

**Paper for
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Dr. Nikos Panagiotou

MA in Conflict Analysis

Aristoteleio University of Thessaloniki

Department of Mass Media and Journalism

TITLE

“The role of Mass Media in Foreign Policy: The case of Greek press.”

The paper will introduce an outline for mass media impact-influence on foreign policy which takes its role as a twofold input and output environment. The sources of the paper come from the combination of theories regarding the construction of the public sphere with the relevant communication theories. Our approach incorporates mass media as an important factor in the foreign policy. . The mass media are not only restricted to the reporting and coverage of foreign policy issues but equally preserve an autonomous role, by determining and “constructing” the context in which the issues are discussed. To support my argument I will develop an approach that best describes the various roles undertaken by the Greek mass media in foreign policy. The functions suggested and illustrated by incidents are be three: 1) The protagonist function 2) The ‘cooperative’ function 3) The commercialise function

Political scientists and media specialists accept the commonplace assumption that mass media have a profound and direct impact on virtually every aspect of the political process. Their development in modern societies influenced to a great extent the ways in which we acquire knowledge, interpret information and transform it into a meaningful and coherent whole. Mass media affect the way that we participate in the political sphere, through becoming an important source of our knowledge. William Gamson suggests that media discourse is but one of three resources that people use to make sense of politics. Personal experience and popular wisdom are often combined with media discourse in ways that lessen the influence of media converge on people's opinions and frames of reference (Gamson 1996:123-125, Doukeri 2001). This element, the absence of personal experience by the public in foreign policy issues, is critical regarding mass media influence in relation with the domestic issues. *'Foreign policy issues are clearly more complex than domestic policy issues and are more difficult with which to identify* (Malek, Wiegand 1996:11). Paletz and Entman, in addition, agree in that domestic issues are better understood by the public than foreign issues (Paletz and Entman, 1981).

Media is an important component which *'foreign policy decision-makers take into considerations as they develop they develop their policies'* (Naveh 2002:2) since it both constrains leaders and officials yet provides them with opportunities to advance their goals (Gilboa2002). In the realm of foreign policy political pressure on the media is greater than on domestic issues (Graber 1989:336).

Methodology

Our analysis aims to examine questions concerning mass media and more specifically Greek press and the ideological conditions of production of the dominant discourse in foreign policy issues. Greece will be used as a case study, in order to uncover the competing demands perceptions expectations and roles of mass media in public communication environment of foreign policy. Our approach is founded on the premise that mass media role in Greek foreign policy is important. In order though to examine successfully the validity of our hypothesis and keep the length of the study within reasonable limits, we assume that media can have a direct effect on government and on public opinion.

The selection of the newspapers is based upon the following criteria: 1) representation of the whole political spectrum 2) circulation figures 3) Their influence upon the members of the political spectrum that they belong. The newspapers that we examined are: 1) Vima 2) Eleftherotypia 3) Eleftheros Typos 4) Kathimerini 5) Rizospastis.

Articles of newspapers during various incidents were compared and examined in a three-step process. First a micro level analysis was conducted for the analysis of news agendas. Secondly in a macro level an analysis of the reactions of the government discourse was conducted. Micro as well as macro analysis results were co-related in order to assess media function. Our choice to examine the press instead of the television is based to the following:

1) As Anthony Sampson suggests the role of political journalism in “providing the chief context for information and understanding for the public” is being undermined by “the media’s ability to confuse news with entertainment” (Sampson 1996:42-51).

This 'ability' creates a technique of presentation that is known as infotainment, which is widely used in the television across the world. In contrast, the absence of the use of this technique in press coverage enables to have a clearer examination on the way that it reports the facts.

2) Television addresses usually a more general audience concerning its political preferences. In contrary the choice of a newspaper by a reader is clearly based on more clear-cut political criteria. This choice results not only from reader's point of view but contents a form of political expectation (Curran, Seaton 1998). Bearing this in mind we suggest that the study of the press reflects the narrative of the ideological spectrum that 'represents'.

Our analysis although that examines the press, we suggest that it can equally be applied to television since *'that new private television channel licenses and frequencies were primarily reserved for press publishers has contributed to the existence of similarities between the print and broadcast media in terms of editorial priorities and work ethic'* (Tsagkarousianou 1999:179)

The unit of our analysis will be the headlines, the editorials. Our choice to examine the headlines as well as the editorials is based, on the following assumptions: 1) they are a decisive among other factors, in a reader's decision to buy a newspaper. This assumption lies in the fact that the Greek press has a small number of subscribers, while the most of its circulation is made through kiosks. 2) Headlines 'express' the stance of the newspaper. They are the reflection of the articles published inside while it clearly represents the ideological stance of the newspaper.

With regards to the influence of the press, on the public and the decisions-makers, I adopt the agenda-setting model as has been modified by Rogers and Dearing. (Rogers & Dearing 1983:550-60). I use critical discourse analysis and the

agenda-setting model, in order to evaluate how the Greek press constructs the public and policy agenda. My premise is that the Greek press sets the public and policy agenda. It both prioritises themes for public debate and determines the terms in which the themes are discussed. The combination of agenda-setting model and discourse analysis will contribute to our understanding of the role of the press in the construction of the public sphere. It will further explore meaning and the social implications of such meaning (Katrivesis, 2003). In addition an agenda-setting analysis demonstrates a strong connection between the salience of foreign affairs in the media and the salience of foreign affairs for the public. In general, we argue that agenda setting in foreign policy is a transaction process in which elites the media and the public converge to a common set of salient issues that define a campaign.

Regarding our arguments the existence of policy certainty or uncertainty is a critical element, which determines whether their coverage and in turn the extended of their influence will be critical, supportive, or neutral of the government's policies (Robinson 2002). Our approach though takes into consideration other factors as well, (economical, organizational etc) which additionally influence their intervention in foreign policy. In order to make our theoretical distinction clear we will use a number of recent relevant cases for each role.

For our the analysis the following hypothesis will be tested:

Hypothesis 1: Greek press influence-coverage depends upon the existence of policy certainty or uncertainty.

Hypothesis 2: In the case of absence of a clear-cut line by the government, the role and the views of the press dominate the public sphere, and as a result influenced a great extent the reactions of the public opinion.

Hypothesis 3: In the case of political certainty especially in major issues of foreign policy press discourse is line or follows their ‘definition’ of the situation.

Hypothesis 4: In the case that commercial necessities prevail over the others (political ideological etc), press operates in terms of attracting attention, by dramatizing and sensationalizing the events.

Foreign policy and the Press

The end of Cold war as well as the globalization of communications has changed the way that mass media influence foreign policy process. These developments displaced old diplomacy’s methods ‘*increasing the diplomatic influence of non-traditional actors such as journalists*’ (Ammon 2001: pp.48-61, Fragkonikolopoulos Kannelopoulos 1995). Debate over which the mass media serves elite interests or alternatively, plays a powerful role in shaping political outcomes has been dogged, by dichotomous and one-sided claims. Some attribute enormous power to the news media (the so-called CNN effect) while others claim the media ‘manufactures consent’ for elite policy preferences. As Chanan suggests ‘*media is involved in all stages of foreign policy formulation and that political leaders take the media into consideration in its national and international aspects.* (Chanan 2001:1)

Regarding mass media role, in foreign policy there are several analytical approaches. The first (structuralist) considers press as an important factor in the formation of foreign policy. More specifically its role is considered important in the process of opinion formation and of policy formulation. For some scholars media play a highly active role in influencing decisions made in foreign policy *viewing the media as a watchdog, an independent observer, an active participant, or a catalyst* (Cohen 1963). Chang (1993:7) enthalls “*the notion of an al- powerful, authoritative media*”. It examines the larger organizational limits impinging on press actions and decisions

that may lead journalists to support government policies. Cohen suggests that organizational practices shape press coverage of foreign policy. Journalists often work within the governmental instituted boundaries of foreign policy coverage, and consequently are inclined to support the stated policy objectives. (Cohen 1963)

Inspired by this study scholars have looked at either the organisational practices of the press or the government's imposed organizational constraints that influence international news products. Peter Drier suggests that newspapers became integrated into what he calls the "*web of affiliations that form the national power structure, remaining a very important factor in foreign policy*" (Drier1989:301) Although all of these studies place emphasis upon the structural conditions, which influence media content, they share a belief about the central role of the press in foreign policy. The press is thought to shape and determine, to a great extent, public opinion reactions, and through that policy itself. As is suggested press and the media in general, are functioning as independent controlling actor. Critiques of this model focused upon the underestimation of the capacity of the audiences to retain some degree of autonomy from the mass media. In addition they criticised the "*assumed neutrality of media message by structural-functionalist approach, and its inability to account for the role of the press in the political and cultural struggle for the construction of consensus*"(McNair 1995:65)

The second approach informed mainly by Marxist theory emphasizes the centrality of the mass media in the reproduction of ideology and of asymmetrical relations of power in society. According to Hallin (1987), (Gittlin 1980) mass media tend '*to support the elite class and already existing political initiatives, whilst validating the government's decisions by deferring to authority*' (Malek, Wiegand 1996:5-6) Representative of this approach is the work of Herman and Chomsky

(Herman & Chomsky, 1988). The 'instrumentalist' approach concentrates on the actual controls exercised on press operators by the power holders in the capitalist economy, as well as the dependence of ideology on the economic processes. Ownership and control are considered to be determining factors in media activities, which directly influence ideological production, and the content of media messages. *"With a majority of the news outlets being owned by large conglomerates, the press as an institution is essentially viewed as belonging to the broader economic system, with very close ties to the governing political system."* (Luther C 2001:36). Access to the media is determined by political elites, while room for challenges to the political and economic systems is limited. *"The press is considered as "lapdog" of the state and the corporate powers; it panders to the interests of those in power. The information that it disseminates to the public, therefore, simply reflects its role as mouthpiece for the governing power elites. Thus news coverage of foreign affairs would reflect the interests of both multi-national corporations and the government."* (Luther C 2001:37). Media coverage is considered as biased in favour of the status quo whilst suppressing the challenging ideas.

The 'instrumentalist' approach constitutes an important contribution, as it focuses on the important implications of ownership, market pressure and other economic and political considerations to the ideological production that has been neglected by approaches focusing exclusively on the content of media messages. It fails though, as McNair suggests, *"to account adequately for the complexity of mediated political debate, and the many cases where 'primary definers', like the ruling elites, have failed to impose their primary definitions on the public debate as a whole. Political shifts like Nixon administration withdrawal from Vietnam War, Thatcher's retreat from poll tax and her removal highlighted the weakness of any theoretical framework*

which asserts the existence of a deep structural bias on the part of the media towards the 'powerful' the 'establishment' or the 'ruling class' ”(McNair 1995:59)

According to McQuail the emphasis placed by this approach on the economic process does not explain cases where the mass media are under public ownership and not operate on the logic of profitability, or ownership by powerful corporations. (McQuail, Windahl 1993:64) Even in the case of privately owned media other priorities could be detected, since it might serve the owners plan for political influence or control.

The third approach 'liberal-pluralism', deals with *'the media as course'* (Gitlin 1980:7). According to this approach *'no single frame predominate to the exclusion of the others'* (Hackett1996: 144). Society is seen and dealt as an open to various competitions sphere. Mass media and more specifically journalists role is dealt as that of an objective observer. As a result *'of the virtue of ownership in a market economy a range of opinions will emerge...in this model the consuming public is not a passive body which absorbs (media) content, but is a heterogeneous group of consumers who use the media in the way that suits their needs ’*(Watts 1997:18)

The fourth approach, the dynamic paradigm-approach as we call it, sees foreign policy as the outcome of continuous negotiation, where press role is important in shaping the public and political agendas. *“‘Political reality’ is not neutral it is rather a product of representation, of processes of definition, or signification. In this context the press product is not mere reflection of ‘reality’, but rather specific interpretation of it.”* (Tsagkarousianou 1993:114). Press account is the outcome of processes of selective introduction and exclusion of issues from the universe of discourse. The central role of the press in the public sphere could be defined as *“assisting the equitable negotiation or arbitration of competing interests through democratic*

processes.” (Curran 1977:114) According though to this approach that we adopt mass media though are not only restricted to the reporting and coverage of crises, but they equally preserve an autonomous role, by determining and ‘constructing’ the context in which foreign policy is decided.

Press is considered to constitute a domain of action, negotiation of increasing importance in contemporary societies. Tsagkarousianou suggests that the press is a gatekeeper: *“It is through the press that our understanding of the political is mediated: the definitions of the political which determine which issues will enter the sphere of public awareness, discussion and collective action; the terms in which these issues are discussed; the criteria for legitimate participation in the public debate; and the parameters of the ensuing debates and discussions”* (Tsagkarousianou 1993:117)

The press has a critical role in making more explicit the links between events in foreign policy and their repercussions for the average citizen. Its role as information provider is not entirely neutral. In its decision on what or what not to cover, various political, economic, ideological and cultural factors, along with organizational constraints or interests are employed and determine the outcome. As McNair states: *“there is no single ‘primary definition’ of an event or an issue circulating in the public sphere at any given time, but a multiplicity of definitions, reflecting the interests of various collectivities, within and outside the ‘establishment’; while one definition may be dominant at a particular time, challenges will continually be mounted, as opposition groups seek to advance their alternative definition. That structures of access to the media through which the struggle for definitional primarily takes place, are not rigid but flexible, and capable of accommodating, even under certain circumstances welcoming challenges to the establishment; and that such*

flexibility is, indeed, an integral legitimating feature of the media in a liberal democracy.” (McNair 1995:140)

Economic though and other factors, in contrast with the pluralism paradigm, in the dynamic approach are considered important, influencing mass media discourse. According to O’ Heffernan’s, the policy makers are particularly informed by the mass media during the early stages of policy development rather than during the latter stages, after policy adoption. *“Policy makers-the Insiders- have a definite model of the media’s relationship to the foreign policy process. They see the media as dual actors, affecting the policy both inside as a player or a tool of the inside players, and outside as part of the environment shaping policy, both overtly and covertly”.* O’ Heffernan 1991: 152)

Informed by the dynamic approach we believe that media are *‘active players in the policy process and that the government also played a significant role in media coverage by use of the media to publicize its policy intentions* (O’ Heffernan 1991:13). According to our approach mass media are active participants in the construction of foreign policy issues discourse. Economic interests play an important role in influencing mass media content, without though being the dominant actor. The importance of this model, according to our view lies upon its hypothesis that there is an interconnection between the public, policy and media agenda, but their ‘autonomy’ is being reserved without their importance equalized.

Our approach presents a taxonomy where mass media and especially the press is viewed as an actor in the policy process with corresponding attributes of type, activity, context and concept. Four are the fundamental areas that influence on press: *1) Political Context 2) Economic conditions 3) Quality of journalism 4) Public attitudes* (Relji:2005). A critical element of press influence on the overall system of

foreign policy, we consider the existence of policy certainty or uncertainty. From this result three functions of the Greek press concerning its role in various incidents:

The Co-operative Function

According to our approach press discourse in the co-operative function is in accordance with the government and political elites 'definition' of the events. That was the case, regarding Greek press stance during the 1987 crisis between Greece and Turkey.

This crisis hinged on proposed oil explorations in disputed waters and likewise involved the survey ship Sismik. The Greek government tabled a bill to take control of Canadian-owned North Aegean Petroleum Company (NAPC) that exploited the Prinos oilfield off the Greek island of Thasos. Turkey accused Greece of having violated the Berne Protocol of November 1976. As a result Turkish government granted further exploration and exploitation licenses to the state-owned Turkish Petroleum Corporation in international waters near the Greek island Samothrace.

On 28 March 1987, when the Turkish survey ship Sismik under naval escort set sail for the Aegean sea, Greek and Turkish forces were placed on alert and Papandreou declared that all necessary measures would be taken to safeguard Greece's sovereign rights (Keridis, Triantafyllou 2001). Holding NATO and, in particular, the United States responsible for the crisis, Papandreou ordered the suspension of communication facilities at the American base at Nea Makri. It also promptly dispatched his foreign minister to Sofia to brief the Bulgarian leader Tudor Jivkov. In a calculated snub, the ambassadors of Warsaw Pact countries in Athens were briefed on the crisis in advance of their NATO counterparts (Clogg 1991:15).

The threat of outright hostilities was averted only when Ozal declared that Sismik would operate only in Turkish territorial seas, while Greece likewise declared that no drilling would take place in disputed waters. After the crisis of 1987 a secret dialogue was established between Ozal and Papandreou that led to a breakthrough that materialized in Davos in February 1988.

The Greek press during this period supported what is perceived as a decisive stance of the government towards the Turkish ‘provocations’ (*Decisive stance against Turkey Kath 25/02, Don’t play with the fire. Turkey is dropping the glove (Eleyft.22-23/03)*). This especially the case for the newspapers in favor of the government but is traced to the oppositional newspaper to a great or less extent. *The crisis is under control. Kath.24/03*). The word ‘decisive’ that appears in most of the headlines justifies the use of military means, as appropriate towards Turkish ‘provocations’. It also serves as an approval from the press of this policy that is ‘decisive’ in contrast with other policies (like rapprochement) that from before are set to be non-decisive or to constitute signs of retreat. (Panagiotou 2003:9). During the crisis the headlines become dramatic in their tone (*Zero Hour Eleyft.28/03*). The ‘dramatization’ of the events aimed at evoking feelings of insecurity, extreme danger and threat. Thus the use of relevant metaphors mobilized these feelings and prompted a unified stance by the public towards the danger. What is reflected in the headlines of the newspapers examined, especially during the peak of the crisis is ‘rally behind the flag phenomenon’, in the face of Turkish ‘threat’. As a result there is an ideological consensus in the press headlines, aiming to invoke feelings of national unity in the public opinion. During the escalation of the crisis all the newspapers examined, but especially the ones that are in favor of the socialist government, followed the arguments and the terms of the discourse that has been set by the government. (*Zero*

Hour Eleft.28/03) This ideological consensus, effects that complex causes to be reduced to a simple picture of an irrational and threatening Other. Turkish ‘aggressive’ and ‘expansionist’, policy as well as the ‘neutral’ stance of third parties (USA, E.U. NATO) are being projected as the causes of the crisis.

This co-operative stance is clear both in the escalation of the crisis as well as for the ways of its proposed resolution. According to the headlines, the Greek side is looking at ways to resolve the conflict through addressing to the International Court of Justice. As in the government rhetoric, in the newspapers examined Greece stance is praised as in accordance with international law while Turkey’s proposals are presented as residing outside of lawful solutions. The antithetical scheme employed in this case is Greece’s rightful claims as against claims that are based on threats, which are sought to be justified through bargaining. (*End at bargaining (Eleft 05/04), Turkey is looking forwards to the division of the Aegean. Turkey reacts in the suggestion from the European Parliament (to commit the dispute in Hague) adhering to the bilateral talks (Kath 06/04).*)

Protagonist function

In cases of political uncertainty or in the absences of a clear stance news media discourse and their influence prevails the public sphere. In this case the dominant element that results in the protagonist role of medias discourse, is the uncertainty from public elites. This function is highlighted by the Greek press stance in Imia/Kardak crisis on 1996.

In 1996 Papandreou, the founder of PASOK and Prime Minister of the time, resigned and in his position K.Simitis was elected. His administration got off to a bad start with the Imia/Kardak crisis, which almost cost him the premiership. In late

December 1995, a Turkish merchant vessel ran aground on the coast of the rocky islet Imia/Kardak in the Aegean Sea. This incident was followed by a small but silent exchange of diplomatic papers between the Greek and Turkish authorities as to who was to rescue the ship. The Turkish government in a verbal note argued that Imia/Kardak belonged to Turkish territory, which was disputed by Athens. *“The incident that took place on an islet of a size that was appropriate only for keeping goats but hardly of any other use, would have gone unnoticed had the Greek TV station ANTI not aired the exchange of diplomatic notes nearly four weeks after the incident occurred. On 25 of January, the mayor of Kalymnos (an island situated next to Imia in the Aegean) took action and put the Greek flag on the rocky soil of the island. This was the spark that inspired the Turkish newspaper “Hürriyet” to fly a helicopter with a team of journalists and photographers to the tiny islet, to remove the Greek flag and hoist the Turkish one. The action took place and “Hürriyet” published the photograph of the journalists removing the Greek flag, on its front page the very next day` (Keridis, Triantafyllou 2001)* Things took a more serious turn from that moment on. The Greek navy changed the flag within 24 hours and by January 30/31-1996 Greek and Turkish naval forces stood opposite each other in Aegean. The crisis escalated further when Turkish Special Forces landed and occupied one of the isles that was not been guarded by the Greek army. (Giallouridis 1996). A Greek helicopter on a reconnaissance mission in order to verify whether or not the islet was being occupied, was crashed causing the death of its pilots. This prompted speculations in Greece that it had been hit by Turkish fire. The intervention of USA and especially a phone call by the President of the United States in person to the Prime Ministers of Greece and Turkey averted further escalation of the already dangerous situation. A

deal under the auspices of the United States was achieved and the two countries withdrew their armies from the area.

From the early beginning of the crisis, the newspapers examined, reported Greek-Turkish relations as a zero-sum game. Their stance is aggressive towards what is seen as Turkish provocation whilst demanding a dynamic response against Turkish 'provocations'. (*Greece is being left ungoverned while the Turks are cruising Subtitle: They placed the Turkish flag in Imia. E.T 29/01. Turkey is pushing to the limits E.T.13/02, We do not retreat Kath. 24/01. Turkey is threatening to use brutal force Kath10/02. A long-ago planned crisis. Andreas has predicted it Eleyth. 27/01*)

Following the events especially in the 'war of the flags' press speech is war mongering (*Lets stand up at Thermopylae, The Turkish flag has been posted on Imia islet E.T.02/02. A Turkish invasion Eleyth. 27/02*). The newly elected government, as well that of the opposition parties responses were in accordance with the war mongering speech of the media. As Dimitras suggests "*The conflict was in fact triggered and then aggravated by the media of the countries*" (Dimitras 1998:65). In that context there as increased appeal for "*aggressive if not heroic acts*" (Dimitras 1998:67)

Mass media protagonist function in this crisis is reflected in the fact that the outcome of the crisis has being projected and categorised since then as a Greek loss, in spite of the governments arguments, that it was a win to win situation for both countries since war has being avoided. *To the Death squad Simitis and Pagkalos. Simitis is letting Tsiler and attacking Andreas. E.T. 03/02. Shame on us, we have been humiliated by the Turks E.T.02/02 Waterloo for Greece E.T. 04/02.Humiliation and submission to American imperialism Rizo 17/02*).

The perpetuation of the conflict is reflected in headlines, which in accordance with the war mongering speech before the crisis, are calling to ‘reorganize our capabilities’. (*It's time to rally to reorganize our capabilities (Kath 04/02)*). There is a call to the nation to be prepared for a second round in the near future. The enmity in the relations between the two nations is presented as something normal. War preparations are to be considered ‘normal’, and the right reaction to be followed by the political leadership.

The prospect of a dialogue between the two countries and in general policies to diffuse the conflict are pushed out from the dominant discourse as not the appropriate approach towards ‘an unreliable’, ‘expansionist, ‘brutal’ Other. Implicit is the message that only military preparations, and even the will to use military force will provide Greece with the necessary security, and will not allow the repetition of the Cyprus tragedy. *Tsiler is threatening with another war, Eleyth. 05/02)*

The Commercialised function

According to our approach when commercial necessities prevail over the others (political ideological etc), press operates in terms of attracting attention, by dramatizing and sensationalizing the events. In this case their discourse is characterised by the infotainment model.

During the second half of 1999, Greek-Turkish relations entered a phase of détente. An important factor has been the establishment of a working relationship between G. Papandreou and Ismail Gem, the Greek and Turkish foreign ministers respectively. The ongoing rapprochement has been further prompted by the solidarity exhibited by the Greek and Turkish people in the face of the humanitarian disaster caused by

devastating earthquakes in both countries in August and September 1999. In Istanbul the earthquake of Mw7.4 resulted in the death of 17.000 people while it had a tremendous social and economical impact, since it hit an area that produced 35% of Turkish GDP. Greek government rushed to provide humanitarian help from the early beginning. The impact of this move has been enormous in the Turkish public opinion, as images of Greek and Turkish rescue teams working together were aired through the media.

In September of the same year Athens was hit by an earthquake of 5,9 Mw leaving 10.000 homeless while 70 people were killed. It was the Turkey's turn to render the help given by Greece. The impact that these developments had upon the Greek public opinion is reflected to a poll conducted by Metron Analysis (Nea 14/12/1999). According to this opinion poll 57,5% of the Greek had a more positive stance for the Turks, while for 41,6% the earthquakes didn't affect its stance. 51,1% percent believed in a positive change in Greek-Turkish relations, while 44,2% percent of the persons asked believed that nothing would change.

During the period examined these incidents were covered extensively by the Greek press, especially during and after the earthquake in Istanbul. The newspapers covered Greek-Turkish relations with a special emphasis being placed upon the manifestation of friendship between the two nations. (*Greeks and Turks are turning the page Kath. 11/09*. Press antagonism with the television affected the way that it covered the incidents, resulting that the headlines to be characterized by the dramatization and sensationalizing of the events. (*Thank you Greek 'brothers' E.T. 17/08 The Greek cries like a friend Eleyth 21/08. Our hearts came closer Eleyth 25/08, Thank you neighbor Vima 17/08 The earthquake is becoming a bridge of friendship Vima 20/08, Romeiko Filotimo (Greek generous feelings) Vima 20/08*) This stance

though in the majority of the cases did not affect the way the Other, or in general the Greek-Turkish relations were projected. The absence of a change in the images of the Other, underlines that commercial necessities of the press prevailed over the others (political ideological etc), impelling press to operate in terms of attracting attention

In spite of the extent coverage of the events and a change in the stance of some newspapers, especially Kathimerini and Eleytherotypia, there are still in use prejudices and stereotypes of the Other. *George you shouldn't help Attila E.T. 21/08*
The earthquake has proven that Turkey was the great patient of the Balkans E.T.23/08. Earthquakes is seen as a chance for the 'yielders' to promote their sell off policy Rizos 14-15/08 Even in the newspapers that differentiate their stance there is a suspiciousness that runs the headlines that concern Turkey (*Yilmaz thanks but still claims: There is no land that cannot be split Kath. 19/08*)

Greek-Turkish relations, despite the sensational headlines, are still viewed as a zero-sum game. This results by the fact that destructions caused in Turkey by the earthquake are in some cases seen as a positive for Greece (*Turkey lacks anymore the economic, social and military strength for a win full war against Greece E.T. 23/08*). In a numerous cases there are calls for Greece to take into advantage this situation in order to pursue its targets (*The earthquake lives no excuse for the yielders E.T. 22/08*)

The newspapers stance during this period was heavily influence by its commercial necessities, since and despite the coverage of the earthquakes, the overall image of the Other remains the same. There is still the aggressive, arrogant, and non-democratic image implicitly running the headlines (*Turkish oligarchy Rizo 22/08*), that suggests that other were the necessities, that influenced the coverage of the Turkish-relations this period

Conclusions

As our analysis has come to reveal mass media is an important variable of the foreign policy system. Its role though and its influence differentiates from time to time while it is in close relation with other factors that influence foreign policy as well as the way the context in which press operates. *The media use of political symbols offers a serious potential to affect responses to foreign policy issues and could have serious policy impact (Chang 1993:103)*. Our work informed, by the dynamic approach sees foreign policy as the outcome of continuous negotiation between the poles that constitute foreign policy system. In this hierarchical 'system' press role is important in shaping the public and political agendas.

In the beginning of our paper we have made some hypothesis. Our first hypothesis proves to be valid since Greek press coverage depends upon the existence of policy certainty or uncertainty. More specifically, as it proves from the analysis of 1987 crisis in the case of political certainty especially in major issues of foreign policy press discourse is in line or follows governments 'definition' of the situation. When governments '*adopt a clear diplomatic strategy, they can successfully harness the growing power of mass media to achieve their goals*' (Gilboa 2002:744) The co-operative stance of the press is informed and influenced by government's choices, whilst it is characterised by the "Rally behind the flag phenomenon". In times of serious crisis (war etc) the alignment with government's decision is being justified as a patriotic duty. Co-operative stance, although that it might be argued justified in times that constitute a threat to nations existence, it carries the danger that policy mistakes will go unchecked by the public opinion.

Our third hypothesis proves to be valid as well, as is been show by the Imia/Kardak coverage of 1996. In the absence of a clear-cut line by the government, the views of the press dominate the public sphere, and as a result influences to a great extent the reactions of the public opinion. That was the case in Imia/Kardak crisis where the war mongering speech by the media, has dominated the Greek public sphere during the crisis and the period after. The protagonist function of the press and the media in general in the Imia/ Kardak crisis almost triggered a war between the two states. In this case mass media pressure was intense and demanding towards the political elites. These included shortening of the time available for policy making and demanding immediate response to crisis and events, excluding experts and diplomats, facilitating diplomatic manipulations, creating high expectations, broadcasting deficient reports (like the one regarding the landing of Turkish special forces in Imia/Kardak islet), and making instant judgments. As a result an incident that first was considered as unworthy of public attention, medias intervention converted it to one of the major crisis between Greece and Turkey during the 1990s. As Dimitras underlines *“It took a few days of media activity for the two governments to find themselves in a position which they could hardly back away from as the two publics were expecting their respective governments to ‘save their nation’s pride’”* (Dimitras 1998:66).

According to our fourth hypothesis in the case that commercial necessities prevail over the others (political ideological etc), press operates in terms of attracting attention, by dramatizing and sensationalizing the events. This hypothesis is valid as shown by the examination of the Greek press coverage of the earthquakes between the two countries on 1999. Despite the extent coverage of the reactions of the Greek and Turkish public opinion when faced with the catastrophes of the earthquakes both in

Istanbul and Athens, this does not result by change in the way the Other is projected. Rather is a result of commercial-economic necessities of the press in order to exploit the sentiments and stances created to Greek public opinion by the earthquake in Istanbul. This way of coverage fostered expectations, that long-term animosity can be extinguished in a short-term period, while it has created expectations that are difficult to meet. This usually has negative effects on public opinions' support for rapprochement policies, as shown from the Palestian-Israeli peace talks after the Oslo agreement.

In our analysis we have taken into consideration that press instrumentalization by private interests '*with political alliances and ambitions*' (Hallin, Papathanassopoulos 2002:177) affects their role in all three functions. In addition the stance of the Greek newspapers in all cases examined, was informed by their political preferences, although common elements between them could be found.

As this study shows mass media role in foreign policy has become central. This places a heavier responsibility both on media, politicians as well as public opinion. As a result there is a clear need to further investigate on this issue in order to further our knowledge on the role and the impact of mass media in foreign policy.

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