and more generally Muslim immigrant communities.¹¹ On the other hand, countries like Spain, Sweden or Spain which interpret Turkish accession as a foreign policy issue affecting the EU tend to be generally more supportive.

International factors

The issue of Turkish accession to the EU is not only linked up with key domestic but also wider-ranging international concerns tied to how political elites and the general public view themselves within the EU. It also relates to their concerns on the direction in which the EU should evolve as an organization. In this sense, as Wood emphasizes, the Turkish EU accession process deals with ‘3 levels of politics’, the domestic, international and an additional EU level.¹²

A significant aspect of this EU-level debate concerns the extent to which the EU should assume quasi-federal jurisdiction over the foreign and domestic policies of its member states. Countries like the United Kingdom are fearful of losing national sovereignty in key governance areas.¹³ Thus they tend to support expanding the EU in order to weaken its ability to centralize decision-making powers and achieve further integration.¹⁴ Other countries such as France or Germany have linked their futures to the progressive integration of the EU and tend to oppose enlargement. Turkish EU membership has become a symbolic battleground between both camps.¹⁵ The power dynamics between these factions, the evolving nature of the EU project and the need to maintain a viable working consensus

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Wood, S. (2004) *The EU and Turkey: Political Machinations in a Three-Level Game*, Australian National University, p.19

¹³ George, S., Bache, J. (2001) *Politics in the European Union*, Oxford University Press, p.182

¹⁴ Barysch 2007: p.13

¹⁵ Tocci 2007: p.18

between member states thus have to be considered when assessing the shifts and continuities in a country's policy towards Turkish EU membership.

The following three sections will focus on the cases of Britain, Germany, France. For each case, it will be examined to what extent the leadership personality of the current and previous administrations had an impact on the national position towards Turkish EU membership. This will be set within the respective contexts which were most crucial for each case. Lastly, for those cases where actual foreign policy change occurred, Gustavsson's model will be applied.

United Kingdom

'I sincerely believe that EU membership is Turkey's future.' Tony Blair¹⁶

'... we want the European Union to be a shared institution of which Britain and Turkey are full and equal members' David Miliband, Brown's foreign minister¹⁷

The UK's position towards Turkish EU membership between the Blair administration and the Brown administration differs from that of Germany and France in several crucial aspects. Firstly, the Brown government has largely inherited and maintained its stance of being the 'most consistent supporter at government level' of Turkish accession within the EU.¹⁸ Secondly, unlike France and Germany, the UK's relation to the EU on a whole is

¹⁶ Oliver, M. (2005) 'Turkey's future lies in EU, says Blair', *Guardian*, Sep.30
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/eu/story/0,7369,1581981,00.html>

¹⁷ Reuters (2007) 'Miliband reaffirms British support for Turkey EU bid', *Reuters*, Sep. 5,
<http://uk.reuters.com/article/domesticNews/idUKL0584853820070905>

¹⁸ Redmond, J. (2007) 'Turkey and the European Union: troubled European or European trouble?', *International Affairs*, 83(2), p.310

much more detached and skeptical than that of France and Germany which have been identified as the traditional engine of European integration. The UK sees the US, not the EU, as its principal partner in international affairs and is not inclined to further the 'deepening' of the EU along quasi-federal lines.

Thirdly, at the domestic level, apart from a small circle of scholars and policy-makers, there is hardly any public debate concerning the issue of Turkish EU membership.¹⁹ Although there is also a sizeable Turkish Cypriot community of some 100,000, the overall size of the UK's Turkish community is very small and has not been linked to any wider-ranging debates concerning national identity, social integration, immigration or economic security. Therefore, the UK's position on Turkish EU membership can be best explained through the prism of its external relations to the EU, the US as well as the British conception of itself in the international arena.

Britain's Grand Strategy towards the EU and Turkey's part in it

Britain has traditionally been seen as the 'awkward partner' in the EU since the 1970s, especially during the Thatcher government as she constantly railed against the dangers of a 'European superstate' threatening Britain's sovereignty.²⁰ This anti-EU attitude is mirrored by the British public's affinity with Anglo-Saxon kin-states like the US, Canada and Australia, rather than with continental Europe.²¹ Therefore, the UK did not join 'core' EU projects like the Euro or the Schengen agreement on border controls and has furthermore retained

¹⁹ Whitman 2007: p.119

²⁰ Haseler, S. (2004) *Super-State: The New Europe and its Challenge to America*, I.B.Tauris, p.89

²¹ George, S., Bache, J. (2001) *Politics in the European Union*, Oxford University Press, p.195

significant autonomy in policy areas such as immigration, refugee and asylum policy as well as fiscal and monetary affairs.

British policy of supporting Turkish EU membership is seen as a logical extension of its greater strategy to foster EU enlargement at the expense of integration in order to shape the EU into a much looser, intergovernmental arrangement between its members.²² Blair voiced this in describing the EU as ‘a Europe of nation-states’.²³ However, the Blair administration was significantly more EU-friendly than previous administrations under Thatcher and Major and had ambitions of revitalizing Britain’s role within the European Union.²⁴ Blair was seen as a keen Europhile whose interests lay in transforming the EU into an effective international power able to act as a force of good in situations such as Kosovo in 1999. On the other hand, like his predecessors, Blair continued seeing relations with the US as the ‘bedrock of UK foreign-policy making’.²⁵ This perception increased exponentially after the September 11 attacks and has been maintained, if on a weaker basis by the current Brown administration. This close and traditional alliance with the US and the UK’s anti-integrationist stance is the most plausible structural frame within which to account for the UK’s position towards Turkish EU membership.

Tony Blair (1997-2007)

Blair’s quasi-presidential approach to his office, his predominant position within his cabinet and his proactive approach towards foreign policy meant he probably favoured Turkey’s

²² Redmond 2007: p.309

²³ Garton Ash, T. (2005) *Free World*, Random House, p.46

²⁴ Niblett, R. (2007) ‘Choosing between America and Europe: a new context for British foreign policy’, *International Affairs*, 83(4), p.627

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p.636

accession himself. Dyson sees Blair as a conviction politician and terms his conception of international affairs as 'manichean' or essentially constituted as a conflict between good and evil.²⁶ This viewpoint could have been furthered by his deeply-held yet concealed religious beliefs.²⁷ By integrating the internationalist and interventionist impulses of his leadership within this moral conceptualization of international affairs, one can see Blair's support for Turkish EU membership as having a three-fold purpose. It would stem the forces of fundamentalist Islam in the wider world, extend economic and political stability into the neighboring Middle East and bring about a more integrated and unified world. This central normative aspect of Turkish EU membership was continually raised by the Blair government and is still being echoed by the current Brown administration.²⁸ Likewise, Blair often stressed Turkey's crucial position as a regional power in the Middle East.²⁹

Gordon Brown (2007-)

There is a high likelihood for significant foreign policy continuity between the Brown and Blair administrations. The transition from the Blair to the Brown administration occurred within the same party, without any political competition and key cabinet personnel were also retained. In terms of Brown's transatlantic preferences, he has remained a blank page and may distance himself more from both the US and EU.³⁰ However, he has expressed his

²⁶ Dyson, S.B. (2007) 'Alliances, Domestic Politics, and Leader Psychology: Why Did Britain Stay Out of Vietnam and Go into Iraq?', *Political Psychology*, 28(6), p.660

²⁷ Woodward, W. (2007) 'Blair kept quiet about his faith for fear of 'nutter' jibes', *Guardian*, Nov 26
<http://politics.guardian.co.uk/tonyblair/story/0,,2217072,00.html>

²⁸ Deutsche Welle (2004) 'Turkey Membership Splits EU', *Qantara*
http://www.qantara.de/webcom/show_article.php/_c-301/_nr-42/i.html

²⁹ Bilefsky, D. (2006) 'Blair tries to reassure Turkey over EU', *International Herald Tribune*, Dec. 15
<http://www.ihf.com/articles/2006/12/15/news/eu.php>

³⁰ Rennie, D. (2007) 'A plateful for Brussels', *Trends in 2008*, *Economist*, p.31

dislike for a federalist, pro-integration vision of EU.³¹ It is also likely that Brown's perspective will be coloured by economic arguments as he previously served as Britain's Chancellor of the Exchequer for 10 years.³² However, as Brown continues to describe Britain as 'one of the key advocates of Turkish membership to the EU' it seems unlikely that the UK's stance will shift greatly.³³ This vital support within the EU would become significantly less influential, the more the UK distanced itself from the Union.

How were these positions translated into actions at domestic and international level

Blair has actively and keenly championed Turkish EU accession to the EU. He voiced this repeatedly. In 2004, Blair was the first British PM to visit Turkey in 14 years and returned in 2006. The UK's support was also evident in 2005 in the proactive manner with which it attempted to start accession negotiations while holding the European Council presidency after France and Netherlands had voted against the proposed European Constitution.³⁴ Likewise, the Blair government attempted to limit to three the number of accession chapters frozen at the European Council meeting in December 2006.³⁵

As was seen, the UK's stance towards Turkish accession hardly altered between Blair and Brown. This stance befits the UK's long-term relations with the EU and its own international role, it was seen how Blair's beliefs and personality may have contributed to fashioning this policy of support. His strong involvement in foreign policy matters also

³¹ O'Donnell, C.M., Whitman, R.G. (2007) 'European policy under Gordon Brown: perspectives on a future prime minister', *International Affairs*, 83(1), p.262

³² Freedland, J. (2007) 'Brown's new world order', *New Statesman*, May 27, <http://www.newstatesman.com/200705280014>

³³ Alhomayed, T. (2007) 'Gordon Brown in an Interview with Asharq Al Awsat', *Asharq Al Awsat*, Oct 30 <http://aawsat.com/english/news.asp?section=3&id=10722>

³⁴ Whitman 2007: p.121

³⁵ NZZ Online (2006) 'EU-Verhandlungen mit der Türkei teilweise sistieren', *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, Dec. 11, <http://www.nzz.ch/2006/12/11/al/newzzEVL67U69-12.html>

increased the likelihood that support for Turkish accession would be in accordance with his personal views and interests.

Germany

'The privileged partnership can [meet] neither the subject developments nor the promises given to Turkey.' Schröder 2004³⁶

"We are committed to a privileged partnership for Turkey, but we are opposed to full membership for Turkey in the European Union," Merkel at the 2007 CDU-CSU annual party congress³⁷

Unlike the UK, Germany's broad position on Turkish EU membership has undergone significant change between the previous Schröder and the current Merkel administration, shifting from keen to meek and qualified support that could eventually develop into outright opposition. As with France, the evolution of its stance will be set within Gustavsson's model of foreign policy change. As stated, France and Germany share a set of characteristics in terms of their position towards EU membership that place them apart from the UK. Germany is a founding member of the European Union project and is seen alongside France as the 'core of the hard core' of the EU.³⁸ Of Europe's 3.5 million strong Turkish community, 2.7 million live in Germany, constituting the country's largest immigrant group.³⁹ In framing the impact of German leadership attitudes on the position of Turkey's

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Deutsche Welle (2007b) 'Merkel's Party Stakes Claim to the Political Center', *Deutsche Welle*, Dec.3, <http://www.dw-world.de/dw/article/0,2144,2984117,00.html>

³⁸ Webber, D. (1999) 'Introduction', in Webber, D. (ed.), *The Franco-German Relationship in the European Union*, Routledge, p.1

³⁹ Deutsche Welle (2006) 'New rules for Muslim in German State blasted', *Deutsche Welle*, Jan. 5, <http://www.dw-world.de/dw/article/0,2144,1840793,00.html>

EU membership, German domestic party-politics and public opinion are the key explicative factors that need to be taken into consideration.

Party politics

German party politics has been historically dominated by the binary rivalry between the centre-left SPD and the center-right Christian democrat CDU-CSU. This dichotomy is reflected by each group's respective position on Turkish EU membership. It is noteworthy in this respect that the 2005 elections produced a coalition government of the two in which the CDU-CSU is the dominant partner. Although many other factors tend to be cited, the core argument animating Christian Democrats' antagonism to Turkish EU membership relates to their cultural outlook on European identity. The CDU-CSU is passionately committed to furthering EU integration.⁴⁰ Yet, the party's conceptualization of European identity stresses the continent's shared Judeo-Christian heritage and the Renaissance and excludes any non-Christian influences on or contributions to European culture.⁴¹ It does not see Turkey as having formed part of this experience and thus labels it as having always been outside of it and having no input into European culture. Chancellor Helmut Kohl was 'implacably opposed' to Turkish accession on the grounds that the EU was an exclusively 'Christian club'.⁴² Therefore, the CDU-CSU has long championed the policy of offering Turkey a 'privileged partnership' of some sort rather than concrete membership.⁴³

⁴⁰ Hale, W. (2005) 'Christian Democracy and the AKP: Contrasts and Parallels', *Turkish Studies*, 6(2), p.298

⁴¹ Tonra, B. (1997) *A European Cultural Identity - Myth, Reality or Aspiration?*, University College Dublin, p.8

⁴² Stelzenmüller, C. (2007) 'Turkey's EU bid: A View from Germany', in Tocci, N. (ed.), *Conditionality, Impact and Prejudice in EU-Turkish Relations: IAI-Tepav Report*, Istituto Affari Internazionali, p.111

⁴³ Demesmay, C., Weske, S. (2007) 'National Debates on Turkey's Accession: A Franco-German Perspective', *ZEI Turkey-EU Monitor*, 3(3), pp. 1-2

Aside from a few prominent dissidents such as former Chancellor Helmut Schmidt, the SPD has been solidly supportive of Turkish accession.⁴⁴ It has been argued that this support is motivated by the party's desire to attract the votes of the Germany Turkish community.⁴⁵ Wood notes for instance, that this 'guaranteed bloc vote' could have been vital in securing the razor-thin margin by which the SPD-Green coalition government was re-elected in 2002.⁴⁶ However, as a social-democratic political party, the SPD also has a socially more liberal and multicultural understanding of identity politics. Additional reasons that figure greatly in the German pro-accession debate include the arguments that Turkey constitutes a bridge between the Western and the Islamic worlds and is of formidable geostrategic value in the EU's struggle against Islamic fundamentalism.⁴⁷

The debate amongst the public

Even under the Schröder government, German domestic opinion tended to oppose Turkish accession.⁴⁸ This position has hardened to the extent that a FT/ Harris poll found only 21% of the German public in support of Turkish accession by 2007.⁴⁹ As Tocci states, in Germany as in France, the issue of Turkish accession is seen within the frame of domestic rather than foreign policy.⁵⁰ Thus the issue is linked to domestic fears about the economic costs of integrating Turkey into the EU, the onslaught of economic insecurity and the

⁴⁴ European Stability Initiative (2006) *The German Turkey Debate under the Grand Coalition*, European Stability Initiative, p.2

⁴⁵ Quaisser and Wood 2005: p.153; Demesmay and Weske 2007: p.3

⁴⁶ Wood 2004: p.13

⁴⁷ Stelzenmüller 2007: p.112; Bacık, G. (2007) 'Turkey – Syria: A Belated Friendship', *Insight Turkey*, 9(3), p.72

⁴⁸ Grant, C. (2005) *Germany's Foreign Policy: What lessons can be learned from the Schröder years*, *Centre for European Reform*, p.2

⁴⁹ Barysch 2007: p.1

⁵⁰ Tocci 2007: p.27

erosion of the welfare state.⁵¹ The large size of the German Turkish community has also linked the issue of Turkish accession to the broader debate of the ‘very nature of German identity in the 21st century’.⁵² In this sense, there are widespread concerns raised in the German media of a ‘parallel society’ emerging from within the German Turkish community, espousing ultra-conservative religious values and shunning integration.⁵³

From Schröder to Merkel government

During the Schröder government, the German government’s stance towards Turkish accession was extremely supportive. In this regard, it is important to note that the Schröder’s foreign minister Fischer was also keenly committed to Turkish EU accession.⁵⁴ As Grant points out, it is questionable whether accession negotiations would have started without German support.⁵⁵ In contrast to the UK, the circumstances of the transition from Schröder to Merkel increased the chances of foreign policy change. This change consisted of a ‘factional shift in the leadership body’ in that the dominant position in the government taken over from the SPD by the CDU-CSU.⁵⁶ On the other hand, since the SPD still retained a position as minor partner in the government, any foreign policy change could still be significantly diminished.

⁵¹ Ibid., p.22; Demesmay and Weske 2007: p.2

⁵² Stelzenmüller 2007: p.110

⁵³ Barysch, K. (2007) *The EU and Turkey: drifting apart? Key conclusions of the 4th Bosphorus conference*, CER, p.8

⁵⁴ Fischer, J. (2006) ‘Turkey and Europe: Two Trains on a Collision Course?’, *Project Syndicate* <http://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/fischer5>

⁵⁵ Grant 2007: p.2

⁵⁶ Hagan 1994: p.145

Angela Merkel (2005 -)

Angela Merkel's entire political upbringing occurred within the sphere of Christian Democrat politics. She was raised in the household of an Evangelical pastor who was a leading church figure in East Germany and her political career began in the East German wing of the CDU just prior to the fall of the Berlin Wall.⁵⁷ Therefore, she would have internalized the Christian Democrat communitarian norms and values, especially as they were bound to be quite compatible with her own personal world-view. Consequently it is likely that she would have come to share the common Christian Democrat belief that Turkey is and should not form part of Europe.

As leader of the CDU-CSU, Merkel has steadily maintained the 'privileged partnership' policy. Since she is simultaneously weakly supportive of Turkey's accession to the EU in her position as German Chancellor, it is not difficult to find this position insincere and duplicitous. As Chancellor, Merkel has defined Germany's support under the leitmotif of 'pacta sunt servanda', in that the EU is obliged to open and continue accession talks with Turkey due to 40 years of promises, treaties and contracts.⁵⁸ Merkel's capacity of shifting policy clearly into opposition is compromised by the SPD's inclusion in her coalition government. Apart from having to deal with contrarian coalition partners, the consensus culture of Germany's politics also naturally restrains national leaders from straying too far from previous policy lines. Furthermore, her own foreign Minister, Frank-Walter Steinmeier, as a prominent SPD social-democrat, favours Turkish EU accession and has criticised

⁵⁷Elkins, R. (2005) 'Angela Merkel: Iron Mädchen', *Independent*, June 19, <http://news.independent.co.uk/people/profiles/article226396.ece>

⁵⁸ Marchetti, A. (2007) 'Steady Progress Despite all obstacles, negotiations continue', *ZEI Turkey-EU Monitor*, 3(2), pp. 1-2

Merkel for her policy of weak support towards Turkey.⁵⁹ Thus, Merkel's policy towards Turkish accession has followed a zig-zag course in order to placate her party, her coalition partner, public opinion and the other EU member states.⁶⁰

How were these position translated into actions at domestic and international level

As seen both Schröder and his foreign minister Fischer were highly supportive of Turkish EU membership in statements and actions at both domestic and EU-level. Schröder himself visited Turkey in 2004.⁶¹ However, the enormity of domestic opposition to Turkish accession did create constraints in the degree to which they could demonstrate their support. Merkel's government has been very weak in their support. Merkel has spoken in favour of a 'privileged partnership' both while she was in opposition and in government. Merkel's adherence to the line of *pacta sunt servanda* obliges her to continue accession negotiations with Turkey but is vague and unclear about the eventual outcome of the negotiations. Unlike the UK, Germany did not try to lower the number of accession chapters blocked by the EU in December 2006.⁶²

To what extent is Gustavsson's model applicable to the German case

Gustavsson's model of foreign policy change is only faintly applicable to the shifts in Germany's stance towards Turkish EU membership during the Schröder government. Despite large public opposition, Schröder and Fischer orchestrated a U-turn in fully supporting Turkish accession compared to the previous Kohl government (Stelzenmüller

⁵⁹ Deutsche Welle (2007) 'Germany's Social Democrats turn left to renew core principles', *Deutsche Welle*, Oct. 28, <http://www.dw-world.de/dw/article/0,2144,2849776,00.html>

⁶⁰ Stelzenmüller 2007: p.111

⁶¹ Hesse, R. (2004) 'Turkish Honey under a German Moon', *Opendemocracy* http://www.opendemocracy.net/arts-Film/article_1784.jsp

⁶² NZZ Online (2006)

2007: 111). However, there were no real domestic crises which they could exploit at this moment to support. Furthermore, supporting Turkish accession had been part and parcel of the SPD's policy before.

The case of Merkel holds more promise for the application of Gustavsson's framework. Coming from different poles of the political spectrum, Merkel has set about progressively weakening Germany's formerly strong support for Turkish EU membership without completely rupturing it. The weak economic situation in Germany under Schröder contributed to fears about the consequences of Turkish accession to the EU thus creating a national mood conducive to Merkel's policy shift. Simultaneously, international developments like the negative votes in France and Netherlands against the proposed EU constitution were also conducive for effectuating this policy change. However, coalition politics with her minor partner in government, the SPD, have constrained Merkel's parameters of action, especially as her foreign minister is from the SPD and favours Turkish accession.

France

'I do not think Turkey has a right to join the European Union because it is not European.' Nicholas

*Sarkozy*⁶³

Asking a country like Turkey, a great country rich in history, to make such a considerable effort to reach an uncertain or partial result is obviously not reasonable. Jacques Chirac 2004⁶⁴

⁶³ Gvosdev, N.K. (2007) 'Sarkozy: Turkey and the EU', *Washington Realist*
<http://washingtonrealist.blogspot.com/2007/04/sarkozy-turkey-and-eu.html>

⁶⁴ Nazli Inal, N., Yegenoglu, D. (2005)

France is the most relevant and suitable case in analyzing the impact of leadership attitudes on national policy towards Turkish EU membership as Sarkozy has to a large extent single-handedly managed to effectuate radical policy change. The structural conditions both at domestic and international level were the most auspicious to encourage a broad policy shift. France's long-term position as a core historical EU power has been to promote further integration in order to safeguard its principal role within it. For that reason, it has traditionally been anti-enlargement.⁶⁵ From this perspective, Turkish accession is seen as greatly undermining France's foreign policy aims and objectives.⁶⁶ Nevertheless, throughout the Mitterand era and during most of the Chirac period was one of the strongest advocates of Turkey becoming an EU member.⁶⁷ This position has changed radically under Sarkozy. Although France's Turkish community is quite small at approximately 400,000, France is home to the EU's largest Muslim community, about 4.2 million.⁶⁸ Similar to Germany, French public opposition to Turkish accession has revolved mainly around domestic anxieties related to issues like economic insecurity, integration of poor Muslim immigrant communities and fears of globalization. Thus, as in Germany, domestic determinants like public opinion and party-politics seem to have been the most influential in shaping the evolution of French policy on Turkish EU membership.

The debate amongst the public

Apart from Austria and Germany, French public opinion is among the most clearly-opposed to Turkish accession. The July 2006 Eurobarometer indicates that only 22% of the public

⁶⁵ Rieker, P. (2006) *French foreign policy and the limits of Europeanisation: The changing French position on EU enlargement*, NUPI, p.7

⁶⁶ Quaisser and Wood 2005: p.155

⁶⁷ Schmid, D. (2007) *The Franco-Turkish Relationship in Turmoil*, Edam, p.vi

⁶⁸ Le-Gloannec, J.-M. (2007) 'Conditionality, Impact and Prejudice in EU-Turkish Relations: A view from France', in Tocci, N. (ed.), *Conditionality, Impact and Prejudice in EU-Turkish Relations: IAI-Tepav Report*, pp.75-83, Istituto Affari Internazionali, p.81

supports Turkish EU membership (Eurobarometer 2006: 4).⁶⁹ The issue of Turkish EU membership became especially publicized, politicized and polemicised in the run-up to the 2005 referendum on the proposed EU constitution. As in Germany, the issue has become entangled with wider debates concerning the integration of immigrant communities into mainstream French society and economic insecurity.⁷⁰ The violent riots in the poor banlieues that emerged in recent years due to France's failed socio-economic integration of its immigrant communities have also sharpened public opposition to Turkish accession as the Turkish community is often simply conjoined with the larger Muslim Arab immigrant communities.⁷¹

Party politics

As with Germany, French party-politics have structured traditionally themselves around two mainstream parties, the centre-right UMP and the centre-left Socialist party, although there is more leeway for extremist parties in the French political system. As with public opinion, much of France's political establishment is opposed to Turkey's entry into the EU. This is unanimous amongst the conservative-right spectrum and increasingly also the dominant view on the left. Moreover, this view has been often voiced by prominent politicians such as former president Giscard D'Estaing who stated that Turkish accession would destroy the EU. In the run-up to the 2005 referendum and during the 2007 national elections, negative campaigning on Turkish EU membership emerged as a relatively cost-free tactic to gain support as there were few domestic constituencies favouring it.

⁶⁹ Eurobarometer (2006) *Standard Eurobarometer 66: Public Opinion in the European Union*, European Commission

⁷⁰ Le-Gloannec 2007: pp.75-76

⁷¹ Barysch 2007: p.4

From Chirac to Sarkozy

According to Schmid, France under Chirac was amongst Turkey's strongest supporters within the EU in the 1990s.⁷² It is noteworthy that Chirac was almost alone in the centre-right UMP in favouring Turkish accession.⁷³ However, in order to salvage a positive vote for the EU constitutional treaty in 2005 as domestic opposition to it emerged, Chirac began to abandon this policy of support and introduced a national referendum clause if Turkey were to be accepted by the EU.⁷⁴ In this context, he also expressed the possibility of pursuing a 'third option', probably meaning a form of 'special relationship'.⁷⁵ As in the British case, the transition from Chirac to Sarkozy occurred within the same party, although it happened within the context of national elections. Additionally, there was much personal enmity between them and both men held dramatically different standpoints towards many political issues. Chirac was a traditional paternalistic Gaullist whereas Sarkozy combines his protectionist impulses with a leaning towards Anglo-Saxon liberalism and an urge to revitalize France's international puissance. These personal contrasts, Sarkozy's strong electoral victory as well as his highly energetic and charismatic leadership style augmented the chances for dramatic foreign policy changes.

Nicholas Sarkozy (2007-)

Sarkozy's shift of policy regarding Turkish EU accession is by far the most radical example of foreign policy change amongst the previous cases. Moreover, he has been personally involved in implementing it and has vehemently and virulently railed against Turkish

⁷² Schmid 2007: p.13

⁷³ Ibid., p.19; Schmid 2007: p.19

⁷⁴ Bahceli, T. (2005) 'Turkey & the EU: A long and uncertain journey', *McGill International Review*, pp.16-21

⁷⁵ EurActiv (2004) 'Turkey's EU bid: A 'third way' looming?', *EurActive*
<http://www.euractiv.com/en/enlargement/turkey-eu-bid-third-way-looming/article-132381>

accession in his political campaigns. Since becoming interior minister in 2002 he has referred to Turkey as an ‘Asian state’ and remarked that Israel and Lebanon had more European values than Turkey.⁷⁶ The personal enmity between Chirac and Sarkozy resulted in his demotion to UMP party leader in 2004 but did not halt his stellar rise into presidential office in 2007. Furthermore, this enmity might have given him further reason to torpedo Chirac over the issue of Turkish accession in order to embarrass him.

Sarkozy’s unconventional and iconoclastic style of politics befits the trajectory of his political career from relative outsider to French president.⁷⁷ His energetic, hands-on personal style of politics and his domination of national media fits well with the direct, hands-on role he has taken in re-crafting French foreign policy.⁷⁸ Despite being the son of immigrants, Sarkozy has developed an image as a tough, ‘pro-law-and-order’ politician opposed to further immigration.⁷⁹ This stance was clearly seen in his uncompromising attitude as interior minister during the 2005 Paris riots.

How were these positions enacted at domestic and international level

Evidence of Sarkozy’s visceral opposition towards Turkish entry into the EU is omnipresent in his foreign policy. Initially, in June 2007, he managed to prevent Turkey from opening a third negotiation chapter in its accession negotiations.⁸⁰ Subsequently, in December 2007, French pressure managed to eliminate the word ‘accession’ from a statement of European

⁷⁶ Journal of Turkish Weekly (2005) ‘France admits opposition to Turkish EU membership’, *Journal of Turkish Weekly* <http://www.turkishweekly.net/interview.php?id=79>

⁷⁷ Lawday, N. (2005) ‘Nicholas Sarkozy: NS Profile’, *New Statesman*, Jan. 5, <http://www.newstatesman.com/200401050011>

⁷⁸ Pedder, S. (2007) ‘Defining Sarkozism’, *Trends in 2008*, Economist, p.38

⁷⁹ De Beer, P. (2007) ‘Nicolas Sarkozy, the American candidate’, *Opendemocracy*

http://www.opendemocracy.net/globalization-institutions_government/sarkozy_4204.jsp

⁸⁰ International Crisis Group (2007) *Turkey and Europe: the Way ahead*, International Crisis Group, p.40

foreign ministers regarding an up-coming talk on Turkish accession.⁸¹ Likewise, the newly announced EU reflection group, Sarkozy's brainchild, is also seen as a vehicle for further reducing Turkey's accession chances.⁸² Lastly, Sarkozy has described his plans for the creation of a Mediterranean Union as a 'key policy in my foreign policy'.⁸³ This proposal is also seen as another thinly disguised scheme aimed at excluding Turkey's exclusion from the EU by offering it membership in a tame, powerless organization.⁸⁴

To what extent is Gustavsson's model applicable to the French case

All three major components of Gustavsson's framework apply to the French case. Firstly, both at domestic and international level, there were serious worries about the future of the EU and France's role within it. Whereas this would not greatly trouble a semi-detached actor like the UK, it did greatly affect a core EU power such as France. Likewise domestic worries under Chirac, widely seen as a lame-duck president in his last years, regarding economic security, inter-communal integration, immigration and a sense of chronic crises about the future of French identity all reinforced these international concerns with a domestic component.⁸⁵

This situation provided an ambitious and reform-minded politician like Sarkozy with a perfect window of opportunity to shift French policy on Turkish accession. He had long personally and virulently argued against Turkish accession. The electoral legitimacy he received through his large mandate at the 2007 polls as well as Sarkozy's energetic and pro-

⁸¹ EurActiv (2007) 'EU accession wording causes Turkish 'discontent'', *EurActiv* <http://www.euractiv.com/en/enlargement/eu-accession-wording-causes-turkish-discontent/article-169030>

⁸² Charlemagne (2007) 'A Summit to nowhere', *Economist*, Dec 22nd, p.48

⁸³ Sarkozy, N. (2007) 'France in a Challenging World', *Trends in 2008*, Economist, p.40

⁸⁴ Koopman, W. (2007) 'Foreign Politics without Labels', *Business & Diplomacy*, 2, p.31

⁸⁵ Lawday, D. (2007) 'The days of grandeur are over', *New Statesman*, April 9, <http://www.newstatesman.com/200704090011>; Le-Groassec 2007: p.76

active foreign policy management maximized his capacity to carry out these changes. Moreover, the election of a like-minded politician like Merkel in Germany, France's key EU ally, further facilitated the enactment of radical foreign policy change. In this sense, Gustavsson's model functions very well as an explicatory framework for understanding how these changes took place and what structural and agential factors were involved.

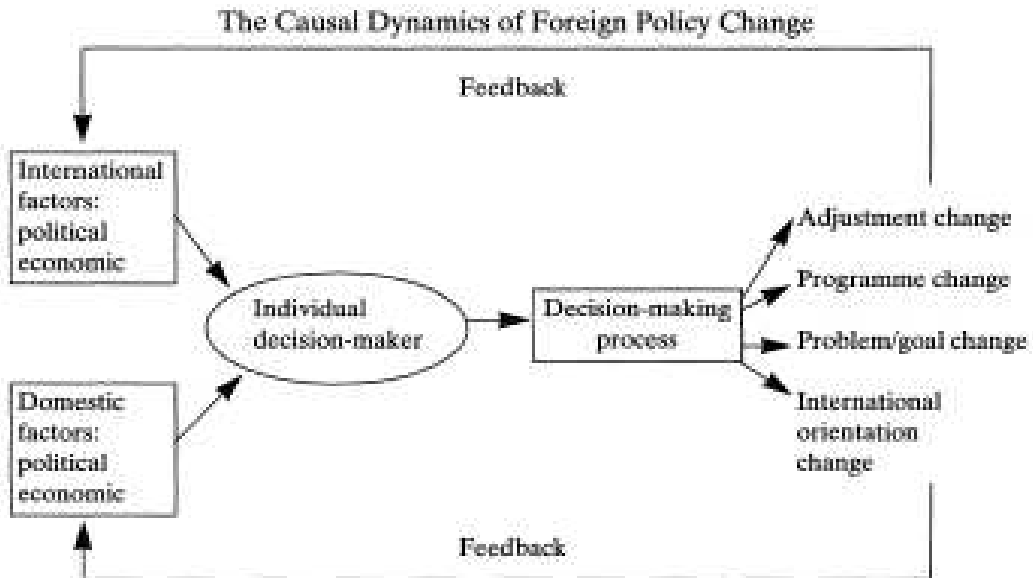
As initially stated this paper aimed to examine the extent to which leadership attitudes in the UK, Germany and France towards Turkish EU membership affected national policy. In each case, this was linked to the most relevant structural factors at domestic or international level affecting policy towards Turkish accession to the EU. Furthermore, in those cases where the national stance did change significantly, these developments were framed within a theoretic model on foreign policy change. As seen, it is the British and French cases where leadership attitudes had the biggest imprint on national policy.

In the British case, Blair's support for Turkish EU membership was linked to the UK's international interests. However, it was also driven forward by his internationalist motives to create a bridge between Europe and the Islamic worlds and demonstrate that a truly multicultural Europe can exist. In Germany, Merkel managed to decisively water down support for Turkish EU membership but her SPD coalition partner restricted her from implementing more radical changes. Lastly, it could be seen in the French case to what extent the political agency of the national leader figured in shifting the national stance towards Turkish accession.

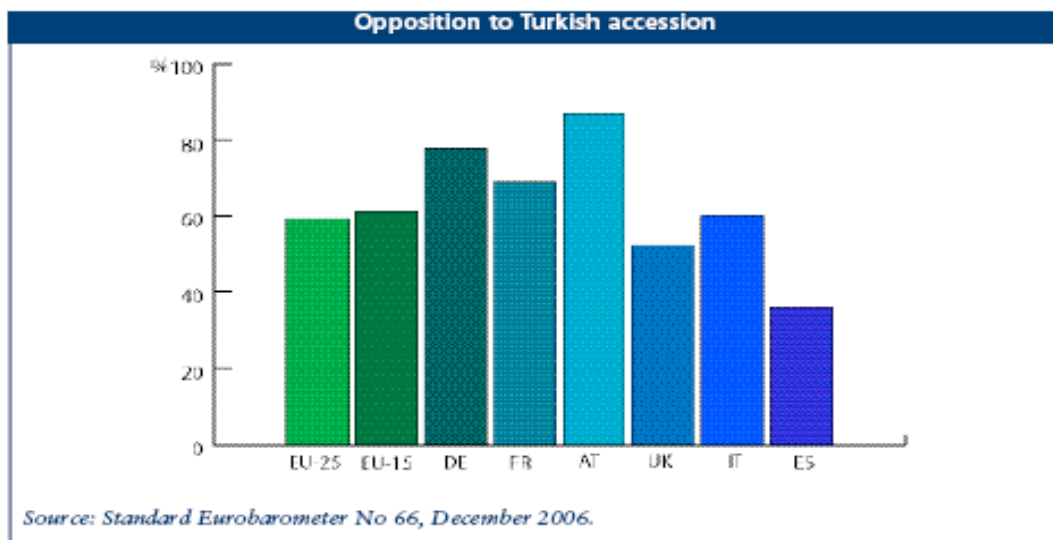
In the French and German cases, where significant foreign policy change towards Turkish accession occurred, it was seen that Gustavsson's model had much more analytical power in explaining foreign policy change when political leaders were in a strong and commanding position and had a relatively large scope in foreign policy decision-making.

Appendix

1. Gustavsson's framework of foreign policy change⁸⁶



2. Domestic opposition to Turkish accession in key EU states⁸⁷



⁸⁶ Gustavsson 1999: p.85

⁸⁷ Barysch 2007: p.3

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