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Impact of EU'S Decisions on Euro-Skepticism of a Turkish Religious Peripheral Party,  
Felicity Party

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**Abstract**

This study achieved a group of objectives including the measuring of the impact of the EU's decisions on trust-based, nationalism-based, and religion-based Euro-skepticism, as well as Euro-skepticism in general, by conducting content analysis of statements made by some elite members of a peripheral Turkish religious party, the Felicity Party (Saadet Partisi, SP). The hypotheses were tested at two independent events (one on December 17, 2004 and the other on October 03, 2005). The data were collected from the pro-SP Milli Gazete. Each hypothesis was tested by using the two sample z-Test formula. The findings show that the two decisions by the EU did not have any impact on religion-based and trust-based Euro-skepticism. Only the first event had an impact on the nationalism-based Euro-skepticism of the SP. No positive impact was found at the 0.05 level. By the end of the second event, only trust-based Euro-skepticism of the SP showed a decrease at the 0.10 level. The results of this study were associated with social identity theory, with the group's status as a peripheral party, and the policy requirements of the EU regarding Turkey's sensitive issues.

## Introduction

Turkey's prospective EU membership has captured significant attention and sparked a serious debate in Europe for the past several years. In spite of Turkey's large Muslim population, geographic size, level of economic development, and low per capita income (Grigoriadis, 2006) (none of which would appear to designate it as a prime candidate for EU membership), its unique geo-strategic position (at the crossroads of the Balkans, the wider Middle East, Southern Caucasus, Central Asia, and beyond); its importance to the security of Asia's energy supply; and its political, economic, and military leverage (Laciner, Ozcan, & Bal, 2005) have made Turkey a candidate country that is different from all the others.

Supporters and critics of Turkey's EU membership have both used Turkey's Islamic religious and cultural identity, geographical position, demographic size, and level of economic development as arguments for and against Turkey's EU membership. For example, the supporters of Turkey's EU membership believe that not only would the admission of a Muslim country into the EU constitute the most effective guarantee that the EU would retain a secular, inclusive, and multicultural character, they believe it would also send a powerful message to the rest of the world (Grigoriadis, 2006). On the other hand, in the Declaration of the "No Turkish Membership in the EU" campaign, the opponents of Turkey's EU membership argue that Turkey belongs to the East and Islam, not Europe. They assert, quite simply, that Turkey is not a European country, and, likewise, that the Orient and Islam are not part of Europe. These opponents go so far as to claim that most Europeans themselves do not want to have Turkish or Arab countries in the European Union, as the EU is not a union of all democracies, they say, nor is it only a union of values. They remind those who will listen that the EU is a *European* Union and that Turkey is culturally and historically not European. In their words, only the people of Europe can decide which countries are accepted as EU member nations, not politicians or foreigners ("Campaign against Turkish Membership"). Some of these opponents, however, do believe that a "special relationship" between Turkey and the EU would be desirable for strategic and economic reasons (Schauble, 2004). This "special relationship" might be defined as a sort of "privileged partnership" between Turkey and EU member nations, implying a close strategic, political, and economic relationship between Turkey and EU member nations but still falling short of full EU membership for Turkey. This possibility became very popular, especially among some political parties in Germany, Australia, and France that oppose full membership for Turkey. Underlying European fears, prejudices, and skepticism always seem to surface in the discussion of full EU membership for Turkey (Grigoriadis, 2006). This European rejectionism targeting Turkey can be observed among both elites and the common people of Europe (Yilmaz, 2004). After taking a glimpse at the European perception of Turkey's prospective EU membership, it is relevant to look at the perception of Turkey about its own membership in the EU.

Turkish public opinion is overwhelmingly in support of full EU membership, and enthusiasm among dominant groups is increasing. According to the Euro-barometer, Turkey is one of the highest-ranking countries in support of its own EU membership, with 65 percent in favor of the proposal (European Commission, 2002), and with 71 percent of this sample believing that the country will benefit from such membership. There are many different studies that measure the attitudes of the Turkish public toward Turkey's EU membership. For instance, drawing on pooled Eurobarometer data from 2001, 2002, and 2003, one recent study examined the extent to which attachment to Islam, utilitarian considerations, and national identity explain individual support for Turkey's accession to the EU in a possible membership referendum (Kentmen, 2008). The study revealed that (1) people evaluated accession on the basis of its influence on national identity and contributions to the national economy in Turkey and (2) attitudes toward the EU did not vary with one's devotion to Islam. This finding implies that Islamic values are not incompatible with being part of the West and that attachment to Islam does not affect attitudes toward the West. According to several studies, mainly descriptive, the majority of Turkish political parties and elites are in favor of Turkey's EU membership. The Euro-skeptic elites and parties are limited in number and have limited appeal to the Turkish public, but the ambivalent position of Europe and its Turkey-skepticism harden them (Ayata, 2003). There is a lack of empirical research about the perceptions of Turkish political elites toward the European Union. Therefore, conducting an empirical study on the Euro-skepticism of a peripheral, religious Turkish party (the Felicity Party) makes my research valuable in that it will reduce the deficit in empirical research in this field. This study will measure the impact of the events of 17 December 2004 and 3 October 2005 on trust-based and ideology-based (religion and nationalism) euro-skepticism specifically and on Euro-skepticism in general.

There have been some studies on party preferences of the individuals and how they relate to the support of or opposition to EU membership. For instance, among all major political parties, only the Pro-Islamist Felicity Party (Saadet Partisi-SP) has a majority of voters against full membership of Turkey in the EU. The SP's major pro-Islamist rival, the Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkinma Partisi-AKP) has a small majority (52 percent) in favor of full EU membership. All other parties have a clear majority of voters in favor of Turkey's EU membership. It is interesting that the highest level of EU support comes from the constituents of Kurdish HADEP, which was banned in 2003. Despite much open opposition by the party elite, 68 percent of the Nationalist Action Party (Milliyetci Hareket Partisi-MHP) supporters are also in clear support of the EU membership (Carkoglu, 2003).

The main reason for the opposition to Turkey's EU membership by Felicity Party (Saadet Partisi, SP) elites is Euro-skepticism. Euro-skepticism is rooted in distrust of the EU, nationalism, and religion-based concerns in Turkey. That is why, as a religiously affiliated party, the Felicity Party shows a clearer skepticism toward the EU than the other political parties do. The fear that European integration could possibly erode national sovereignty and dilute Turkish-Islamic identity and culture forms this party's skepticism toward EU integration (Arikan, 2004). By looking at the results of the research, however,

we can see that while there is not a clear correlation between party preference and support of or opposition to EU integration in some cases, there is precisely such a correlation in others. For example, even though MHP leadership has shown a strong resistance to EU integration, 68 percent of its constituents have supported Turkey's EU membership. On the other hand, AKP is the leader of Turkey's EU integration process, but only 52 percent of its constituents support full EU membership for Turkey. This correlation is clearer in the case of other parties. For instance, the SP shows a strong resistance against the EU, and the majority of its constituents show resistance as well.

Despite exceptions such as the MHP and its followers, a direct relationship exists between Turkish individuals' party preferences and their support or resistance of Turkey's EU membership. Each party has a certain number of supporters, and the way each political party thinks and operates can easily affect the beliefs of its followers. Indeed, parties may play an important role in affecting society's opinion about the Integration of Turkey in the EU. For this reason, the resistance of any party to Turkey's EU membership is important enough to merit close examination since it might create a much more complex integration process in the European Union.

From a policy perspective, there exist many so-called "sensitive" issues that can easily be used by the political parties that oppose Turkey's EU membership. These issues, when publicly expressed, are easily exploited by such parties and used to stir up support from Euro-skeptics, using nationalistic and religious rhetoric to build opposition to EU membership within the largely EU-supportive Turkish public. The choice of rhetoric of political parties may significantly influence the level of support or opposition of the public with respect to full membership of Turkey in the EU. In light of this, despite the majority of public support for Turkey's EU membership within Turkey, the polarized and publicly proclaimed resistance to EU-membership of some Turkish elites (and their primary political parties) can manipulate the public opinion. Indeed, "segments within the political elite can easily accomplish their objective of melting mass support for EU membership by providing misinformation to the public and strategically shaping the rhetoric around the sensitive issues" (Carkoglu, 2003). One such example of a "sensitive issue" involves the cultural rights of the citizens of Kurdish origin and the abolition of the death penalty. The death penalty is linked to the Kurdish issue due to the fact that Abdullah Ocalan, the PKK leader, was on death row.

Therefore, in this study, the relationship will be looked at from the perspective of political parties and their relationship to the support or opposition of Turkey's EU membership. While there have been previous studies on the party preferences of constituencies and support or opposition for EU membership, the perspective in this particular study is from the political parties' standpoint rather than that of party constituencies. The main reason that some political parties resist EU integration is because of the various forms of Euro-skepticism that they harbor. There are different reasons for Euro-skepticism, and this study will attempt to explain these reasons and measure whether the decisions of the EU itself regarding Turkey's EU membership have had any impact on the attitudes of Euro-skeptical Turkish political elites. Events occurring on December 17, 2004 and October 3, 2005 will be used as to measure the

impact of the decisions of the EU on Turkey's own support of or opposition to its EU membership.

### **Islamist Parties and the Felicity Party**

Until the late 1990s, Turkey's Islamist Parties were radically opposed to EU membership for Turkey. According to Professor Erbakan, who was the leader of the Welfare Party (Refah Partisi) at that time and who is now the informal leader of the Felicity Party (Saadet Partisi), the "EU is a Christian Club, established to prove that the cross was superior to the crescent." In his book, "The Basic Problems of Turkey," he said: "I regard the application of Turkey for the full membership in the EC as treason to our history, civilization, culture, and sovereignty" (Erbakan, 1991).

The Islamist Welfare Party, however, was first ousted and then outlawed by the Constitutional Court in 1998. At that time, the Welfare Party's elite founded the Virtue Party (Fazilet Partisi) and made several changes in political policy on a number of issues. Democracy, human rights, and freedom were then emphasized by the party elites, one of the results of which was that the former Welfare Party's hostile stance on Turkish membership in the European Union was softened. In fact, the new leader of the Virtue Party, Recai Kutan, declared that the new party would have a new image. He even stressed the importance of Turkey's EU membership and talked about the universal values of Europe without any indication of the Welfare Party's previously strongly anti-Western position (Unal, 1998). Despite this, the state prosecutor who had applied to the Constitutional Court for the Welfare Party's closure declared publicly that because the new Virtue Party was the official successor to the Welfare Party (Refah Partisi), it, too, would be banned (Taniyici, 2003). When the Virtue Party was banned by the Constitutional Court in June 2001, its elites split and founded two different parties: the Saadet Partisi (SP), (the Felicity Party) and the Adalet ve Kalkinma Partisi (AKP) (the Justice and Development Party). Both parties assumed a positive stance toward the EU, especially the AKP, which became a leader within Turkey's EU- membership project (Taniyici, 2003).

Despite their previous resistance to EU-membership, the following events precipitated a change in the Islamists' stance on proposed membership. The first was the ban on headscarves, and the second was the closure of political parties, especially Islamist Parties, by the Turkish Constitutional Court and the influence of the military over civilian governments. Islamist political elites started seeing the EU as a solution to these concerns. They believed that the ban on headscarves might be lifted with the help of the libertarian rules, views, and policies of the EU. They also believed that criticism from the EU would stop the Turkish Constitutional Court from disbanding Islamist political parties. Their hopes were not unfounded. For example, the EU president stated that the EU "notes with regret the decision of the Turkish Constitutional Court on 16 January 1998 to order the closure of the Welfare Party, to confiscate its property, and to ban certain present and former members of that party from being members of the Turkish Parliament or from further political activity for five years" (Bulletin of the European Union, 1998). The elite from the Virtue Party, in particular, came to the conclusion that

Western democracy would provide a solution to these problems when Turkey became a member of the EU. As such, argues Ayata (2003), this radical shift in Islamist party ideology was born of necessity.

As previously described, when the Virtue Party was banned by the Constitutional Court, the elites of this party split and founded both the AKP (Justice and Development Party) and the SP (Felicity Party). After the election of 2002, the AKP, as a ruling party, continued supporting Turkey's EU membership. However, the Felicity Party's stance toward Turkey's EU membership started to change drastically after the election of 2002. This change was the result of several factors. First, the election of 2002 had, as a result of the court-ordered disbanding of the Virtue Party, relegated members of the newly founded Felicity Party to the periphery. On top of this, SP party members' perspectives on Western democracy and EU-membership were done no favors when the EU was not able to stop the Turkish Constitutional Court from closing the Islamic Virtue Party. Indeed, in February 13, 2003, when the European Court of Human Rights ruled that the Turkish Constitutional Court's decision to ban the Welfare Party had not violated human rights laws (Taniyici, 2003), Felicity Party members were greatly disappointed. Finally, the EU also did not provide any solution to the headscarves restrictions. In fact, in 2005, the European Court of Human Rights upheld Turkey's ruling against a young woman who had taken the Turkish State to the court because she had been expelled from the University of Istanbul for refusing to take off the scarf in class (Financial Times Special Report, 2006). The court rejected the appeal by Leyla Sahin, who argued that the state ban violated her right to an education and discriminated against her. The verdict was a bitter shock for the public, especially the Islamist elite. After this court ruling on the banning of headscarves, they more clearly understood what the EU could and could not offer to Turkey.

### **Methodology**

This study investigated whether the decisions of the EU toward Turkey's EU membership have had any impact on the attitudes of Euro-skeptical Turkish political elites. Events on December 17, 2004 and October 3, 2005 were used to measure this possible impact on a major religious party, the Felicity Party (Saadet Partisi, SP).

A content analysis method was used in this study. The changes in the content and occurrences of this conservative party's statements on trust-based and ideology-based Euro-skepticism were analyzed over time. Two major EU decisions about Turkey's membership were selected as critical discourse moments around which to analyze the possible attitude changes of the Felicity Party with respect to Turkey's EU membership over time, particularly in reference to before, during, and after these two events. Both latent and manifest content analyses of this party's official statements were employed to understand the impact of the EU's decisions on the Euro-skepticism of this political party.

## **Research Questions**

### ***Specific***

1. Does Turkey's European Union (EU) membership project (specifically reflected in the events of the December 17, 2004 and October 3, 2005) have any impact on the Euro-skepticism (trust-based, nationalism-based and religion-based) of the Felicity Party's elites?

### ***General***

2. Do the decisions of the EU with respect to Turkey's EU membership have any impact on the attitudes of Euro-skeptical Turkish political elites?

## **Variables**

### ***Dependent variable***

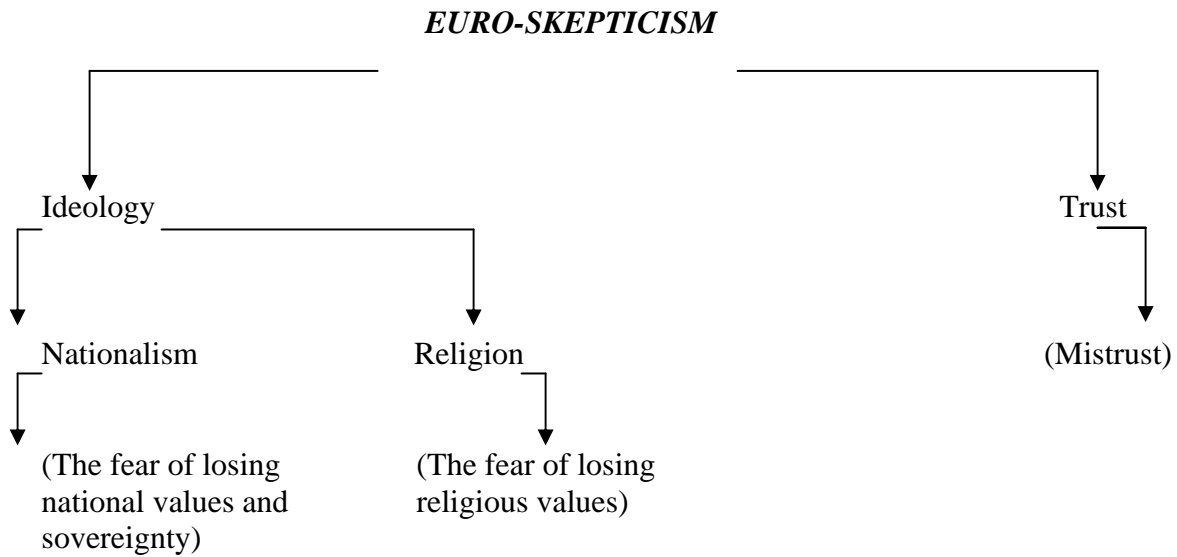
Euro-skepticism (whether the result of trust-based, Nationalism-based, or Religion-based concerns)

### ***Independent variable***

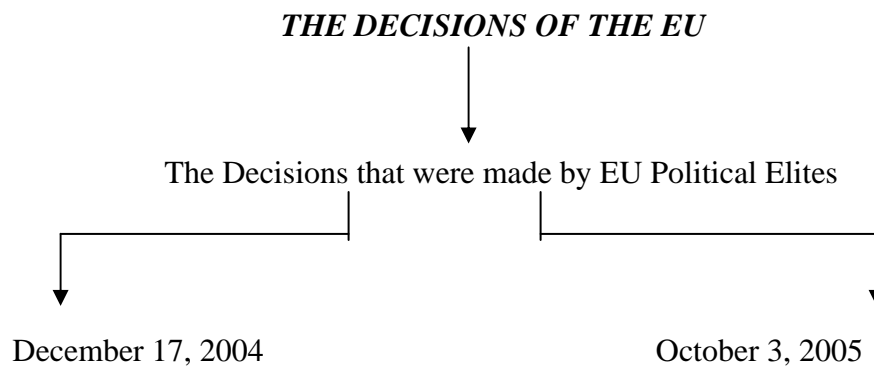
The decisions of the EU regarding Turkey's EU membership on 17 December, 2004 and on 03 October, 2005



*Figure 1: Operationalization of Euro-skepticism*



*Figure 2: Operationalization of the Decisions of the EU*



### **The Importance of Two Major Events**

Essentially, 17 December 2004 is the date on which the European Union approved Turkey's completion of Copenhagen criteria, and the European Council decided to open talks regarding Turkey's accession to the European Union on 3 October 2005, though with strings attached. The second date, 3 October 2005, is the date on which the accession talks with Turkey symbolically opened, as was promised on 17 December 2004.

#### ***Timetable***

The timetable begins on July 25, 2004 and end on February 25, 2006, examining 145 days before and after each major event. In this way, I ensure that no important data between July 25, 2004 and February 25, 2006 remains unexamined. By recording data from 145 days before and after each major event, I maintain consistency in my research.

The timetable was established as follows:

#### *General Period for the December 17, 2004 event:*

Before the decision: July 25, 2004 – December 16, 2004

During the decision: December 17, 2004

After the decision: December 18, 2004 – May 10, 2005

#### *General Period for the October 03, 2005 event:*

Before the decision: May 11, 2005 – October 02, 2005

During the decision: October 03, 2005

After the decision: October 04, 2005 – February 25, 2006

### **Data Collection**

The data was collected from a Pro-SP newspaper, the *Milli Gazete*. By doing a content analysis, I looked at the frequency and content of the party's statements about the EU. The frequency of these statements was indicated as a percentage of all statements about the EU made by the party. Since I am measuring Euro-skepticism, my main focus was on the negative statements made by the party about the EU. However, to see a broader picture and to increase the reliability of the study, I have paid attention on the positive, neutral, and ambiguous EU statements as well. The technique of content analysis helped me to classify and analyze party's statements and statement strategies. They were

classified as negative (nationalism-based, religion-based, trust-based and other negatives), neutral, positive, and ambiguous statements.

### **Sampling Frame**

Since this study focuses on the party elites of the Felicity Party (Saadet Partisi, SP), my population of interest was the Central Office. Each reachable individual of the Central Office was also a part of the sample of this study. The Central Office is the main decision-making mechanism of the party, and all the other organs of the party must obey the rules, regulations, decisions, and instructions of the Central Office. Basically, the Central Office consists of the party elites.

### **The Organizational Structure of the Party**

The Organizational Structure is comprised of three different Organs which include:

*(1)- Primary Organs (Main Organization), (2)- Supplementary Organs, and (3)- Agencies at Home and Abroad.* This research focused only on the Central Office from the Primary Organs (Main Organization). Therefore, it can be easily said that the Central Office is the most representative organ of the entire Party as a whole. The list of the names and positions can be seen from Appendix A in my dissertation and on the official web page of the political party, [www.sp.org.tr/](http://www.sp.org.tr/) (Official Web Page of SP).

### **Coding**

The data was coded as follows: The method of content analysis helped me to identify the negative (religious, nationalistic, trust-based, and other negatives), positive, neutral, and ambiguous statements from the texts.

#### ***Column A***

The statements (observations) made by the party about the EU were entered into SPSS and numerated under the "TypeofStatement" (Column A). This first column was used to code each statement as a 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, or 7. The statements (the first four of which represent negative statements made by the party about the EU) were coded as follows: Religion = 1, Nationalism = 2, Trust = 3, Other Negatives = 4, Neutral = 5, Positive = 6, and Ambiguous = 7.

#### ***Column B***

Column B displays the date (month/day/year) of each statement and helps to mark the time that each statement was said or implemented.

***Column C***

Column C displays the before, during, and after of each event as follows: Before the first event = 1, During the first event = 2, After the first event = 3, Before the second event = 4, During the second event= 5, and After the second event = 6.

***Column D***

Column D represents the political party, and SP was coded as 1.

***Column E***

Column E displays the official level, and two different levels were observed under this column. The leader of the party was coded as 1, and the other elites around the party leader were coded as 2.

***Column F***

The final Column F contains the type data. Basically, it indicates how the views of the party elite were distributed. The Press Briefings were coded as 1, the speeches and messages were coded as 2, and if the data type was undetermined it was coded as 3.

**Coding Rules for the Column A.*****Religion=1***

The statement is coded as (1) Religion if the statement delivers a message that EU membership will harm Turkey's Islamic values, Islamic Identity, or Islamic culture and expresses that the EU is a Christian club, anti-Muslim and anti-Islam, or, if the statement delivers a message that disagrees with existing and many proposed future issues regarding Islam (religion). Support of D-8 was also considered as opposition to the EU as a "Christian Club."

***Nationalism=2***

The statement is coded as (2) Nationalism if (a) the statement delivers a message that EU membership will harm Turkey's national values, national identity, national culture, national interest, national sovereignty, nation state, national unity, state entirety, state dignity or expresses that the EU is anti-Turkish and an external enemy, or (b) if the statement delivers a message that disagrees with existing and many proposed future issues regarding nationalism.

***Trust=3***

The statement is coded as (3) Trust if the statement expresses any doubt about the EU's willingness and honesty in accepting Turkey as a member, or any distrust of the EU and the EU's double standards towards Turkey.

***Other Negatives=4***

The statement is coded as (4) Other Negatives if the statement delivers any message that is (a) neither Religion-based, Nationalism-based, nor Trust-based Euro-skepticism related, or, (b) if the statement is a combination of Religion-based, Nationalism-based, and Trust-based Euro-skepticism, or (c) if there is more than one meaning.

***Neutral=5***

The statement is coded as (5) Neutral if the statement delivers any message that is neither negative nor positive nor ambiguous.

***Positive=6***

The statement is coded (6) Positive if the statement delivers any message that is positive about the EU.

***Ambiguous=7***

The statement is coded as (7) ambiguous if (a) the statement is open to two or more interpretations or has more than one possible meaning, so that it is not clear how the sentence will be coded, or (b) if the statement is neither negative nor neutral nor positive.

**Reliability of the Study**

At the end of the coding of each of the related statements made about the EU, 50 randomly selected statements were coded by two independent coders. The results were compared with the original coding to determine the reliability of this research. Since three observers (the researcher and two independent coders) were involved in this research, Inter-Rater (Inter-Observer or Inter-Coder) Reliability is the best technique to assess the degree to which different raters/observers give consistent estimates of the same phenomenon. Inter-rater reliability is the commonly used term for the extent to which independent coders evaluate a characteristic of a message or artifact and reach the same conclusion (Lombard, Snyder-Dutch, & Bracken, 2004). Tinsley and Weiss (1975, 2000) indicate that inter-coder (inter-rater) agreement is the most specific term for the type of consistency required in content analysis. Kolbe and Burnett (1991) note that "inter-judge

reliability is often perceived as the standard measure of research quality. High levels of disagreement among judges suggest weaknesses in research methods, including the possibility of poor operational definitions, categories, and judge trainings.” Additionally, “coefficients of .90 or greater are nearly always acceptable, .80 or greater is acceptable in most situations, and .70 may be appropriate in some exploratory studies for some indices. Higher criteria should be used for indices known to be liberal (i.e., percent agreement) and lower criteria should be used for indices known to be more conservative” (Cohen’s Kappa, Scott’s pi, and Krippendorff’s alpha) (Lombard, Snyder-Dutch, & Bracken, 2004). Landis and Koch (1977) suggest that kappa values from 0.41-0.60 are moderate, and those values above 0.60 are substantial. Kappa is a useful statistic when one is concerned that the percent agreement might be artificially inflated because of the fact that most observations fall into a single category (Stemler, 2004).

**Table 1: Agreement between Researcher and Coder1**

	Value	Asymp. Std. Error(a)	Approx. T(b)	Approx. Sig.
Measure of Agreement Kappa	.864	.057	11.294	.000
N of Valid Cases	50			

**Table 2: Agreement Between Researcher and Coder2**

	Value	Asymp. Std. Error(a)	Approx. T(b)	Approx. Sig.
Measure of Agreement Kappa	.837	.061	11.094	.000
N of Valid Cases	50			

Since the results are .86 and .83, we can say that this study is reliable.

### Hypotheses Testing

The hypotheses were tested by using **Two Sample Z-Test** to compare **Two Independent Proportions**. The formula is as follows:

$$Z = \frac{P_1 - P_2}{\sqrt{[P_c(1 - P_c) / n_1] + [P_c(1 - P_c) / n_2]}}$$

(Hawkes, Marsh, 2005)

$$P_1 = X_1 / n_1$$

$$P_2 = X_2 / n_2$$

$$P_c = (X_1 + X_2) / (n_1 + n_2)$$

If Z is 1.96 or higher, then the difference of means is significant at the .05 level. In that case, the null hypotheses were rejected (Zhou, Fielding, Silverman, Tempany, 2003).

### Main Hypotheses

**H1** \_The decisions of the EU in regards to Turkey's EU membership do not have any impact on trust-based Euro-skepticism; **H2** \_The decisions of the EU in regards to Turkey's EU membership do not have any impact on nationalism-based Euro-skepticism; **H3** \_The decisions of the EU in regards to Turkey's EU membership do not have any impact on religion-based Euro-skepticism; and **H4**\_The decisions of the EU in regards to Turkey's EU membership do not have any impact on the attitudes of Euro-skeptical Turkish political elites.

Each of these hypotheses will be tested based on a party (SP), and each major decision from the EU (17 December, 2004 and 3 October, 2005).

## Results

### Hypotheses Testing for SP

Table 3: Types of Statements: Before, during and after each event Crosstabulation (SP)

Before, During, And After Each Event							
Types of Statements	Before 1st Event	During 1st Event	After 1st Event	Before 2nd Event	During 2nd Event	After 2nd Event	Total
Religion	43	0	58	35	0	37	173
Nationalism	133	0	199	127	1	99	559
Trust	54	1	45	53	1	34	188
Other Negatives	111	1	89	53	4	80	338
Neutral	46	3	29	17	0	24	119
Positive	4	0	2	0	0	0	6
Ambiguous	54	0	71	42	2	29	198
Total	445	5	493	327	8	303	1581

The appropriate numbers are inserted into the two sample z-Test formula. If z is 1.96 or higher, then the difference of means is significant at the .05 level. In that case, the null hypotheses will be rejected.

#### Two Sample Z-Test Formula:

$$z = \left[ \frac{\hat{p}_1 - \hat{p}_2}{\sqrt{\frac{p_c(1-p_c)}{n_1} + \frac{p_c(1-p_c)}{n_2}}} \right] \quad p_c = \frac{n_1}{n_1 + n_2} \hat{p}_1 + \frac{n_2}{n_1 + n_2} \hat{p}_2$$

(Hawkes, Marsh, 2005)

Table 4: Hypothesis Testing for Felicity Party (SP)

Hypothesis Testing for Felicity Party (SP)	
First Event H1	Second Event H1
$P_1 = 54/445 = 0.121$	$P_1 = 53/327 = 0.162$
$P_2 = 45/493 = 0.091$	$P_2 = 34/303 = 0.112$



$$P_c = (54+45) / (445+493) = 99/938 = 0.105$$

$$z = -1.496$$

**H2**

$$P_1 = 133/445 = 0.298$$

$$P_2 = 199/493 = 0.403$$

$$P_c = (133+199) / (445+493) = 332/938 = 0.353$$

$$z = -3.350$$

**H3**

$$P_1 = 43/445 = 0.096$$

$$P_2 = 58/493 = 0.117$$

$$P_c = (43+58) / (445+493) = 101/938 = 0.107$$

$$z = -1.036$$

**H4**

$$P_1 = 341/445 = 0.776$$

$$P_2 = 391/493 = 0.793$$

$$P_c = (341+391) / (445+493) = 732/938 = 0.780$$

$$z = -0.990$$

$$P_c = (53+34) / (327+303) = 87/630 = 0.138$$

$$z = 1.812$$

**H2**

$$P_1 = 127/327 = 0.388$$

$$P_2 = 99/303 = 0.326$$

$$P_c = (127+99) / (327+303) = 226/630 = 0.358$$

$$z = 1.611$$

**H3**

$$P_1 = 35/327 = 0.107$$

$$P_2 = 37/303 = 0.122$$

$$P_c = (35+37) / (327+303) = 72/630 = 0.114$$

$$z = -0.594$$

**H4**

$$P_1 = 268/327 = 0.819$$

$$P_2 = 250/303 = 0.825$$

$$P_c = (268+250) / (327+303) = 518/630 = 0.822$$

$$z = -0.180$$

### ***For the First Event***

**H1** *\_The decisions of the EU in regards to Turkey's EU membership do not have any impact on trust-based Euro-skepticism. Since z is -1.496 and lower than 1.96 (two tailed test), the difference of means is insignificant at the .05 level, and thus the null hypothesis will be accepted.*

**H2** *\_The decisions of the EU in regards to Turkey's EU membership do not have any impact on nationalism-based Euro-skepticism. Since z is -3.350 and higher than 1.96 (two tailed test), the difference of means is significant at the .05 level, and thus the null hypothesis will be rejected (Euro-skepticism increased).*

**H3** *\_The decisions of the EU in regards to Turkey's EU membership do not have any impact on religion-based Euro-skepticism. Since z is -1.036 and lower than 1.96 (two tailed test), the difference of means is insignificant at the .05 level, and thus the null hypothesis will be accepted.*

**H4** *The decisions of the EU in regards to Turkey's EU membership do not have any impact on the attitudes of Euro-skeptical Turkish Political Elites.* Since  $z$  is  $-0.990$  and lower than  $1.96$  (two tailed test), the difference of means is insignificant at the  $.05$  level, and thus the null hypothesis will be accepted.

***For the Second Event***

**H1** *The decisions of the EU in regards to Turkey's EU membership do not have any impact on trust-based Euro-skepticism.* Since  $z$  is  $1.812$  and lower than  $1.96$  (two tailed test), the difference of means is insignificant at the  $.05$  level, and thus the null hypothesis will be accepted. (It is significant at the  $0.10$  level,  $1.64$  and therefore there is a decrease in Trust-based Euro-skepticism).

**H2** *The decisions of the EU in regards to Turkey's EU membership do not have any impact on nationalism-based Euro-skepticism.* Since  $z$  is  $1.611$  and lower than  $1.96$  (two tailed test), the difference of means is insignificant at the  $.05$  level, and thus the null hypothesis will be accepted.

**H3** *The decisions of the EU in regards to Turkey's EU membership do not have any impact on religion-based Euro-skepticism.* Since  $z$  is  $-0.594$  and lower than  $1.96$  (two tailed test), the difference of means is insignificant at the  $.05$  level, and thus the null hypothesis will be accepted.

**H4** *The decisions of the EU in regards to Turkey's EU membership do not have any impact on the attitudes of Euro-skeptical Turkish Political Elites.* Since  $z$  is  $-0.180$  and lower than  $1.96$  (two tailed test), the difference of means is insignificant at the  $.05$  level, and thus the null hypothesis will be accepted.

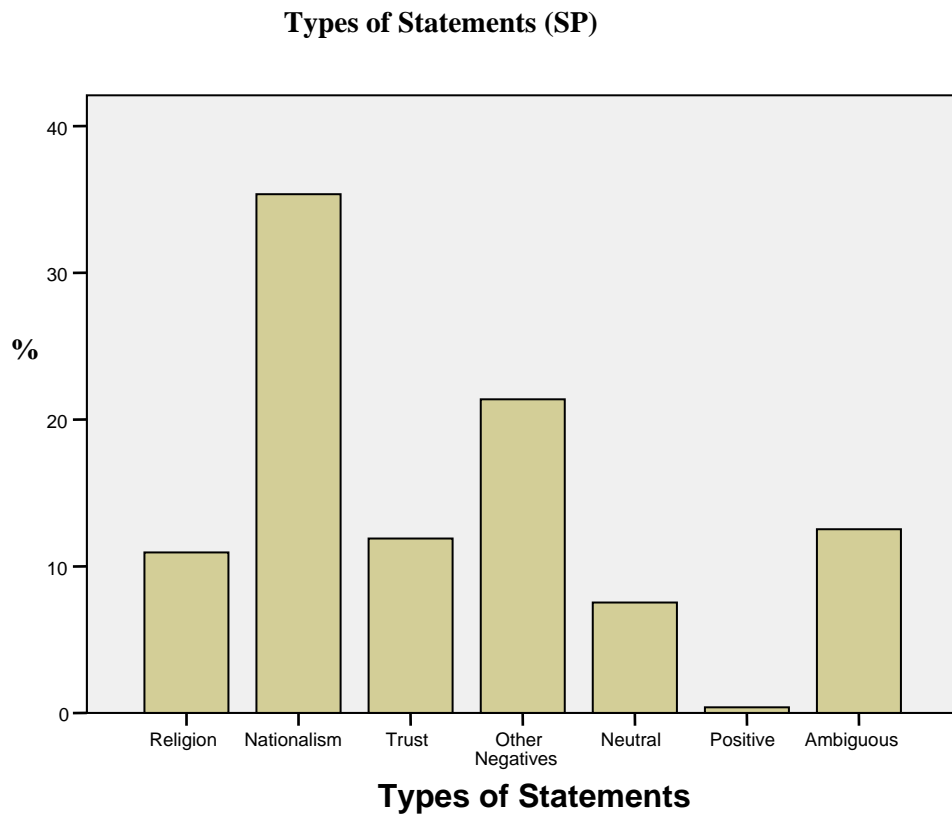
**Explanation of the Descriptive Parts of SPSS Sheets.**

**SP-Frequencies**

**Table 5: Frequency Table of Types of Statements (SP)**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
<b>Religion</b>	173	10.9	10.9	10.9
<b>Nationalism</b>	559	35.4	35.4	46.3
<b>Trust</b>	188	11.9	11.9	58.2
<b>Other Negatives</b>	338	21.4	21.4	79.6
<b>Neutral</b>	119	7.5	7.5	87.1
<b>Positive</b>	6	0.4	0.4	87.5
<b>Ambiguous</b>	198	12.5	12.5	100
<b>Total</b>	1581	100	100	

**Figure 3: Types of Statements (SP)**



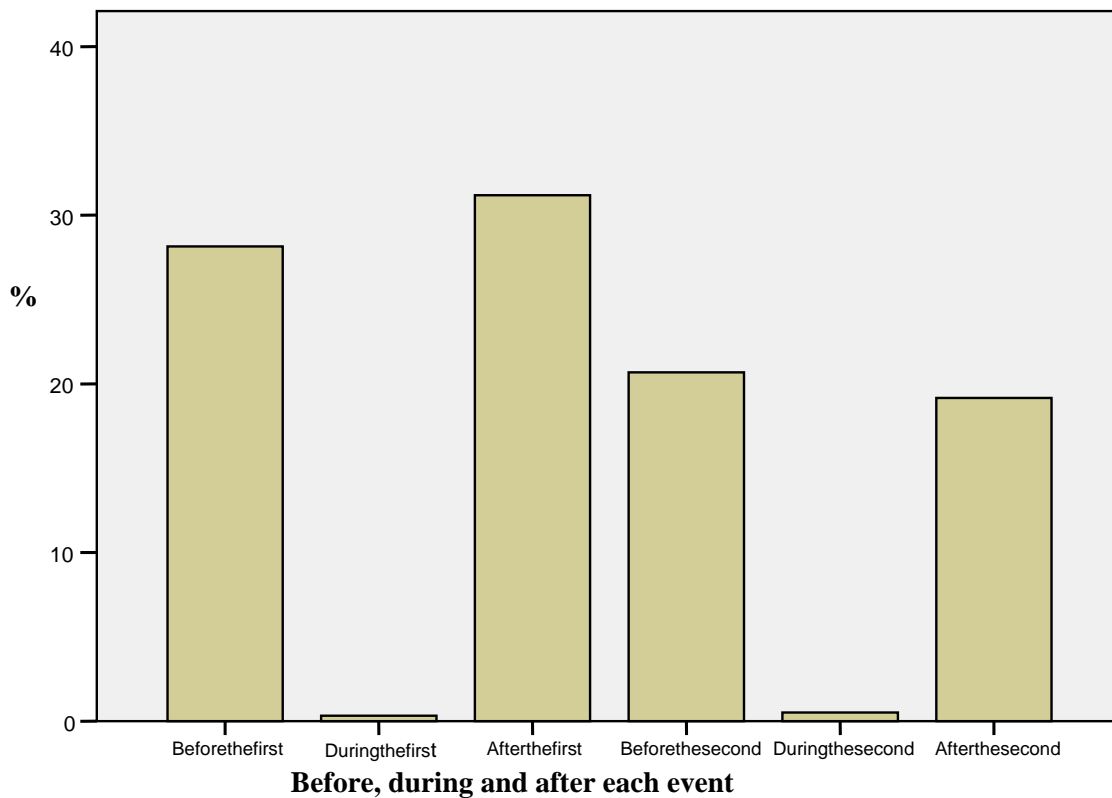
Even though the Felicity Party (Saadet Partisi) is a Turkish Political Party with a strong Islamist view, the religion-based statements made by the party regarding EU membership are much less frequent than the nationalism-based statements (10.9% and 35.4%, respectively). After the closure of two Islamist parties, the Welfare Party and the Virtue Party, by the Constitutional Court in 1998 and 2001, the Felicity Party made several changes in their policy on different issues. This intentional change in policy could easily be one of the reasons why the party elites of SP appeared to avoid making religion-based comments and instead made more nationalism-based criticism regarding Turkey's relationship with the European Union. Like the Nationalist Action Party (MHP), the Felicity Party (SP) also shows no sympathy toward the EU. In fact, the SP party uttered the smallest percentage (.4%) of positive statements with respect to Turkey's EU membership, which appears to illustrate the party elites' clear skepticism toward Turkey's EU membership process. The party's skepticism is further illustrated by the many statements made that demonstrate the party's trust-based, nationalism-based, religion-based concerns regarding EU membership and general Euro-skepticism. For instance, one of the party officials bitterly predicted that the "EU will never give Turkey a date to start full membership negotiations" *Milli Gazete*, (2004a). Another party official concurred, saying, the "EU will not give us a date in December" *Milli Gazete*, (2004b). Several hundred similar statements from the SP party elite show their different types of skepticism towards the EU.

**Table 6: Before, during and after each event (SP)**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
<b>Before 1st Event</b>	445	28.1	28.1	28.1
<b>During 1st Event</b>	5	0.3	0.3	28.5
<b>After 1st Event</b>	493	31.2	31.2	59.6
<b>Before 2nd Event</b>	327	20.7	20.7	80.3
<b>During 2nd Event</b>	8	0.5	0.5	80.8
<b>After 2nd Event</b>	303	19.2	19.2	100
<b>Total</b>	1581	100	100	

**Figure 4: Before, during and after each event (SP)**

**Before, during and after each event (SP)**

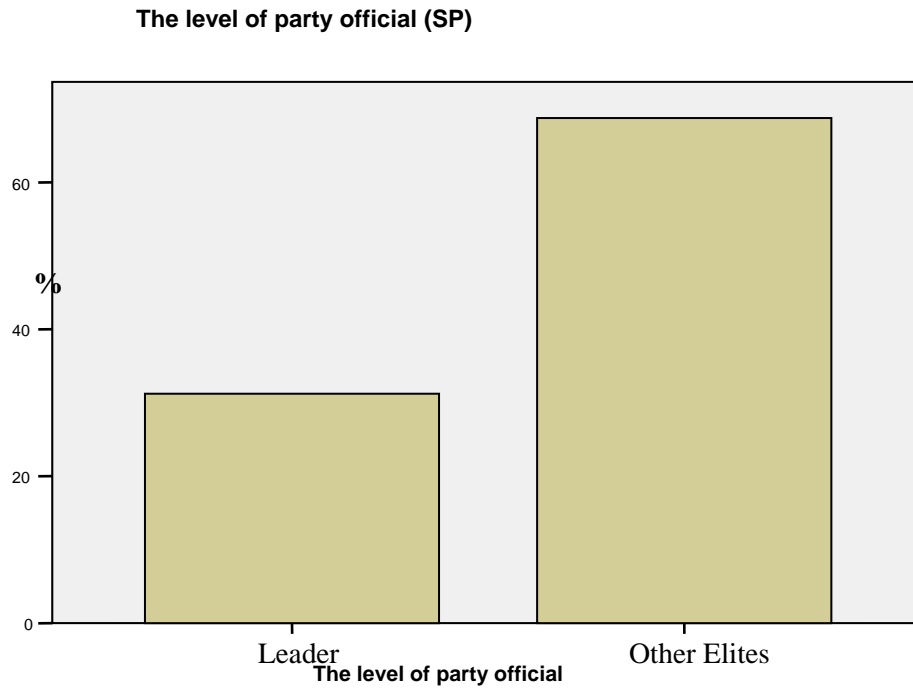


The results of the data show that the SP was more affected by the first event, on December 17, 2004, than by the second, on October 3, 2005. The figures above illustrate that the number of statements made by the SP party decreases with the second event. If we look at Table 3, we see that the number of nationalism-based statements made by the SP for the first event is 332. This number decreased to 226 for the second event. This decrease may either be due to a general decrease in the party elite's Euro-skepticism, or it may simply reflect the party elites' decision to stop speaking publicly about the EU. To determine which might be the case, we must look at the positive statements made by party members. If, while nationalism-based negative statements decrease, there is no concurrent increase in positive statements made, it is hard to say definitively that Euro-skepticism is decreasing. Instead, the apparent decline in skepticism might more accurately reflect the party elites' decision simply not to talk about the EU anymore.

**Table 7: The level of party official (SP)**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
<b>Leader</b>	494	31.2	31.2	31.2
<b>Other Elites</b>	1087	68.8	68.8	100
<b>Total</b>	1581	100	100	

**Figure 5: The level of party official (SP)**



The SP's statements came more from party elites than from the party leader. The leader of the party has made fewer comments about the EU compared to the other elites. (68.8% vs. 31.2%).

**Table 8: The data type (SP)**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
<b>Press Briefings</b>	594	37.6	37.6	37.6
<b>Speeches and Messages</b>	818	51.7	51.7	89.3
<b>Undetermined</b>	169	10.7	10.7	100
<b>Total</b>	1581	100	100	

**Figure 6: the data type (SP)**

The SP mostly used speeches and messages to deliver their opinion about the European Union. Press briefings were secondary to public statements made by these party elites.

### **Conclusion and Implications**

The findings of this study show that the two decisions made by the EU (on December 17, 2004 and October 5, 2005) did not have any impact on the Felicity Party's religion-based or trust-based Euro-skepticism. The findings also show that only the first event had an impact on the Felicity Party's nationalism-based Euro-skepticism. The hypotheses tested in this study were conducted on one party and on two different events (including time both before and after each event). Since there were 4 general hypotheses, the total hypotheses testing occurred 8 times. The findings show that 1 of instances of hypotheses testing had a negative impact, and 7 instances of testing had no impact at all. No positive impact was found at the 0.05 level. Only one of hypothesis test showed significance at the 0.10 level. The results of all testing showed that the two decisions of the European Union either did not change the Felicity Party's Euro-skepticism or that the party's Euro-skepticism was changed in a negative way. None of the tests showed a



positive impact or decrease in Euro-skepticism (even though the actions of the EU on both dates tested appeared to be positive). Why, then, didn't the two events have any positive impact on the Felicity Party's Euro-skepticism?

The first answer to the question can be associated with the Social Identity Theory. Group membership creates in-group/self-categorization and enhancement in ways that favor the in-group at the expense of the out-group (TCW, 2004). "Minimal Group Studies" conducted by Tajfel and Turner (1986) showed that the mere act of individuals categorizing themselves as group members was sufficient to lead them to display in-group favoritism. After they categorize themselves as group members, individuals seek to create positive self-esteem by positively differentiating their in-group from an out-group on some valued dimension. This theory was developed in response to several experiments conducted by Tajfel and his colleagues demonstrating that individuals attempt to maximize the differences between their group and other groups, even at the cost of in-group rewards (Tajfel, 1970; Tajfel & Billings, 1974; Tajfel, Billings, Bundy, & Flament, 1971). Social Identity Theory (SIT) is based on the assumption that inter-group perceptions and conflicts arise because groups attempt to maintain distinctiveness from other groups (Cable, Welbourne, 1994). As such, regardless of whether the decisions of the EU may be externally perceived as positive, if members of the Felicity Party seek to maintain an identity that is distinct from European groups, and if the party seeks to maximize differences between their group and Europe (and by extension, the EU) by making statements that invoke concern that the EU is in fact discriminatory or prejudiced (against Turkey, its citizens, or its religious practices), the favorable decisions of the EU will not matter and will result in no decrease in Euro-skepticism within the Felicity Party.

Since its inception, Social Identity Theory has mainly focused on inter-group phenomena in the context of large scale social categories and demographic groups. It has paid less attention to small groups and intra-group phenomena. In the last ten years, this has changed, and social identity researchers have increasingly applied the principles of SIT to organizational contexts (Knippenberg & Hogg, 2001). Specifically, SIT has been applied to a wide range of fields at the national and organizational levels, but there is still a lack of research that applies this theory at the inter-national level.

The application of this theory to national (SP) and supra-national (EU) organizations is one of the unique features of this research. Like Flockhart's (2005) study, my study is an example of inter-group phenomena in the context of large scale social categories and demographic groups. Flockhart explains why Europeanization is so differently perceived by masses than it is by the elites in Denmark. Flockhart writes, "The explanation is based on a conceptualization of mass and elite as two distinct social groups, which have been differently constructed, and which are undergoing different self- and other categorization processes, leading to very different conceptions of interest and political preferences, and hence different views on the desirability of Europeanization" (Flockhart, 2005).

In my study, if the reason why the EU's favorable decisions did not decrease Euro-skepticism within the Felicity Party is indeed the result of an in-group vs. out-group phenomenon, then the case of the Felicity Party (SP) vs. European Union (EU) helps us to understand how the Social Identity Theory might be applied with respect to inter-group discrimination and how it might create serious international problems. In other words, if

SIT helps to answer the question of why the EU's positive actions did not decrease Euro-skepticism within the Felicity Party, then we can conclude that this study applied Social Identity Theory on an inter-group phenomenon at the international level. The results of this study show that even though the decisions from the EU were positive, they either did not decrease Euro-skepticism or they changed the party elites' Euro-skepticism in a negative way. Therefore, we can conclude that like the other studies related to Social Identity Theory, inter-group relationships at the international level play out very much the way they do at the inter-group level. Laboratory studies that use SIT's minimal group paradigm have demonstrated that simply assigning an individual to a group is sufficient to generate in-group favoritism (Brewer, 1979; Tajfel, 1982). Even explicitly random assignment of individuals to different groups has caused discrimination against out-groups and increased intra-group cooperation and cohesion (Billing, Tajfel, 1973; Locksley, Ortiz, & Hepburn, 1980).

Apart from Social Identity Theory altogether, the second reason why the EU's decisions may not have reduced Euro-skepticism among SP party members could be associated with the fact that the Felicity Party is a peripheral party in Turkey. (The SP was a peripheral party at the time that this study was conducted, and it is still peripheral.) Conducting research on a peripheral party is another contribution of this study. By studying a peripheral party, an opportunity is created to compare and contrast the findings of this study with a similar study that was conducted on Turkey's core parties (Arikan, 2004) and to show how this more radical, peripheral party responded to the possibility of Turkey's EU membership both (a) when it was a core party (before the Constitutional Court had disbanded its previous incarnation, the Virtue Party) and (b) in its now more peripheral incarnation. As the literature review confirms, core political parties with a role in governance seldom embrace Euro-skeptic positions. In the first place, such parties are, in effect, charged with bringing their countries into compliance with the *acquis* and cannot undermine the prevailing consensus on the "return to Europe." Furthermore, parties in power are responsible for the continuation and implementation of the reform package that involves unpopular social and economic policies, so that the conditionality associated with accession has an instrumental value as justification for the reform (Hughes, Sasse, & Gordon, 2002).

Parties in opposition, on the other hand, appear to have more incentives to articulate Euro-skeptic views as a means of differentiating themselves within the political sphere itself and making inroads into the competition for power (Bielasiak, 2004). Eventually, the anti-Europe position is most frequently advanced by peripheral parties, who aim to position themselves closer to the core of political power (and further from the periphery) specifically by differentiating themselves from core parties' policies and public statements.

By applying this theory to Turkey's three types of political parties discussed earlier, it becomes evident that the level of Euro-skepticism gradually increases as the parties' centrality decreases, going from ruling parties (lowest level) to opposition parties to peripheral parties (highest level). In other words, parties closer to the government tend to soften their positions toward Europe, leaving Euro-skepticism to those that are peripheral to the party system. As the literature review confirms, the reason why there was no apparent decrease in the Euro-skepticism of the Felicity Party elites might be associated with the peripheral status of their political party.

A similar study to this one, conducted by Arikan (2004), found that both fundamental nationalist and religious parties in Turkey are in support of Turkey's EU membership when they are core parties. Arikan's study showed that these fundamental parties demonstrated a positive reaction to two different critical events, and both of these events possibly played a key role in increasing the overall percentage of pro-EU framings in both parties (as opposed to their anti-EU framings). The results of my study are in complete opposition to those of Arikan's study, which may be a function of the Felicity Party's status as a peripheral party. The number of positive statements made by the Felicity Party with respect to Turkey's EU membership coded in my study shows that there is no support for the EU at all within the Felicity Party. Specifically, the findings of this study show that the percentage of positive statements made by the SP about the EU was only 0.4 percent, which can be seen from the frequency tables for "types of statements" of the party. This is a clear proof that the discourse of a core, fundamental party (like the former Virtue Party) changes considerably as the party becomes more peripheral (like the current Felicity Party).

To return to more core status, the SP may have been using Turkey's EU membership as a political tool to manipulate public opinion and regain party popularity in the years leading up to the 2007 national election. This party may also have been differentiating themselves from and targeting core parties such as the AKP by criticizing that party's way of handling Turkey's EU membership process. If this were the case, the SP might have believed that such tactics could cast doubt on the success of the current government, thereby giving the SP a chance to defend itself and influence the Turkish public against the AKP administration. This explanation of Peripheral Parties vs. Core Parties also nicely parallels the Social Identity Theory's In-group vs. Out-group paradigm.

The third and final reason why the EU's positive actions with respect to Turkey failed to reduce Euro-skepticism among Felicity Party elites may be explained by associating the findings of this study with the EU's policies with respect to Turkey themselves. The results of this study may not be associated only with the Social Identity Theory or with a group's status as a peripheral party. The policy requirements of the EU regarding Turkey and the sensitive nature of these issues may be the real reason why there was not a positive change in the Euro-skepticism of the Felicity Party's elites. Simply put, the party elites might have had serious concerns about the future of Turkey, and the EU's membership requirements with respect to some sensitive issues might have maintained or even increased the party's Euro-skepticism. The content analysis of the study coded the nature of all statements made by Felicity Party elites showing Euro-skepticism. A total of 1581 statements made by the SP about the EU and the EU's Policy towards Turkey were found. Most of these statements are negative. The following concerns of the Felicity Party elites are likely responsible in no small way for increased Euro-skepticism toward the EU: (1) the Cyprus issue, (including recognition of southern Cyprus, the lifting of the restrictions on Cyprus-flagged vessels and vessels serving the Cyprus trade), (2) the retrial of Abdullah Ocalan who is the leader of PKK, (3) the promotion of Kurdish Nationalism by the EU, (4) the change in electoral system (the 10 percent threshold and the use of other languages rather than Turkish by political parties), (5) the changes on the Penal Code of Turkey, (6) the reopening of the Greek Orthodox

Seminary, which has been closed since 1971, (7) the removing of the bans on public use of the ecclesiastical title of Ecumenical Patriarch and the election of the heads of some religious minorities, (8) the recognition of some groups in Turkey as minorities such as Kurds and Alevis, (9) the opening of Turkey's border with Armenia, (10) the recognition of so-called Armenian Genocide, (11) the legalizing of adultery, (12) the allowing of property sales to foreigners in Turkey and Northern Cyprus, and (13), the fear that European integration could erode national sovereignty and dilute Turkish-Islamic identity and culture (Arikan, 2004).

In addition to these nationalism-based and religion based concerns about the EU's policies with respect to Turkey's domestic affairs, EU-skeptical political leaders also have concerns about the double standards of the EU toward Turkey. They believe that the EU is particularly tough on Turkey, and they suspect that whatever else Turkey accomplishes, European Union countries will not let Turkey join because of other member nations' deeply engrained prejudices. Any of the political issues listed above, along with the complicating issues of in-group vs. out-group social identity and the peripheral status of the Felicity Party may serve to explain why the favorable decisions of the EU on two separate occasions did not decrease the Euro-skepticism of the elites of Turkey's Felicity Party (Saadet Partisi, SP.)

As we observed from the hypotheses testing, the two major events did not have any impact on religion-based and trust-based Euro-skepticism. Additionally, only the first event had an impact on the nationalism-based Euro-skepticism of the SP. This result showed that the SP may have been more concerned about nationalism-based issues throughout the duration of first event. The party made 133 nationalism-based statements before the first event and 199 after the first event. In general, the data analysis shows that the frequency of the SP's negative EU-related statements increased because of the impact of the first event. This first event, on December 17, 2004, provided the first indication for this peripheral party that the EU was not, in fact, an insincere supra-national unity (contrary to statements made by the SP party elite to that effect). Instead, this event proved that the EU is ready to open the door for Turkey when Turkey completes the EU's outlined requirements. The declarations that this peripheral party continued to make about the EU were seemingly unfounded in light of the nature of the December 17 event. The December 17 decision from the EU also appeared to prove the success of Turkey's existing government at that time and could have had an impact on the results of the 2007 national election in favor of the current government. Knowing this, the Felicity Party might have wanted to overshadow the success of the existing government by increasing their SP's own speeches on some sensitive nationalism-based issues, hoping that doing so might help to turn the public's attention in different direction. As a result, I believe that the frequency of nationalism-based, negative statements made by the SP increased in this party's discourses. The first and second events did not affect the overall Euro-skepticism of the SP in any way.

### **Policy Recommendations**

The discussions about Euro-skepticism have recently attracted intense academic interest in both EU member and candidate countries. The dream of a “United States of Europe” has started to more seriously face the threat of Euro-skepticism. Euro-skepticism at first showed itself mostly in candidate countries but is also demonstrated in some EU member countries. Sir Anthony Eden’s often cited comment, from one of his speeches made in 1952 at Columbia University in New York, explains, for example, British Euro-skepticism very well. He said simply, “British membership [in] a ‘federation on the continent of Europe’ was something ‘we know in our bones we cannot do’” (Young, 1998, 73-74). Additionally, the opposition of France and the Netherlands in the ratification of referenda for the proposed EU constitution showed that the dream of being a “United States of Europe” would not come without problems. The EU began to realize that it is problematic to think that the European Union project might develop into the sort of federal state advocated by “eurofederalists” such as the former German foreign minister Herr Fischer because of the many differences among the member states with respect to language, culture, and historical background. Turkey’s possible membership only creates an additional, potentially complicating difference among member nations, with the possibility of bringing Islam to the EU (Christie, 2007). What then, would be the best way to help decrease Euro-skepticism in EU member and candidate countries?

I strongly believe that Christie’s (2007) modern-day Madisonian approach for the EU might be a good solution to decrease Euro-skepticism. By following Christie’s Madisonian approach, I would recommend that the EU focus its future efforts on two of the primary purposes of the original American Constitution. According to this approach, the EU should first promote economic growth through trade, a common currency, and the protection of private contractual and property rights. Second, the EU should leave the development of social welfare, domestic, and criminal policies to the individual states.

I believe that it is too early for EU to be the “United States of Europe.” As Christie indicates, the EU should not ignore the historical fact that it took a long time for 13 original American colonies to become the United States of America, even though they, unlike EU member and candidate nations, “shared the same language (English), a common language and culture influenced by that religion (Protestant Christianity), common legal principles based on English law, and a common history as people who had fought and bled together against a common enemy for independence” (Christie, 2007). Even today, some issues in the US are matters of state, not federal, law. Problematically, the EU has continued to accept new members without giving enough time to test the harmony of all these states. It might well be a big mistake for the EU to approach membership issues by the Franco-German vision of “deeper and narrower” instead of choosing the British vision of “wider and shallower.” The Franco-German vision promotes the political integration of the EU as more important than expanding the free-trade zone. On the other hand, the British vision promotes expanding the free-trade zone into as many countries as possible while preventing the evolution of the EU into a federal super-state. Once the “harmony test” can be accomplished by the states, then it will be more rational to work on the vision of “deeper and narrower” (Christie, 2005)

As discussed above, if the EU leaves states free to make their own decisions on some issues, it will diminish Euro-skepticism and may get member states closer to accepting the idea of Europeanization or the “United States of Europe.” This could solve the problem and decrease Euro-skepticism in member countries such as France and Denmark and in candidate countries such as Turkey. This will also eliminate the concerns of Euro-skeptical Turkish political elites on some sensitive nationalistic and religious issues. In addition to that, the EU must also help Turkey to understand the nature of the accession process better. This will alleviate concerns about double standards of the EU toward Turkey.

Finally, the EU needs to find a strategy to build trust in the Euro-skeptical Turkish people and in the hearts and minds of the Turkish elite, while stressing the aim of eventual Turkish membership. The EU must also realize that being “too tough on Turkey” will not solve the problem. On the contrary, being too tough will only serve reinforce Turkey’s view that the EU imposes double standards and will not admit Turkey no matter what Turkey does to seek membership.

In addition to the responsibilities of the EU to Turkey, Euro-skeptical Turkish elites also have serious responsibility for a betterment and modernization of Turkey. First of all, they must recognize that globalization transformed the world into a small village, and we all members of the world bear some responsibility for achieving peace in that village. The key to this peace is, among other things, better foreign policy. Turkey needs to be constructive. It should not be forgotten that selfishness, discrimination, anger, and prejudice towards other religions and nations have no place in foreign policy (TESEV, 2006).

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

Turkey held both parliamentary and presidential elections in 2007, and the result of the parliamentary elections might shape the future of EU-Turkey relations. The SP did not win the 2007 elections and still remains a peripheral party. If, however, this peripheral party wins a future election and becomes a core party in the future, it will be interesting to revisit their stance regarding Turkey's EU membership and relationship with Europe in general. If this study is replicated when the Felicity Party is more of a core party, and if the results show that the party's Euro-skepticism has decreased and that it has become more supportive of the EU and the EU's policies, then the findings of this study will also be confirmed. This study can also be replicated on Euro-skeptical parties once Turkey has become an EU member. It will be very interesting to see how the Euro-skeptical parties will be affected by that event and how they will react to the EU.

### **Limitations of this Study**

The main limitation of the study is its focus on only available data from the Pro-SP Milli Gazete. In addition to the direct statements of these political elites, there were some indirect statements paraphrased by the news reporter. Even though the statements came from the political elite, there is always a risk that these paraphrased statements might have included the perception of the reporter, and there is no way for the researcher to confirm the accuracy of the statements without seeing a transcription of the original statement.

### **Acknowledgement**

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