Conditions of European Integration: 
The Salience of Religious Identity in the Case of Turkey’s EU Membership

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• Growing body of literature on the relationship between religion and politics

• Relatively little application in integration studies

• Turkey: Candidate since 1987, perhaps farther than ever from membership in 2017

Given that Turkey has sufficiently met the Copenhagen Criteria for accession into the EU, why has it not become a member yet?

Research Puzzle

Research Question
## Significance

### Theoretical and Practical Implications

#### Theoretical

Gap in knowledge in existing scholarship

- Scholarship on economic, political, and social drivers of integration
  - Neo-functionalism
  - Intergovernmentalism
  - Social institutionalism
- Scholarship on identity and religion

#### Practical

Implications for policy and diplomacy

- Turkey side – foreign policy and identity politics
- EU side – institutional and systematic bias
Argument
A Comprehensive Framework

Non-Negotiable Accession Criteria from Copenhagen Criteria (1993)

- **Economic Criteria**: a functioning market economy and the capacity to cope with competition and market forces in the EU
- **Social and Political Criteria**: stable institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights, and respect for and protection of minorities
- **Candidate Country**: the ability to take on and implement effectively the obligations of membership, including adherence to the aims of political, economic, and monetary union

Other Factors

- **Religious identity**: Relational similarity of religious identity of candidate country to that of the EU

Membership Outcome
Case Selection

Why Turkey?

- **Single**-Case Study
- **Unique** Case
  - Data Rich
  - Isolating causal mechanism
  - Using comparative cases
Research Methods
A Mixed-Methods Approach

Part I (quantitative)

• Policy chapters (13 out of 35)
• Proxy variables
• Comparison: Bulgaria and Romania
• Scoring and Ranking

Part II-1 (Quantitative)

• Textual analysis: content analysis
  • Word frequencies and word searches

Part II-2 (Qualitative)

• Historical representation
  • Timeline
  • Events
Results I
Bulgaria and Romania Comparison

Turkey’s performance on the Copenhagen Criteria is compared to that of Bulgaria and Romania at the time of their accession.

- Turkey should have become an EU member by now.
- the Copenhagen Criteria cannot be the only conditions for membership.
Results II
the Factor of Religious Identity

Two sets of documents:
- Official
- Media

**Code**: Key words related to religious identity

Word frequencies and word searches
- Present in all documents
- Low frequencies → extenuating circumstances
So What?
Implications, Limitations, and Opportunities for Further Research

- Religious identity matters!
  – Just how much: ?
  - Language and discourse analysis
  - Comparative cases and comprehensive textual analysis

- Theory: operationalizing religious identity
- Practice: rethinking foreign policy

Cartoon Movement:
https://www.cartoonmovement.com/collection/77