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**Framing Turkey: Identities, public opinion and Turkey's potential accession into the EU**

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## CHAPTER 2

Framing Turkey. Explaining Citizen Framing of Turkey's Potential EU Membership in 21 Countries.

*Manuscript under review*

### **Abstract**

Scholars argue that individual frames affect attitudes by assigning weights to different issue specific considerations. Where previous studies have focused on issue-specific values to explain the use of frames, we argue that general values affect which frame is used. We test our hypotheses on the issue of Turkey's potential accession. Using cross-sectional survey data from 21 countries ( $N = 34,412$ ), we find that utilitarian framing and identity framing depend on general importance of economic and immigration issues. This implies that individual framing in a specific case depends on more general ideas of what is important. We discuss these findings in relation to the theory of framing effects.

To make sense of the world around them, individuals frame the world. That is, when looking at events, happenings, problems or issues, individuals select certain aspects while neglecting others. Framing helps the individual to 'locate, perceive, identify, and label' (Goffman, 1974, p. 21). Individuals thus give meaning to the world through frames, and attitudes about the world depend on these frames (Scheufele, 1999). Not only individuals use frames to make sense of the world, in the news media frame are used to guide their stories and give meaning to the issue at hand (Entman, 1993). A large body of literature focusses on how specific political issues are framed in the media (e.g., Koenig et al., 2006; Schuck & De Vreese, 2006) and how exposure to these media frames affect political attitudes (e.g., De Vreese & Boomgaarden, 2003; Nelson, Clawson, & Oxley, 1997) or individual frames (e.g., Gamson, 1992; Price, Tewksbury, & Powers, 1997). Much less attention is given to how citizens frame particular issues (although there are exceptions: e.g., the first chapter in this dissertation, Van Drunen & Boomgaarden, 2011) and in particular what factors predict the manner in which citizens frame particular issues.

In this study we aim to fill that gap by focussing on the relationship between values and individual frames. Several scholars have linked values to the perception of news frames, for instance by looking at how values prohibit or facilitate affects from exposure to media frames (e.g., P. R. Brewer, 2001; Druckman & Nelson, 2003; Shah, Domke, & Wackman, 1996; Shen & Edwards, 2005). In this study, we will argue that values are important in the actual use of individual frames. Defining frames as weights assigned to different considerations, we argue that values, as one's judgement of what is important in life, influence the weights assigned to different considerations.

To test the effect of values on the use of frames, we focus on the case of Turkey's potential accession into the European Union. This is an issue that is longstanding and perceived to be of importance by political elites. It is also politically contested, which makes it likely that citizens have knowledge of different frames concerning the issue. Previous literature on attitudes towards EU enlargement and Turkey's potential membership focus on two distinct explanations: utilitarian consequences of enlargement (e.g., Gabel,

1998; Karp & Bowler, 2006) and identity considerations (e.g., Carey, 2002; Hooghe & Marks, 2004). In the first chapter of this dissertation, we showed that citizens, in line with attitudinal explanations of support for Turkey's EU membership, frame the issue of Turkey's potential EU membership in terms of utilitarian consequences (i.e., what does Turkey's accession bring us) and in terms of identities (i.e., is Turkey European?).

Following our argument that the use of individual frames depend on previously-held values (i.e., one's judgement of what is important), we argue that individuals who value economic issues in general as important are likely to frame the issue of Turkey's EU membership in terms of utilitarian considerations, and that individuals who value immigration issues in general as important are likely to frame the issue in terms of identity considerations. Also, we argue that frame use depends on contextual factors, namely the importance attributed to economic and immigration issues in the country where an individual lives. To test our hypotheses, we make use of a survey held in 21 EU member states (N = 34,412).

The results of this study add to the body of knowledge of framing by citizens and opinion formation in general. If we understand when an individual frame is likely to be applied, we also understand what comes into play in forming an opinion. If, indeed, individual framing depends on personal values, this would mean that opinion formation actually transcends each specific issue. Use of similar individual frames is to be expected across different issues, as long as the specific value leads to applicable frames. Also, if frames in use are indeed in line with an individual's values, this is good news for democracy. Several authors raised the claim that if public opinion is easily affected by media framing, it illustrated the incompetence of (most) citizen to perform their democratic duties (for a discussion, see: Druckman, 2001). But our study shows that frames used by citizens are in line with what citizens believe to be important, and thus their opinion is not based arbitrarily on new information.

### **Theory**

Framing scholars argue that frames exist in communicating texts (as *media frames*), but also in individuals' thoughts (as 'internal structure in the mind' called *individual frames*) (e.g., Kinder & Sanders, 1990; Scheufele,

1999). Similarly, Entman describes media frames as ‘attributes of the news itself’ (1991, p. 7) and individual frames as ‘mentally stored clusters of ideas that guide individuals’ processing of information’ (1993, p. 53). Individual frames are used to process information and how an individual frames a certain issue is thus important for the attitudes that individual holds on that issue.

Scholars argue that individuals frame an issue in a particular way (i.e., use particular considerations) when it is available, accessible and applicable (Chong & Druckman, 2007a; Price et al., 1997). Several scholars (e.g., Chong & Druckman, 2007a; Nelson et al., 1997) connect these aspects to expectancy-value models (e.g., Fishbein, 1980). According to these models, an attitude is the result of the sum of a collection of weighted beliefs and considerations, with the outcome attitude depending on the (relative) weights assigned to each consideration. *Availability* refers to that a consideration must be stored in one’s memory. Of course, when a certain consideration cannot be retrieved from one’s memory, it also cannot affect one’s opinion.

*Accessibility* refers to the ease in which a certain consideration is retrieved from one’s memory (Chong & Druckman, 2007a; Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007). Some considerations may be stored deep down in long-term memory, while others are readily accessible in short-term memory. Of course, the easier a consideration is accessible, the more likely the consideration is weighted against other considerations and used in forming an opinion. Scholars argue that repeated exposure to a frame (for instance by exposure to news media) leads to frequent processing in the mind, which subsequently leads to increased accessibility (e.g., Chong & Druckman, 2007b).

*Applicability* refers to when a certain accessible consideration is considered appropriate to apply, i.e., the weight of the consideration in forming an opinion (Chong & Druckman, 2007b). A certain consideration may be highly accessible, but when this consideration is perceived to be irrelevant (i.e., assigned no weight) it is unlikely to affect one’s opinion. Scholars argue that citizens deem what is appropriate through exposure to media frames. This would constitute the actual media framing effect.

Scholars describe framing effects (i.e., the effects on individuals through exposure to frames in communicating texts) as ‘altering the *weight* of particular considerations’ (Nelson, Oxley, & Clawson, 1997), which, in turn, ‘carry greater weight for the final attitude’ (Nelson et al., 1997). This idea of belief importance change is widely supported by experimental studies (e.g., Lecheler & De Vreese, 2012; Nelson et al., 1997; Nelson & Oxley, 1999; Slothuus, 2008) and also in combination with EU enlargement (e.g., De Vreese et al., 2011; Lecheler & De Vreese, 2010).

Accessibility and applicability, however, do not only depend on information from the media. Several authors link the use of frames to previously-held values and principles (e.g., P. R. Brewer, 2001; Chong & Druckman, 2007b; Shah et al., 1996; Sniderman & Theriault, 2004). Some authors argue that values lead to increased accessibility of certain frames. For instance, Shah et al. (1996) argue that frames related to (moral or ethical) values are ‘likely to be closely related to one’s self-conception and thus be both highly accessible and particularly functional’ (Shah et al., 1996, p. 516). Frames related to values are likely to be highly accessible, because through frequent processing values are chronically accessible (Higgins, 1996).

Also, scholars argue that values influence the applicability of certain frames. Individuals decide on the appropriateness of a frame, by evaluating the strength and relevance of the considerations on the basis of previously-held preferences and values (e.g., Chong & Druckman, 2007b; Nelson et al., 1997; Sniderman & Theriault, 2004). Following this line of reasoning, several authors argue that media framing effects are limited when the media frames contradict prior beliefs and values (e.g., P. R. Brewer, 2001; Druckman & Nelson, 2003; Shah et al., 1996). Brewer argues that individuals exposed to media frames consciously deliberate on the values in the frame and that the effects of frames depend on ‘how favorable or unfavorable citizens respond to them’ (P. R. Brewer, 2001, p. 49). He concludes that citizens are not ‘passive receivers’ but thoughtfully process the information. In line with this, Higgins (1996) argues that people are able to suppress knowledge that is activated (i.e., considerations being made accessible) when they judge this information to be irrelevant.

According to Nelson and Kinder (1996) media frames are most likely to have an effect, when citizens hold multiple relevant but contradicting considerations: media frames can help to resolve the confusion in such situations. Sniderman and Theriault (2004), however, argue that this also works the other way around. Political struggle leads to a competitive framing environment, where frames themselves are contested and competing frames may cancel each other out. Testing their ideas in an experiment, Sniderman and Theriault (2004) find that individuals simultaneously exposed to competing frames turn to the frame consistent with their values. Thus, exposure to contradicting consideration in media frames is resolved by individuals by turning to the individual frame consistent with their values. From this, we conclude that personal values are important for individuals in weighing the importance of different considerations, i.e., in their framing of particular issues.

The question that remains is how issue-related these values need to be to influence the use of particular frames. In studies focussing on belief importance change, the focus is on specific issue related beliefs (e.g., Lecheler & De Vreese, 2012; Nelson et al., 1997)(e.g., Lecheler & De Vreese, 2012; Nelson et al., 1997). For instance, Nelson and Oxley (1999) study the effect of an economic frame and an environmental frame, and measure belief importance by asking how important economic beliefs or environmental beliefs about the issue are when deciding on the issue. An exception to the above mentioned studies (where beliefs are assessed that are issue specific) is by Nelson, Clawson and Oxley (1997). They study the effect of a free speech frame and a public order frame on tolerance towards hate groups. Apart from using the specific issue related beliefs, they also focus on general support for civil liberties and concerns for public order. They argue that as their frames send implicit messages about which considerations should dominate opinion, the effect of general attitudes towards civil liberties and public order on tolerance towards hate groups should differ between experimental conditions (Nelson et al., 1997). Following this line of reasoning, we propose to extend the idea that the importance of general values in deciding on specific issue changes when individuals are exposed to specific frames, and argue that general values are

important in which individual frame an individual uses to decide on issues. We will test this by focussing on our case that is perceived of high importance, longstanding and highly contested: the case of Turkey's potential accession into the EU.

### **The Turkish case**

So how do citizens frame the issue of Turkey's EU membership? Previous research on public opinion towards EU issues shows, among others, two important explanations of EU attitudes in general and attitudes towards enlargement in particular. Hooghe and Marks (2005) denote the distinction between these two explanations as *calculation* versus *community* considerations, and De Vreese, Boomgaarden and Semetko (2008) speak of *hard* and *soft* factors. In this study, we will further focus on these two explanations.

With the EU originating from economic cooperation, support for this cooperation is argued to be found in *hard* economic and utilitarian factors, and citizens *calculating* their profits or losses (Gabel, 1998). Karp and Bowler argue that '[...] responses towards enlargement are likely to be driven by short-term instrumental concerns such as, for example, a concern over how the entry of new countries may provide additional benefits or costs' (Karp, Banducci, & Bowler, 2003, p. 372) and that '[...] citizens going through tough economic times may want little or nothing to do with enlargement' (p. 372). Scholars operationalized these utilitarian conditions both 'objectively' (e.g., the higher educated are more likely to profit from European integration, thus higher educated are more likely to support integration, Gabel, 1998) and 'subjectively' (e.g., individuals with positive perceptions and future evaluations of the economy are more likely to support EU enlargement, De Vreese et al., 2008). McLaren (2002) added that utilitarian considerations were not only defined by individual self-interest, but also in terms of group interest. But regardless of whether enlargement would have objective or subjective prospects, or of whether these prospects would affect the individual or the in-group, all these explanations build on the idea that citizens evaluate enlargement by considering the consequences enlargement would have, i.e., frame it using utilitarian considerations.



With the European Union exceeding the economic cooperation and moving more towards also political integration, scholarly attention also broadened and turned to *soft* identity and *community* related factors to explain EU attitudes (e.g., Carey, 2002; De Vreese & Boomgaarden, 2005; De Vreese et al., 2008; Hooghe & Marks, 2004; McLaren, 2002). The general idea is that support for the EU or for EU enlargement depends on the way individuals make sense of their own (usually national) identity and how they perceive the identity of other Europeans (in other member states or (potential) applicant countries). The effect on EU attitudes is consecutively explained by a premise from social identity theory, which holds that members of the out-group will be negatively treated, either relative to in-group members through in-group favouritism or in absolute terms through out-group rejection (e.g., M. B. Brewer, 1999; Brown, 2000; Tajfel, 1981). Following these lines of thought, Carey (2002) shows that individuals who feel strongly attached to the nation state are less supportive of the EU and we will show in chapter 3 that opposition towards Turkey is driven for a large part by defining Turks or Turkey as an out-group or as 'the other'. Thus, identity factors are argued to be driven by whether individuals see other Europeans as part of their in-group or as an out-group, i.e., individuals framing the issue in terms of identities.

As described above, these two explanations argue that individuals frame EU enlargement in general and Turkey's potential EU membership in particular in terms of utilitarian or identity considerations. Interestingly, these considerations are also found in studies focussing on how (news) media and (political) elites frame the issue of Turkey's potential accession. Redmond (2007) describes that Turkey's potential membership is usually assessed along four lines: Turkey's political development, Turkey's security-strategic position, Turkey's economic performance, and the cultural and religious differences, of which the latter two are likely to correspond with the utilitarian and identity considerations. Grigoriadis (2006) writes that Turkey's Islamic character is used to both argue in favour or against Turkey's EU membership. He also argues that 'Turkey's geographical position, demographic size and level of economic development [...] are used as arguments for and against Turkey's EU membership (Grigoriadis,

2006, p. 153), and illustrates this by describing how these issues may lead to advantages or disadvantages consequences. In other studies, different authors find that (among certain other frames) utilitarian and identity considerations play an important role in media content (e.g., De Vreese & Boomgaarden, 2003; De Vreese et al., 2011; Koenig et al., 2006; Negrine et al., 2008; Schuck & De Vreese, 2006; Steunenberg et al., 2011; Wimmel, 2009).

Actually, to what degree do citizens use a utilitarian and/or identity frame for the issue of Turkey's potential EU membership? A variety of experimental studies, explaining citizens' opinions about enlargement in general or membership of specific (candidate) countries (e.g., Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia, Serbia, Turkey), found effects of either a utilitarian frame (e.g., De Vreese & Boomgaarden, 2003; Lecheler & De Vreese, 2010; Schuck & De Vreese, 2006) or an identity frame (e.g., Maier & Rittberger, 2008), or both (e.g., De Vreese et al., 2011). As scholars argue (e.g., Lecheler & De Vreese, 2012) that exposure to a frame can only affect opinion when the frame is recognized (i.e., available), we can expect from these experimental studies that the utilitarian and identity frame are indeed available in citizens' memory. And given that in political and media debates the frames are also prominent, and that scholars have argued that accessibility increased with increased exposure, we can also expect the frames to be accessible to most citizens.

This is, however, indirect 'evidence' of citizens' potential use of the utilitarian frame and identity frame. Direct evidence is scarce. In chapter 1 we found evidence that a substantial part of Dutch citizens actually applied a utilitarian and/or an identity frame. In chapter 1 we coded answers to an open-ended question why respondents were in favour or against Turkey's EU membership and found an identity frame to be present in just over a third of responses. In about the same amount of responses a utilitarian frame was present. There was some overlap between the two frames, but in about 65% of the responses at least one of these frames was present.<sup>4</sup> But

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<sup>4</sup> In chapter 1, we actually also found a third prominent frame, which revolved around the rather technical considerations of whether Turkey is ready (on issues as democratic performance, human rights and economic development) to join the EU. This frame

apparently, not all individuals used these frames. So can we make sense of who uses these frames by focussing on general values?

### Hypotheses

We start off with the premise that the issue of Turkish potential EU membership can indeed be framed in utilitarian terms and in terms of identity. Which of either of the two frames an individual applies, depends on how important considerations in these frames are believed to be (i.e., depends on the weights assigned to these considerations). We argue that individuals, who value certain considerations in these frames important, do so because they value these considerations important in general. Thus, those who frame the issue of Turkey's EU membership in utilitarian terms perceive utilitarian considerations more important in this specific issue, but are also likely to perceive utilitarian considerations more important in general. To test this, we will link general importance of utilitarian considerations to the importance individuals attribute to a particular utilitarian topic: economic issues. We thus hypothesize:

[H1a] The **more** importance an individual attaches to economic issues, the **more** important the utilitarian frame is in deciding on support for Turkey's EU membership.

Similarly, individuals who frame the issue in terms of identities value identity considerations more important in this specific issue, and do so because they value identity considerations more important in general. To test this, we will link the general importance of identity considerations to the importance individuals attribute to a particular identity related topic: immigration issues. This leads to a similar hypothesis for the identity frame:

[H1b] The **more** importance an individual attaches to immigration issues, the **more** important the identity frame is in deciding on support for Turkey's EU membership.

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combined with the utilitarian and identity frame covered more than 90% of the respondents.

Of course, as framing is about weighing certain issue related considerations, the application of a certain frame is the result of the relative weights assigned to these considerations (Chong & Druckman, 2007a). But this relative nature of weights is also likely to apply when general considerations are weighted. If, as we hypothesized, application of a utilitarian frame depends on the importance assigned to general importance attributed to economic issues, then the relative nature of weights would suggest it is about whether importance of economic issues are perceived as more important than other issues. The consequence of this would be that increasing perceived importance of other issues, would lead to relative stronger weights of considerations in other frames, i.e., reduce the likelihood of application of the utilitarian frame and increase the likelihood of the application of another frame. Thus, given our frames and general issues of interest, we also hypothesize:

[H1c] The **more** importance an individual attaches to immigration issues, the **less** important the utilitarian frame is in deciding on support for Turkey's EU membership.

[H1d] The **more** importance an individual attaches to economic issues, the **less** important the identity frame is in deciding on support for Turkey's EU membership.

The explanation of importance belief change in framing literature focuses in specifically on the individual. Studies on public discourse on Turkish potential accession (Steunenberg et al., 2011; Wimmel, 2009), however, usually focus on countries, indeed find country differences and explain these differences with country-specific details. For instance, Wimmel (2009) argues that differences in the national discourse on support for Turkey's EU membership can be explained by differences in how each country perceives Europe's finality (i.e., where the EU should be heading towards). From this, we may also want to focus on how national contexts may influence the use of frames.

In a national context where particular issues are valued of high importance, likely there will be much attention for these issues. Elenbaas, De Vreese, Boomgaarden and Schuck (2012) argue that when information is

widely available in the media, effects of this information would not depend on individual exposure. In other studies, scholars argue that individuals do not need to be individually exposed to media content to be influenced, as information is likely to be widely dispersed through interpersonal communication (e.g., Hopmann, Vliegenthart, De Vreese, & Albaek, 2010; Jerit, Barabas, & Bolsen, 2006). Much attention in the media context may lead to changes in both accessibility of certain considerations and weights assigned to these considerations. Mirroring our hypotheses on individual importance, we hypothesize the following on contextual importance:

- [H2a] The **higher** the average importance attached to economic issues in a country, the **more** important the utilitarian frame is in deciding on support for Turkey's EU membership.
- [H2b] The **higher** the average importance attached to immigration issues in a country, the **more** important the identity frame is in deciding on support for Turkey's EU membership.
- [H2c] The **higher** the average importance attached to immigration issues in a country, the **less** important the utilitarian frame is in deciding on support for Turkey's EU membership.
- [H2d] The **higher** the average importance attached to economic issues in a country, the **less** important the identity frame is in deciding on support for Turkey's EU membership.

## Methods

### Survey

We conducted a survey in 21 countries of the EU in the spring of 2009. In selecting which countries to include, we took into consideration that the sample would include larger and smaller member states, countries from North, South, East and West, and long term and new members to the EU. The countries included were Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech

Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden and the UK. From the TNS databases and their partners, a sample was drawn, with quota's enforced on age, gender and education to ensure representativeness. A total of 34,412 respondents participated. The average response rate (AAPOR RR1) was 23% (with a minimum of 13% in Denmark and a maximum of 46% in Lithuania).

The questionnaire was developed in English and translated by TNS (who also translate the Eurobarometer surveys) into the different languages. As an additional check, all translated questionnaires were retranslated back into English. Irregularities and problems arising from this process were resolved by deliberation.

### **Variables**

As we define individual framing as the weights assigned to certain considerations, we test this by examining for whom considerations within a particular frame have a stronger weight in deciding on the issue of Turkey's EU membership (see Nelson et al., 1997; Ruiz-Jimenez & Torreblanca, 2007). We will look at the relationship between considerations and support for Turkey's membership, and consecutively focus on whether importance of certain issues change (i.e., moderate) that relationship (i.e., change the weight of the considerations in deciding on the issue, which implies change in use of the frame). We will thus model with support for Turkey's EU membership as the dependent variable, frame considerations as independent variables, and individual and contextual importance of economic and immigration issues as moderators.

**Support for Turkey's EU membership.** To measure support for Turkey's EU membership, we asked respondents on a 7 point scale whether they were in favour of (6) or against (0) Turkey becoming a member. As predicted by previous literature, on average the sample was sceptical about Turkey's accession ( $M = 2.07$ ;  $SD = 1.93$ ).

**Frame considerations.** Following the question on support for Turkey's EU membership, we asked the respondents to answer on a 7-point scale whether they agreed or disagreed with a number of considerations regarding Turkey's potential membership. The considerations we asked respondents

about were derived from our results in chapter 1. For the utilitarian frame we asked whether respondents thought that Turkey's EU membership would have more negative than positive consequences for (1) his/her country, (2) for the EU, and (3) for his/her personal situation; for the identity frame we asked whether respondents thought that Turkey was part of Europe (1) geographically, (2) economically, and (3) culturally. The order in which the items were presented to the respondents was randomized. Using exploratory factor analysis, we found that the items group along the lines of utilitarian and identity considerations, with two factors explaining 69.8% of the total variance (Factor 1: EV = 2.603, 43.4% explained variance; Factor 2: EV = 1.588; 26.5% explained variance). This shows that consequences of Turkey's accession and Turkey's identity as European can indeed be distinguished and are not just representations of one overarching concept of support for Turkey's EU membership. For both dimensions, we constructed scales by calculating the mean score of the three items. The scales were recoded so that respondents with low scores (0) would theoretically be expected to oppose Turkey's membership and respondents with high scores (6) would be expected to support membership (utilitarian: Cronbach's  $\alpha = .787$ ,  $M = 3.157$ ,  $SD = 1.564$ ; identity: Cronbach's  $\alpha = .776$ ,  $M = 2.352$ ,  $SD = 1.491$ ). The two frame considerations are weakly correlated ( $r = .240$ ).

**Importance of economic and immigration issues.** The moderators we are interested in are the degree to which respondents attribute importance to economic and immigration issues, and the importance attributed to these issues in the polity in which the respondent resides. For this, we asked respondents to scale on a 7-point scale whether they thought economic and immigration issues were not important at all (0) or very important (6). In the same battery we also asked about the importance of environmental issues, terrorism, crime, and EU integration issues. Again, the order in which the items were presented was randomized. For respondents' individual importance of economic and immigration issues, we used the individual-level scores (economic issues:  $M = 5.15$ ,  $SD = 1.20$ ; immigration issues:  $M = 3.86$ ,  $SD = 1.75$ ). For importance in the polity, we

aggregated these scores to the national level ( $n_{\text{countries}} = 21$ ; economic issues:  $M = 5.15$ ,  $SD = 0.46$ ; immigration issues:  $M = 3.88$ ,  $SD = 0.53$ ).<sup>5</sup>

### Data analysis

We use multilevel modelling techniques, because a significant portion of the variation is found at the national level (5.9%). As described before, we will examine the use of frames by focussing on the effect size of considerations in these frames on support for Turkey's EU membership (see Nelson et al., 1997; Ruiz-Jimenez & Torreblanca, 2007). We analyze the effect of importance of economic and immigration issues on frame use by assessing how they affect the relation between considerations and support for membership (i.e., how the importance indicators moderate the effect of considerations on support). We start with establishing a baseline model with only the frame indicators (Model 1). Consecutively, we add to the model the individual moderators and interactions to analyze whether the model improves and how the moderators affect the use of the frames (Model 2). Next, we turn back to a baseline model, but now set the effects of the frame considerations to vary across countries (Model 3), and consecutively add the contextual moderators and interactions (Model 4). Finally, we run a model with moderators and interactions of both levels (Model 5).<sup>6</sup>

The models we present have no additional controls. We did, however, run the same models while controlling for the most relevant factors in recent literature on support for enlargement and/or Turkey's EU membership of support for Turkey's EU membership and demographics. This includes anti-immigrant attitudes (De Vreese et al., 2008; McLaren, 2007), exclusive national identity (Carey, 2002; Hooghe & Marks, 2004; Hooghe & Marks, 2005), government satisfaction (Franklin et al., 1995), economic evaluations (Gabel & Palmer, 1995), ideology (Gabel, 1998),

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<sup>5</sup> Respondents received the importance questions before the questions on Turkey's EU membership and the frame considerations. The rating of economic and immigration issues are thus unbiased by the Turkey issue. Of course, answers to the Turkey questions may be influenced by the previously asked importance questions. However, since we asked about the importance of more issues, and several questions on multiple issues were asked in the survey between the importance questions and the Turkey questions, we argue that influence would be minimal.

<sup>6</sup> We also ran models with only one moderator interaction added each time. As this didn't lead to substantially different results, we decided to present models where all moderators are added simultaneously.



religiosity (Boomgaarden & Freire, 2009), age, gender, income and ethnicity. Adding these factors as controls to the models did not substantively change the results and for reasons of conciseness we decided to present the results without the controls.

## Results

We first look at Model 1 of Table 2.1. As would be expected, both frame considerations have positive coefficients. Compared to an intercept-only model (not shown in table), adding the frame considerations significantly improves the model ( $\chi^2 = 16,270.384$ ,  $df = 2$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and strongly reduces the variance at both the individual level (39.4%) and the national level (77.0%)

To test our first set of hypotheses (H1a through H1d), we turn to Model 2 of Table 2.1, where the individual moderators and interactions have been added. The addition of the interactions in Model 2 significantly improves the model (compared to model 1:  $\chi^2 = 168.889$ ,  $df = 6$ ,  $p < .001$ ; compared to a model with the main effects of the moderators but without the interactions:  $\chi^2 = 134.461$ ,  $df = 4$ ,  $p < .001$ ). As H1a predicts, we find a significant positive coefficient for the interaction between the utilitarian considerations and importance of economic issues ( $b = 0.009$ ,  $p = .018$ ). This implies that the more importance individuals attribute to economic issues, the stronger the effect of the utilitarian considerations on support for Turkey's membership, and thus the more the utilitarian frame is applied. This finding supports H1a. Turning to H1b, we find similar results. The interaction between the identity considerations and importance of immigration issues in Model 2 is significant and positive ( $b = 0.018$ ,  $p < .001$ ), thus implying more application of the identity frame and supporting our hypothesis.

In model 2, we also find support for H1c and H1d. We find a significant negative effect of the interaction between utilitarian considerations and importance of immigration issues ( $b = -0.031$ ,  $p < .001$ ), implying that the more importance is attributed to immigration issues, the weaker the application of the utilitarian frame. For the interaction between the identity considerations and importance of economic issues, we have similar findings ( $b = -0.026$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

Table 2.1

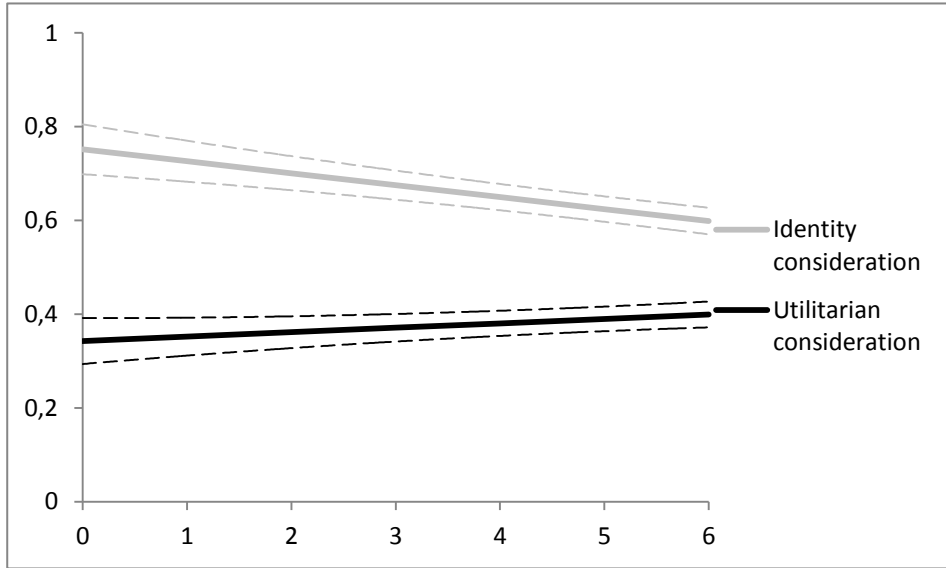
*Multilevel models explaining support for Turkey's EU membership*

	1	2	3	4	5
Intercept	-0.609 <sup>***</sup> (0.054)	-0.844 <sup>***</sup> (0.11)	-0.623 <sup>***</sup> (0.036)	-0.951 <sup>*</sup> (0.492)	-0.981 <sup>*</sup> (0.498)
Utilitarian considerations (Util.Cons.)	0.390 <sup>***</sup> (0.005)	0.464 <sup>***</sup> (0.025)	0.390 <sup>***</sup> (0.012)	0.411 <sup>**</sup> (0.148)	0.405 <sup>**</sup> (0.146)
Identity considerations (Id.Cons.)	0.622 <sup>***</sup> (0.006)	0.683 <sup>***</sup> (0.027)	0.627 <sup>***</sup> (0.021)	0.534 <sup>*</sup> (0.259)	0.542 <sup>*</sup> (0.256)
<b>Individual</b> importance economy (Ind.Econ.)		0.019 (0.017)			0.020 (0.018)
<b>Individual</b> importance immigration (Ind.Imm.)		0.034 <sup>**</sup> (0.012)			0.037 <sup>***</sup> (0.012)
Util.Cons. * Ind.Econ.		0.009 <sup>*</sup> (0.004)			0.003 (0.005)
Util.Cons. * Ind.Imm.		-0.031 <sup>***</sup> (0.003)			-0.026 <sup>***</sup> (0.003)
Id.Cons. * Ind.Econ.		-0.026 <sup>***</sup> (0.005)			-0.018 <sup>***</sup> (0.005)
Id.Cons. * Ind.Imm.		0.018 <sup>***</sup> (0.003)			0.010 <sup>**</sup> (0.003)
<b>Contextual</b> importance economy (Con.Econ.)				0.075 (0.076)	0.057 (0.079)
<b>Contextual</b> importance immigration (Con.Imm.)				-0.015 (0.068)	-0.049 (0.070)
Util.Cons. * Con.Econ.				0.035 <sup>+</sup> (0.023)	0.034 <sup>+</sup> (0.023)
Util.Cons. * Con.Imm.				-0.052 <sup>**</sup> (0.020)	-0.027 <sup>+</sup> (0.020)
Id.Cons. * Con.Econ.				-0.042 (0.040)	-0.025 (0.040)
Id.Cons. * Con.Imm.				0.080 <sup>*</sup> (0.035)	0.068 <sup>*</sup> (0.035)
<b>Variance of random components</b>					
Residual	2.143 <sup>***</sup>	2.132 <sup>***</sup>	2.120 <sup>***</sup>	2.120 <sup>***</sup>	2.112 <sup>***</sup>
Intercept	0.051 <sup>***</sup>	0.052 <sup>***</sup>	0.017 <sup>*</sup>	0.015 <sup>*</sup>	0.016 <sup>*</sup>
Util.Cons.			0.003 <sup>**</sup>	0.002 <sup>**</sup>	0.002 <sup>*</sup>
Id.Cons.			0.008 <sup>**</sup>	0.006 <sup>**</sup>	0.006 <sup>**</sup>
-2log likelihood	116735.721	116566.832	116451.591	116440.769	116331.034

Note: <sup>\*\*\*</sup>  $p < .001$ ; <sup>\*\*</sup>  $p < .01$ ; <sup>\*</sup>  $p < .05$ ; <sup>+</sup>  $p < .1$  (one-sided)

Source: Panel data

To further examine these findings, we plotted the marginal effects of the frame considerations against different values of individual importance of economic issues (Figure 2.1) and immigration issues (Figure 2.2). The black line in Figure 2.1 (representing the marginal effect of the utilitarian



*Figure 2.1.* Marginal effects of framing considerations on support for Turkey's membership for different values of individual importance of **economic** issues, based on Model 2. Black curve is the marginal effect of utilitarian considerations; grey curve is the marginal effect of identity considerations. The dashed lines indicate the 95% confidence interval.

considerations) rises slightly, matching the positive coefficient in Model 2 in Table 2.1. However, when we look at the 95% confidence interval, we should question whether the slope is substantial enough to speak of significant differences in effect size between the minimum and maximum value of importance of economic issues<sup>7</sup>. This would suggest that perceptions of importance of economic issues do not affect the application of the utilitarian frame and thus not support hypothesis 1a.

In the same figure, the grey line represents the marginal effect of identity considerations, and here we do find a steady decrease of the marginal effect. This indicates that within the scale of importance of economic issues, lower scores of importance lead to smaller effects of identity considerations on support for Turkey's membership (i.e., lower score of importance lead to less application of the identity frame). This also supports hypothesis 1d.

<sup>7</sup> The upper bound of the 95% CI of the marginal effect at the minimum value of importance of economic issues lies at 0.391, and is higher than the lower bound of the 95% CI of the marginal effect at the maximum value of importance of immigration issues (at 0.371).

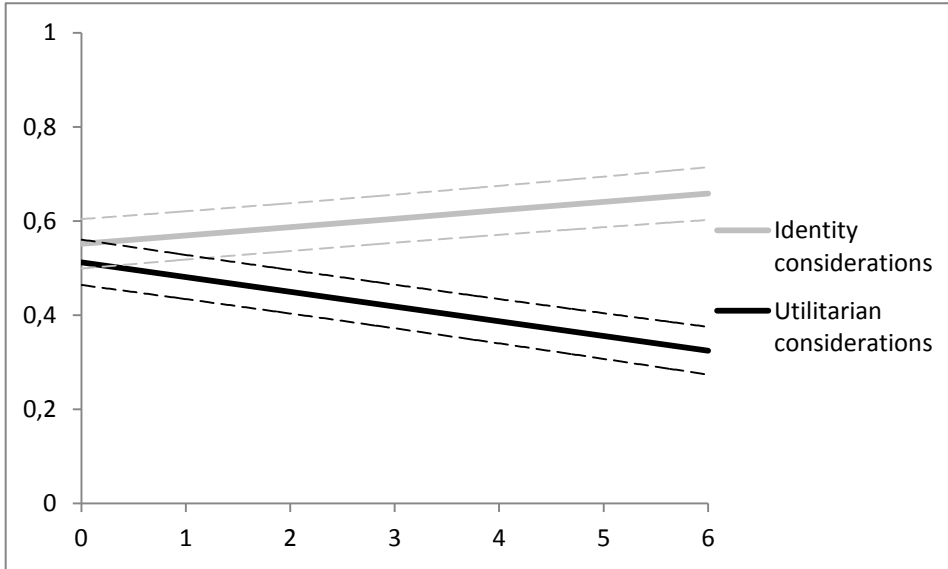


Figure 2.2. Marginal effects of framing considerations on support for Turkey's membership for different values of individual importance of **immigration** issues, based on Model 2. Black curve is the marginal effect of utilitarian considerations; grey curve is the marginal effect of identity considerations. The dashed lines indicate the 95% confidence interval.

In Figure 2.2, we see that with increasing importance of immigration issues, the marginal effect of utilitarian considerations (and thus the application of the utilitarian frame) decreases and the marginal effect of identity considerations (and thus the application of the identity frame) increases. This is also in line with hypotheses 1b and 1c.

Combining these findings and giving them a more substantial interpretation, we can also illustrate the magnitude of the effects. The model predicts that for individuals who attribute high importance to economic issues ( $M + 1SD$ )<sup>8</sup> and low importance to immigration issues ( $M - 1SD$ ) a coefficient for the effect of utilitarian considerations on support for Turkey's membership of  $b = 0.467$  ( $p < .001$ ); for individuals who attribute low importance to economic issues and high importance to immigration issues the model predicts a coefficient of  $b = 0.358$  ( $p < .001$ ). The difference of 0.109 is quite substantial. For the effect of identity

<sup>8</sup> The mean plus one SD is actually 6.350, which is above the maximum score of the scale. Instead, we used the maximum score of 6 here.

considerations on support for Turkey's membership, we find coefficients for the relative low and high on the importance scales of  $b = 0.658$  ( $p < .001$ ) and  $b = 0.533$  ( $p < .001$ ). There is, again, a substantial difference in coefficients (of 0.126).

We now turn to our contextual hypotheses (H2a through H2d) and add the contextual moderators. The results are shown in Model 4 of Table 2.1. Adding the cross-level interactions significantly improves the model (compared to a main effect model only without interactions:  $\chi^2 = 9.925$ ,  $df = 4$ ,  $p < .042$ ). We find a similar picture as with the individual moderators: as our hypotheses predict, we find a significant positive coefficient for the interaction between utilitarian considerations and contextual importance of economic issues ( $b = 0.035$ ,  $p = .071$ ) and for the interaction between identity considerations and importance of immigration issues ( $b = 0.080$ ,  $p = .017$ ). This implies that higher importance of economic issues in a country, the stronger the effect of utilitarian considerations (and the more the utilitarian frame is applied). Similarly, higher importance of immigration

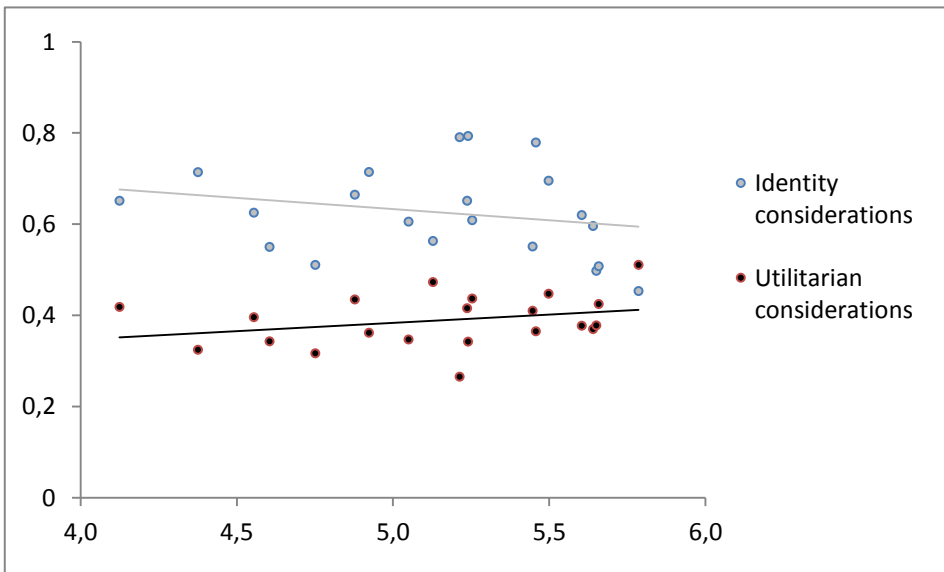


Figure 2.3. Marginal effects of framing considerations on support for Turkey's membership for different values of national importance of **economic** issues. Black curve is the marginal effect of utilitarian considerations; grey curve is the marginal effect of identity considerations.

issues in a country leads to stronger effects of identity considerations and thus to a stronger application of the identity frame. Also, we find negative coefficients for the crossed interactions, although not significant for the interaction between contextual importance of economic issues and identity considerations (for contextual importance immigration \* utilitarian considerations:  $b = -0.052$ ,  $p = .009$ ; for contextual importance economy \* identity considerations:  $b = -0.042$ ,  $p = .156$ ). We thus find support for hypotheses 2a, 2b and 2c, but not for hypothesis 2d.

We also illustrated these findings in Figure 2.3 and Figure 2.4. The black line in Figure 2.3, which represents the marginal effect of utilitarian considerations on support for Turkey's membership, increases when importance attributed to economic issues at the contextual level increases. And the grey line, representing the marginal effect of identity considerations on support for Turkey's membership, decreases as importance attributed to economic issues at the contextual level increases. Mirroring Figure 2.3, Figure 2.4 shows that the black line (marginal effect of utilitarian

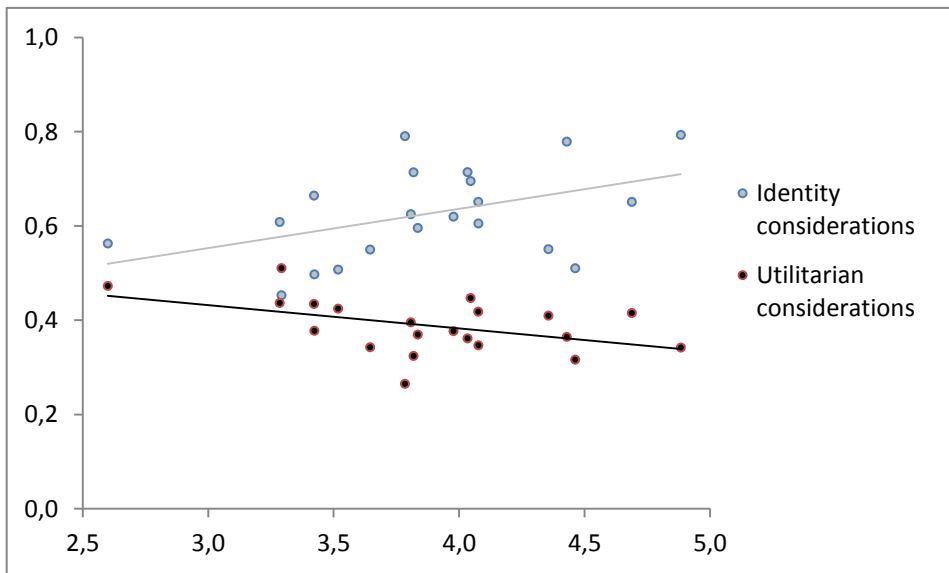


Figure 2.4. Marginal effects of framing considerations on support for Turkey's membership for different values of national importance of **immigration** issues. Black curve is the marginal effect of utilitarian considerations; grey curve is the marginal effect of identity considerations.

considerations) decreases and the grey line (marginal effect of identity consideration) increases as importance attributed to immigration issues at the contextual level increases.

What does this substantially mean? The model predicts a gap between countries one SD above the mean of importance of economic issues and countries one SD below the mean of importance of economic issues of 0.032. The gap for one SD above the mean and one SD below the mean of immigration issues is predicted at 0.039. Combining both (low importance economic issues and high importance immigration issues on the one side, and high importance economic issues and low importance immigration issues on the other), the model even predicts gaps of 0.087 for the utilitarian considerations and 0.123 for identity considerations. On main effects of 0.390 of utilitarian considerations and 0.627 of identity considerations, these gaps in effect size are quite substantial.

Finally, we turn to Model 5 of Table 2.1. In the full model, we find similar results as presented above. We find significant coefficients in the expected direction for all importance indicators, except for the interaction between individual importance of economic issues and utilitarian considerations (which was significant in Model 2, but not in the analysis of the marginal effects), and for the interaction between contextual importance of economic issues and identity considerations (also not significant in Model 4). So also in Model 5, we find support for hypotheses 1bcd and 2abc.

By comparing two sets of individuals, we can illustrate the (maximum) impact of importance. The first set of individuals thinks economic issues are most important and immigration issues are of no importance. These individuals also happen to live in countries where economic issues are relatively important (one SD above the country level mean) and immigration issues relatively unimportant (one SD below the mean). For this set of individuals, the effect of utilitarian considerations is estimated by Model 5 to be  $b = 0.549$  and the effect of identity considerations is estimated to be  $b = 0.468$ . The second set of individuals thinks immigration issues are most important and economic issues are not important, and live in countries where immigration issues are perceived to be important and

economic issues less important. For this set of individuals, the effect of utilitarian considerations is estimated at  $b = 0.259$  and of identity considerations at  $b = 0.830$ . The gaps of 0.290 for utilitarian considerations and 0.362 for identity considerations illustrate that depending on both individual and contextual attribution of importance leads to substantial differences in the role the same considerations play in forming an opinion about Turkey's potential EU membership.

### Conclusion

In this chapter we argued that framing is about assigning weights to different considerations, and that the weights assigned to considerations depend on prior values. To test this, we focussed on who actually made use of a utilitarian frame and an identity frame when deciding on their opinion on Turkey's EU membership. We hypothesized that individuals who value economic issues of higher importance, are more likely to frame the issue of Turkey's EU membership in utilitarian terms, and analogous to first hypothesis, that individuals who value immigration issues of higher importance, are more likely to frame the issue in terms of identities. As weights of considerations are always relative to each other, we also hypothesized that values may decrease the use of considerations not related to the value. Finally, we argued that citizens may also be affected by their national context, and hypothesized that importance of certain issues in a country affects the use of frames. Analyzing data from a survey held in 21 EU member states, we found support for most of our hypotheses.

We didn't find support for our hypotheses concerning individual importance of economic issues and utilitarian framing (in the full model) and contextual importance of economic issues and identity framing. At the time of this study, the financial and economic crisis roamed across Europe. Economic issues are likely to be very important in these times and this is indeed illustrated in the mean score of importance of economic issues (both individual and contextual). Perhaps this resulted in less variation (which is indeed the case compared to importance of immigration issues) and a potential ceiling effect.

Our findings suggest that individual framing in a specific case depends on a more general idea about what this individual believes to be important.



We have shown this looking at the specific case of Turkey's EU membership, but it is likely to also be the case with other topics. That does of course not mean that values have a one-on-one relation with the application of individual frames. Frames can only be applied when they are available, accessible and applicable (e.g., Chong & Druckman, 2007a; Price et al., 1997). Accessibility depends only on the individual and not on which issue an individual evaluates. Thus, when values increase accessibility of certain considerations, the effect of values on framing is independent of the topic under evaluation. Applicability, however, depends on both the individual and the topic at hand. Certain frames are not (or hardly) applicable in certain issues. No matter how important an individual then seems a particular value linked to such a frame, if that frame is not applicable to an issue it will not be applied (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007). So when values increase applicability, the frame will only be (more often) applied if it is actual applicable to the issue. With the methods we employed, we cannot distinguish between accessibility and applicability. But with scholars arguing that framing effects are applicability effects (e.g., Nelson & Oxley, 1999; Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007), we should at least be careful to generalize these findings to any random frame and any random topic.

But if individual frames are dependent on personal values, should we then not expect individual framing and opinion to be relative stable? Viewing this as an accessibility effect, then instability may arise through agenda setting (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). Frequent exposure to certain values in the media, would lead to a higher perceived importance of these values and consecutively lead to the use of frames in line with these values. In this view, however, framing would be a mere priming effect.

But looking at it as an application effect, there is still reason to expect media effects. Media frames emphasizing different values affect individual frames and opinions (e.g., Shen & Edwards, 2005). This is perhaps the classic framing effect. Although citizens have their individual 'baseline' in how they frame a particular issue, by exposure to media frames the weights to considerations may be altered. That leaves, however, the question how persistent these framing effects are (see Lecheler, 2010) especially compared

to the effects of previously-held personal values in a competitive framing environment (Sniderman & Theriault, 2004).

But media frames do not only affect individuals through emphasizing different values. For instance, Nelson, Lecheler, Schuck and De Vreese show that ‘rival frames can also influence opinion when they recruit the same value’ (Nelson, Lecheler, Schuck, & De Vreese, 2012, p. 12). They argue that this works through a frame not only stating which value is of importance, but also framing how the value should be interpreted. If framing effects are limited by values of individuals, a frame might actually still effect opinion through giving meaning to the actual value. With these ideas in mind, it is interesting for future studies to see how over time different values may be put forward and how these values are given meaning in individual frames.

So when framing is about which value is important about how this value should be interpreted, what does this say about our specific topic? As we already saw in our data, both the utilitarian frame and the identity frame contain considerations that lead to either support of or opposition towards Turkey’s accession. At the moment, popular opinion is mainly against Turkey’s accession (e.g., McLaren, 2007). Scholars argue that identities are perceived as most important (e.g., De Vreese et al., 2008) and that religion is one of the main aspect that defines Turks as ‘the other’ (Azrout, Van Spanje, & De Vreese, in press; Van Spanje, Azrout, & De Vreese, 2010). But if the current economic crisis endures, we may witness an increase in importance of the utilitarian frame. And given the economic developments in Turkey and its rapid economic growth, the direction of the utilitarian considerations may also change in favour of accession. So it may be the case that an enduring economic crisis in the EU may actually be a necessary condition for public support to turn in favour of Turkey’s membership.