

---

# ENGLISH SUMMARY

---

## REPRESENTING TURKEY: An Analysis of the Power and Politics of Turkey's Representation in British Lifestyle News

Introduction.....	189
Theoretical Background.....	191
Summary of the Results.....	192
Conclusion and Discussion .....	195

## INTRODUCTION

This dissertation investigates *how British print media construct and circulate views about Turkey in lifestyle news texts?* By content analysing different lifestyle news sections of British broadsheet and tabloid newspapers, I debate the representation of Turkish national identity in lifestyle news that has been lacking so far in media studies evaluating the Turkish nation and its people. I have developed an alternative approach for addressing the question of Turkey's media representation, and I formulated empirical and theoretical propositions on three lifestyle areas: "Travel", "Romance Tourism", and "Sports". I uncover the way in which travel and tourism, gender and romance, and sports and nationalism have been treated in the British press, particularly in relation to Turkey.

Scholars in the field of journalism and communications studies have mainly evaluated the political representation of Turkey and have scrutinized the dominant media discourse on Turkey's EU candidacy (e.g., Aksoy 2009; Negrine 2008; Negrine, Kejanlioglu, Aissaoui, and Papatthanassopoulos 2008; Aissaoui 2007; Koenig, Mihelj, Downey and Gencel-Bek 2006). Little, if any, effort has been made to move beyond politics and engage the socio-cultural fields in order to dig deeper for an understanding of Turkey. The main claim of this dissertation, therefore, is that it is not simply enough to draw a representational picture of Turkey only by looking at hard news coverage on Turkey's potential EU membership. My main argument was that looking at the portrayal of Turkey in other journalistic fields, such as lifestyle news sections that carry soft and more entertaining-based information is necessary to come to a more holistic and complete understanding of the representation of the country.

In this dissertation, I contributed to prior research on Turkey's media representation by moving beyond this merely political debate on Turkey-EU relations. I proposed a framework that questions what other competing media discourses, fantasy images, clichés, prejudices and stereotypes are available in the British lifestyle texts. I questions what other

competing media representation, fantasy images, clichés, prejudices and stereotypes are available in the British lifestyle texts. Additionally, I collected rich and encompassing information that compares British broadsheet and tabloid newspapers. Such comparisons within the British press industry enabled to come to understand more thoroughly how and to what extent different media formats portray Turkey and what kind of distinctive and similar representations they produce. The British press is at the core of this dissertation, because the British government's and in large measure the British media's imagination of and attitude to the Turkish nation and its people is generally positive when compared to the prevailing opinions found amongst the countries and media outlets in continental Europe (Wimmel 2009). In this regard, the British mainstream media organizations have generally framed their image of Turkey in terms of "a positive *Other*" (cf., Paksoy 2012).

The collection of the three empirical cases – travel, romance, and sports – offered a useful starting point for reframing arguments about a nation exclusively evaluated by political and media scholars in terms of its potential EU membership. Hence, I unpack the highly ignored, yet ultimately helpful lifestyle categories. I consider my study as a movement away from the traditional, solely political hegemonic representation of Turkey toward an empowered model of an alternative, diverse, comprehensive yet ideologically and politically significant cultural representation of Turkey in British lifestyle context. By gaining a better knowledge of how British broadsheet and tabloid lifestyle texts are produced and what they might mean, I explain how lifestyle texts are produced in different journalistic genres; and I show that it is possible to learn more about other societies via these same texts.

In the first case study I investigate the role of travel journalism in presenting Turkey as a travel destination for the intended British reader. How Turkey is evaluated and portrayed as a travel destination for British tourists and how the country is culturally pervaded in the tourism discourse are the main questions I analyse. In the second case

study I evaluate the tabloid media's representation of romance tourism. I question how tabloid newspapers represent relationships between mature British women and the younger Turkish toyboy lovers they meet on their holiday. I examine how the British tabloids make sense of the contradicting social categories and power relations at play, with respect to age, gender, nation and economic position. In the third case, I look at the representation of Turkey in British sports news. I question how British journalists communicate notions of the Turkish nation, national identity and culture.

The methodology I chose to examine lifestyle representations in the print media is based on a qualitative content analysis (cf., Richardson 2007; Berg 1989). I follow, especially, the work of Schreier (2012) and Hijmans (1996), and apply a four dimensional analysis: the thematic, the narrative, the linguistic, and to a certain degree the visual dimension. I analysed 321 news articles dealing with three case studies. Without insisting on the accuracy of these news articles, the level of realism conveyed, or the extent of truth or prejudices in the representation, at the simplest level, I try to understand the ways in which these news articles portray Turkey at particular times covering topics of contemporary popular appeal.

## **THEORETICAL BACKGROUND**

Theoretically I draw on the concepts of sociology of news and social construction of lifestyle news. Lifestyle journalism has long been viewed as an *unserious* type of journalism that is not deserving of *serious* attention (Hanusch 2012). Undoubtedly, the production of traditional hard news journalism has a considerable hegemonic power and role in representing Turkey and in drawing a particular stereotypical image of Turkey. Lifestyle journalism, in equal measure, has ideological power to re-present the nation. Journalists producing lifestyle pages shape our opinion about Turkey as much as politics and economics pages do. They outline many political, economic, social and cultural tensions (Hanusch

2013). They provide us information about who we/they are, and what our/their national identity is perceived to be (cf., Hanusch 2012, 2010; Fürsich 2012). Lifestyle news texts, as outcomes of human activity, have within them a power that cannot be dismissed contemptuously by an old and narrow journalistic view that they are merely trivial, soft and entertaining. The production of lifestyle news discourse has serious implications for representational aspects: they provide additional and often different informational and cultural frames about Turkey. Because lifestyle agenda (e.g., softening the news) has a distinctive way of framing an event compared to its hard-news counterparts. I, thus, argue that an in-depth evaluation of lifestyle news also tells us something about Turkey, about its national identity, history, beliefs and even aesthetics (e.g., beauty, art, taste). As the three empirical case studies demonstrate, lifestyle news are not necessarily uncritical by definition; they shed new light on how national identity is projected in such news texts.

## **SUMMARY OF THE RESULTS**

In line with some political arguments of stereotyping Turkey in the European media, I found in this dissertation that British lifestyle journalism is inclined to facilitate traditional inequalities. I found disparities in the global political, economic and cultural context. By commodifying Turkey, British lifestyle journalism manifests existing economic and political inequalities, and suggests an unequal power relationship between Turkey and Britain.

First, British travel journalists working for the broadsheet and tabloid press are more likely to somewhat Europeanise Turkey and compare it with neighbouring places like Greece, Italy, Cyprus, Spain or southern France. Travel journalists include Turkey geographically, “within” the EU than “outside” the EU. They positively present Turkey as just another safe Mediterranean destination “in” Europe, but different from Europe. This obviously does not mean that the British press sees

Turkey as part of the EU or Western civilization generally. But it does mean that at least in terms of travel, this form of journalism has the power and potential to impose a different viewpoint that best serves to the 21st century consumer culture. Instead, British travel journalists working for the tabloid press commodify Turkey as an economically weak country, as a “cheap” and “low cost” destination for sun, sea and sand loving lower-middle class tourist. On the other hand, broadsheet journalists, targeting social groups higher up on the economic ladder, commodify Turkey as a place with “top-end”, “luxurious” and “tailor made” hotels, also as an authentic, exotic, oriental and stunning travel destination that upper-middle class tourist can dream about.

Second, similar to travel journalism, the practice of sports journalism is prone to Europeanise the Turkish football players, which are coming from a different social class. British broadsheet and tabloid sports journalists portray Turkish national football players as European or Mediterranean. The players are associated with Europe and depicted as successful players in prestigious European clubs. Especially the broadsheet press almost always positively presented the Turkish footballers as “excellent”, “physically strong” and “quality” players. Tabloid press similarly presented the Turkish players in favourable light and give due weight to popular narrations such as “hottest”, “sexy”, “top”, “star”. These positive overtones, to some extent, shows that the individual Turkish players are much respected by the British press.

This stands in stark contrast to the representation of the Turkish football fans. I found in this dissertation that the aggressive behaviour of the Turkish fans is occasionally associated with violence, and as part of stereotypical Turkish football culture. Turkish fans are almost exclusively portrayed as extremely fanatical and passionate, especially by the tabloid articles analysed here. To a certain degree the broadsheet press reporting style also amplifies stereotypes about the history of violence in Turkish football. The focus on the violent nature of Turkish supporters is a discursive strategy to portray Turkish citizens of lower status in general

as inherently aggressive and Turkey as a developing nation in which such behaviour is tolerated. In a similar fashion, tabloid texts covering gender and romance news also include the socio-economic status of Turkish toyboys, who come from a deprived economic background. The tabloid press has a general tendency to depict the young toyboys from a lower economic point of view, and as inferior (e.g., marrying to secure legal status in the UK). The Turkish men are mostly invisible and usually classified as “peasant’s son,” “chicken factory worker,” or “waiter” and “barman.” The journalists depict much mainstream discourse on toyboys as characteristic of an Orientalist prejudice. This shows us how romance manifest a far older pattern of discrimination and *Othering*. Quite similarly, in the travel texts local Turks are also invisible. The friendly, local people are only of service when they aid in what is considered a successful tourism encounter. Turks remain anonymous and are represented in a non-individualised manner as a part of a colourful mosaic, as passive outsiders, therefore, “*Others*”. At its extreme, such representation suggests a dominant form of Eurocentric, touristic imperialism: Turkey is seen as just an object, a country to invade, or to be priced, sold and treated as a commodity. Locals are there, but are not spoken to or seen by the travel journalist.

Third, by portraying an image of a beautiful country, lifestyle journalists commodify the Turkish culture and its people. For instance, in an average travel text, Turkey’s historical resources, architecture, and cuisine are orientalised, e.g., mosques facing Mecca, imam’s voice, Ottoman hamams, Arab-style buildings, Ottoman desserts, and mediaeval bazaars. Turkey is presented as an extraordinary piece of land, e.g., “incredibly beautiful”, “fascinating region”. Travel journalists’ adopt an uncritical and celebratory jargon, overstating the good things about a destination, while social, economic and political problems are neglected. Such buoyantly flattering representations of Turkey, by transforming an ordinary piece of land into an extraordinary land, evoke feelings of fantasy, and reinforce the dreams of the reader of a

“breathtaking” place “to die for”. Similar to the commodification of the Turkish culture as a “Turkish delight” or “Try a taste of Turkey”, romance news commodify the Turkish men. In these news, women themselves depict the Turkish toyboy as being “great in bed,” and an “amazing lover”. They are constructed as being available at will, and made into passive consumables for British women. Turkish men are available on the toyboy market for western women as “foreign lovers to spice up their lives”.

Fourth, and last, Turkey’s representation in hard news media as a predominantly Muslim country and as the *Muslim Other* (cf., Wimmel 2009), almost entirely disappears in British lifestyle journalism. Islam is hardly mentioned in my sample; and the Turks are generally not labelled as Muslims. Islam is commodified by repacking orientalism, including harmless, aestheticized references: “beautiful mosques”, “minarets” and “calling to prayer” enter the texts and allow readers to imagine an oriental place with an Ottoman and Arabic flavour. Islam is either avoided, or reframed as an unthreatening religion that the visitor (be a British tourism or a British mature woman) can experience without fear. With this counter-discourse, UK journalists successfully place Turkey in a much more easily consumable position. Turkey is presented as European, thus close and easily accessible; on the other hand, it is oriental, thus different enough to satisfy the visitor’s imagination.

## CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

In this dissertation, by means of three case studies, I have explored different types of representations of Turkey in lifestyle topics: the representation of Turkey in relation to travel (Chapter 2); the representation of Turkey in relation to gender and romance (Chapter 3); and the representation of Turkey in relation to sports (Chapter 4).

Throughout the dissertation, I observe that the British press treatment of Turkey facilitates the promotion of the old understanding of the cultural superiority and dominance of Britain. In other words, the



representations of national identities offered by the British print media in their reporting of Turkey, especially, in terms of travel, gender and romance, and sports are based upon an array of perceptions that serve more to define the British way of life, the shared values of its people and the commonly received beliefs they have about the Turkish nation. In a real sense, the imagined identity in British media of Turkey tells us a great deal about English culture. The mediation of the Turkish national identity, particularly by the broadsheet and tabloid lifestyle news articles analysed here, perpetuates notions of Englishness which are made up of related stereotypical characteristics which, in turn, are connected with deeply rooted British cultural codes (cf., Elias 1991), and an unwritten hegemony of values. These dominant values are communicated explicitly in the lexis of broadsheet and tabloid writing that naturally draws upon the connections of cultural traditions, patriotism, national habits, class division, gender roles, and an insular domestic mentality for its inspiration.