Angeliki Koukoutsaki-Monnier
akoukoutsaki@yahoo.com
University Paris 3, CHRIME

1st LSE PhD Symposium on Modern Greece:
Current Social Science Research on Greece
LSE, 21 June 2003

Panel 6 : "Popular Culture, Ideology and the Media"

"The Production of Meaning in Contemporary Greece: Reflections on the Evolution of Greek Television Drama"

by
Angeliki Koukoutsaki-Monnier
Post-doctorate Scholar
University Paris 3, CHRIME
E-mail: akoukoutsaki@yahoo.com

If television content evolves in relation to its social, political and economic frame, then the diachronic study of a television genre should contribute to bring into light the specific characteristics and changes that mark a given society through time. Within this scope, the present contribution proposes to retrace the evolution of Greek television drama over the last three decades, in order to demonstrate how this type of program has developed different contents embedded in the immediate circumstances of the local context of production.

The first part of our presentation will thus focus on the years of the State monopoly (1970-1989) in order to reveal how the genre of fiction of this period has functioned as an ideological medium of state propaganda, reproducing the discourse of its government-controlled broadcasters: an entertainment fiction combined with military propaganda, as to fit the Dictatorship's ideological project and promote its values; a historical fiction based on some of the most famous literature works of the Hellenic cultural patrimony, as to stimulate the nation's collective memory by evoking its cultural roots, for the conservative government of *New Democracy*; and, finally, a "pedagogical" and "engaged" fiction of political content, for the socialist government of *PASOK*. These elements are of vital importance in order to understand the constant dependence of Greek television drama upon its broadcasters' short term interests and its incapacity to develop into an autonomous language of expression.

The second part of our presentation will discuss the changes introduced in the television discourse by the entry of private television in Greece and, in particular, the "return" to an entertainment and "light-theme" fiction with the expansion of comedies, henceforth termed as "sitcoms", the return to adventure and crime drama, as well as the development of a new sub-genre, the soap opera. We will particularly focus on the standardisation of production, often mentioned as one of the main drawbacks of contemporary television drama along with the degradation of content and the expansion of sensationalism. Our goal will be to incite a reflection upon the role of today's mercantile television policies in the materialistic and consumer-oriented lifestyle that seems to expand in contemporary Greece.

This contribution is based on a PhD research undertaken over the period 1995-1999 at the University Paris III – Sorbonne Nouvelle, under the direction of Professor Michaël Palmer. The study is based on an analysis of a sample of fiction programs (701 episodes emanating from "the same" week per year, starting from 1970 up to 1997) combined with 42 interviews

with professionals of Greek television[1] (Koukoutsaki, 2003, 2001). Our reflection joins the ongoing discussion about the relationship between television discourse and society, as it has been developed by researchers like Philippe Breton, Serge Proulx and Armand Mattelart.

Both of the terms "drama" and "fiction" are abundantly used today in different contexts, from television news (Buonanno, 1993: 177-202) to theatre or literature, and there isn't a clear and common definition for either of them. However, for the purpose of this study, "drama" and "fiction" are used as synonyms in order to qualify screenplay-based television programs structured in more than two episodes, produced in Greek by Greek companies and screened on Greek television channels.

1. Greek television drama during the years of the State monopoly

The years of the military dictatorship

Television broadcasting in Greece began officially in 1966. The first Greek fiction program was screened four years later in 1970 ("The house with the palm tree", *"to spiti me to finika"* in Greek, broadcast on the military channel YENED for 13 episodes, each lasting 30 minutes[2]). These dates are of great significance because from 1967 to 1974 Greece was governed by a military dictatorship. It comes as no surprise to find out that, from its very first steps, the new-born medium of television was taken under the dictators' direct control. Actually, one of the two national stations, YENED, was explicitly a politico-military organisation that depended on the Ministry of National Defence. This phenomenon, unique in the history of European television (ERG, 1986: 3, 47), turned out to be fatal for Greek television production, in general, as well as for television drama production, in particular: from its very beginning, the latter was conditioned to fit the necessities and the purposes of the military regime.

In this context and for obvious reasons, television production was undertaken by the national television channels (EIRT, YENED). As far as television drama is concerned, three production models can be found:

a. The subcontracted production: The major part of national drama production was assigned to subcontracting companies which were working under the dictators' control. These companies had roughly the role of an executive producer. They would undertake the realisation of a program commanded by a channel and would then be reimbursed for it by the latter. Information about the production companies of this period (Georgiadis, 1980: 79-83), demonstrates that they were rarely specialised in television drama but developed, on the contrary, a wide range of parallel activities, such as the import of foreign programs, the production of TV games, advertising spots, films, plays, etc. In fact, a large part of them only produced one fiction throughout this

[1] It is fairly common in Greece that television professionals assure simultaneously several functions within the audio-visual system (direction, screenplay writing, consulting, etc.). The lack of specialisation is one of the main drawbacks in Greek television. Given this fact, the interviews on which this study was based can be more or less classified as follows: 16 interviews with Television Executives that are (or were) directly or indirectly implied in drama production and broadcasting; 11 interviews with Executives in various recently founded organisations dealing with television (The National Council of Radio and Television, AGB Hellas, the Greek company specialised in television audience ratings, etc.); 10 interviews with creators (directors and/or screenplay writers); 4 interviews with Scholars and Consultants on Greek media; 1 interview with a Journalist-Critic of television programs.

[2] The relatively high number of episodes is a general feature of Greek television drama. Similar remarks observed on Egyptian television seem to encourage the hypothesis of this being a particular characteristic of a Mediterranean or oriental model of television production (El Emary, 1995:174).

period. Production companies were created and run by TV writers, directors, actors, advertisers or entrepreneurs, who had acquired some experience in the Greek commercial cinema of the 60s or had studied television abroad. Some of them had family ties with members of the dictatorship. Personal relations played, consequently, a major role in the decision making process.

b. The barter: At times, the "barter", an American model of production[3] based on exchanging programs for advertising space, was applied. According to this formula, television channels received, with no previous expense on their behalf, hours of programs in which a producer or a distributor had inserted advertising spots that he had negotiated with the advertisers.
c. The in-house or internal production: Only a small part of television drama was produced directly by the stations. The cost of these programs was extremely low compared to "external" productions. Nevertheless, the channels were not sufficiently equipped to sustain this model, hence the limited use of it.

Dictators saw in television a means to expand their propaganda. YENED, the military channel, had an explicit order to "psychologically prepare the Nation for a possible outbreak of war and to reinforce its morale and spirit during battle" (Kastoras, 1978: 93). Within this scope, programs needed to be entertaining and "neutral", so as to encourage a passive attitude, allaying thus every historical or social conscience and preventing any critical reactions on behalf of the audiences. The values promoted were those of the dictatorship's dogma: "Nation, Religion, Family". To this respect, censorship was constantly exerted throughout the process of production. In the absence of any specific legislative frame codifying the modalities of intervention, it was on the basis of the censor's judgement that censorship was exerted. As far as the nature of interventions was concerned, it was basically political. Concepts like communism were strictly forbidden to be cited or implied within the screenplay. However, prohibitions concerned other domains as well: morale, religion, aesthetics, or even advertising. Michalis Papanikolaou, director and screenwriter, recalls that one of its scenarios was qualified as "anti-national, anti-Hellenic and pornographic", because it presented the "*portrait of a woman dreaming of a sexual life that she couldn't have*" (Papanikolaou, 1996). The control of screenplays depended on the General Secretary of Press and Information but the dictators' censorship extended to all levels of production. The censor's presence during shooting, especially regarding satiric programs, had major consequences, since even a small remark on his behalf was enough to force the director to interrupt shooting and start everything from the beginning. Moreover, inquiring on the political activities of the participants (actors, screenwriters, directors, etc.), as well as supervising the final editing of the programs, constituted additional forms of the dictatorship's control on production.

In this frame and in the absence of any organisation for the screenwriters' defence, the latter were obliged to practice self-censorship. Democracy, equality, workers' rights and class issues were among the themes to avoid. All critical or satirical reaction against Government was also forbidden (the comedy "Him and him", *"Ekeinos ki ekeinos"* in Greek, 103 episodes of 15 minutes, EIRT, 1972-1973, seems to be one of the very rare exceptions where satire insinuations against the regime managed to escape the censors' control). Sometimes, the only option for the writer was silence. If today we can study in retrospective the television production of the dictatorship era, the knowledge of the non-materialised ideas or that of the works that disappeared because of fear, is lost for ever (it is important to add, at this point, that over this period a part of the Greek intelligentsia had chosen to live in exile and was thus excluded from television and artistic production in general).

[3] It is Procter & Gamble that invented barter in the 30s (Mattelart, 1990: 76-77).

Contrary to the dictatorship's political project based on the coercion and police control of Greek society, its symbolic project had recourse to the mercantile devises of mass culture, "formal products of an economic liberalism without State, as well as of a State control underlain by the ideology of national security" (Mattelart, 1987: 33-34). Consequently, entertainment genres such as fiction perfectly fitted the dictatorship's ideological project. Indeed, the production of Greek television drama blossomed over this period. Its global output in terms of quantity underwent a considerable rise, especially in 1973, when the total weekly broadcast time of domestic fiction reached approximately 18 hours (on both channels[4]). Comedies and adventure drama were among the privileged genres of national production, occupying more than half of the global output. Aside from their entertaining character, adventure and crime fictions had a complementary function, trace of the dictatorship's censorship and propaganda. Detective stories in their majority, based on original screenplays, they served to highlight the role and the importance of the National Police Force as well as policemen's devotion to the Law. Indeed, the iconography of the characters reproduced several stereotypes and myths regarding the representation of policemen on the screen (Rodier, 1994: 14). Of modest social origins and middle social status, they had a symbolic role as they were supposed to personify the dictatorship's values. The existence of a production company within the Hellenic Police Public Relations Department is therefore significant (Georgiadis, 1980: 447). General dramas were also important. Actually, a closer examination of this category in terms of content brings into light the existence of a large number of "war fictions" abundantly developing the theme of the Greek resistance to the German army during the Second World War. The significance of these programs within the context of the Dictatorship is therefore apparent: ideological products of military propaganda, they were aimed at the nation's conciliation with the army[5]. "The unknown war" (*"O agnostos polemos"*, in Greek), detective drama written and directed by Nikos Foskolos and broadcast on YENED over the period 1971-1974 (226 episodes of 45 minutes), is often cited as the most representative example of this category.

The years of the independent (?) State television

The end of the military dictatorship brought a general optimism and installed a solid confidence regarding the country's future. During the years after the dictatorship, both national stations continued to be government-controlled, first by the conservative party *New Democracy* (*"Nea Dimokratia"* in Greek), which was in power from 1975 to 1981, and then by the socialist *PASOK*, which ruled the country up until 1989. The television boards were appointed by the government and each time the latter had to change, the former would change, too. Within this context, the role of broadcasters in the procedure of production was consolidated as well. It is important to mention that, contrary to most European States, which openly sustained independent production during the 80s[6], Greek television of this period further reinforced the in-house, government-controlled model.

During the second half of the 1970s up until 1981, the global output of domestic fiction programs remained high (approximately 12 hours per week on both channels[7]). The technical

[4] On an average weekly broadcasting of approximately 130 hours (on both channels) for this specific year (1973).
[5] The Brazilian military regime of 1964-79 presents similar features in terms of cultural production policies (Mattelart, 1987: 33-34).
[6] The development of independent production throughout Europe demonstrates the efficiency of the independent lobbies, but also governments' care to diversify the sector of production in order to strengthen it against the increasing competition of American programs (Reichenbach, 1990:15).
[7] On an average weekly broadcast time of approximately 120 hours (on both channels) over this period (1976-1981).

conditions of production made remarkable progress due to the arrival of new equipment that enabled outdoor video shootings, better sound recording and easier editing. Moreover, the first programs in colour, screened at the end of the 70s, stimulated the producers' interest as well as the public's enthusiasm. However, contrary to the previous variety in terms of genres, this period was characterised by the abundance of general drama. Information existing on these programs has revealed that most of them were not original scenarios, but adaptations of some of the most famous social and historical works of literature stemming from the Hellenic cultural patrimony ("Christ re-crucified", *"O Christos xanastavronete"* in Greek, EIRT/ERT, 1975-1976, 50 episodes of 45 minutes, adaptation of a Nikos Kazantzakis's novel, is one of the pioneers of this type of programs[8]). This return to the classics can be viewed on two levels: first of all, it demonstrates the lack of ideas and original screenplays and reveals the effort to improve television programs quality by reducing the number of the up-to-then melodramas that were mostly based on dialogues and speech and had few outdoor shootings; secondly, it brings into light the policy that guided the television production of this period. Situated at the crossroads of a financial logic and a symbolic project, it had a double aim: the establishment of a national industry in terms of television production, as well as the stimulation of the nation's collective memory[9] by evoking its cultural roots. Most of these programs met a considerable success, something that proves, according to some analysts, the potential conciliation between literature and television (Sarris, 1992: 213). However, the considerable alteration of History in which they often resulted, voluntary or not, was firmly condemned by the intellectual circles (Kastoras, 1978: 264, Manthoulis, 1981: 112).

Indeed, some of the productions of this period, productions "where history was treated […] the legendary logic outweighing the historical one" (Lemaire, 1989: 207-208), outpace the intentions of their authors and reveal the ideological preoccupations of the Hellenic society and its effort to understand its past and define its national identity. Doxiadis' comparative study between a specific television drama production of this period ("The teacher with the golden eyes", *"i daskala me ta xrussa matia"* in Greek, ERT, 1979, 14 episodes of 50 minutes) and the original novel from which it emanated (by Stratis Myrivilis) reveals evidence of the ideological interference in the literary text (Doxiadis, 1993). This study shows how television production put forward the socio-political frame of the story to the detriment of the naturalistic and liberal spirit that characterises the novel. The thoughts and emotions of the main character were given a "collective" tone that is not found in the book. The most representative example of these interventions is an excerpt of the dialogue between the basic character (called Vranas) and a Turk soldier:

"Vranas: And what about the foreign forces that led us to this adventure?
Turk soldier: Let them kill each other, eat each other, pigs! Why should we care about them?
Vranas: You're right! Why shed our blood for foreign interests?"

This part of the dialogue doesn't exist in the novel and provides proof of an ideological interference in the literary text, aimed at putting forward a "progressive" and "anti-imperialistic" nationalism, associated with the eternal mourning about the loss of the "glorious and independent" Greece, caused by the intervention of the "Big Forces"[10].

The year 1982 marked a radical decline in the evolution of Greek television drama output. From this point up until 1989, it maintained a considerably low level (approximately five

[8] It also constitutes the first television drama outdoor production.
[9] Similar functions seem to have assured the historic television fictions in Quebec (Lemaire, 1989: 207-208).
[10] It must also be noted at this point that the representation of Turks in Greek television productions of this period often posed problems to the adapters of historic literary texts (Manthoulis, 1981:131).

hours per week on both channels, at times less[11]). This rupture with the past needs to be examined, firstly, on the basis of the global financial penury of television production throughout this period (IIC, 1988: 127; Kopp, 1990: 127), and, secondly, in combination with the new government's position towards television in general (Papathanassopoulos, 1990). For the socialist party *PASOK*, television was an ideological medium with a pedagogical mission[12] and, consequently, the production of entertaining fiction programs was of minor importance. The consequences of this policy were equally obvious in the genre's diversification. General drama predominated throughout this period, mostly composed of contemporary social fictions that developed three basic themes, "socialism, provinces, women" – often productions of director and screenwriter Yiorgos Michailidis (Valoukos, 1998: 31). In the same time, the first commentaries on the military dictatorship and Greek politics appeared, reflecting the ideological orientation of government-controlled television over this period. Some representative examples are the following: "The beginning of the fire - Rokkos Choïdas", *"To xekinima tis fotias – Rokkos Choïdas"* in Greek, ERT1, 1982-1983, 12 episodes of 45 minutes, "Ancient rust", *"Archaia skouria"* in Greek, ERT2, 1983, 18 episodes of 45 minutes, "Anna X", ERT 1, 1985, 13 episodes of 45 minutes.

It comes therefore as a conclusion that during the years of the State monopoly (1970-89), the production trends of Greek television drama reflected the political interests of its state-controlled producers/broadcasters. The latter interfered directly or indirectly in production by regulating the market, by imposing specific types of programs, by authorising or not specific contents. Mirroring the government's specific ideology, Greek television drama of this period confirms that every television represents "not only a people's culture, its customs and its language, but also the point of view of the political system in effect in a specific country" (Cazeneuve, 1974: 46).

2. The Greek television drama of the 90s

In 1987, Greek state channels, called henceforth "public", became legally "autonomous". Two years later, in 1989, the monopoly of public television was abolished in Greece and the first two private stations, Mega Channel and Antenna TV, appeared without legal permission. The deregulation of Greek television has to be seen as a logical consequence of the general European television liberalisation of the 80s. Nevertheless, the disorder in which the former took place was largely attributed to the turbulent context of political rivalry between the two aforementioned major Greek parties, the socialist party *PASOK* and its conservative opposition party *New Democracy*, in the imminence of the national elections of 1989. The precipitated creation of a third public channel (ET3) by *PASOK*'s government in 1988 can be viewed in the same scope (Papathanassopoulos, 1993, 1997). The television landscape of the 90s was characterised by a two-pole oligopoly, in which two private channels, Antenna TV and Mega Channel, dominated the market. Several other private stations did exist but their audience ratings were of minor importance[13]. Since 1993, however, certain stations, mainly Sky TV and, to a lesser extent, Star Channel and New Channel, progressively managed to consolidate their place on the market. Contrary to many European States (Ferrell Lowe and Alm, 1997), Greek public television was not able to keep up with the evolution of the sector and seemed, up until recently, to have been phased out.

[11] On an average weekly broadcast time of approximately 125 hours (on both channels) over this period (1982-1989).
[12] However, the main reproach towards the television of this period is that of populism.
[13] In 1995, more than 160 television stations – mostly locally broadcasting channels - were operational all over the country.

The opening of television to the private sector did not modify the role of broadcasters in production. Public channels still broadcast their own productions, whilst the two main private televisions, Mega Channel and Antenna TV, controlled directly or indirectly, via satellite companies, the major part of all domestic drama production. In this context, personal relations continued to play a major role in the organisation of the production sector, in the absence of any legislative regulatory frame of the latter. The liberalisation of television may have freed production from political control, but it was not accompanied by an effective opening towards real competitive liberal procedures. Moreover, the lack of specialisation constituted another major drawback in television production, which affected not only the quality of the final output, but also the structure and the organisation of the market.

The deregulation of Greek television marked an indubitable turn over in the history of domestic drama as well, both in terms of quantity as well as in terms of genre production. The soaring of the global fiction output during the years 1990-4[14] (from approximately 32 hours up to 58 hours per week, on all stations[15]), showed the channels' positive policy towards this type of program. Screened firstly at prime-time, the latter was often recycled over the morning or afternoon slots. Liberated from the State guardianship and power, television production submitted to the laws of the market and the maximisation of profit became its main objective. Within this frame, any insinuation of political character on behalf of the creators or the broadcasters had to be avoided, since it would predetermine the viewers concerned and would thus limit the audience ratings.

The result of this evolution became apparent by the return to an entertainment and "light-theme" fiction. The expansion of comedies, henceforth termed as "sitcoms" (abbreviation of the American "situation comedies") was one of the major features of this period. Popular productions of low cost (three to four million drachmas per episode for the period 1991-2, six to eight millions for 1996-7[16]), shot indoors with three or four cameras and a regular casting in two or three days, sitcoms constituted the ideal program for the prime-time[17], complying with the mercantile spirit of the private television which wishes to attract the maximal audience by investing the minimum amount of money. They were always intended for a weekly broadcast, usually just after the 20.15h or 20.30h news-round, covering thus the 21.00h to 22.00h timeslot. Structured on 13 or 14 episodes lasting 20 to 26 minutes, they usually ended up being extended over several TV seasons. The return to adventure and crime drama was another distinctive feature of this period. Despite their higher cost (four to six million drachmas per episode for the period 1991-2, 14 to 18 millions for 1996-7) and their more carefully prepared production, compared to sitcoms, these programs were still marked by the penury of "rich" action scenes and the dominance of indoor shootings and dialogues. They were composed of a variable number of episodes lasting approximately 45 minutes and were mostly screened late at night (usually after 22.00h or 23.00h) on a weekly basis. Finally, the development of a new genre, the soap opera, marked the transition to the private television, since it was the latter that introduced the term in the Greek television landscape (pronounced *"sapounopera"* in Greek) and established its rules. The first Greek soap operas in the beginning of the 90s had the form of dramatic serials, made of 30 to 60 minute episodes and were programmed after 22.00h on a weekly basis. From 1992 up until today, however, the

[14] Since 1994, however, the financial problems that private Greek television encountered have diminished its production pace. Greek fictions have often been replaced by lower cost programs (talk shows, reality shows, etc.) and the quantity of re-screenings increased, the production output remained, however, relatively high.

[15] On a 24h/24h broadcasting basis. It has to be stressed, however, that this increase of global fiction output becomes much less important when examined on the basis of the total broadcasting time which also increased considerably due to the multiplication of the number of channels.

[16] All financial figures emanate from interviews with professionals of Greek television, as well as from unpublished documentation. During the 90s, one US dollar equaled approximately 250-300 drachmas.

[17] Greek prime-time usually covers the 20.00-23.00h timeslot (Koukoutsaki, 2001: 118-123).

broadcasting of *Brightness* (*"I lampsi"* in Greek), the longest and most popular Greek soap opera, broadcast on the private owned station Antenna TV, established new norms. Thus, the Greek soap operas took the form of low budget productions (approximately two and half million drachmas per episode for the 1992-3 period), structured on daily episodes lasting approximately 20 minutes. They were mostly screened in the evening, before the 20.15h or 20.30h news-round, contrary to the American formula, according to which soaps are broadcast in the morning or in the afternoon slots ("day-time" soaps), or late at night ("night-time" soaps).

Within the new television landscape of the 90s, the standardisation of production is one of the main drawbacks of fiction programs characterised by the degradation of the language employed, the abundance of scenes of violence and sex, as well as their "poor" content, in general.

The aforementioned *Brightness* (*"I lampsi"*) is a particularly interesting case often cited as one of the most representative examples of Greek television drama in the 90s. This soap, as its title implies, depicts a modern and wealthy Athenian family whose members, despite their high social rank and their exaggerated wealth, lead a life full of unhappiness, bad luck and tragedy. The inner structure of the scenario follows the American formula according to which there are always three story-poles that are simultaneously developed throughout each episode. In terms of content, however, the melodrama is at the heart of the story. Characters are schematic and stereotyped. They are individuals out of common, powerful professionals, terrible criminals or poor and honest servants, having original names and evolving in an impressively luxurious and non-realistic context, striking for economic and/or political power, social justice or love. Despite the exaggerated wealth and glamour put forward in the program, an accumulation of stereotyped and sensational stories leads the general plot: kidnappings, accidents, death illnesses, government scandals, losses of memory, acts of terrorism, spying, adultery, rapes, children/brothers/sisters/parents lost and found again after several years, drugs, alcoholism, AIDS, etc. In any case, characters are always tortured by an unsolved problem and this becomes apparent even in their attitude: they constantly drink and smoke. The screenplay is mostly inspired by the daily sensational tabloids and an effort to install a critical discourse of social content is obvious. However, social critic remains caricatured, a simple means of mannerism, as it takes place in a non-realistic context. Dialogues employ a hyperbolic, pompous language, linked to the paroxysms of the scenario (Koukoutsaki, 2001: 238-244). According to recent studies, *Brightness* follows the "dynastic" soap opera model, a conservative and patriarchal form in terms of power structure, family and gender relations, which "focuses on one powerful family, with some satellite outsiders – connected by romance, marriage or rivalry – on its periphery […] The godfather family of the Greek and Italian variants represent cultural variations on the Mafia-chief story, turned into a television series. These families fill the whole screen, have enough power to organise the world around them (by bribery, extortion, etc.), and economic power is translated into political power. They provide an escape to the world in which crooks may be admired in spite of their immoral actions because they are successful, or because the blame falls on the corrupt society in which the only way to succeed is to have the backing of a Mafia-style family […] Godfather or patriarchal soaps take for granted an unshakeable class structure in which the glamorous […] is the only one worth looking at, both for escaping into a dream world and, at the same time, for 'proving' that the rich and powerful are unhappy" (Liebes and Livingstone, 1998: 153, 161, 163). Since its first screening in 1992, the astonishing success of *Brightness* has given birth to several soap operas of the same style, though none of them have managed to compete with its audience ratings.

Delving into the causes of this evolution has revealed a variety of opinions shared partially or unanimously among Greek television professionals. Financial constraints and a lack of

originality in finding scenarios are two of the parameters often mentioned as grounds of "low quality". The limits imposed by the nature of the medium of television itself is a third one. Finally, there seems to be a widespread assumption among certain professionals that the degradation of television content is "consciously intended", as a means of "hypnosis" and "alienation" towards society, aimed at the establishment of today's materialistic and consumer oriented lifestyle. According to the defenders of this position, television is a means of economic but also ideological domination. Even though it gives the illusion of modernisation and freedom, it traps societies by creating simulations of reality, in order to keep humans from becoming aware of their "distressing condition". By projecting the brilliance of the western civilisation, image perfectly coherent with the global expansion of the powerful post-industrial countries, it promotes an affirmative culture founded on the concept of pleasure and the promise of happiness, in order to proclaim a materialistic democracy based on consumption. Within this frame, according to the defenders of this position, advertising becomes the heart of the broadcast strategy: its production quality often outweighs that of the other programs which are, in reality, only the means, the vehicle, that carries the advertising message. The essential element of this mercantile spirit is sensationalism. It comes as no surprise therefore that the expansion of private television in Greece coincided with the blossom of the press tabloids.

Disconnected from this rather pessimist approach, the new generation of professionals tend to develop a Tocqueville-style discourse, based on a more positive, open and managerial apprehension of reality. Without denying the existence of domination mechanisms, they underlay the possibility of maintaining a certain autonomy between television's mercantile objectives and society's needs. As far as the *entertainment* model is concerned, they seem to believe that the latter will soon reach its limits.

This discourse about television as a medium of ideological manipulation is not recent. Greek television professionals' preoccupations echo several studies in Western Europe that have explored communication "intentionalism" in media since the 70s (Mattelart, 1977). It has often been argued that the notion of manipulation implies the existence of a causal model which is considered to be too simplistic, because it mechanically links the characteristics and the contents of messages to a transformation of their social and cultural context. Even though this link may exist, modern television programs are not only a cause but also a result of social and cultural changes. In other words, it seems that, in reality, television content reflects society as it is acting upon it (Breton and Proulx, 1989: 154-159). As Stavros Kastoras has put it: "*At each stage of the history of Greek television, there is a general social, political, aesthetic, etc. frame. Television's key-personalities carry unconsciously the values of this frame. They are aware of their context's philosophy and they automatically adapt themselves to it. Their role goes beyond that of simple individuals; they become representatives of a system. With the exception probably of totalitarian regimes, explicit orders are not necessary to reproduce the system. Every modification of the latter brings inevitably a modification in the spirit of television production*" (Kastoras, 1998).

Within this scope, the ideological hallmarks of modern Greek television drama should be apprehended as the result of its producers/broadcasters mercantile policy, reflecting society's ideological orientations and cultural homogenisation. However, admitting that Greek television mirrors Greek society is one thing – and what this statement unfortunately implies needs to be analysed[18] – but refusing television's responsibility towards Greek society is another. If television content *reflects* the social and cultural setting of its production, its role

[18] It is interesting to mention here that, contrary to the widespread assumption that soap operas are spreading throughout Europe, it has been found that most European countries have produced few programs of this type; moreover, countries such as France and Italy haven't produced any soap operas at all (Liebes and Livingstone, 1998: 148).

goes beyond that of a simple "mapping" of the real world; it also *reproduces* meanings, values and ideologies. By doing so, and irrespective of any aesthetic or artistic judgement, television participates in the expansion of the materialistic and consumer-oriented lifestyle that seems to dominate contemporary Greece (Koukoutsaki, 2002a). If theorists like Stuart Hall have demonstrated since the 70s the importance of the process of decoding and that of the use of media discourse, do viewers of contemporary Greek television have options for alternative interpretations and uses of the contents transmitted? If yes, what are the limits of these options? Conducting audience analysis might be a way to answer these questions.

Concluding remarks

The fact that television stations have always been in charge of production has played a decisive role in the development of Greek television drama. Since its very first steps, the latter has been destined to function as an ideological medium of state propaganda, reproducing the discourse of its government-controlled broadcasters. Within this context, Greek television drama wasn't able to elaborate into an autonomous language of expression nor was it able to develop into a real cultural industry. Crafted methods were the consequence of production's strong politicisation and concentration, along with the lack of coherent long term strategy and specialisation. The deregulation of Greek television didn't modify the situation; production remained a strongly concentrated sector, dependant on its broadcasters' short term commercial interests.

This element is of vital significance as it sheds light on Greece's specificity regarding today's entertainment television model. More specifically, it has already been argued (Olivesi, 1998: 171-207) that in most European television systems, the expansion of the entertainment model in the 80s came as the natural result of a gradual evolution that was guided by the necessity to rationalise production and open it to international – mostly American – competition (Reichenbach, 1990:15). In Greece, however, this evolution didn't take place. Television was founded from its very beginning on the basis of an entertainment model, as a result of the ideological project of the military Dictatorship. Until the end of the 80s, the evolution of Greek television was marked by the gradual elimination of commercial enterprising and the affirmation of the political, social and cultural role of television. Consequently, the emergence of the entertainment model of the 90s is not the last stage of a long and gradual process of evolution. On the contrary, it is the result of a combination of factors that are irrelevant to television production. These factors need to be associated to the political turbulence that took place in Greece at the end of the 80s, the latter being incorporated in the context of the general European television deregulation.

The similarities between the dictatorial television of the 70s and the private television of the 90s are flagrant, both in terms of quantity as well as in terms of genre diversification, especially when it comes to programs like fiction: both of them have sustained domestic television drama production and have given it a central place in their daily schedules; both of them have promoted "light-theme" and entertaining fictions that fitted their short-term projects. Their differences reside, however, in the underlying logic that was inherent to these projects. In the dictatorial television, the ideological project was the reason for its entertainment model, whereas in today's private television, the former constitutes the natural consequence of the latter.

What can we expect from television today? Unfortunately, the perspective of different or alternative contents seems out of reach. The market laws and the research of immediate profit prohibit any initiative or experimentation. Private television's mercantile model, underlain by the social economic and political power of its entrepreneurs, barons of the press and the public works, dominates the market, domination that no government takes the risk to face. If

the professionals of Greek television are not responsible for its quality, most of them don't dare oppose to it, since this would threaten their own place within the system. Interestingly enough, among those who condemn contemporary television, certain ones do not hesitate, when the opportunity is given to them, to reproduce the same models. Arguing that television mechanically mirrors society's orientations is, in our opinion, only part of the truth. If programs like fictions indicate the "agenda of concerns, values and metanarratives […] of the society which produces and views them" (Liebes and Livingstone, 1998: 155), they also shape our apprehension of reality by creating images and meanings that validate or not our vision of the world. Media texts act upon realities as much as they reflect them. Within this scope, Greek television channels have a more important responsibility towards society than what we (or they) would like to think.

Acknowledgements

The present contribution constitutes the evolution of two existing papers. The first one, in French, focuses on the role of the local context in the production of Greek television drama and was published in the French scientific journal *Mesogeios – Méditerranée* (n° 16, special issue, "The media in Greece", Hêrodotos Publications, October 2002). The second one, in English, proposes a generic typology of Greek fiction programs and is currently under publication in *Media, Culture & Society* (n° 25/4, Sage Publications, July 2003). We would like to thank both journals for their kind permission to use material for the present paper.
The whole PhD research, in French, entitled *Industries culturelles et spécificités nationales: les tendances de production de la fiction télévisuelle grecque (1970-1997)*, was published in March 2001 by Septentrion Editions (France).

References

Buonanno, Milly (1993) "News-Values and Fiction-Values: News as Serial Device and Criteria of Fictionworthiness in Italian Television Fiction", *European Journal of Communication* 8(2): 177-202.
Breton, Philippe and Serge Proulx (1989) *L'explosion de la communication.* Paris: La Decouverte.
Cazeneuve, Jean (1974) *L'homme téléspectateur (Homo Telespectator).* Paris: Denoël/Gonthier.
Doxiadis, Kyrkos (1993) *Ideology and Television.* Athens: Plethron (in Greek).
El Emary, Fouad (1995) "Le feuilleton télévisé et les industries culturelles en Egypte – Genèse et enjeux", PhD dissertation, Paris, Université de Paris III-Sorbonne Nouvelle.
Euromedia Research Group (The) (1986) *New Media Politics, Comparative Perspectives in Western Europe*. London: Sage.
Ferrell Lowe, Gregory and Ari Alm (1997) "Public service Broadcasting as Cultural Industry: Value Transformation in the Finnish Market-place", *European Journal of Communication* 12(2): 169-192.
Georgiadis, Vassilis (1980) *Cinema and Television: The Almanac of Greek Screen.* Athens: Georgiadis (in Greek).
Hall, Stuart (1993) "Encoding, Decoding", 90-103, *in* Simon During (ed.) *The Cultural Studies Reader*, London and New York: Routledge.
IIC (International Institute of Communications) (1988) "Stories come first: An IIC Report for the Commission of the European Communities", Brussels, Directorate General Information, Communications, Culture, The Media Programme, Commission of the European Communities.
Kastoras, Stavros (1978) "Greek television – A descriptive study of its programming and production as an approach to human communication", PhD dissertation, Los Angeles, University of Southern California.
Kastoras, Stavros (1998), interview, Athens.
Kopp, Pierre (1990) *Télévisions en concurrence.* Paris: Anthropos/Economica.
Koukoutsaki, Angeliki (2003) "Greek Television Drama: Production Policies and Genre Diversification", *Media, Culture & Society* 25(4), under publication.
Koukoutsaki, Angeliki (2002b) "Télévision et idéologie: le rôle du contexte local dans la production de la fiction télévisuelle hellénique", *Mesogeios / Méditerranée* 16 (numéro spécial "Les médias en Grèce"): 87-103.
Koukoutsaki, Angeliki (2002a) "La production de la fiction télévisuelle hellénique des années 90 : acteurs et enjeux », *Actes du colloque 'Les Figures de l'Acteur',* Université de Paris III - Sorbonne Nouvelle, Ecole Doctorale ASSIC, 23-25 mai 2002, pp. 113-116.
Koukoutsaki, Angeliki (2001) *Industries culturelles et specificités nationales: les tendances de production de la fiction télévisuelle grecque (1970-1997).* Villeneuve d'Ascq/Université Lille 3: Presses Universitaires de Septentrion.

Lemaire, Paul-Marcel (1989) *Communication et Culture.* Québec: Presses de l'Université Laval.
Liebes, Tamar and Sonia Livingstone (1998) "European Soap Operas: The Diversification of a Genre", *European Journal of Communication* 13(2): 147-180.
Manthoulis, Roviros (1981) *The empire of television.* Athens: Themelio (in Greek).
Mattelart, Armand (1977) *Mass média, idéologies et mouvement révolutionnaire.* Paris: Anthropos.
Mattelart, Armand and Michèle (1987) *Le carnaval des images – La fiction brésilienne.* Paris: La Documentation française.
Mattelart, Armand (1990) *La publicité.* Paris: La Découverte.
Olivesi, Stéphane (1998) *Histoire politique de la télévision.* Paris: Harmattan.
Papanikolaou, Michalis (1996), interview, Athens.
Papathanassopoulos, Stylianos (1990) "Broadcasting Politics and the State in Socialist Greece", *Media, Culture and Society* 12: 387-397.
Papathanassopoulos, Stylianos (1993) *Liberating television.* Athens: Kastaniotis (in Greek).
Papathanassopoulos, Stylianos (1997) "The Politics and the Effects of the Deregulation of Greek Television", *European Journal of Communication* 12(3): 351-368.
Reichenbach, E. (1990) "Paysage avant la bataille. Les relations producteurs-diffuseurs", *CinémAction* 57:15-20.
Rodier, B. (dir) (1994) *Policiers en séries, images de flics*. Nancy: Presses Universitaires de Nancy.
Sarris, Neoklis (1992) *Greek society and television.* Tom. 2. Athens: Gordios (in Greek).
Valoukos, Stathis (1998) *Greek Television: Guide of television series 1967-1998.* Athens: Aigokeros (in Greek).

Social Representations of Democracy; Ideal versus Reality
A qualitative study with young people in Greece.

Thalia Magioglou,
Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, Paris

Introduction

Democracy is a major issue in the contemporary world. The collapse of the communist world and the devaluation of communist ideology, the welfare state crisis in Western democracies and the important role of globalization have an effect on the way people think about democracy. In what way do citizens experience these transformations? Abstention from elections and action through humanitarian associations are examples of a new kind of citizen mobilization. More precisely, the present project aims to investigate the following:

- **The social construction of the meaning of democracy**: how do people who live in a system considered to be democratic understand democracy? What does it mean to them?
- **The ideal and the representation of the reality** of democracy. Which is the political system that young people wish for, and is it different from the one they live in? Do they have an ideal of democracy that is opposed to the one that they experience?
- **The limits of what they consider as possible in the real world.** Is democracy, or their ideal political system possible or impossible according to them? If the ideal democracy is seen as impossible, there is no action in order to make it happen.

Democracy has a particular importance for Greek people; it is considered to be an element that somehow belongs to the Greek culture. From early education, the importance of ancient Greece and the fact that democracy was created in Athens is emphasized repeatedly, more so than other historical periods (see Fragoudaki and Dragonas, 1997). Representative democracy as a political system was introduced in Greece very soon after national independence from the Ottoman Empire, by the beginnings of the 20th century. Democratic government of the country has since been interrupted by the civil war that followed the end of World War II, and more recently by the military junta of 1967-1974. These are both significant elements in the construction of social memory, and should weigh heavily on the social representation of democracy.

No previous reports concerning the social representations of democracy of young people have been published. The available literature is related to the social representations of politics in Italy (Colucci and Camussi, 1996), on the social representations of human rights (Doise, 1996) and the social representations of democracy for the Scotts and the Slovaks (Moody and Markova, 1995). Finally, the work conducted on the Greek political culture (Diamandouros, 1983, 1984; Nikolakopoulos, 1990), the work of Greek sociologists on the representations of young people (Fragoudaki and Dragonas, 1997) in Greece, and the work of Percheron (1991) related to youth and politics in France, may contribute to the interpretation of the present findings.

Some elements of theory

The theoretical approach is situated within the framework of a field that is currently developing in Europe, that of political psychology. The study of social thinking on democracy may partly be conceived on the concepts of social psychology, that are however not entirely

adapted to the specificity of political questions, as it can be founded on political sociology theories. The purpose of this study is to apply a concept developed in European social psychology, that is, social representations (Moscovici, 1961; Doise, 1986), to the study of politics, by associating social representations to ideology.

Social representations theory initially referred to the transformation of scientific knowledge by common sense. Moscovici renovated the concept of collective representations developed by Emile Durkheim, in order to tap the specific way of understanding reality that is shared by a community of individuals. The theory focuses particularly on the way in which common sense integrates an object that is new. On the one hand, a process called « objectivation » of the novelty is activated, whereby the new idea or theory takes the form of a specific object. For instance, in the germinal study of Moscovici (1961) psychoanalysis is objectivated in the image of a psychoanalyst and his couch. A second process of integration of the new idea is called « anchoring ». During this process, common sense relates the new idea to something that is already familiar. In the case of psychoanalysis, the act of following psychoanalytic sessions was anchored onto the act of confessing to a priest.

According to the definition of Jodelet (1991), social representation is a form of knowledge, socially elaborated and shared, that has a practical objective and contributes in the construction of a shared reality for a social group. We can study the « field » of a social representation, but also its « organizing principles » (Doise, 1988), that is, the elements that organise everything that makes part of a social representation. Abric and Flament (1994) have developed the hypothesis of the « central nucleus » of a social representation, that is, the elements that don't change easily and are indispensable for the existence of the representation, and the « peripheral elements », that are less important and more susceptible to change. The research methods applied to the study of social representations include interviews, questionnaires, as well as experimentation. Content analysis and multivariate statistics are also used for the data analysis.

Although this approach offers a possibility to study democracy from a subjective point of view, that is the viewpoint of the people who participate in the research, it is not sufficient to grasp the representation of democracy. First, there is no theoretical link established between social representations and other forms of social thinking, such as ideology, belief systems and culture. Therefore, one of the objectives of this study is to link ideology with social representations, based on the research findings. A second problem that arises when we study democracy from the perspective of this theory, is that democracy does not constitute a novelty « created » by the scientific world that is absorbed by common sense. On the contrary, it is a very familiar object, and it is also « created », on a day to day basis, and not only by a political elite.

These problems led us to the ideas of Castoriadis (1981), the political philosopher who wrote about « the immaginary institution of society ». Castoriades takes into account the potential of common sense to innovate and create. He argues that human societies throughout history are characterized by continuous creativity, a way to modify themselves which takes shape in social institutions. Social facts are for Castoriadis an incarnation of imaginary meanings, that society materializes. Among these imaginary meanings, there are several that are central for a society because they create something from nothing, and thus organize every other meaning. Democracy is an example to this: ancient Greeks invented it ex-nihilo, and it organizes a group of imaginary meanings, such as politics, citizenship, the parliament. Society is not conscious of its creative power which is at the basis of all human institutions; there is however a possibility for it to become conscious in the future and to thus arrive at a better quality of democracy.

The work of Jennifer Hochschild (1995) and Paul Sniderman (1995), on political psychology, are valuable sources since they furnish us with empirical evidence and theoritical

insights that orient our interpretation. Hochschild works on the way African Americans "face up to the American Dream" and more gererally on the conflicts between Americans' ideals and practices. Investigating the case of young Greeks, we don't have the variable of race in stake, but social class or aspirations of social mobility play an important role in the way young Greeks perceive democracy in the sense that they are associated to different ways of thinking about democracy.

Sniderman has made a major contribution on the role political ideology plays in the way people understand politics. We also consider that political ideology has an important part to play when it comes to the representations of democracy for young Greeks. We claim that ideology "organizes" the attitudes and opinions linked to democracy.

Hypotheses

1. Our first hypothesis is that there are two ways in which young Greeks would represent democracy: one opposing the ideal to reality, *binary*, and the other, moderate and consensual, referring to a unique representation of democracy, based on the actual political system, that the individual would like to see improved. In the second case, there is no conflict between a model of democracy and reality; democracy belongs to the real world. In the first case, the ideal democracy is impossible; this way of thinking is in fact incompatible with positive action.
2. We consider that the way of thinking revealed by interviews is related on the one hand to the subject's social position, and on the other to their positive or negative aspirations related to their social position. Optimism would be related to a moderate way of thinking with absence of great oppositions, whereas pessimism would be related to a dualistic way of thinking.
3. We consider that the representations of democracy for young people in Greece would be examples of the « creativity of the social imagination », in the sense that Castoriadis attributes to this expression. We expect to find combinations of different theories and ideas that may be considered « wrong » according to scientific and ideological discourse, but which prove however the vivacity of the social imaginary.
4. The idea that democracy is a question of the private sphere of life is one of the new elements that we expect to find in the social representation of democracy.
5. Tension between an ideal vision or representation of democracy and the representation of reality would be a sign of innovation. If the ideal representation differs from the official discourse of the media or other dominant discourses of the public sphere, young people are aware of it, and therefore they place their ideal project in the realm of the impossible.
6. Finally, we consider that the content of the representation of democracy will be organized according to ideology, a conception of political left and right on the one hand, and a system of traditional values and a system of modern values on the other.

Sample: studying the social representation of democracy of young people in Greece

A case study was undertaken on a sample composed of men and women aged from 18 to 26 years, in Greece. A series (30) of non- directive interviews were conducted. Greece is a Southern European country with a number of particular characteristics but also characteristics shared with other European countries, concerning its political system. In that way, it is possible to compare our results with findings from other studies in Europe.

The decision to work with a population of young people was influenced by a study carried out by Percheron (1991), who considered that certain tendencies present in other social groups may be found accentuated in youth. What is more, young people have played an important role in the recent political history of Greece: they were actively involved in the restoration of democracy after the dictatorship in 1974, and active in politics since, through

political party youth organizations and an animated student's movement. In the 80s, however, they appear to become more and more disengaged from politics, with the exception of punctual interventions, such as expressing opposition to a specific government measure (Demertzis and Kafetzis 1996).

Individuals between 18 and 26 years old are people who are confronted with the representative system for the first time, in the sense that they are in the process of becoming citizens with full civil rights. As a result, they may be more attentive to the political system than older and more experienced people who are more familiar with it.

Data collection and analysis

Thirty non-directive, in-depth interviews were conducted in Athens. The interview began with the following question: « If I say the word democracy, what comes to mind? What is democracy for you? ». Interviews lasted on average an hour, they were audio-taped and then transcribed verbatim.

The sample consisted of young people between 18 and 26 years old, men and women, students in different fields, or people who work, coming from different social backgrounds, originally from Athens or the countryside, with different political orientations. The social status of the interviewees was defined with the combination of educational level, occupation of the parents and the part of Athens they live in. Concerning the definition of their political orientation, we took into consideration the occupation of the parents and the interests of the interviewee. The following tables summarize the composition of the sample (N=30).

Age	
18-21	8 (26%)
22-26	22 (74%)
Gender	
F	15 (50%)
M	15 (50%)

Social Status	
Upper	6 (20%)
Middle	14 (46%)
Lower	10 (34%)
Occupation	
Students	18 (60%)
Employed w/ diploma	7 (23%)
Employed	5 (17%)

The table indicates that all participants have an occupation. However, not all subjects who have a job make their own living. Students who are more than 22 years old, who have not completed their studies yet and work occasionally or part time, may be considered to be unemployed; this regards 7 out of the 18 students reported in this table.

The empirical interest of this study consists in the use of three different methods of data analysis, corresponding to three different phases of the research. The first one, is a thematic content analysis, aimed to explore the hypothesis of the opposition between the ideal representation of democracy and the representation of reality (Berelson, 1952, D'Unrug, 1974).

The results of the first analysis confirmed the first hypothesis and led to the formulation of a second hypothesis: ideology and systems of modern or traditional values organize the representation of democracy. To verify this postulate, a multiple correspondence analysis was carried out on the themes of the thematic analysis. The results confirmed the second hypothesis concerning the role of political ideology but revealed the importance of two "ways of thinking" concerning democracy that do not coincide with traditional or modern values.

In order to clarify the results of the second analysis, specifically the role of the two ways of thinking democracy, we proceed to a third analysis that is different from the two others

in the sense that both of them pool data from different interviews together and thus obscure the specificity of each interview.

The third analysis we applied, a structural discourse analysis, has been inspired by a method used by Michelat (1975). The purpose of this analysis is to define the internal structure of each interview, without eliminating any elements but summarizing similar ideas. Then, we focus on the oppositions and contrasts that each discourse includes, compared to logic, and also ideological and scientific discourse. We follow the way these contrasts are dealt with by the interviewees and finally formulate a typology of contrasts and the "new" ideas that emerge from them, new, compared to what is established knowledge for the scientific and the ideological discourse.

Results

The content analysis initially showed that democracy is a major issue for all the interviewees. The abundance of themes associated to democracy (144 themes), and the different ways of talking about it, are evidence of the importance that the notion holds for subjects. The values of freedom, equality and justice, and the principles and procedures of the representative system, such as deliberation or elections, are the most frequently mentioned themes. However, interviewees don't accept the representative system without any reserve: more than half of the sample consider it as a compromise between the ideal of direct democracy that is impossible, and a political system that is feasible in contemporary societies. The majority thinks that ideal democracy has never really existed and never will, with a possible exception of ancient Athens. Ideal democracy is opposed to real democracy for the majority of the interviewees. Although ideal democracy is placed in the realm of the imaginary, it is symbolically present and judges reality.

The matrix composed of the themes of the thematic analysis and their presence or absence from the discourse of each interview was then treated with multiple correspondence analysis. This analysis yielded two dimensions, corresponding to two different social ways of thinking. The first dimension explains 15% of the variance and corresponds to political ideology. It opposes themes related to the political left to themes related to the right. The second dimension explains 7% of the variance and opposes two ways to think democracy: on the positive pole of the dimension we find an elitistic, moderate and individualistic version of democracy, whereas on the negative pole of this dimension we find a dualistic way of thinking constituted by various oppositions: ideal to reality, good to evil. These two dimensions are the organizing principles of the representation of democracy (Doise, 1996), in the sense that they organize all the themes mentioned.

This empirical evidence allows us to relate the concept of social representations to that of ideology, as it shows that ideology and value systems that are not part of the definition or the representation of democracy, in fact organize the representation. Ideology, that is, a way of social thinking different from social representation, is probably an element that organizes many other political representations.

The findings of this study demonstrate that the central nucleus of the representation is composed of the values of freedom, equality and justice, because they are the most frequently mentioned themes and are indispensable for the definition of democracy. Concerning the difference between the « central nucleus » of a representation (Abric, Flament, 1994), and its organizing principles (Doise, 1986), the findings show that the central nucleus is not the same thing as the organizing principles, which may indeed be found « outside » the definition of democracy. Ideology and traditional or modern values organize the representation of democracy in our case.

The structural discourse analysis enabled us to better understand the role of the "two ways of thinking democracy" that appeared as organizing principles of the representation of democracy in the correspondence analysis. We concluded that the discourse of each interviewee presents a number of contradictions and inconsistencies that are resolved in two ways: either they are taken in charge by the interviewee, and this corresponds to the dualistic way of thinking, or they are concealed and in this case there is no tension or apparent conflict. Each way of thinking resolves these "inconsistencies" in comparison to logic, ideological and scientific discourse, in a different way: the first one "creates" the representation of an ideal democracy with a strong metaphysical aspect, related to absolute beauty, an earthly paradise. The second, turning its back with indifference to the public sphere, "creates" the "private democracy" and the "democratic personality" that one can live and enjoy in his private moments with his family and closest friends. This is a democracy of the "microcosmos" with a lot of its values and practices, transferred to a different setting.

Conclusion

At this stage we have finished our research and the analysis of our data. What is missing for our project to be concluded, is to discuss our findings with experts from the discipline of political psychology, and to anchor our conclusions in this scientific tradition. Political Psychology does not "exist" in most European countries.

Bibliography

Badie, Bernard, ( ), Culture et Politique,

Blanchet, Alain (1985), L'entretien dans les sciences sociales, Dunod, Paris.

Berger et Luckmann, (1994), La construction sociale de la réalité, Meridiens Klincksieck, Paris.

Bruner, Jerome, (1991), Car la culture donne forme à l'esprit, Eshel, Paris.

Castoriadis, C. (1981), L'institution imaginaire de la société, Seuil, Paris.

Catellani, P. Quadrio, A. (1991), Ideal and real in the representation of politics, in Revue Internationale de Psychologie Sociale, t.4, No ¾.

Colucci, P. Camussi, E.(1996), Representations, politics and democracy : ideal vision and evaluations of political reality in Italy.

D'Unrug, M.-C., (1974), Analyse de contenu, Paris : Encyclopédie Universitaire, 2e ed., Jean-Pierre Delarge

Demertzis, N. , Kafetzis, P. (1996), Cynisme politique et aliénation politique pendant la troisième république grecque, Papier au 4e Colloque sur la démocratie, Athènes.

Diamandouros, N. , (1983), Greek political Culture in Transition, in Clogg R., ed. Greece in the 80s, MacMillan.

Diamandouros, Nikiforos, (1994), Cultural dualism and political change in postauthoritarian Greece, *Estudios, Working Papers, February 1994.*

Doise, W., (1988), Les représentations sociales : un label de qualité. In *Connexions, 51.*

Doise, W., Clémence, A., (1996), La problématique des droits humains et la psychologie sociale. *Connexions 67.*

Doise,W. , (1986), Les représentations sociales :définitions d'un concept. In Doise, W., Palmonari A., (s/d). L'étude des représentations sociales, Paris, Neuchâtel : Delachaux et Niestlé, (Article paru d'abord en 1985 dans Connexions, n° 45, p.243-253).

Duschesne S., (1994), "La Citoyenneté à la Française",

Farr, R. , Moscovici, S. (1984), Social Representations, Cambridge University Press.

Farrar Cynthia, (1991), The origins of democratic thinking. The invention of politics in classical Athens, Cambridge University Press.
Frangoudaki A., Dragonas T., (1997), Greece between tradition and modernity, in search of an equal place in the European taxonomy of peoples. In M. Angvik, B. Von Borries (Eds), *Youth and History,* Hamburg: Korber-Stiftung.
Geertz, Clifford, ( ), Savoir local, savoir global
Gergen, M., (1989), Induction and construction : Teetering between worlds. In *European Journal of Social Psychology, Vol. 19, 431-437.*
Guiglione R., Matalon, B., Bacri, N., (1983), Textes et entretiens :une méthode d'analyse des contenus. Université de Paris VIII.
Hochschild, J., (1995), "Facing up to the American Dream", Princeton Univ.Press
Jodelet, D. ed.(1991). Les représentations sociales, puf, Paris.
Lambiri-Dimaki, (1983), La société grecque dans la conscience des étudiants, Odysseas, Athènes.(en grec).
Michelat, Guy (1975), Sur l'utilisation de l'entretien non directif en sociologie. In *Revue Française de la Sociologie, XVI, p. 229-247.*
Moodie, E. Marcova, I. et Plichtova, J., (1995), Lay representations of democracy: a study of two cultures, in Culture & Psychology, SAGE, vol. 1.
Moscovici, S. (1961/ 1976), La psychanalyse, son image et son public, puf, Paris.
Nikolakopoulos, I., (1990), Elections et partis politiques en Grèce dans les années 1980. Athènes: Themelio.
Percheron, A. (1991), Au miroir grossissant de la jeunesse. In *Autrement, série mutations, (122), p.30-42.*
Schutz, A. (1962), Collected papers I: the problem of social reality. The Hague.
Schütz, A (1964), Collected papers II: studies in social theory. The Hague.
Sniderman Paul, (1995), Reasoning and Choice,

1st LSE PhD Symposium on Modern Greece
"Current Social Sciences Research on Greece", Hellenic Observatory,
London School of Economics and Political Science, June 21, 2003

PAPER FOR THE WORKSHOP: POPULAR CULTURE, IDEOLOGY AND THE MEDIA

SIFAKI, Eirini
(Université Paris 3, Sorbonne Nouvelle, Communication department, CHRIME, France)

Projections of Popular Culture Through the Study of the Cinema Market in Contemporary Greece.

Introduction

Cinema is considered to be the most popular of cultural practices reflecting a plethora of social, economic and cultural phenomena in modern societies. While locating our research in the general framework of cultural studies which seeks to account for cultural differences and practices by reference to the overall map of social relations (O'Sullivan *et al*. 1998: 60), our aim is to understand how culture should be specified in itself and in relation to economics and the social sphere.

The European film industry has entered a period of decline and the appropriate response to this has become a matter of some debate. Three main factors are at the root of the current crisis in European cinema; a decline in cinema audiences, a decline in production and the increasing domination of the European box-office by Hollywood. (Hill 1994:53-80)

Hollywood's domination of European markets is not, of course, a new phenomenon and stretches back to at least the end of First World War. What is new, however, is the extent of this domination and, in an age of increased economic globalisation, the way in which specific models and practices are imported, undermining the viability of specific national characteristics linked to memory, experiences and identity.

Many researchers postulate that western protectionism[1] on a political level has made Greece receptive to influences that came from the west. (Bacoyannopoulos in Demopoulos 1995: 72) Following this general postulation our hypothesis is that the formation of a cinematic popular culture has always been adjacent to international economic interests.

The increasing presence of multimedia moguls and the domination of the European market by Hollywood is incontrovertible. In Europe only the Hollywood majors have access to a pan-European distribution network and as a result they have been able to dominate the European market place. Furthermore, majors have become increasingly involved in European exhibition (through the opening of multiplexes) and this has further facilitated the passage of American films into European cinemas.[2] According to some European Union research on the European cinema industry (CEE 1997), two thirds of the annual admissions in Europe are made in multiplexes. More than 2500 screens have been constructed since 1997 and a strategy of occupation of the terrain in different markets is becoming evident.

The ongoing success of these consumption sites, which project and shape popular culture, raises many questions about the future of cinema practices in Greece. What can be

the consequences on the various national characteristics in exhibition like open-air cinemas? Can those changes in cinema going have an impact on other leisure and social practices in general?

As Denis McQuail has noted, with the growth of an international media industry we see evidence of an 'international media culture', which can be recognised in similar standards world-wide as well as in content forms, genres and the actual substance of communication (McQuail 1994: 28-29). It has also been suggested that it is a consequence of globalisation, which affects social structures, relations and cultures, as well as of the rapid adoption of the 'free market' principles and philosophy in most western countries in the post-modern era (McQuail 1994: 11-12).

Globalisation is a double -edged process, which encourages both differentiation and homogenisation. (Jusdanis 1996:153) Jusdanis's critical discussion of early globalisation theorists[3], (even though he is referring to different ethnic identities within a nation-state and particularly to the United States) reveals that they underestimated the assimilative appeal of both Americanisation and consumer culture. He takes as one example of homogenisation the desolation of shopping centres in small towns by superstores arguing that these devastating consequences are rarely discussed by researchers more concerned by the violation of boundaries. (Jusdanis 1996:159) It is precisely such global phenomena that will be discussed throughout this paper within the Greek context regarding the relationship between the projections of popular culture through the study of cinema market.

Theoretical framework and methodological problems

Recent research (Cladel et all, 2001; Creton, 2001; Guy, 2000) brings more attention to the socio-economic study of cinema and in particular to the place of cinema theatres in the urban space. Cinema theatres are indeed considered as an integral part of urban space, which also participate in the definition of a local geography. Jean Michel Guy (2000) also argues that cinema theatres contribute to the preservation of a collective memory, as they constitute a prevalent socio-cultural practice linked to a specific place, which acts as a common reference or landmark for numerous people.

Traditionally, socio-economic approaches concerning film studies tend to examine cinema industries according to the triptych: production, distribution, and exhibition. This final aspect will be examined throughout this paper. Robert Allen's influential article "From exhibition to reception: reflections on the audience in film history" (Allen, 1990) underlines how rarely audience and exhibition featured in film history and how little attention was given to the conditions in which viewers actually saw films until the late eighties. Dimitris Eleftheriotis (2001: 180) also demonstrates that the theoretical models of the 1960s and 1970s not only overlooked the social construction of the audience but also depended on a certain type of exhibition practice that was defined as universal and normal. The author illustrates that film theory of the '70s[4] on spectatorship often proposed monolithic accounts of the viewing experience.

> *The defining characteristic of these accounts is their negativity. The structure of the film theatre is meaningful only in terms of its self-effacement as a dark, silent and non-descript background that does not interfere with the intense, all-absorbing, one-to-one relationship between spectator and screen.* (Eleftheriotis 2001: 181-182)

Eleftheriotis comes to a very interesting conclusion juxtaposing the above theories with Greek spectatorship and more particularly that of open-air cinemas of the 1960s, which present diametrically opposed characteristics. The above arguments point out how exhibition practices are interconnected with idiosyncratic national histories as well as peoples temperaments which makes their study catalytic for the understanding of modern media cultures. (Sifaki 2003)

Greek bibliography on cinema is centred more on the history of Greek cinema and the aesthetics of films. The work of Aglaïa Mitropoulou and Yannis Soldatos which cover the whole history of Greek cinema until today remain fundamental on the field of film history. Nevertheless, bibliography on the Greek film industry being quite limited[5] our main methodological tool was semi-structural interviews with Greek film professionals (directors of the main distribution and exhibition companies, as well as researchers, academics, and even few film directors). One of the many difficulties was collecting financial data from the distributors. Studios companies archives are not available for research and big firm directors were very difficult to approach and very sceptical and attentive once the contact was established when it comes to economic figures of their company. This explains the fact that financial statistics concerning cinema in Greece do not figure on Eurostat's studies (CEE's main organisation for statistics in Europe) and Media Salles that publishes the "*White Book of the European Exhibition Industry*.[6]

However, research from other disciplines in social sciences and literary theory has been proven to be extremely useful. I am referring to Gregory Jusdanis, Dimitris Tziovas and Dimitris Eleftheriotis, whose work concerning the role of Greek literature and cinema in the construction of national culture is very pertinent. Tracing back the genealogy of conceptual terms and concepts in cultural studies within the Greek context is quite problematic, as very often theories and concepts vary a lot from dominant theories in communication studies.

As Gregory Jusdanis has noted, Greece is epistemologically interesting because our assumptions about literature, art, modernism, the avant-garde, and postmodernism, which we believe to have at least a pan -European validity, do not necessarily hold true there. The example of Greece demonstrates how culture and time -specific these concepts are. (Jusdanis 1987: 71)

The term "popular culture" has many different and often contradictory meanings that makes it impossible to propose a strict and rigorous definition of the term. Therefore it is necessary to explore briefly the formation of the concept and its evolution in Greece. According to Tziovas the concept of popular culture in Greece has always been associated with the concept of tradition and the term folk culture.

> *"Certainly 19th century Greece's patterns of social stratification were different from those of Europe; the Greek middle class remained underdeveloped and lacked a clear awareness of its distinctiveness. Hence the contrast between high (written) and common (spoken) culture took another form: the conflict between ethnic life and local customs, on the one hand, and the foreign civilization of enlightened Europe on the other. The latter stood for the ideals of learning and progress combined, however with the threat of corruption. These conditions did not permit the emergence of the concept "popular culture". Only after 1920, when urbanization and industrialization manifested themselves intensely in Greece, did the term laikós politismós (popular civilization) appear sporadically".* (Tziovas 1989: 324)

Gregory Jusdanis, tracing back the book trade -which is considered as as sign of an emerging literary public sphere- in Europe the 19th century, argues that conditions in Greece were not yet ripe for the emergence of a culture industry-neither the technological infrastructure nor a large enough market of potential readers existed. The task in Greece was still the creation of a national popular culture rather than a mass culture. (Jusdanis 1991, 157-158)

However, one could argue that the creation of a mass culture came inevitably with the coming of cinema, even though socio-economic conditions were not fertile for the construction of a national industry. Foreign films and productions played then a capital role in the formation of the future cinema culture for audiences. Regarding the projections of popular culture through cinema, the first Greek films associated elements of folk culture and popular traditions.

Greece's strategic position between the East and the West, made that many of its most enduring cinematic representations have been an amalgam of different cultural factors. Thus, from the beginning, we see the expression of the two trends, which have dominated the Greek cinema and Greek cultural life in general until today. On the one hand, there is a leaning towards the modern achievements of western civilisation, its way of life and artistic models, and, on the other, an attachment to the eastern, Greek Orthodox tradition, to folk and popular values, customs, songs and dances, together with a distant idealised recollection of antiquity.

Naturally, the interaction or blending of these seemingly opposing elements would have an impact on that popular form of entertainment. A typical example of this dichotomy between the popular (hellenocentric) traditions and western cinematic characteristics can be found in the very early Greek productions. The first Greek feature film "Golfo" (1914) was an adaptation of the theatrical idyll written by Spyros Peressiadis (1894), which formed a wholly Greek genre called 'fustannella films'. This kind of dramatic idyll (or bucolic drama) adopted the metre of the folksong and the traditional manners, customs and dress, particularly the Greek fustanella costume. Romantic, sentimental, moralistc, it idealized and prettified the rural past. The village, particularly the mountain village with its shepherds and flocks, stern patriarch fathers, fine young lads, pure morals, honour and virginity, forbidden love and tragic endings are themes, which are repeated from film to film. Furthermore the first production company -DAG Film- filmed extracts from Aeschylus' "Prometheus Bound" during the Delphic Festival of 1927, created by the poet Angelos Sikelianos.

On the other hand there is a clear tendency to adopt to western models borrowed from American cinema themes. In 1929, the film "Astero" (directed by Gaziadis) became the first major success of the Greek cinema. The screenplay, attributed to the famous writer, Pavlos Nirvanas, was in fact written anonymously by Orestes Laskos, though it closely parallels "Ramona", a romantic tale among the Indians, written by Helen Hunt Jackson, already adapted three times for the screen; the first time by Griffith.

The Greek market through time

Tracing back the history of Greek cinema becomes necessary before endeavouring to analyse the actual cinema market. The first Greek cinema hall began screening a programme of French movies directed by Melies in 1901. By the end of the '30s Greece counted 71 cinema theatres which projected mainly American Films. Cinema in Greece has had from its beginnings many difficulties organising and edifying the bases of a real industry. (Sifaki 2002b: 44-46) Just before the Second World War Greek production was

almost non-existent. The market was characterised by a multitude of companies, which offered -with some exceptions- until the 40s low quality products both technically and artistically. The first film that reflected personal artistic expression was Orestes Lasko's "Daphnis and Chloe" (1931). Laskos filmed the ancient idyll by Longus in a natural scenery, with amateur teenage actors but with remarkable poetic and visual quality.

A general perception is that beyond the objective difficulties and the absence of technical equipment, the lack of film education and studios, national archives and a flexible institutional framework, professionals (especially producers-investors) did not see a profit margin for producing films. Moreover, the majority of intellectuals and artists did not consider the perspectives that cinema as an artistic development could offer. Moreover the continual invasion of American and European talking films ousted the silent Greek films. The investment needed to install a sound studio made the first production companies such as DAG films to close down. During the following decade, the number of Greek films (shot in Egypt) was very limited. (Mikelidis in Demopoulos 1995: 43-44)

Furthermore American studios such as Fox Film, Metro Goldwyn Mayer and Warner Bros created very early on subsidiaries in order to exploit their films in Greece and controlled most of the central theatres in Athens. It becomes evident that American domination of admissions accustomed the public of urban cities to western models of film consumption.

During the Second World War, Germany imposed UFA's films, -a company that was under the control of the Third Reich-, a policy that applied in all the occupied countries. (see Kreimeir: 311-353) In Greece, the first thing that the German ministry of propaganda did was to ban American and European films (apart from some Italian and Hungarian) and to create a company named ironically "Hellas films" for the distribution of German films. However, film propaganda did not have great success in Greece while Italian and Hungarian films attained more admissions.

The general tendency to resist the spread of German influence was reflected in low attendance at German films. Audiences made clear their refusal to watch German and Italian films and sought encouragement and national unity in Greek entertainment. Filopopemin Finos, a man with exceptional technical and organisational talents showed great perseverance and managed to overcome all obstacles and to present the first complete, modern film: "The Voice of the Heart" (1942), directed by Dimitris Ioannopoulos, who also wrote the screenplay. It was made immediately after the great famine in Athens and was shown in March 1943, selling 102.000 tickets in the still occupied capital city.

Yet, after the war, Greece suffered a tragic civil war and from the 1950's onwards progresses towards democratisation and economic development despite the dark interlude of the colonels' seven-year dictatorship. Thus in the first quarter of this century conditions were not conducive towards the development of cinema which is commonly born in an urban setting with the necessary accumulation of capital and industrial technological organisation. (Kolovos: 339)

With the reorganisation of the industry, American studios like Warner Bros and Metro Golwyn Mayer reopened their subsidiaries in Greece. However, gradually, some Greek distributors like Amolochitis-Voulgaridis, Anzervos and Skouras[7] started to have contracts with the studios and control a number of theatres, a practice that is still valid today. Furthermore, Greek producers such as Pilopemene Finos, Antonis Zervos, Christos Spentzos, Mavrikios Novac, started creating their own studios, using well known theatre directors and creating home grown stars. (Mitropoulou 1980: 85-98) Characteristic genres of films -the melodrama, the romantic comedy, the comedy- began to take shape while

production increased owing to the response of the public: five films in 1945-46, seven in 1947-48, ten in 1950-51, nineteen in 1952-53.

In the '60s Greek cinema started to flourish, with light musical comedies being the most popular "genre". The annual Greek cinema production as well as the number of admissions in relation to the population was impressive, while most Greek films were box-office success. During the 1960-61 season, 58 new films were shown and this number was to increase at a rapid rate: 82 in 1962-63; 93 in 1964-65; 117 in 1966-67 and the number did not fall below 90 until 1972. During the same period, cinema audiences increased dramatically, with over 100 million admissions each year, reaching a peak in 1968, when 137 million tickets were sold, almost fifteen tickets per capita. This number placed Greece among the most filmgoing countries of the world.

Cinema was the most popular form of entertainment for the Greek family especially in the lower classes. (Soldatos 1999: 87-110) Naturally, the boom coincided with economic growth and social progress. Greece began to go beyond its traditional farming economy, with light industry and services now employing more people than agricultural production. Towns grew, villages became modernised and the cinema spread everywhere. According to Eleftheriotis popular films of the '60s are domestic in all senses of the word. They are made for domestic consumption, set in a Greek setting and are usually about domesticity - the troubles and the pleasures of life within the extensive network of family, friends and neighbours. (Eleftheriotis 1995: 238)

Despite the high quality entertainment of foreign and, particularly, American films, it was the Greek films that won over a large proportion of the public. Audiences recognised themselves and their feelings, and above all, they understood the language, since foreign films were subtitled and not dubbed due to the high cost. Moreover, a certain part of the population had only limited education and lost a great deal of enjoyment through having to read the subtitles.

During the seventies there was an important "auteur" movement (known as the New Greek Cinema) which attracted international attention in terms of its artistic developments. This new generation, brought up on the politics of resistance, the ideological currents of Europe and the USA (particularly the events of May 1968 in France) and on innovations in film art aimed at the craftsman's individualisation. The "auteur" art, came in contrast to the tendency that dominated in the era of Finos, towards the production of a series of reproduced and standardised products. (Bakoyannopoulos in Demopoulos 1995: 65) However, the Dictatorship of the Colonels in April 1967 sealed mouths, cutting short the "new wave" in the cinema, while the commercial cinema enjoyed the last years of its dominance.

However, the development of television combined with the inability of commercial cinema to remain competitive led to a drastic decline in both production and admissions in the 80s. The lower and working classes in the towns, together with the rural population, who had always been the main audience of Greek films, were now fascinated by this new and free form of entertainment. However, a small "cinephile" audience remained, mainly through the existence of film societies.

In the late '90s there was an increase in the number of admissions in Greece, following the trend in Europe. Nevertheless, the dominance of American cinema accounts for 90% of the distribution while only a few Greek movies are exported and are capable of box - office survival. The annual frequency per capita in Greece is the lowest in the EU, barely 1,2 admissions in 1999 (Deiss 2001); attracting 130 to 150 million spectators in the '60s, it fell two-thirds during the following decade (42 millions in 1980), and another two thirds in the first half of the 80s. Having reached its lowest point in 1993-1995 with only eight million admissions for ten million inhabitants, cinema going seems to have stabilised at around

twelve million entries (Forest 2001: 278). The American domination of the market is also one of the strongest of the EU, representing the major part of the Greek market:86% in 1989, 92% in 1999. (Deiss 2001)

The Greek film market today

According to Papathanassopoulos in the recent history of Greek media, one can observe three phases of development. The first was in the mid-1980s and affected the newspaper market. The second came in the late 1980s due to the deregulation of the state broadcasting monopoly, which resulted in the creation of numerous private, national and local television channels and radio stations. In the mid-1990s, there was also an expansion in the magazine sector, and a proliferation of new magazines. (Papathanassopoulos, 2001: 508)

As far as the film industry is concerned, during the 90s many mutations have also occurred in the film industry. In this "reorganisation era" that characterises the Greek media sphere, media moguls (which hold huge financial interest which vary from telecommunications, tv channels, magazines, newspapers, shipping, refining, etc) are becoming more and more involved in the cinema industry. Most companies are vertical integrated, especially distribution companies which get more and more involved in the exhibition and production sectors. That was the result of the dynamic increase on Greek films box office gross at the end of the1990s.

Production

Following the long stagnation of the Greek production, at the end of the 20th century begins a new era for Greek cinema. New releases (films, productions) have radically transformed the cinema market in terms of admissions. The film 'Safe Sex', made 1,3 million entries in 1999 and boosted admissions which increased by 100 percent (in ticket sales) This phenomenon is been considered by specialists as a breakpoint in the rebirth of Greek cinema, which seems to appeal to filmgoers more than ever after the sixties. Greek films are blossoming, according to the statistics compiled by Research International for the Greek Cinema Centre, in 2000, in five Greek cities. The overall picture from the poll indicates that the public is starting "to shed its doubts about Greek cinema", as comments GCC's (Greek Cinema Center) president Manos Efstratiadis, in the Herald Tribune.[8] The optimism about the future of Greek cinema is very eloquent in the national press and distribution companies such as Prooptiki, Odeon and Spentzos invest in the production of Greek films.

The pessimistic approach of distributors towards Greek films is fading out. Thus, more and more distributors enter the production phase of a film in exchange for distribution rights. Distributors in Greece prefer now to get involved in a film early in its pre-production phase make decisions on the development of the film and plan ahead the marketing and promotion campaign. Furthermore, Greek television channels also begin to see a profit margin in film investing, which is a very important factor for their promotion and advertising that contributes heavily on the box office success of films.

Distribution

On the whole the distribution sector is rather monopolistic and very competitive. Most distribution companies have been established in many activities such as publicity, promotion, partnerships, exhibition, merchandise and video. Seven companies operate on

the whole market: Ama films[9], Odeon S.A[10], Prooptiki[11], Rosebud[12], Spentzos Films[13], UIP[14], Warner Roadshow[15]. It should be also added that a non-profitable exists, organisation called Studio Parallilo Kukloma that distributes films to Film Societies, which have also expanded all over Greece.

The big three distribution companies, namely Odeon, Warner Roadshow and Prooptiki cover 80% of the annual film distribution gross revenues. They have exclusive distribution deals with big American studios for Greece and access to blockbusters, which are certain hits. UIP follows representing Universal, Paramount, MGM in Greece and distributing only their films. Spentzos Films is a medium sized distributor with close cooperation with Miramax. AMA films and Rosebud are two little distributors that insist on European cinema. They release European films on a percentage of 50% and 70% respectively of their releases.

It should also be added that every distributor has separate deals with different video distributors while most of their profit comes from Television Broadcasting. For the feature films, distributors hope to make a profit through the licensing of rights to Television channels. In video and TV distribution, American films are dominant. With the exception of the three public TV channels that broadcast European program, hardly ever does another TV channel buy European films.

Exhibition

All seven distributors have their own theatres or cooperate with certain theatres in Athens. They decide on which movie will open, on how many screens, and for how long, depending on the target audience. In the provinces, distributors have annual agreements with exhibitors, that usually does not allow them to show films distributed by other companies. This is a common practice and even though distributors never admit it, it explains why certain films (especially European ones) are rarely projected outside the Greek capital.

In 2001, there were around 450 movie theatres in Greece (more than half of which in Athens) including 200 winter movie theatres and 180 open-air movie theatres of which only 70 are open all year. Cinema going in Greece is currently enjoying a renewed level of participation especially in the younger generation. According to the film professional's guide the international changes which brought audiences back to movie theatres have reached Greece. (Greek Film Centre 2001:129)

In the process of renovation most monoscreen (traditional) theatres divided up to accommodate extra screens in order to offer the public a wider choice of films, in terms of economy of scale. Moreover, some commercial enterprises (especially of consumer products and/or services) sponsor the renovation of cinemas by adding their brand name to that of the theatre. The first company to launch this concept was ASSOS ODEON (associating the Greek brand of cigarettes Assos and the media group Odeon[16] who own more than 20 theatres all over Greece) offering the same products, services and related franchise products. Today this phenomenon is very current as commercial enterprises estimate that cinemagoers represent a common target for their products. Thus, names of banks like Alpha (Alpha Odéon, Alpha Card), cars like Renault, consumer products such as Nescafé, Lipton, Balladines, Refresh, telecommunications companies such as Ericssons, Philips, accompany the names of several cinemas. (Media Desk Hellas 2000:93)

Multiplexes: a complex phenomenon

The last few years, multiplexes are key players in the market and have revolutionised the exhibition sector. The notion of multiplex[17] is relatively new in Greece. In 1997, the Australian multinational *Village Roadshow* inaugurated the first big multiplex, in the district of Marousi in Athens with 10 screens and a capacity of 2431 spectators, and "Village Entertainment Park" in 1999 implanted in 42 thousand m^2. Multiplex had an enormous commercial success considering that the number of admissions of Village, was about 1.200.000, in 1997, 1.400.000 in 1998 and 1.500.000 in 1999. In Athens, Village Roadshow possesses 50% of the market, with only 12% of the totality of cinemas. According to the evaluations of the direction of Village Roadshow[18], *Village Entertainment Park* has become in just a few years the most popular destination in Greece. During the first year of its opening, the biggest multiplex of the country attracted three and a half million Athenians, three times more than the amount of visitors to the Acropolis.

Over the last few months, the investments of the major multinational enterprises for the multiplexes have increased and their projects have been announced in the national press. The construction of more than 200 new cinemas all around Greece in the next three years have been announced in the economic press, which suggests the multiplication of these venues in the future. (Sifaki 2002a: 170) Other enterprises have come to claim their stake, for example the South-African enterprise *Ster Kinekor* which constructed a multiplex of eight screens in Thessaloniki in collaboration with the Greek company Alpha Odeon. The Dutch enterprise *Europlex BV* which is specialised in cinema exhibition in Europe, also created a subsidiary in Greece (Europlex Movies Hellas) and inaugurated its first multiplex in Patras "Veso Mare" in November 2001.

As regards questions linked to management, it is interesting to take into account how far exhibition companies have extended their activities into distribution, for example Village Roadshow's joint venture with Warner Bros. The connection between cinema and business activities is considered to be in synergy, and many socioeconomists bring to light the different strategies and marketing techniques that the firms adopt. While implementing vertical integration or multimedia strategies most multinational companies aim to expand on the global market in order to establish their presence world-wide and especially in the developing markets. (Creton 2001: 145-159)

However the end of 2002 saw many revolutionary changes with *AOL Time Warner* and *Vivendi Universal* reporting disappointing results and losing up to 75% of their stock market value. The paradox was that even though the studios had an amazing year in terms of profits it did not make much difference in the profitability of the group. This reflects the instability that integrated market structures face and gives a good lesson to managers that "bigger is not always better". (Sifaki 2003)

Nevertheless, the effects of all this on cultural production are profound. Cultural consumption became radically more complex as products vied with each other for consumer time and attention; and the different media became inter-linked with each other, so that the products of each medium were advertised and marketed in other media. (Hesmondhalgh 2002: 65) Indeed over the last ten to twenty years advertising has been reinforced in the cinema industry and nearly all the other cultural industries act as important vehicles for advertising too. Film studios make specific marketing plans and sign contracts of product placement for advertising which correspond to their audiences in order to promote their films. Product placement is both in the actual film itself and all over the activities that surround it. As we already mentioned traditional monoscreen theatres in Greece as well as open-air ones embraced this strategy in order to renovate their theatres, by placing brand names next to the name of the theatre.

We are experiencing an era where the term "spectators" is synonymous with "consumers" in an unprecedented commercialisation of our everyday lives as we are constantly bombarded by commercials, brands, consumer products, etc. (Sifaki 2003) Following the Habermasian tradition of 'public sphere' thinking, actual viewing practices reflect and reinforce more negative aspects of what Habermas described in his later writing[19] referring to the pulverisation of the cultural sphere by the economy and the state, as the colonisation of the life-world. (Stevenson 2002: 52)

As Robert Allen emphasises, audience is as much a discursive concept as a social phenomenon. Individuals are not only solicited but constructed as audience members through industry attempts at marketing research, advertising, promotions, the decor of movie theatres, etc. (Allen 1990: 352) According to Allen there is a need to ask whom the industry and their agents have thought about when they talked about "the audience". What presumptions lie behind not only advertising and promotion, but also studio pronouncements and internal discourse regarding 'popularity', 'box office' and films that 'work' with particular audiences? (Allen 1990: 352)

In response to those questions, attention has been drawn to the way that executives and creative managers conceive their relationship with audiences. (Hesmondhalgh 2002: 244) It seems that there was an organised strategy to conquer the "global teen" as the teenager's taste is, according to economy specialists, universal. In reality, they make sure that it becomes universal. During the 1990s the youth market started to expand as industrials noticed the potential that it represented and its importance began to dawn on many in the manufacturing sector and entertainment industries. The most extensive and widely cited study of the global teen demographic was conducted in 1996 by the New York based advertising agency DMBet B's BrainWaves division, commissioned among others by Coca-Cola, Burger King and Philips. The "New World Teen Study" surveyed 27,600 middle-class fifteen-to eighteen-year-olds in forty-five countries. According to the results "*despite different cultures, middle-class youth all over the world seem to live their lives as if in a parallel universe. They get up in the morning, put on their Levi's and Nikes, grab their caps, backpacks, and Sony personal CD players, and head for school*" (Klein 2000: 118-119). The arrival of the global teen demographic is being considered as "one of the greatest marketing opportunities of all time".[20]

The multiplex phenomenon can be explained and must be interpreted by taking into account those global strategies and marketing trends. One of the main reasons is that multiplexes are very popular among the young population. The return of younger spectators to the cinemas played a capital role in the renewal of the cinema industry in Greece and Europe in general and consequently in the success of multiplexes.

Furthermore, since young people are more culturally absorbent than their parents, they often influence their families and their family practices. This statement echoes the comments of the development manager of Village Roadshow in Greece according to whom "the purpose of *Village Entertainment Park* was to create a family environment, offering a wide range of services and products, a site which was necessary to the Greeks". Indeed, the multinational groups aim wide but at the same time segment the market. (Sifaki 2003)

Concluding remarks

Even though multiplexes in Greece have a short history which makes rather early for field research tracing their impact in comparison to traditional venues such as open-air cinemas, the national press commentary are quite revealing about the reception of this phenomenon.

For instance the financial paper "Imerissia"[21] points out in the article "A new type of entertainment for the 21 century" that leisure practices are about to change radically in Greece in the 21 century which will provoke important changes in social practices. The author suggests that multiplexes are only the beginning of this transformation while theme parks (which range from technological parks, waterparks and shopping centres) already very "trendy" (the term is used in English) in the US are currently been constructed in Greece.

The article of Dimitris Rigopoulos which appeared in the Sunday widely read paper "I Kathimerini"[22] (under the column Arts and literature) with the provocative title "Re patera den pame multiplexe?" (Hey dad, let's go multiplex) is also very characteristic of those changes in a more general social sphere. The title in itself and the language use reflect a change, which goes beyond cultural practices. It reflects radical mutations in interpersonal communication where a teenager addresses his father in the same way as he would a "mate". In this article Rigopulos talks about a "cloning" of those venues (multi-places) and cites four examples of such places which combine many activities such as coffee houses, cinemas, restaurants, concert halls, museums.

In the majority of these articles the arguments are finance orientated and the new venues are not presented in a negative way. On the contrary they are perceived as places of economic growth and potential which will provide more choice in terms of leisure facilities. However there are always allusions to western trends and models, identified in the language use without any explicit criticism of what is really at stake. This confirms our preliminary theoretical remarks, which make Greece an extremely receptive pole of western models of life. (Sifaki 2003)

What is really at stake in the face of a global consumer culture, is the expression of national cultural practices and characteristics, and consequently human and social relations and cultural values; the demolition of a public-social space and its replacement with a marketed, enclosed and private one where we -happy consumers- can buy it all in one. Multiplex culture with its enforced codes of style and consumption that can be found in all towns of the globe in an identical way, leave very little space for cultural diversity and expression. As Jusdanis (1987:91) remarks now that Greece has almost been absorbed into the European political mainstream, it would be interesting to observe, whether this country can enter modernity without the necessary split of morals, science and art into self-validating spheres.

Nevertheless the last couple of years open-air cinemas which were in dramatic decline for decades, show signs of rebirth. It should be added that the opening of multiplexes contributed indirectly to the increase of admissions in general, as cinema going became "fashionable" again. Furthermore, open-air theatres have managed to boost their admission by showcasing new releases during the summer.

In an article[23] that examines the return of outdoor cinema, there is reference to multiplexes and a declaration of a Village Roadshow manager. *Oddly, the rebirth of the open-air cinema is occurring during multiplex madness. Three movie theatres with a total of 35 screens have opened since 1997 in the Athens area. Yet Maria Batistatou, a manager at the 10-screen Village Centre in a suburb north of Athens, says there appears to be room*

for all. "From what has been proven in the past three years, we have not been affected by the summer cinemas," she said.

However, two years later (in 2002) Village Roadshow inaugurated a new concept in exhibition, named Village Cool. These are open-air cinemas marketed in an English (western) modern package. Therefore Village Roadshow opened three open-air cinemas in a year. If we consider the localisation of each theatre, (one in the city centre, one in the periphery and a last one in Pireas) the managerial strategy seems to seek the monopoly of summer admissions.

What is also interesting, is the Internet site[24] of the company as it reveals eloquently this interaction between the local cultural practices and the global media culture. First through a collaboration with the historic cinema Aegli in the center of Athens, which dates back to the silent film era and reopened only in 2000.

"The open-air cinema "Aegli" at Zappeion which combines the characteristics of traditional open-air cinemas, in a total harmony with technological evolutions. If you add the traditional souvlaki and the snacks that one can enjoy during the projection of feature films in the comfortable seats, surrounded with tables, then you can be certain that your visit to Aigli-Village, will be unforgettable."

In addition the company created one open-air cinema in the suburb of Renti (in Village Entertainment Park).

"We created a place that offers many possibilities (entertainment options) for the whole family, the new Village Cool, in order to change the scenery in open-air viewing experience. 400 seats, tables, relax and "loveseats", a big screen, and the system Dolby Digital which is brought in for the very first time in an open-air cinema, are about to change your summer nights. The revolutionary technology, the unique décor, are combined perfectly with the unique experience of the traditional open-air cinema, filled with the scent of summer flowers."

The last one is situated in Pireas and the site's description is quite anecdotal: *"On the roof of the listed building of Mc Donald's (!!), with tables and the unique sound of Village Cool Cinemas. Its unique position offers a panoramic view in the whole Pasalimani area".*

This new concept in open-air cinemas reveals that multinational companies are obliged to go along local cultural practices, which have a long established history in order to remain competitive. Consequently one could argue that there is something inherently Greek about open-air cinemas, a tradition of popular culture blended with standardised cinema going practices creating a particular viewing experience. However, in an era where tradition and popular culture is projected through the "souvlaki" and a Mc Donalds building is mentioned as listed, the consequences on the future leisure and cultural practices remain ambivalent.

References

Allen, Robert (1990) "From exhibition to reception: reflections on the audience in film history", *Screen*, 31(4), 347-356.

CEE (1997) *L'industrie européenne du Cinéma en Analyse,* (Direction Politique Audiovisuelle, Culture et Sports, available on the Internet http://www.mediasalles.it)

Cladel, G., Feigelson, K., Gevauda, J.M., Landais, Ch., and Sauvaget, D. (eds) (2001) *Le cinéma dans la cité*. Paris: Editions du Félin.

Creton, Laurent (2001) *Economie du cinéma: perspectives stratégiques*, Paris: Nathan.

Deiss, Richard (February 2001) *Cinema statistics, Strong growth in cinema going*, Theme 4, statistics in Focus, (Eurostat, available on the Internet http://europa.eu.int/comm/eurostat/)

Demopoulos, Michel (ed) (1995) *Le cinéma grec*, Paris : Centre Georges Pompidou.

Eleftheriotis, Dimitris (1995) "Questioning totalities: constructions of masculinity in the Greek popular cinema of the 1960s", *Screen*, 36(3), 233-242.

Eleftheriotis, Dimitris (2001) *Popular cinemas of Europe. Studies of texts, contexts and frameworks*, New York, London: Continuum.

Forest, Claude (1995) *Les dernières séances. Cent ans d'exploitation des salles de cinéma,* Paris: CNRS.

Gomery, Douglas (1986) *The Hollywood studio system,* New York: St Martin's Press.

Greek Film Center (2001) *Film professionals guide*, *South Eastern Europe Cinema Network,* Athens: GFC.

Guy, Jean Michel (2000) *La culture cinématographique des Français*, Paris: La Documentation Française.

Habermas Jurgen (1983) *The Theory of Communicative Action, vol 2: The critique of functionalist reason*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

Hesmondhalgh, David (2002) *The cultural industries*, London: Sage Publications.

Hill, John (1994) "The future of European cinema: the economics and culture of pan-European strategies", in Hill, John., Mc Loone, Martin., Hainsworth, Paul (eds), *Border crossing: film in Ireland, Britain and Europe*, U.K: The Institute of Irish studies, The Queen's University of Belfast, 53-80.

Jusdanis, Gregory (1987) "Is Postmodernism Possible Outside the West? The Case of Greece". *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 11, 69-92.

Jusdanis, Gregory (1991) *Belated modernity and aesthetic culture: inventing national literature*, Minneapolis, Oxford: University of Minessota press.

Jusdanis, Gregory (1996) "Culture, culture everywhere: the swell of globalization theory", *Diaspora* 5(1), 141-161.

Klein, Naomi. (2000) *No logo,* London: Flamingo.

Kolovos, Nikos (1999) Cinema: the art of the industry, (Κινηματογράφος: η τέχνη της βιομηχανίας) Athens: Kastaniotis. (in Greek)

Komninou, Maria (2002) From the market to entertainment: a study for the formation of public sphere and cinema in contemporary Greece (Από την αγορά στο θέαμα: μελέτη για τη συγκρότηση της δημόσιας σφαίρας και του κινηματογράφου στη σύγχρονη Ελλάδα, 1950-2000), Athens: Papazissis.

Kouanis, Panos (2001) *Cinema market in Greece 1944-1999: consumption models in the film market in Greece since the Second world war,* (Η κινηματογραφική αγορά στην Ελλάδα 1944-1999, καταναλωτικά πρότυπα στην αγορά των κινηματογραφικών ταινιών στην Ελλάδα μετά το Β΄ παγκόσμιο πόλεμο), Athens: Finatec (in Greek)

Kreimeier, Klaus (1996) *The UFA Story: A History of Germany's Greatest Film Company 1918-1945*, (translated by Robert and Rita Kimber), New York: Hill and Wang.

McQuail, Denis (1994) *Mass communication theory. An introduction*, London: Sage Publications.
Media Desk Hellas (2000) *The state of film distribution system in Greece*, (Η κατάσταση του συστήματος κινηματογραφικής διανομής στην Ελλάδα) Athens: Media Desk Hellas. (in Greek)
Mitropoulou, Aglaïa (1980) Greek cinema, (Ελληνικός κινηματογράφος) Athens, 1980. (in Greek)
O'Sullivan, Tim., Hartley, John., Saunders, Danny., Fiske, John (1998) *Key concepts in communication*, London: Routledge.
Papathanassopoulos, Stylianos (2001) "Media Commercialization and Journalism in Greece", European journal of communication, volume 16, number 4, London, Sage Publications december 2001, 505-521.
Sifaki, Eirini (2002a) "Les salles multiplexes comme acteurs du paysage cinématographique grec" Actes du colloque, "*Les Figures de l'acteur"*, 23-25 mai 2002, Université de Paris III - Sorbonne Nouvelle, 167-171.
Sifaki, Eirini (2002b) "Un siècle de cinéma grec: acteurs et enjeux" in Vovou, Ioanna, *Les Médias en Grèce*, Revue Mésogeios (Méditerranée) n° 16, novembre, Paris: Editions Hêrodotos, 43-63.
Sifaki, Eirini (2003) "Global strategies and local practices in film consumption", *Cultural Values: Journal for Cultural research,* 7:3, London: Routlege, july 2003. (under publication)
Soldatos, Yannis (1999) *History of Greek cinema (1900-1967*), (Ιστορία ελληνικού κινηματογράφου, Α΄ τόμος 1900-1967) Vol. A, Athens: Aigokeros. (in Greek)
Stevenson, Nick (2002) *Understanding media cultures*, London: Sage Publications.
Tziovas, Dimitris (1989) "Residual Orality and Belated Textuality in Greek literature and culture", *Journal of modern Greek studies*, 7, 321-335.

Notes

[1] After the Second World War, Greece was under the tutelage of the British who sent their troops in order to "save the country from anarchy" which was succeeded by the United States who had a concrete political and financial role in the country during the civil wars.

[2] The expansion of US exhibition interests in Europe is discussed in Media Salles 1988 "European Cinema Yearbook: Britain leads renaissance", in *Screen Digest*, August 1989.

[3] He is referring to the works of: Kallen, Horce (1924) *Culture and Democracy in the United States*, New York: Boni and Livericht.; Bourne, Randolph (1956) *The history of a literary radical and other papers,* New York: S.A. Russel.

[4] He is referring in particular to: Baudry, Jean Louis (1999) "Ideological effects of the basic cinematographic apparatus" in Braudy Leo and Cohen Marshal (eds) *Film theory and criticism: introductory readings*, Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 352-353. ; Metz, Christian (1985) "Story/discourse: notes on two kinds of voyeurism" in Nichols, Bill (ed) *Movies and methods*, vol II, Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 548 ; Mulvey, Laura (1975), "Visual pleasure and narrative cinema" *Screen*, vo. 16, no.3. ; Ellis, John (1984) *Visible Fictions*, London: Routledge.

[5] Kolovos, Nikos (1999) Cinema: the art of the industry, Athens: Kastaniotis ; Komninou, Maria (2002) From the market to entertainment: a study for the formation of public sphere and cinema, in contemporary Greece Athens: Papazissis ; Kouanis, Panos, (2001) *Cinema market in Greece: consumption models in the film market in Greece since the Second world war, 1944-1999,* Athens: Finatec ; Media Desk Hellas (2000) *The state of film distribution system in Greece*, Athens: Media Desk Hellas.

[6] CEE (1994) White *Book of the European Exhibition Industry* (second edition, vol. II, available on the Internet http://www.mediasalles.it/whiteboo/wbvol2.htm)

[7] Spyros Skouras was a very intelligent and perceptive man who immigrated with his brothers Charles and George in the United States and created a chain of theatres. By 1926, they controlled thirty-seven houses in St Louis, in collaboration with Paramount Publix, additional theatres in Kansas city and Indianapolis. In 1929, the Skourases cashed in, selling their theatres to Warner Bros. In 1932, the three brothers tried to save the Fox-controlled Wesco chain, the bulk of Fox's theatre holding. By 1942, Spyros Skouras was one of the heads of 20th Century Fox, handling the distribution and exhibition end in New York. (see GOMERY, Douglas, 1986: 76-100). He also created a distribution company after his name in Greece distribution mostly Fox's films, but also Paramount and R.K.O.

[8] Dimiris Rigopoulos, "Greek films are making a comeback", Herald Tribune, Thursday 25 may 2000.

[9] Ama film was founded in 1991. It distributes on average 15 films per year. It co-operates with a circuit of 8 theatres in Athens. The majority of films distributed are European films.

[10] ODEON S.A is the oldest distribution company in the Greek films industry, which came out of the company "Damaskinos -Michaïlidis" and later out of ELKE. The main action holder (33%) is the group Lambrakis, a major media mogul which owns three daily newspapers "To Bima", "Ta nea" "Athens News", the magazines "Ikonomikos Tachydromos", "Marie-Claire", "Diacopes". Lambrakis is also the main shareholder of the private tv Mega Channel. Odeon distributes 50 movies per year on average in 14 theatres in Athens. ODEON represents exclusively in Greece 20th century FOX. The company is expanding its activities in Greek film production it owns the ODEON theatre network as well as the company Rosebud and Cinenews which has the quasi monopoly of trailers on the screens.

[11] PROOPTIKI S.A. was founded in 1984. It represents Sony (Columbia Tri-Star), and Buena Vista international (Disney, Hollywood Touchstone). Every year the company distributes on average 40 movies per year, mostly American and some European as well. In 2002, the group "Attikes Ekdoseis" (which owns the magazines, "Tilerama", "Tilethatis", "Einai", "Madame Figaro" "Mirror", "Playboy" acquired the 51% of Prooptikis capital.

[12] ROSEBUD S.A. was founded in 1994. The company is active in European film distribution. It distributes on average 20 to 25 movies per year in all seasons. Rosebud which is a subsidiary of the Odeon S.A.

[13] SPENTZOS FILMS was founded in 1940. The company works closely with Miramax and also buys independent American films as well European films. Distributor's late big box-office success is Italian film 'Vita e Bella' and Greek film 'Safe Sex'. The company is investing more and more in Greek film production. Spentzos Films distributes on average 30 movies per year in 15 theatres.

[14] UIP (United International Pictures) was founded in 1985. It distributes exclusively films of American majors like Paramount, Universal, DreamWorks.

[15] WARNER ROADSHOW DISTRIBUTORS GREECE S.A was founded in 1997. The company is a joint venture between two majors, the American Warner Bros and the Australian Village Roadshow. In Greece, the company is owned by Village Roadshow, which also owns the biggest multiplexes 'Village Centers' and 'Village Entertainment Park'. The company distributes on exclusive terms the films of Warner Bros and films co-produced by Warner Bros and Village Roadshow. It is exclusive partner of important independent production companies like New Line Cinema, Mandalay Pictures, Beacon Entertainment, Franchise Pictures, Winchester Films and Seven Arts. It distributes on average 30 movies per year. It does not distribute any European film. Only in the self-owned multiplexes, some screens are given to the exhibition of European works after working out a deal with other distributors.

[16] The group Odeon is one of the first Greek media groups in the cinema industry; present in production, distribution and exhibition.

[17] Multiscreen, multiplex, megaplex: these are terms, which are frequently used for cinemas with several screens, which gradually established themselves, especially during the nineties. The most easily identifiable criteria for distinguishing the various types of movie theatres includes auxiliary services, such as car parks or refreshments, and the fact that they have been specifically designed to accommodate several screens. Although no official terminology exists as yet, from a practical point of view, wide consensus has been gained in the profession for the definition suggested by MEDIA Salles, according to which the term multiplex cannot properly be used unless the complex has at least 8 screens. It would therefore seem reasonable to establish the dividing line between multiplex and megaplex at 16 screens. - "White Book of the European Exhibition Industry " (second edition, 1994, vol. II).

[18] Those remarks emanate from an interview with the development manager of *Village Roadshow* in Greece Karivalis Georges, Athens, 05/04/02.

[19] See Habermas Jurgen (1983) *The Theory of Communicative Action, vol 2: The critique of functionalist reason*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

[20] See also Hesmondhalgh, David (2002) *The cultural industries*, London: Sage Publications, 244 -246.

[21] Marianthi Pelevani, "A new type of entertainment for the 21 century", Imerissia 12 January 2001 (in Greek)
[22] Dimitris Rigopoulos, "Hey dad, let's go multiplex", I Kathimerini, Sunday 28 January 2001, 41 -42. (in Greek)
[23] Tongas Theodora "Rebirth of outdoor cinema" The Associated Press, 3 August 2000
[24] See http://www.village.gr/village_cool.asp

Realistic versus non-realistic counterfactual thinking and affective reactions to decision outcomes

Nick Sevdalis

Department of Psychology, University College London

and

Flora Kokkinaki

Department of Marketing, Athens University of Economics and Business

Correspondence to:

Nick Sevdalis

Department of Psychology

University College London

Gower Street, London, WC1E 6BT, U.K.

E-mail: n.sevdalis@ucl.ac.uk

Tel: +44 (0) 207 679 5389

Fax: +44 (0) 207 436 4276

Abstract

Previous research has documented a triple role of counterfactual thinking; counterfactuals influence causality judgements; they influence people's affective reactions to outcomes and events ("emotional amplification"); finally, recent findings indicate that counterfactuals not only amplify affective reactions, they actually shape them. Following these latter findings, the present research investigates the influence of non-realistic counterfactuals on affective reactions to decision outcomes. In Study 1 participants were asked to rate their regret and disappointment after an unfortunate outcome, which was or was not their own fault. Before reporting the experienced affect, half of the participants generated non-realistic counterfactuals. It was found that participants' reported disappointment decreased. In the light of previous findings suggesting a possible interaction between regret and disappointment ratings due to their joint assessment, in Study 2 we sought to replicate this pattern of results assessing the two emotions separately. Results revealed that non-realistically thinking participants' reported regret decreased. Implications of these findings for the role of counterfactuals in shaping affective reactions, and the measurement of affect are discussed.

Counterfactual thinking: What it is, and what it does

Counterfactuals are alternative versions of the past (Roese, 1997). People live through events, and consequences of their own behaviours, and then these "… experienced facts of reality evoke counterfactual alternatives and are compared to these alternatives" (Kahneman and Miller, 1986; p. 142).

These comparisons are not without consequences. Kahneman and Miller (1986) described two different classes of these consequences. The first class comprises cognitive consequences; on the basis of their counterfactual construction of past events, people arrive at judgements about sequences of antecedent actions (or inactions) that led to these events (see also Wells and Gavanski, 1989).

The second class comprises affective consequences; people feel better or worse about past events, on the basis of counterfactual comparisons of these events with other possible events that could have occurred (but actually did not occur). The reference point employed in these comparisons determines the direction of affective influence: "Upward" counterfactuals improve on reality, therefore making people feel worse, whereas "downward" counterfactuals worsen reality, therefore making people feel better (Markman, Gavanski, Sherman, and McMullen, 1993). Kahneman and Miller coined the term "emotional amplification" for this phenomenon.

More recently, the role of counterfactuals as amplifiers of affective experiences has been extended to include their influence on shaping these experiences in the first place. Niedenthal and her colleagues gave their participants scenarios describing situations that could lead to feelings of either guilt or shame, and asked them to generate counterfactuals (Niedenthal, Tangney, and Gavanski, 1994; studies 1a and 1b). They

found that guilt-inducing scenarios gave rise to counterfactuals mutating aspects of one's behaviours, whereas shame-inducing scenarios gave rise to counterfactuals mutating aspects of one's self. In a second pair of studies, Niedenthal et al. presented their participants with scenarios that could give rise to both emotions (in other words, scenarios that were rather ambiguous with respect to their affective content). This time they experimentally manipulated the content of counterfactuals by explicitly asking their participants to generate either behaviour-focused, or self-focused counterfactuals. When they subsequently assessed their participants' reported shame and guilt they found that participants who had generated behaviour-focused counterfactuals reported feeling more guilty over the unfortunate scenario-outcome, whereas participants who had generated self-focused counterfactuals reported feeling more ashamed over the same outcome (Niedenthal et al., 1994; studies 2a and 2b).

Zeelenberg, van Dijk, van der Pligt, Manstead, van Empelen, and Reindermann (1998a) extended this idea to the affective experiences of disappointment and regret. In their first study they asked participants to recall an affective experience from their own lives, which had caused either intense regret, or intense disappointment. Subsequently, Zeelenberg at al. asked their participants to generate counterfactuals for this experience. What they found was that regretful experiences gave rise to behaviour-focused counterfactuals, whereas disappointing experiences gave rise to situation-focused counterfactuals.

Closely following Niedenthal et al.'s strategy, in their second and third studies Zeelenberg et al. provided their student participants with ambiguous scenarios – in other words scenarios that could give rise to both regret and disappointment. They also

experimentally manipulated the content of counterfactuals by explicitly asking their participants to generate either behaviour-focused, or situation-focused counterfactuals. As in the case of Niedenthal et al.'s (1994) study, when Zeelenberg and his colleagues subsequently assessed their participants' reported emotions they found that participants who had generated behaviour-focused counterfactuals reported feeling more regretful over the unfortunate scenario-outcome, whereas participants who had generated situation-focused counterfactuals reported feeling more disappointed over the same outcome (Zeelenberg et al., 1998a; studies 2 and 3).

From realistic to non-realistic counterfactuals

What theoretical conceptualisations and experimental operationalisations discussed so far have in common is the underlying assumption that generated counterfactuals are realistic. This assumption is apparent in Kahneman and Miller's (1986) discussion of the issue of mutability of events and, consequently, availability of counterfactuals: In any given (i.e. "factual") situation, some aspects are more "mutable" than others – therefore enhancing counterfactual comparisons. In their words "… the statement 'I almost caught the flight' is appropriate for an individual who reached the departure gate when the plane had just left, but not for a traveler who arrived half an hour late" (Kahneman and Miller, 1986; p. 142). This assumption is clearly expressed in Niedenthal et al.'s (1994) and Zeelenberg et al.'s (1998a) empirical work discussed above. In both cases, the scenarios presented to the participants were ambiguous in the sense that they could be construed in terms of both shame and guilt (Niedenthal at al.'s scenarios), or in terms of both regret and disappointment (Zeelenberg et al.'s scenarios).

In addition to the descriptive aspect, the above assumption has a normative aspect. Not only are counterfactuals realistic; they should be realistic, as well. The normative side of the assumption underlies Roese's (1997) argument for the functional role of counterfactuals (see also Zeelenberg, 1999). Because they can be construed as conditional propositions inherently related to an actual event (i.e. the event that is counterfactually construed), counterfactuals lead to causal inferences – therefore conveying information about causality. According to Roese's analysis, this information is useful for the individual, since it allows for the future self-regulation of behaviour on the basis of the judgement of causality: If, for example, through the counterfactual construction of the event, a particular omission is identified as the causal antecedent of a negative outcome, then it can be expected that in the future the recipient of the negative outcome will perform the initially omitted behaviour so as not to receive the same outcome again. One can hardly see what the benefits of any such counterfactual reconstruction of reality would be, if this reconstruction is based on rather improbable, non-realistic, or otherwise "unnatural" contingencies.

Empirical evidence, however, suggests that rather than being realistic, people's reconstructions of the past are often self-serving – in other words, people often reconstruct past events in a way that best suits their needs. Tykocinski (2001) showed that once a goal set in advance has been missed, people re-evaluate downwards their initial chances of achieving this goal; simply put, they lower their expectations *ex post facto*, in order to mitigate their experienced disappointment over their failure (i.e. a form of hindsight effect; Fischhoff, 1975; Hawkins & Hastie, 1990). In addition to expectations, other elements of the past can also be subjected to this adjustment

procedure: Ross and his collaborators (Conway & Ross, 1984; Ross, 1989; Ross & Newby-Clark, 1998) have shown that people revise their personal histories in the light of their current state of being. These revisions are made on the basis of relevant implicit theories of either stability or change.

Another means to avoid disappointment is based on the generation of excuses for an aversive outcome: People behave in a way that will provide them with a "good enough reason" for failure – i.e. a reason that will explain away the unfortunate outcome (e.g. Snyder & Higgins, 1988; for a review see Armor & Taylor, 1998). The literature on "egotism" (i.e. the motivation to protect one's self-esteem against anticipated negative outcome feedback) provides empirical support for this defensive strategy (e.g. Berglas and Jones, 1978; Frankel and Snyder, 1978; Snyder, Smoller, Strenta and Frankel, 1981).

Finally, potential disappointments are also avoided via a dissonance-reduction type of reasoning: Essentially, people reconstruct their past preferences, convincing themselves that the outcome was not so desirable after all (Carlsmith, 1962 – In Pyszczynski, 1982; Festinger, 1957; Pyszczynski, 1982).

We are not arguing that all counterfactuals are necessarily non-realistic. For instance, in their discussion of people's revisions of their personal histories, Armor and Taylor (1998) argued that these revisions have to satisfy a certain "reasonability" criterion, in order to be deemed acceptable. We are rather pointing out the fact that non-realistic counterfactuals are a possibility – a possibility that has not yet been sufficiently explored, since, most studies on the role of counterfactuals in causal and affective judgements are based on the implicit assumption that counterfactuals are realistic.

This discussion of non-realistic counterfactuals is also precipitated by views that reject the functional aspect of counterfactual thinking in its entirety. For instance, Howard (1992) argued that preferences should be based only on a set of possible futures and not on foregone and counterfactually construed ones. Moreover, in his attempt to qualify his views on the appropriateness or non-appropriateness of regret considerations, Burks (1946) pointed out that a necessary prerequisite for regret to be reasonable is "… not merely [the assumption] that there are laws of nature, but that these laws are *more* than mere summaries of matters of fact (past, present, or future)" (Burks, 1946; p. 170, italics in the original). The property of being "more than mere summaries" implies that the aforementioned laws of nature should hold true irrespective of the actors' actions (or inactions), so that the latter can meaningfully regret their promptness (or failure) to initiate a causal chain – since the presence or absence of this behaviour changes the state of the world they end up in. In other words, counterfactual thinking can be thought of as an altogether inappropriate mode of inferring causality – and, hence, its influence on the content or intensity of affective experience can be equally thought of as redundant.

The present studies: Overview and hypotheses

On the basis of the above considerations, the present studies examine the influence of non-realistic counterfactuals on experienced regret and disappointment.

Previous research has shown that regret differs from disappointment on the dimension of "agency" – in other words people feel regretful over a bad outcome that they have themselves caused; whereas they feel disappointed over a bad outcome that has occurred to them without them contributing to it (Frijda, Kuipers, and ter Schure, 1989;

Zeelenberg, van Dijk, and Manstead, 1998b; 2000; Zeelenberg et al., 1998a; for an alternative view see Connolly, Ordonez, and Coughlan, 1997; Ordonez and Connolly, 2000).

We, therefore, take a counterfactual to be "realistic" if it refers to an unfortunate outcome, the recipient of which is personally responsible for its occurrence, and the counterfactual alters aspects of the recipient's own behaviour. Equally "realistic" is a counterfactual that refers to an unfortunate outcome, the recipient of which is not personally responsible for its occurrence, and the counterfactual alters aspects of the situation.

On the opposite side, we take a counterfactual to be "non-realistic" if it refers to an unfortunate outcome, the recipient of which is personally responsible for its occurrence, and the counterfactual alters aspects of the situation. Equally "non-realistic" is a counterfactual that refers to an unfortunate outcome, the recipient of which is not personally responsible for its occurrence, and the counterfactual alters aspects of the recipient's own behaviour.

We expect that when realistic counterfactuals are generated, responsible recipients' regret is higher than their corresponding disappointment, whereas non-responsible recipients' disappointment is higher than their corresponding regret. For non-realistic counterfactuals we expect the opposite pattern: Responsible recipients' regret is lower than (or at least of equal intensity to) their corresponding disappointment, whereas non-responsible recipients' disappointment is lower than (or at least of equal intensity to) their corresponding regret.

Study 1: Regret and disappointment assessed jointly

Overview

Participants were presented with a summer-trip scenario with a disastrous ending, that either was, or was not their fault. They were then asked to generate either realistic, or non-realistic counterfactuals. Finally, their affective reactions (i.e. regret an disappointment) to the scenario-outcome were assessed.

We anticipated that realistically thinking personally responsible participants would report higher levels of regret than disappointment; realistically thinking non-responsible participants would report higher levels of disappointment than regret; non-realistically thinking personally responsible participants would report lower (or at least of approximately equal intensity) levels of regret than disappointment; and non-realistically thinking non-responsible participants would report higher (or at least of approximately equal intensity) levels of regret than disappointment.

Method

Participants

Ninety-nine students at the Panteion University of Athens took part in the study. Participants were not paid for their participation.

Variables and Design

The design was a 2*2 completely between-subjects design, with Personal responsibility (Present versus Absent) and Counterfactual (Realistic versus Non-realistic) as independent variables. There were between 24 and 25 participants per condition.

There were six dependent measures: a. participants' perceptions of the decision outcome described in the scenario (OUT); b. their perceived personal responsibility for the outcome (PR); c. the degree to which participants perceived the outcome as a result of situational factors (SF); d. the degree to which participants perceived the described course of action as normative (NO); e. participants' regret at the outcome; and f. participants' disappointment at the outcome.

Materials

All participants were presented with a short booklet containing experimental manipulations and dependent measures. On the first page of the booklet participants in the personal responsibility condition were asked to imagine themselves in the following scenario[1]: *"Right after your June final exams at the university a group of students is organising a four-day trip to the island of Myconos. A few of your friends are actually going, and you decide to go yourself, because you will definitely have a good time. So you find one of the students who organise the trip, and you pay him, as is common practice, a non-refundable deposit of GRD12000[2]. He informs you that you depart from Piraeus port at 7.30am on the day of the departure. The eve of the departure day you call an old school-friend of yours, and you suggest the two of you go out for a drink. You actually go with him to a bar. After a few drinks there, you decide to continue to a club nearby. He reminds you that you are getting up the following morning, but you reassure*

[1] Translated from the original Greek, as is the case with all material used for the two studies reported here.

[2] GRD12000 equalled approximately $35 at the time the study was ran.

him that you it won't be any problem to wake up; therefore, you go. You eventually get back home at about 4.00am, and you immediately fall asleep. Things do not go smoothly next morning, though. Your electronic alarm goes off, but your turn it off, and fall back to sleep. When you eventually wake up you realise that you are late, and you get ready as fast as you can. You get out in the street to catch a cab (since you live in Pagrati[3]), but you need to stop at an ATM first to withdraw some cash, since you spent all your money the night before. You withdraw the money, you find a cab, and you are on your way. Just a few metres before entering the port, however, you tell the driver to pull over at a payphone, because you have forgotten to wake up your flatmate, who is sitting an exam early in the morning, as you promised. After calling him, you are on your way again, and you enter the port in the cab. Unfortunately, however, when you eventually reach the dock the boat has just departed; the next boat to Myconos leaves only the next day at 4.00pm".

The scenario for the situational responsibility condition read as follows: *"Right after your June final exams at the university a group of students is organising a four-day trip to the island of Myconos. A few of your friends are actually going, and you decide to go yourself, because you will definitely have a good time. So you find one of the students who organise the trip, and you pay him, as is common practice, a non-refundable deposit of GRD12000. He informs you that you depart from Piraeus port at 7.30am on the day of the departure. The eve of the departure day an old school-friend of yours calls, and suggests the two of you go out for a drink. You politely decline the invitation, thinking that you are getting up the following morning; you go to bed at about 10.30pm. Things do*

[3] Pagrati is a central area of Athens, about 12km away from the port of Piraeus.

not go smoothly the next morning, though. Your electronic alarm does not go of; it has stopped, because of a few-minutes power-cut in your area during the night. When you eventually wake up, you realise you are late, and get ready as fast as you can. You get out in the street to catch a cab (since you live in Pagrati), but all passing cabs are full, none of them going towards Piraeus. You eventually find a free cab, and you are on your way. Just a few metres before entering the port, however, another car comes out of a side-road carelessly, and bumps onto the cab. The accident is not serious; however, you have to get off the cab and walk for the rest of the journey. You are walk as fast as you can, you almost run, even though you are carrying your ruck sack. Unfortunately, despite your effort, when you eventually reach the dock the boat has just departed; the next boat to Myconos leaves only the next day at 4.00pm".

The second page of the booklet contained the following four dependent measures:

a. OUT: *"The outcome described above I consider …"*; participants recorded their answers on a 10-point scale, anchored at 1 = very bad, and 10 = very good
b. PR: *"For the outcome described above I consider myself …"*; participants recorded their answers on a 10-point scale, anchored at 1 = absolutely responsible, and 10 = not responsible at all
c. SF: *" I consider the outcome described above a result of situational factors – that is factors outside my personal control…"*; participants recorded their answers on a 10-point scale, anchored at 1 = absolutely, and 10 = not at all
d. NO: "*I believe that in the above situation I did what everyone would have done, had they been in my position …"*; participants recorded their answers on a 10-point scale, anchored at 1 = absolutely, and 10 = not at all

On the third page of the booklet, participants in the "personal responsibility absent – realistic counterfactual" condition received the following instructions: "*Now we would like you to complete briefly the following two sentences by indicating how aspects of the situation (that is to say, things that you could not influence yourself) could have been different, so that the event would have had a better ending. For example: Had the accident not happened, then things would have had a better ending*". Participants were then presented with two "if only…" stems to fill in. Participants in the "personal responsibility present – non-realistic counterfactuals" condition were prompted to generate similar counterfactuals, except that the example they were presented with read as follows: "*Had my friend not been able to join me out, then things would have had a better ending*".

Similarly, participants in the "personal responsibility present – realistic counterfactual" condition received the following instructions: "*Now we would like you to fill in briefly the following two sentences by indicating how aspects of your own choices, decisions, or behaviour (that is to say, things that you could influence yourself) could have been different, so that the event would have had a better ending. For example: Had I not spent all my money the night before, then things would have had a better ending"*. Again, two counterfactuals of the same type were used in the "personal responsibility absent – non-realistic counterfactuals" condition. The only difference was the example, which, read as follows: "*Had I booked a radio-cab the evening before, then things would have had a better ending*".

On the last page of the booklet participants were asked to indicate their regret and disappointment at the unfortunate outcome described in the scenario; the two items were

counterbalanced. The exact wording of the items used was: *"How much regret would you feel when experiencing this event?"*; and *"How much disappointment would you feel when experiencing this event?"*. Participants gave their answers on two 10-point scales, anchored at 1 = not at all, and 10 = very much.

Results

Manipulation checks

The PR, SF and NO scales were reversed-scored, and then these three and the OUT scale were submitted to a 2*2 Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA), with Responsibility, and Counterfactual as independent variables. As anticipated, only Responsibility was found to have an overall effect, Wilks' Lambda (4, 92) = .26, $p < .001$. Univariate F tests further revealed that this effect was confined to the first three measures, but did not affect participants' perception of the scenario outcome (F (1, 95) = 128.52, $p < .001$ for PR; F (1, 95) = 230.36, $p < .001$ for SF; F (1, 95) = 47.98, $p < .001$ for NO; and F (1, 95) = 2.25, $p = .137$ for OUT, respectively).

Participants uniformly perceived the situation described in the scenario as unfortunate. However, only participants in the "personal responsibility present" condition thought that the behaviour described in the scenario deviated from what most people would have done in the same situation (3.84 versus 7.06). These participants were also ready to accept that the outcome was more their own responsibility than attributable to situational factors (9.12 versus 4.36, and 2.14 versus 7.63, respectively). These results indicate that the responsibility manipulation was successful.

Analyses of reported affect

Regret and disappointment ratings were submitted to a 2*2*2 MANOVA, with Responsibility, Counterfactual, and Order (regret first versus disappointment first) as independent variables. This analysis yielded a significant overall effect of Responsibility, Wilks' Lambda (2, 90) = .77, $p < .001$, and a significant Responsibility by Counterfactual interaction, Wilks' Lambda (2, 90) = .93, $p < .035$.

Univariate F tests further revealed that the effect of Responsibility was only present for regret, F (1, 91) = 18.71, $p < .001$; participants in the "personal responsibility present" condition reported higher levels of post-decisional regret than participants in the "personal responsibility absent" condition (7.34 versus 4.92). Responsibility was not found to have an effect on disappointment. This pattern of results can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Mean reported regret across conditions (SDs in parentheses) – Study 1

	Responsibility present	**Responsibility absent**
Realistic counterfactual	7.40 *(2.26)*	5.04 *(3.09)*
Non-realistic counterfactual	7.28 *(2.51)*	4.80 *(2.86)*

Note: Entries are mean responses to the questions: "How much regret would you feel when experiencing this event?" Participants could answer the question on a 10-point scale, anchored at 1 = not at all, and 10 = very much.

On the contrary, the interaction effect was only present for disappointment, F (1, 91) = 5.51, $p = .021$. Breaking down of this interaction into Responsibility effects at the two levels of Counterfactual further revealed that whereas Responsibility had the anticipated effect on disappointment for participants who generated realistic

counterfactuals, t (36.89[4]) = -2.05, p = .048, it had no effect for participants who generated non-realistic counterfactuals, t (48) = -1.36, p = .181.

Table 2. Mean reported disappointment across conditions (SDs in parentheses) – Study 1

	Responsibility present	**Responsibility absent**
Realistic counterfactual	8.12 *(2.07)*	9.08 *(1.10)*
Non-realistic counterfactual	8.48 *(1.42)*	7.76 *(2.24)*

Note: Entries are mean responses to the questions: "How much disappointment would you feel when experiencing this event?" Participants could answer the question on a 10-point scale, anchored at 1 = not at all, and 10 = very much.

As can be seen in Table 2, participants were more disappointed when the unfortunate outcome was due to the circumstances, rather than being their own fault (9.08 versus 8.12), but only when they thought "realistically" about the outcome; once they had generated "unrealistic" counterfactuals this pattern disappeared (7.76 versus 8.48). Further exploration of the data suggested that this effect was due to a sharp decrease in disappointment of not responsible for the outcome participants, t (35.24) = 2.64, p = .012 (9.08 versus 7.76), rather than an increase in disappointment of responsible for the outcome participants, t (48) = -.72, p = .476 (8.12 versus 8.48).

[4] Whenever we report non-integer degrees of freedom we have corrected for unequal variances on the basis of Levene's F-test.

Discussion

What is novel about the results of this study is that they provide partial support for the hypothesis that non-realistic counterfactual thinking changes the "normal" pattern of emotional reactions to unfortunate decision outcomes: Although experienced regret was not significantly different, experienced disappointment of non-realistically thinking participants was less intense than experienced disappointment of their realistically thinking counterparts. In addition, the results of the study support the notion that regret and personal responsibility for an unfortunate outcome are closely related.

However, a possibility that cannot be ruled out on the basis of these findings is that because they were assessed simultaneously, regret and disappointment ratings interacted (i.e. the rating of either of the two provided participants with an anchor for the ratings other) – hence this pattern of results. As Niedenthal et al. (1994; p. 591) pointed out about their findings on experienced shame and guilt that "…the first rating of an emotion … tended to determine the second rating…" – in other words they found evidence of an anchoring effect.

Zeelenberg et al. (1998; studies 2 and 3) obtained essentially the same pattern of results for regret and disappointment across different types of assessment (i.e. joint versus separate). Visual inspection of the magnitude of the ratings they obtained in the two assessments, however, reveals that there is indeed some anchoring present in the joint assessment – with ratings being consistently higher for both emotions, and especially for regret, when assessment was separate. It should also be noted that, as well as changing the type of assessment, Zeelenberg and his colleagues changed the (objective) cost of the

unfortunate decision described in their scenario (25 Dutch Guilders versus 200+ Dutch Guilders, in their second, and third studies, respectively).

In order to replicate our findings and to resolve these inconsistencies, we conducted a second study in which regret and disappointment were separately assessed.

Study 2: Regret and disappointment assessed separately

Overview

As in Study 1, participants were presented with the same summer-trip scenario with disastrous ending, that either was, or was not their fault. They were then asked to generate either realistic, or non-realistic counterfactuals. Finally, their affective reactions (i.e. either regret, or disappointment) to the scenario-outcome were assessed.

Along the lines of Study 1 predictions, we anticipated that realistically thinking personally responsible participants would report higher levels of regret than disappointment; realistically thinking non-responsible participants would report higher levels of disappointment than regret; non-realistically thinking personally responsible participants would report lower (or at least of approximately equal intensity) levels of regret than disappointment; and non-realistically thinking non-responsible participants would report higher (or at least of approximately equal intensity) levels of regret than disappointment.

Method

Participants

One hundred and fifty-three students at the Panteion University of Athens participated in the study. Participants were not paid for their participation.

Variables and Design

The design was a 2*2*2 completely between-subjects design, with responsibility (Present versus Absent), Counterfactual (Realistic versus Unrealistic), and Affect (Regret versus Disappointment) as independent variables. There were between 18 and 20 participants per condition.

As in the first study, there were five dependent measures: a. participants' perceptions of the decision outcome described in the scenario (OUT); b. their perceived personal responsibility for the outcome (PR); c. the degree to which participants perceived the outcome as a results of situational factors (SF); d. degree to which participants perceived the described course of action as normative (NO); and f. either participants' regret or participants' disappointment at the outcome.

Materials

All participants were presented with a short booklet very similar to the one used in the first study. The scenario was again described on the first page of the booklet, followed by four dependent measures (namely: OUT; PR; SF; and NO) on the second page. On the third page of the booklet the manipulation of counterfactual was introduced. Finally, all participants went through the last page of the booklet, where approximately

half of them indicated their regret, whereas the other half indicated their disappointment at the unfortunate outcome described in the scenario.

Results

Manipulation checks

The PR, SF and NO scales were reversed-scored, and then these three and the OUT scale were submitted to a 2*2*2 Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA), with Responsibility, Counterfactual, and Affect as independent variables. As anticipated, only Responsibility was found to have an overall effect, Wilks' Lambda (4, 142) = .36, $p < .001$. Univariate F tests further revealed that this effect was confined to the latter three measures, but did not affect participants' perception of the scenario outcome (F (1, 145) = 147.30, $p < .001$ for PR; F (1, 145) = 171.27, $p < .001$ for SF; F (1, 145) = 112.01, $p < .001$ for NO; and F (1, 145) = .15, $p = .697$ for OUT, respectively)[5].

Participants uniformly perceived the situation described in the scenario as unfortunate; however, only participants in the "personal responsibility present" condition thought that the scenario-described behaviour deviated from what everyone would have done in the same situation (3.86 versus 7.30). These participants were also ready to accept the outcome was more of their own responsibility, than attributable to situational

[5] Univariate analysis of norm ratings revealed a significant three-way interaction, F (1, 145) = 4.73, p = .031. This interaction was due to regret participants' perception of the scenario-described behaviour as more normative, compared to disappointment participants, (4.83 versus 3.35, respectively, t (36) = 2.51, p = .013). Notwithstanding the unexpectedness of this pattern, this result did not have any effect on the rest of the analyses, nor is it crucial to our theoretical rationale.

factors (8.68 versus 4.25, and 2.46 versus 7.01, respectively). These results indicate that the responsibility manipulation was successful.

Analyses of reported affect

Regret and disappointment ratings were submitted to a 2*2*2 ANOVA, with Responsibility, Counterfactual, and Affect as independent variables. This analysis yielded a significant overall effect of Responsibility, F (1, 145) = 8.06, p = .005; participants in the "personal responsibility present" condition reported higher levels of post-decisional affect than participants in the "personal responsibility absent" condition (8.07 versus 7.03) – a pattern consistent with previous results (cf. Zeelenberg, van der Pligt, and de Vries, 2000).

The analysis also yielded a significant main effect of Affect, F (1, 145) = 11.79, p = .001; participants reported feeling more disappointment than regret (8.19 versus 6.92).

Both these main effects were, however, qualified by an interaction between all three independent variables, F (1, 145) = 3.55, p = .062. This pattern of results led us to analyse the regret and disappointment ratings separately[6].

The analysis of disappointment ratings revealed the absence of any effect (all three Fs < 1). The absence of any systematic pattern in disappointment ratings can be seen in Table 3.

[6] For the importance of this type of comparison independently of the overall interaction effect, see Marascuilo and Levin (1976).

Table 3. Mean reported disappointment across conditions (SDs in parentheses) – Study 2

	Responsibility present	**Responsibility absent**
Realistic counterfactual	8.26 *(1.59)*	8.30 *(1.69)*
Non-realistic counterfactual	8.50 *(2.04)*	7.68 *(2.34)*

Note: Entries are mean responses to the questions: "How much disappointment would you feel when experiencing this event?" Participants could answer the question on a 10-point scale, anchored at 1 = not at all, and 10 = very much.

The analysis of regret ratings revealed a significant main effect of Responsibility, F (1, 71) = 8.12, p = .006. As in the case of Study 1, participants in the "personal responsibility present" condition reported higher levels of regret compared to participants in the "personal responsibility absent" condition (7.78 versus 6.08). Although the interaction did not reach significance, (F (1, 71) = 2.59, p = .112), pairwise comparisons between conditions[7] revealed that personally responsible participants reported more regret that not responsible participants when they generated "realistic" counterfactuals, t (23.84) = 2.93, p = .007, but not when they generated "non-realistic" ones, t (36) = .93, p = .358.

As can be seen in Table 4, participants were more regretful when the unfortunate outcome was their own fault rather than due to the circumstances (8.16 versus 5.50), but only when they thought "realistically" about the outcome; once they had generated "non-realistic" counterfactuals this pattern disappeared (7.39 versus 6.65). Inspection of our

[7] See footnote 7 above.

data suggests that this pattern was due to both a tendency of non-realistically thinking personally responsible participants to feel less regret (8.16 versus 7.39), and a corresponding tendency of non-realistically thinking non-responsible participants to feel more regret (5.50 versus 6.65) – although none of these differences reached significance.

Table 4. Mean reported regret across conditions (SDs in parentheses) – Study 2

	Responsibility present	**Responsibility absent**
Realistic counterfactual	8.16 *(1.64)*	5.50 *(3.50)*
Non-realistic counterfactual	7.39 *(2.87)*	6.65 *(1.98)*

Note: Entries are mean responses to the questions: "How much regret would you feel when experiencing this event?" Participants could answer the question on a 10-point scale, anchored at 1 = not at all, and 10 = very much.

Discussion

As in the case of Study 1, the results of this study provide partial support for the hypothesis that non-realistic counterfactual thinking changes the "normal" pattern of emotional reactions to unfortunate decision outcomes: Experienced regret of non-realistically thinking participants was less intense than experienced regret of their realistically thinking counterparts. This pattern was not, however, replicated for experienced disappointment. Taken together, the results of our first and second study can be thought of as effective illustrations of the influence of non-realistic counterfactual thinking on post-decisional affective reactions.

As far as the relation between regret and responsibility is concerned, the results of this study follow the pattern of results obtained in Study 1 and corroborate the notion that

regret and personal responsibility for an unfortunate outcome are closely related. These results also replicate the finding of Study 1 concerning more intense negative affect being associated with personal responsibility for an unfortunate outcome – compared to affect generated when the unfortunate outcome is caused by situational factors.

The final aspect of these results that needs to be commented on is the apparent discrepancy between the two studies. This discrepancy indicates a measurement effect. We come back to this point in the General Discussion.

General Discussion

Overall, the present research indicates that non-realistic counterfactuals do exert an influence on the shaping of affective reactions to decision outcomes. Non-realistically thinking participants expressed less intense disappointment than realistically thinking participants over an unfortunate outcome that was not their own fault (Study 1). Similarly, non-realistically thinking participants expressed less intense regret than realistically thinking participants over an unfortunate outcome that was indeed their own fault (Study 2). Moreover, personal responsibility was found to be an important antecedent of post-decisional regret (in both studies), and a cause of more intense post-decisional negative affect in general (Study 2

These findings are discussed under two different perspectives: a. the novel and previously undocumented effects of non-realistic counterfactual thinking on post-decisional affect; and b. measurement effects on affective (and other similar) ratings. These issues are discussed in turn.

Non-realistic counterfactual thinking

The present research provides the first demonstration of the influence of non-realistic counterfactuals on post-decisional affect. Similarly to their realistic alternatives studied so far, non-realistic counterfactuals shaped affective reactions in a way that deviated from what would have "normally" been expected. Taken together with other research findings that show how people revise their past in view of their present (Conway and Ross, 1984; Ross, 1989; Ross and Newby-Clark, 1998), we believe that these results point towards two different issues; the first issue is descriptive and the second is normative.

Firstly, our results show that it is indeed possible for people to be influenced by non-realistic counterfactuals. No matter what a "reasonableness" criterion might dictate, our participants' affective reactions were responsive to improbable counterfactuals, rather than the scenario-based reality. Secondly, and as a direct consequence of this, we believe that these results raise some questions over the unconditionally functional role attributed to counterfactual thinking in general. The latter, assumes that, because counterfactuals are realistic, they convey useful information about the causal chain underlying a series of events, thereby preparing the person who is involved in these events for future corrective action (Roese, 1997; Zeelenberg, 1999).

However, it is often the case that we do not have any information on how well counterfactuals will conform to any "reasonableness" criterion, or "reality-check". In fact, previous research that has focused on *ex post facto* self-serving rationalisations and similar phenomena, should caution us against the aforementioned assumption (e.g. Berglas and Jones, 1978; Frankel and Snyder, 1978; Pyszczynski, 1982; Snyder and

Higgins, 1988; Snyder et al., 1981; Tykocinski, 2001). People are motivated to appear (both to others, but also to their own selves) consistent with their past behaviours, attitudes, or preferences, more successful in their endeavours than their objective successes would indicate, and, finally, less emotionally harmed than a post-decisional affect model would predict.

Measurement effects on affective ratings

Whereas in Study 1 non-realistic counterfactuals reduced disappointment but did not affect regret, in Study 2 non-realistic counterfactuals reduced regret, but did not affect disappointment. Moreover, the cross-study analysis revealed that type of assessment directly influenced regret ratings; the latter were overall higher when regret was assessed separately from disappointment, than when the two were assessed jointly – a finding that directly replicates Zeelenberg et al.'s (1998) findings.

These conflicting findings do not stand in isolation within the post-decisional affect empirical literature. For instance, the view that action regrets are more intense than inaction regrets supported by several studies employing within-subjects designs (e.g. Kahneman and Tversky, 1982) was challenged when N'gbala and Branscombe (1997) failed to replicate the effect using a completely between-subjects design. Moreover, Zeelenberg et al. (2000) attributed inconsistencies between their own (i.e. Zeelenberg et al., 1998b) and Connolly et al.'s (1997), and Ordonez and Connolly's (2000) results on the relationship between regret and responsibility to the mixture of within-, and between-subjects assessment of the relevant variables.

Together with other recently documented inconsistencies in the broader area of experienced utility research (e.g. Ariely, Kahneman, and Loewenstein, 2000), the above inconsistencies highlight the importance of the measurement of affective reactions to decision outcomes, or events. In a within-subject design participants are asked to perform either one or a series of paired-comparisons between two or more stimuli, thus producing a clearly comparative judgement. In a between-subjects design, on the other hand, participants are asked to assign a number to a single affective experience of theirs, without a salient reference point – a substantially more difficult and potentially tricky task, because the researcher has no way of figuring out how participants are using the rating scale provided. Absence of any reference point in this latter case cannot be guaranteed, either; participants may in fact be using an internal reference point, not communicated to the researcher.

Viewed in this context, a possible explanation for the conflicting pattern of results for regret and disappointment that emerged in the present studies could be that these results are due to both the effect of counterfactual thinking, and our choice of measurement. Notwithstanding the fact that this explanation cannot be entirely ruled out on the basis of the present findings, we can still argue for the presence of an effect of counterfactual thought, since the latter attenuated the intensity of affect across both studies (i.e. across both a within-, and a between-subjects design). It seems, therefore, reasonable to argue that this pattern of results deserves further scrutiny, so that we will eventually be able to clearly distinguish effects that are theoretically interesting, from those that are side effects of measurement.

Conclusions

The two studies reported here empirically documented the role of non-realistic counterfactual thought in attenuating people's experienced negative affect after an unfortunate event. These results illustrate the role of non-realistic counterfactuals in the shaping of affective experience; they replicate previous patterns of results with Greek samples; and, finally, they highlight the importance of the measurement of self-reported post-decisional affect. In terms of theoretical implications, these results indicate that it might be necessary to qualify the functional and normative of counterfactual thinking.

Certainly, these two studies have limitations; scenario-based results need to be replicated by studies measuring actual affective reactions; a wider domain of situations needs to be sampled; measures that provide a direct theoretical explanation of the influence of non-realistic counterfactuals need to be taken – rather than the latter merely being observed; and other improvements. Notwithstanding these limitations, we have shown that the study of non-realistic counterfactuals can have implications for them and pose interesting challenges for future research.

References

Ariely, D., Kahneman, D. and Loewenstein, G. (2000). Joint comment on "When does duration matter in judgment and decision making?" (Ariely & Loewenstein, 2000). *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*, 129, 524-529.

Armor D. A., and Taylor S. E. (1998). Situated optimism: Specific outcome expectancies and self-regulation. In: M. P. Zanna (Ed.), *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology (vol. 30)*. New York; Academic Press.

Bell, D. E. (1985). Disappointment in decision making under uncertainty. *Operations Research*, 33, 1-27.

Berglas S., and Jones E. E. (1978). Drug choice as a self – handicapping strategy in response to noncontingent success. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 36, 405-417.

Burks, A. W. (1946). Laws of nature and reasonableness of regret. *Mind*, 55, 170-172.

Connolly, T., Ordonez, L. D., and Coughlan, R. (1997). Regret and responsibility in the evaluation of decision outcomes. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 70, 73 – 85.

Conway, M., and Ross, M. (1984). Getting what you want by revising what you had. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 47, 738-748.

Festinger, L. (1957). *A theory of cognitive dissonance*. Stanford; Stanford University Press.

Fischhoff, (1975). Hindsight ≠ foresight: The effect of outcome knowledge on judgement under uncertainty. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Human Perception and Performance*, 1, 288-299.

Frankel, A., and Snyder, M. L. (1978). Poor performance following unsolvable Problems: Learned helplessness or egotism? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 36, 1415-1423.

Frijda, N. H., Kuipers, P., and ter Schure, E. (1989). Relations among emotion, appraisal and emotional action readiness. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 57, 212-228.

Hawkins, S. E., and Hastie, R. (1990). Hindsight: Biased judgment of past events after the outcomes are known. *Psychological Bulletin*, 107, 311-327.

Howard, R. (1992). In praise of the old time religion. In: W. Edwards (Ed.), *Utility theories: Measurements and applications* (pp. 27-56). Boston; Kluwer Academic.

Kahneman, D. and Miller, D. T. (1986). Norm theory: Comparing reality to its alternatives. *Psychological Review*, 93, 136-153.

Kahneman, D. and Tversky, A. (1982). The Psychology of Preferences. *Scientific American*, 246, 136-142.

Larsen, R. J., and Diener, E. (1992). Promises and problems with the circumplex model of affect. In M. S. Clark (Ed.), *Review of Personality and Social Psychology,: Emotion* (vol. 13, pp. 25-29). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Loomes, G. and Sugden, R. (1982). Regret theory: An alternative theory of rational choice under uncertainty. *Economic Journal*, 92, 805-824.

Marascuilo, L. A., and Levin, J. R. (1976). The simultaneous investigation of interaction and nested hypotheses in two-factor analysis of variance designs. *American Educational Research Journal*, 13, 61-65.

Markman, K. D., Gavanski, I., Sherman, S. J., and McMullen M. N. (1993). The mental simulation of better and worse possible worlds. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 29*, 87-109.

N'gbala, A. and Branscombe, N. R. (1997). When does action elicit more regret than inaction and is counterfactual mutation the mediator of this effect? *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 33, 324-343.

Niedenthal, P.M., Tangney, J.P., and Gavanski, I. (1994). "If only I weren't" versus "if only I hadn't": Distinguishing shame and guilt in counterfactual thinking. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 67, 585-595.

Ordonez, L. D., and Connolly, T. (2000). COMMENT. Regret and Responsibility: A Reply to Zeelenberg et al. (1998). *Organizational Behavior & Human Decision Processes*, 81, 132-142.

Pyszczynski, T. (1982). Cognitive strategies for coping with uncertain outcomes. *Journal of Research in Personality*, 16, 386-399.

Roese, N. J. (1997). Counterfactual thinking. *Psychological Bulletin*, 121, 133-148.

Ross, M. (1989). Relation of implicit theories to the construction of personal histories. *Psychological Review*, 96, 341-357.

Ross, M., and Newby-Clark, I. R. (1998). Construing the past and the future. *Social Cognition*, 16, 133-150.

Snyder, C. R., and Higgins R. L. (1988). Excuses: Their effective role in the negotiation of reality. *Psychological Bulletin*, 104, 23-35.

Snyder, M. L., Smoller, B., Strenta, A., and Frankel A. (1981). A comparison of egotism, negativity, and learned helplessness as explanations for poor performance after unsolvable problems. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 40, 24-30.

Thayer, R. E. (1996). *The origin of everyday moods: Managing energy, tension, and stress*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Tykocinski, O. E. (2001). I never had a chance: Using hindsight tactics to mitigate disappointments. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 27, 376-382.

Watson, D., and Tellegen, A. (1985). Toward a consensual structure of mood. *Psychological Bulletin*, 98, 219-235.

Wells, G. L., and Gavanski I. (1989). Mental simulation of causality. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 56, 161-169.

Zeelenberg, M. (1999). The use of crying over spilt milk: A note on the rationality and functionality of regret. *Philosophical Psychology*, 12, 325-340.

Zeelenberg, M., van Dijk, van der Pligt, J., Manstead, A, S, R., van Empelen, P., and Reinderman, D. (1998a). Emotional reactions to the outcomes of decisions: The role of counterfactual thought in the experience of regret and disappointment. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 75, 117 – 141.

Zeelenberg M., van Dijk, W. W., and Manstead, A. S. R. (1998b). Reconsidering the relation between regret and responsibility. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 74, 254 – 272.

Zeelenberg, M., van der Pligt, J., and de Vries, N. K. (2000). Attributions of responsibility and affective reactions to decision outcomes. *Acta Psychologica*, 104, 303-315.

Paschalia – Lia Spyridou
PhD student
Andreas Veglis – Assistant Professor
Media Informatics Lab
Department of Journalism and Mass Communication,
Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

E-papers in Greece: Living Up to their Potential?

Paper submitted to the 1st Ph.D Symposium on Contemporary Greece,
London School of Economics, London, June 21, 2003

ABSTRACT

Academic literature suggests that online papers are moving beyond the realm of 'shovelware' in an effort to create a more attractive product to be consumed by a larger and more loyal audience. The basis for this attempt is the effective use of interactive features.

The mass media in Greece seem to follow the journalistic norms and practices of the western model in the context of an increasingly expanding 'international media culture'. The paper argues that the forms and expressions of interactivity in online newspapers in Greece are very limited and explains that the development of web publishing is hindered due to particular political, economic and cultural traits of the country as well as due to the dominant journalistic culture of the country.

E-papers in Greece: Living Up to their Potential?

Despite the initial pessimistic scenarios regarding the development and use of online newspapers, reality has proven that e-papers do have the potential to transform the news industry. Media analysts admit that the increasing number of online newspapers, whether net-natives or the digital version of an existing title, are becoming more and more popular, and thus extensive attention should be paid to the content and future of the new commodity.

Recent though dominant academic literature suggests that online newspapers are moving beyond the realm of 'shovelware'[1] in an effort to create a more attractive product to be consumed by a larger and more loyal audience, confirming media guru Nicholas Negroponte, who in 1995, claimed that 'the online newspaper of the future won't be much like the ones in existence today'.

Although most newspapers went online under fear and doubt, and without clearly articulated missions, ten years later most media analysts and editors have come to realise that both content originality and the advantages provided by technology are the main parameters on which online newspapers should focus. The Internet is a brand new territory and the means of electronic publishing are not just means to do the same old journalism (Trench, 1997). The question is how. According to J. D. Lasica, 'it is interactivity that is the truly revolutionary promise of the Net'[2].

---

[1] The term 'shovelware' is used in the academic literature to describe the online newspaper which is a duplicate of its print version

[2] Cited in J. D. Lasica (1998), A Great Way to Strengthen Bonds, American Journalism Review, March 1998, www.ajr.org/article_printable.asp?id=154

Until recently e-papers had been a duplicate of their print version, and even the net-natives resembled the rest. In other words, early online newspapers were typically text-based relying on content from the core product rather than utilising a broader range of features such as audio and video material or hyperlinks.

John Pavlik (1997) claims that online content is evolving through three stages. The first stage involves repurposing print content for the online edition. In stage two, content is augmented with interactive features, such as hyperlinks and search engines. Stage three is characterised by the creation of original news content designed specifically for the new medium. This type of content involves both new forms of storytelling and increased levels of interactivity.

Defining Interactivity

Interactivity consists the primary characteristic of new media (Kenney et. al, 2000) and the key advantage of the new medium (McMillan & Downes, 1998). In fact, the study of the concept has increased dramatically since the emergence of the world wide web and the extensive diffusion of the personal computer. The Internet is considered to be the world's first two-way electronic mass medium (Morris 2001), but interactivity does not come automatically with two-way technology.

The concept of interactivity has been defined in multiple ways. Rafaeli, who has been one of the early investigators of interactivity in the mass media context, defined interactivity in the late 1980's 'as an expression of the extent that in a given series of communication exchanges, any third (or later) transmission (or message) is related to the degree to which previous exchanges referred to even earlier transmissions' (p.

111)[3]. By 1997 he had revised the definition to 'the extent to which messages in a sequence relate to each other, and especially the extent to which later messages recount the relatedness of the earlier messages'[4].

According to Williams et. al. (1986) 'the degree to which participants in a communication process have control over, and can exchange roles in their mutual discourse is called interactivity'[5]. A decade later, Rogers (1995) defined interactivity as 'the degree to which participants in a communication process can exchange roles and have control over their mutual discourse'[6].

In Steuer's (1992) view interactivity can be defined as 'the extent to which users can participate in modifying the form and content of a mediated environment in real-time'[7]. He identifies three dimensions of interactivity, -speed, range and mapping-, which are all technological elements.

Jensen (1998) defined interactivity as 'a measure of a medium's potential ability to let the user exert an amount of influence on the content and/or form of the mediated communication'.

Regardless of the variations or even differences existing among the definitions given by various disciplines[8] or starting points, it is accepted that the term implies a) some degree of user control, b) inducement of

[3] cited in Kiousis, Spiros (1999), Broadening the Boundaries of Interactivity: A Concept Explication, Paper submitted to the AEJMC annual conference, New Orleans, LA, August 4-7, 1999

[4] cited in McMillan, Sally and Edward (1998), Interactivity: A Qualitative Exploration of Definitions and Models, Paper submitted to the AEJMC annual convention, August 5-8, Baltimore

[5] cited in Kiousis, Spiros (1999), Broadening the Boundaries of Interactivity: A Concept Explication, Paper submitted to the AEJMC annual conference, New Orleans, LA, August 4-7, 1999

[6] cited in McMillan, Sally and Edward (1998), Interactivity: A Qualitative Exploration of Definitions and Models, Paper submitted to the AEJMC annual convention, August 5-8, Baltimore

[7] ibid

[8] The disciplines which have studied and analysed the concept of interactivity are Communication, Psychology, Computer Science, Business Schools and Advertising

receiver feedback, c) participatory communication and d) is linked to new technologies.

Also, the concept of interactivity incorporates two basic dimensions. One centers on the interaction between/among people (user-user interaction) and the other between a person and technology (user-medium interaction).

Yet, a third aspect, that of perceived interactivity could be articulated. According to Newhagen et. al. (1995), the mode in which the audience responds to and uses the interactive possibilities offered consists the dimension of perceived interactivity. The authors agree that the experience of interactivity is variant across people and without measuring how people perceive/experience interactivity, it is difficult to understand the essence of its function. However, that aspect is beyond the purpose of this paper, which focuses on the former two, that are a basic precondition.

The question which arises at this point is 'why such a big fuss about interactivity?' Interactivity is the driving force of new media (Zollman, 1997) or as Nicholas Negroponte put it "TV is a medium in which all the intelligence is at the point of origin, but new technologies shift the distribution of intelligence from the transmitter to the receiver" (1995:19). Specifically, as far as web journalism is concerned the major reason for which interactivity has become a crucial element, and a focal point of interest for media researchers, is that it can change the mode of defining news (Zollman, 1997), it provides new forms of producing and consuming news (Shahin & Bierhoff, 2001) and it can change the role of journalists (Singer, 1998).

Interactivity above all connotes that the 'mouse-clicker' is in control. Thus, acknowledgement of the public's role or of the user's importance is an increasing part of a certain media industry discourse. Responding to the invitation of the UK Press Gazette to name the biggest challenges facing journalists in 2002, the editor of *The Guardian*, Alan Rusbridger, said: 'The readers are in the driving seat: if they want their news on a Personal Digital Assistant rather than newsprint, that's what we had better give them' (Anon, 2002)[9].

Users not only want navigational control, but they actually want to be heard. Most people have become profoundly skeptical of what they read through the mass media. 'People want to bypass those channels to increase the level of direct experience, to have a much more direct contact with reality and with the subjects they feel closely about' (John Barlow in J.D. Lasica, 1996).
Michael Schudson (1995) argued that an ideological gulf has developed between reporters and their audiences resulting in the loss of credibility on the part of the newspapers. Yet, new media and interactivity can eliminate this development so that content is rendered more credible and the audience becomes more open.

It is pretty obvious, therefore, that online news organisations are increasingly realising that the key to success lies in giving readers what they want and when they want it. That means constant updating, creating interactivity, giving readers options and control. In other words, it entails major changes in the way newsrooms work.

[9] citen in Quinn, Gary & Brian Trench (2002), Workpackage 1: Studies Defining the Wider Context for Media Innovation, Paper prepared on behalf of MUDIA (Multimedia Content in the Digital Age), IST (information-society-technologies) and Dublin City University, Ireland (responsible partner), July 2002, www.mudia.org

So far, the benefits of interactivity discussed revolved around what the audience has to gain. Yet, the application of true interactivity is equally beneficial for online newspapers as well. As mention above, online news is a commodity, and in order for it to 'sell' it has to meet certain characteristics. In an era of extreme fragmentation of the audience, a medium which can effectively detect and cater for the specific preferences of its audience can build a loyal group of users, and it is only natural to become attractive to advertisers. Besides, it has already been proven that the companies that survived were the ones that gave the users the interactivity and control they demanded (Pryor, 2002).

Furthermore, the newspaper which offers the opportunity for active participation and encourages a dialogue with its readers helps the paper deliver news of genuine interest to them (Noth, 1996). Such information is considered precious at a time when detailed and extensive audience research does not seem able to define 'what exactly the audience wants'. As a result the true meaning of what the audience wants remains a puzzle word, which becomes even more complicated in days of severe saturation in content and presentation.

Regan (1995) argued that interactivity fosters a more involved staff. The report of the International Labour Organisation on information technologies in the media, quotes a BBC News Online executive: 'We're now getting much greater involvement from the people in the story itself. The journalist's business is becoming much more closely connected to its subjects, and this makes for better reporting, for a better relationship between the news organisation and its readers. Right now there are four people just sorting through readers' e-mails, so

that every day we have this immense interaction with our readers. This is fundamentally changing journalism'[10].

Journalists who have established a two-way communication with their readers have discovered a tank of new topics and sources since these users write back to alert them of upcoming events, broken links or stories in their community that they would never have known about (Lasica, 1998). Daniel Kadlec, a columnist of Time claims: "Through e-mail I have built a library of people out in the world who I can get in touch with to provide different perspectives on financial stories…It's extra input" (Solomon, 1997)[11].

Media experts argue that the real challenge for web journalism is to extent the best of traditional publishing, such as the credibility of well-known papers into the web, while taking advantage of all the interactive and multimedia features available on the Internet (Kamerer et. al, 1998). A fascinating example were the eyewitness reports posted by New York-based webloggers, whose descriptions -often accompanied by images and video from the scene of the 11th September attacks- were of upper quality (Jordan, 2002). Such pieces illustrate how news sources are not restricted to what we think of as the traditional news media, and if posted on popular newspaper sites, people get the opportunity to view good and rare material, which otherwise would be unavailable or really hard to find through a plethora of sites.

Online Journalism in Greece

The first online newspaper to go online was *Makedonia* in 1995. Today 70% of greek newspapers have an online edition. However, very few of

[10] idid, p. 11
[11] ibid, p. 12

them have evolved into true online newspapers (Veglis, 2002). Most greek newspapers moved into cyberspace under fear and with little knowledge about the function and potential of the new medium. The basic reason to launch an online edition was an attempt to reverse declining circulation by building a new base of readers/users, and more specifically of young and computer-savvy readers, given the fact that start up costs are relatively small. A second reason has to do with developing a new source of revenue by basically offering the same product. Similar to the former, is editors' attempt to protect their advertising base, and particularly the classified ads. And last but not least, due to prestige reasons. Following the global trend of going online, presence on the Internet improves the newspaper's image.

Exploring interactivity in online greek newspapers

The Internet is, by definition, an interactive medium, but not every communication mediated by the Internet is interactive (Schultz, 1999). Receivers of messages on the Internet 'may or may not move fluidly from their role as audience members to producers of messages' (Morris & Ogan, 1996).

Considering previous studies on the state of interactive forms of online newspapers, it is evident that e-papers attempt steps, sometimes effective and others less serious, towards a more interactive profile. Gubman and Greer (1997) after conducting an analysis of U.S. newspaper sites concluded that online newspapers were making strides in placement of news and reader interaction. Kamerer and Bressers (1998) argue that 'repurposing' content from the printed editions may be the dominant trend, but the growth in interactivity of online newspapers is noteworthy. The findings produced by Tanjev Schultz (1999) reveal that more sophisticated tools of interactivity, such

as videoconferencing was not encountered at all, yet newspapers have not totally ignored the Internet's conversational potential. Kenney et. al. (2000) argue that little has changed as far as interactivity of online newspapers is concerned after comparing their study with the ones conducted by Ha and James (1998) and Tankard and Ban (1998). A more recent study (Quinn and Trench, 2002) that examined the European online landscape claim that the adoption by online news services of the range of possible forms and expressions of interactivity with users is limited and uneven, showing a remarkably weak interest in tracking usage of their sites as a basis for redesigning them and rethinking their publishing practices and user relationship.

According to the latest data, a new publishing model is evolving: Innovation is developing through partnership between owners and end-users (Pryor, 2002). During the online journalism conferences held at the USC Annenberg School on March 2002 and another at the University of Texas on April 2000, a tendency towards increased levels of interactivity was documented. "We have to engage in a conversation with our audiences…We look at what users are doing and use it to inform how our product develops", said Stephen Newsman[12], deputy general manager of nytimes.com. During her speech Jane Ellen Stevens[13], multimedia instructor at UC Berkeley Graduate School of Journalism urged journalists and editors to "involve the community – make people part of the news organisation", while Julie Weber[14], digital media manager at Hearst Newspapers advised to "give [the users] what they want and give them value".

[12] cited in Pryor, Larry (2002), The Third Wave of Online Journalism, Online Journalism Review, April 26, 2002, www.ojr.org/ojr/future/p1019174689.php
[13] ibid
[14] ibid

The research question, therefore, is 'what and how many (different) interactive options do greek online newspapers offer?' In other words, do greek newspapers try to keep up with international trends?

Methodology

In order to measure interactivity a scale based on predetermined parameters is needed (Kiousis, 1999). The research conducted by the authors is based on Carrie Heeter's (1989) theoretical model which identifies six dimensions of interactivity:

1. complexity of choice available: it refers to those features or mechanisms which allow the user to navigate through the site and choose both the content and the sequence
2. effort users must exert: it is related to how user-friendly the site is in terms of design, so that users can find what they need with the least possible effort
3. responsiveness to the user: it refers to those features which allow the user to contact the reporters/editor
4. facilitation of interpersonal communication: it has to do with the features which allow the users to communicate with each other
5. ease of adding information: it refers to the ability given to the user to contribute to the content by adding information on the site
6. monitor system use: it refers to those monitoring devices which permit the web site operator to record who has visited the site and which part of the site they have visited.

Sampling

The sample consists of the online editions of existing newspapers and does not include any Net-natives. The authors chose those with the largest circulation[15]. Because daily newspapers in Greece are divided

[15] Source of circulation figures: 'Ependitis' newspaper, 17/05/2003

into morning and evening papers, the sample was made up by the three morning and the three evening newspapers that have the largest circulation figures. Thus, the sample was the following:

I. Morning newspapers:

1. KATHIMERINI [www.kathimerini.gr]
2. TO VIMA [http://tovima.dolnet.gr]
3. RIZOSPASTIS [www.rizospastis.gr]

II. *Evening newspapers*

1. TA NEA [http://ta-nea.dolnet.gr]
2. ELEYFEROTYPIA [www.enet.gr]
3. ETHNOS [www.ethnos.gr]

The date of examination was June 3, 2003.

Coding

The method used is content analysis, while the unit of analysis under examination is the home page of each web site.

According to the elements provided by Carrie Heeter, the following model for measuring interactivity was constructed:

INTERACTIVE FEATURES	**RATING (POINTS)**
I. complexity of choice available	
1. use of language (greek/ English)	1
2. internal search engine	1
3. external search engine	2
4. archives	2
5. links to other relevant articles	2

6. links to other sources (outside the web site)	2
7. time of updating	1
8. customisation possibilities of the web site	3
9. inclusion of multimedia features (sound, video, photos)	1
	15
II. effort users must exert	
10. advanced search tool	2
11. direct printing button	1
12. breaking news services	3
13. mobile SMS services	3
	9
III. responsiveness to the user	
14. direct e-mail link to the article's author	2
15. e-mail addresses that readers can use to contact the editor/writers	1
	3
IV. facilitation of interpersonal communication	
16. chat rooms	1
17. discussion forums	1
18. polls and surveys	2
	4
V. ease of adding information	
19.hyperlinks that add information to the site	3
20. mechanisms that allow users to make contributions to a reporter's story	2
21. option of directly e-mailing an article	2
	7

VI. monitor system use	
22. cookies[16]	2
23. counters	1
24. requested registration	1
	4
Total:	**42**

A scored rating derives from recording the presence or absence of 24 specific interactive options. These are rated relative to their ability to provide opportunities for users to interact with news producers and with other users.

Using this scoring method, the maximum score is defined as 42 points and the minimum score is zero.

Each feature receives a rating from 1 to 3. A rating of 1 indicates a low level of interactive functionality. Those functions forge a stronger relationship between the user and the news service. A rating of 2 indicates a moderate level of interactive functionality. Such features allow for direct user response but do not consist a route for providing content. Whilst a rating of 3 shows a high level of interactive functionality which either permits the user to interact directly with the news service by providing content for instance, or it allows the user to adjust the site on his needs and preferences.

Results

After conducting a content analysis research on the six web sites under investigation, the authors came up with the following results:

[16] 'Cookies' are packets of data that are transmitted and stored by a Web Server to the hard drive of a user's computer. They include information that is used by the Web Server when the user access the site.

INTERACTIVE FEATURES	KATHIMERINI	TO VIMA	RIZOSPASTIS	TA NEA	ELEYFEROTYPIA	ETHNOS
I. complexity of choice available						
1. use of language (greek/ English)	1	0 [possibility for downloading greek fonts]	1 [monthly international edition]	0 [possibility for downloading greek fonts]	0	0
2. internal search engine	1	1	1	1	1	0
3. external search engine	0	0	0	0	2	0
4. archives	0	2	2	2	2	0
5. links to other relevant articles	2	0	0	2	2	0
6. links to other sources (outside the web site)	0	0	0	0	0	0
7. time of updating	0	0	0	1	0	0
8. customisation possibilities of the web site	0	0	0	0	0	0
9. inclusion of multimedia features (sound, video, photos)	1 [only photos]	0	1 [only photos]	1 [only photos]	1 [only photos]	1 [only photos]
	5	**3**	**5**	**7**	**8**	**1**
II. effort users must exert						
10. advanced search tool	0	2	0	0	0	0
11. direct printing button	0	0	0	0	1	0
12. breaking news services	0	0	0	0	0	0
13. mobile SMS services	0	0	0	0	0	0
	0	**2**	**0**	**0**	**1**	**0**
III. responsiveness to the user						
14. direct e-mail link to the article's author	0	0	2 [12 separate e-mails for each departmen	0	0	0

			t]			
15. e-mail addresses that readers can use to contact the editor/writers	1	1	1	1	1	0
	1	**1**	**3**	**1**	**1**	**0**
IV. facilitation of interpersonal communication						
16. chat rooms	0	0	0	0	0	0
17. discussion forums	0	0	0	0	0	0
18. polls and surveys	0	0	0	0	0	0
	0	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**
V. ease of adding information						
19.hyperlinks that add information to the site	0	0	0	0	0	0
20. mechanisms that allow users to make contributions to a reporter's story	0	0	0	0	0	0
21. option of directly e-mailing an article	0	0	0	0	0	0
	0	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**
VI. monitor system use						
22. cookies	0	0	0	0	0	0
23. counters	0	0	0	0	0	0
24. requested registration	0	0	0	0	0	0
	0	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**
Total:	**6**	**6**	**8**	**8**	**10**	**1**

The most striking element of the research is how extremely low have all six web sites scored. Out of 42 points being the maximum, the highest score was ten achieved by *Eleyferotypia*, followed by *Rizospastis* and *Ta Nea* with eight points, *Kathimerini* and to *Vima* with six points and *Ethnos* that scored only one.

A second observation to be made is how similar are the web sites in terms of the interactive elements they offer. Basically, they have all scored at the same features. Also, it ought to be noted that none of the sites scored at those features that were rated with three points, a rating indicating a high level of interactivity.

Related to this is the fact that all the sites got points in the first three sections and none of them got any points at the rest. The first two sections include features, which if we use the terms established by Mark Deuze, apply to navigational interactivity, by which the user is allowed to navigate in a more or less structured way through the site's content. But as we move towards more complicated types of interactivity, such as functional interactivity where the user can to some extent participate in the production process of the site by interacting with other users or the producers of a particular page (for example direct mailto-links, discussion groups etc), or adaptive interactivity where every action of the user has consequences for the content of the site as the site's programming adapts itself to the surfing behavior of every individual user and remembers the user's preferences (for example allowing people to upload, offer chat rooms or personal customisation through smart web design), the sites score zero. Guay has argued that the most sophisticated level of interactivity is adaptive, meaning that it allows the web site to adapt to itself (ideally in real-time) to the behavior of the visiting surfer.

Overall, it is evident that greek newspaper sites are characterised by extremely low levels of interactivity even though eight years have passed since the greek newspapers' debut online, and despite the fact that significant efforts are made internationally, so that the news audience is addressed in a different mode: as active instead of passive media consumers.

Conclusions

The surprising lack of possible forms and expressions of interactivity in greek e-papers shows that the new paradigm of journalism, which refers to disappearing boundaries between producer and user, or to a gradual merging of professional journalism with a range of non-professional activities, is absent. The reasons for this state can be attributed to certain political, social and economic factors as well as to the particular greek journalistic culture.

Greek online newspapers present a low degree of interactivity, which firstly can be explained because of production and delivery barriers. Most online newspapers operate by insufficient staff both in numerical terms as well as in terms of web journalism expertise. The latter exacerbates due to the lack of equipment. The greek media market is small, and newspaper owners do not risk to invest on operations which at the moment cannot be profitable. Although the number of Internet users is growing fast, the total percentage in 2002 amounted to 19.3%[17] of the population.

Also, despite the fact that Internet users access the web on a pretty regular basis (35% log on every day, 27% many times per week and 25% 1-2 times per week)[18], only half of them (53%)[19] go online for information retrieval and news, which makes the web news audience even smaller. Schudson (1996) argues that online services have a hard time becoming a 'habitual part of the user's routine'. New subscribers typically try the various applications extensively over the first several weeks.

As far as delivery barriers are concerned the limitations of the users'

[17] source: Veglis, Andreas & Andreas Pomportsis, (2003), Searching the Greek WWW, submitted to the 9th PANHELLENIC CONFERENCE IN INFORMATICS (PCI'2003).
[18] source: ibid
[19] source: Goutas, Thodoros (2001), Use and Diffusion of Information Technologies in Greece, Report presented on behalf of the 'Information Society' Programme and the National Research Network, www.mpa.gr/specials/edet/index.html

computers, such as outdated software technology or slow modems and low bandwidth do not permit the use of multiple interactive features.

Media commercialisation encourages competition, which operates as a significant determinant of how the news media function. This phenomenon is especially dominant in greek journalism, 'which has been led by the needs of competition rather by a solid, or unanimously accepted, professional culture' (Papathanasopoulos 2001: 515). As shown from the evidence above, online newspapers in Greece present a homogenous picture in the use of interactive features, which are limited to a large extent. As a result owners are not 'compelled' to improve their sites as long as a better product is not offered to the audience. Furthermore, the greek audience is characterised by low levels of net proficiency[20] and familiarity, and thus the market is still not rendered appropriate for sophisticated web sites.

A third parameter has to do with the general declining of interest in news, which renders the news audience even smaller. In greek society a high individualistic character has been documented, which in its turn implies a low degree of social coherence and sense of collectivity (Syngellakis, 1997: 101). Moreover, the identification of social action with partisan action, the peculiar system of extensive clientilism (Tsagarousianou, 1995) in relation to the fact that the memories of the civil war and dictatorship have faded away, the severe political crisis of the late 1980's, and the recent elimination of the ideological gap between the Socialists and the Conservatives, have resulted not only in the decline of political interest, but also in the rise of cynical and alienated attitudes towards politics, especially among the younger generations. And although the Net has significant penetration into

[20] The term 'net proficiency' refers to the ability of the user to manipulate and regulate his/hers information intake

young people, mainly the 15-24 age group[21], which according to theory are the web savvy readers, yet greek young people seem to have little interest in news.

The printed press in Greece, with very few exceptions, has remained obtrusively partisan, excessive and at times cross-patronising (Papathanasopoulos, 2001). It is only natural that the credibility of newspapers has decreased significantly, which partly explains the declining circulation figures. Newspapers sites are just the digital counterpart of a newspaper, which has established its political ties and identification, and thus loses any semblance of independent judgement. People will not turn to read 'one of the same' and editors will not invest on a product that is not wanted. With television remaining the primary source of news and newspaper sites presenting a poor picture and few visits, advertisers are sceptical about the new medium meaning that the possibility of profit is very limited and a 'vicious circle' is created.

Another reason has to do with the persistence of the old mindset. 'Newspaper companies are business first, and they culturally and corporately unable to understand the egalitarian, decentralised, peer-to-peer, autonomous nature of communication on the Net' (Martin and Hansen, 1998:46)[22]. Others (Lasica, 1998) mention newsrooms that breed aloofness and insularity or managers who turn apoplectic when employees voice their personal opinions in public resulting in the perpetuation of practices and content that seems less relevant in the digital age.

---

[21] Source: Goutas, Thodoros (2001), Use and Diffusion of Information Technologies in Greece, Report presented on behalf of the 'Information Society' Programme and the National Research Network, www.mpa.gr/specials/edet/index.html

[22] cited in Kenney, Keith et. al. (2000), Interactive Features of Online Newspapers, First Monday, vol. 5, no. 1, January 2000, http://fisrtmonday.org/issues/issue5_1/kenney/index.html

Furthermore, due to the particularities of the greek political history and the fact that the modernisation of the greek mass media system has taken place in the absence of a strong, truly independent journalistic body of ethics, the modern greek media professionals accept the corruption of journalists (Papathanasopulos, 2001) as well as the fact that 'the press offers information, analysis and comments produced by a few elite groups who address other political, cultural and economic elites in order to send messages and start up negotiations' (Papathanasopoulos, 2001: 518-519). But such trends reflect something which is related less to journalism and more to the interplay between media owners and political power centres and the battle for control for the public agenda rather than to focus on objectivity, exchange of information and dialogue. It is pretty obvious thus, that any attempts which promote what is called civic journalism and render the public as active receivers and producers of news is out of the question.

Finally, the development of a solid online journalistic culture which promotes interactivity is hindered by the journalists and the mode in which they perceive themselves. Journalism professionals view themselves as the mediators between authorities and the public. Even further they are the ones who perform the gatekeeping role by deciding which information will go public and how. They filter what is newsworthy and what isn't. Such responsibilities attach prestige and status. On the other hand, different levels of interactivity undermine the 'we write, you read dogma' of modern journalism (Deuze, 2002).

Although schools of media in universities were founded in the early 1990's, older professionals claim that a journalist 'is made on the job'. A university degree does not seem to be a serious qualification for starting a career as a journalist. Yet, online journalism requires specific skills and knowledge that most old journalists ignore. In that sense both

young professional newcomers, who could break the established hierarchy and members of the audience who could actively participate in the production of content, pose a serious threat as far as their job, tasks and status are concerned. As a result they don't favour online development which they mainly view as unnecessary and a waste of money and time.

The net result is online editions being at a 'primitive' stage, editions that not only consist pure 'shovelware,' but indeed a bad one. Greek journalists do not seem to realise what online news research has revealed: the more interactive opportunities web sites give to users, the more involved users will fell about the site even though they may not take full advantage of them (Deuze, 2002).

Schudson (1995) argued that an ideological gulf has developed between media professionals and the audience. 'Journalists today must choose. As gatekeepers they can transfer lots of information, or they can make users a smarter, more active and questioning audience for news events and issues' (Kenney et. al, 2000: 3). Greek journalists though do not seem willing to engage into the second stance and eliminate that gap for various reasons as mentioned above. Besides, we should bear in mind that 'journalism does not grow in a vacuum: it is the fruit of the interaction between different actors and systems and such differences in social structure and context have to be taken into account even when theorising models of journalism (Mancini, 2000: 267)[23]. In other words, introducing multimedia and interactivity in a news media organisation perhaps has less to do with using all kinds of new resources and hardware or software applications, but more about understanding and developing a different, diverging journalistic news culture. It has to do more with values than with skills.

[23] cited in Papathanassopoulos, Stylianos (2001), Media Commercialisation and Journalism in Greece, European Journal of Communication, vol. 16, no. 4

Future Research

Two future studies appear obvious. On one hand, to interview the executives of the online newspapers in order to find out from their point of view, why most dimensions of interactivity are not being used. A comparison of responses from journalists would be interesting. The second study would explore the perceived interactivity on the part of the users. Do they use interactive features? Which ones they prefer and why? Answers to such questions would provide valuable information to both newspaper executives and media scholars.

References

- Agostini, Angelo (1997), Journalism and the Challenge of the Internet, Le Monde Diplomatique, October 1997, www.mondediplo.com/1997/10/internet
- Cho, Yung-Yul (2000), Discrepancy of Gratifications of Online News Readers, Paper submitted to the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC), Phoenix, 2000
- De Aquino, Ruth, Jan Bierhoff (2001), Tim Orchard and Martha Stone (2001), The European Multimedia News Landscape, Report prepared on behalf of MUDIA (Multimedia in the Digital Age) and IST, May 2001, www.mudia.org
- Deuze, Mark (1998), The WebCommunicators: Issues in Research into Online Journalism and Journalists, First Monday, www.firstmonday.org/issues/issue3_12/deuze/index.html
- Deuze, Mark (2001), Online Journalism: Modelling the First Generation of News Media on the World Wide Web, First Monday Magazine, vol. 6, no. 10, October 2001, http://firstmonday.org/issues/issue6_10/deuze/index.html
- Deuze, Mark (2001), Understanding the Impact of the Internet: On New Media Professionalism, Mindsets and Buzzwords, www.ejournalism.au.com/ejournalist/deuze.pdf

- Deuze, Mark (2002), The Internet and Its Journalisms – Part I: A Typology of Online Journalism, Online Journalism Review, posted on July 11, 2002, www.ojr.org/ojr/future/p1026407729.php
- Gauntlett, David (2000) (ed), Web.studies: Rewiring Media Studies for the Digital Age, London: Arnold
- Goutas, Thodoros (2001), Use and Diffusion of Information Technologies in Greece, Report presented on behalf of the 'Information Society' Programme and the National Research Network, www.mpa.gr/specials/edet/index.html
- Gubman, Jon & Jennifer Greer (1997), An Analysis of Online Sites Produced U.S. Newspapers: Are the Critics Right?, Paper submitted to the AEJMC Newspaper Division
- Harald, Pfannhauser (2002), From Gutenberg to Marconi – Why Electronic Media Are Still a Secondary Source of Information, Paper presented at COST network conference on 'The Impact of the Internet on Mass Media, Tromso – Norway, June 21-22, 2002, http://cost-a20.iscte.pt/tromso/Guttenberg2Marconi.doc
- Industry News from the Associated Press, Internet: News Web Sites Slowly Moving Away from 'Shovelware', retrieved on 3/10/2002, www.ap.org/pages/indnews
- Kamerer, David & Bonnie Bressers (1998), Online Newspapers: A Trend Study of News Content and Technical Features, Paper submitted to the AEJMC Newspaper Division
- Kenney, Keith, Alexander Gorelik and Sam Mwangi (2000), Interactive Features of Online Newspapers, First Monday, vol. 5, no. 1, January 2000, http://fisrtmonday.org/issues/issue5_1/kenney/index.html
- Kenney, Keith et. al. (2000), Interactive Features of Online Newspapers, First Monday Magazine, vol. 5, no. 1, January 2000, http://firstmonday.org/issues/issue5_1/kenney/index.html
- Kiousis, Spiros (1999), Broadening the Boundaries of Interactivity: A Concept Explication, Paper submitted to the AEJMC annual conference, New Orleans, LA, August 4-7, 1999
- Lasica, J. D. (1996), John Perry Barlow: 'People Want to Bypass the Mass Media, www.well.com/user/jd/barlow.html

- Lasica, J. D. (1998), A Great Way to Strengthen Bonds, American Journalism Review, March 1998, www.ajr.org/article_printable.asp?id=154
- Lasica, J. D. (2002), The View from Europe, Online Journalism Review, modified: April 9, 2002, www.ojr.org/ojr/lasica/p1017820504.php
- Lee, Jae-Shin (2000), Interactivity: A New Approach, Paper submitted to the Communication Technology & Policy Division at the AEJMC annual Conference, Phoenix, August 9-12, 2000
- McMillan, Sally & Edward Downes (1998), Interactivity: A Qualitative Exploration of Definitions and Models, Paper submitted to the AEJMC annual convention, August 5-8, Baltimore
- McMillan, Sally (2000), What Is Interactivity and What Does It Do? Paper submitted to the Communication Technology and Policy Division AEJMC annual conference, Phoenix, 2000
- Morris, John (2001), Newspapers in the Age of the Internet, Paper submitted to the Newspaper Division of AEJMC annual convention, Washington, DC, August 2001
- Morris, M. & C. Ogan (1996), The Internet as Mass Medium, Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, vol. 1, no. 4, www.ascusc.org/jcmc/vol1/issue4/morris.html
- Negroponte, Nicholas (1995), Being Digital, Athens: Kastaniotis
- Neuberger, Christoph et. al. (1998), Online – The Future of Newspapers? Germany's Dailies on the World Wide Web, Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, vol. 4, no. 1, www.ascusc.org/jcmc/vol1/issue4/neuberger.html
- Nua Internet Surveys (1998), Paperless Tigers, December 14, 1998, www.nua.ie/surveys/analysis/weekly_editorial/archives/1998/issue1no55.html
- Papathanassopoulos, Stylianos (2001), Media Commercialisation and Journalism in Greece, European Journal of Communication, vol. 16, no. 4, pp. 505-521
- Pavlik, John (1997), The Future of Online Journalism, Columbia Journalism Review, July/August 1997, www.cjr.org/year/97/4/online.asp

- Pavlik, John (2001), Journalism and New Media, New York: Columbia University Press
- Peng, Foo Yeuth et. al. (1999), Trends in Online Newspapers: A Look at the US Web, Newspaper Research Journal, vol. 20, no. 2, Spring 1999
- Phelan, Eric (1999), Changing Journalism: The Influence of the Internet, UNESCO Webworld News, www.unesco.org/webworld/points_of_views/phelan_1.shtml
- Pryor, Larry (2002), The Third Wave of Online Journalism, Online Journalism Review, modified on April 26, 2002, www.ojr.org/ojr/future/p1019174689.php
- Quinn, Gary & Brian Trench (2002), Workpackage 1: Studies Defining the Wider Context for Media Innovation, Report prepared on behalf of MUDIA (Multimedia in the Digital Age) – Responsible partner: Dublin City University, www.mudia.org
- Quinn, Gary & Brian Trench (2002), Online News Media and their Audiences, Report prepared on behalf of MUDIA (Multimedia in the Digital Age) and IST, www.mudia.org
- Raphael, Jordan (2002), Media Critics See Web Role Emerge, Online Journalism Review, posted on April 3, 2002, www.ojr.org/ojr/reviews/1017865409.php
- Riley, Patricia et. al. (1998), Community or Colony: The Case of Online Newspapers on the Web, Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, vol. 4, no. 1, www.ascusc.org/jcmc/vol4/issue1/keough.html
- Schudson, Michael (1995), The Power of News, Cambridge: Harvard University Press
- Schudson, Michael (1996), News in the Next Century – New Technology, Old Values and A New Definition of News, Essay prepared on behalf of the Radio and Television News Directors Foundation (RTNDF), www.rtndf.org/resources/newtech.html
- Schultz, Tanjev (1999), Interactive Options in Online Journalism: A Content Analysis of 100 U.S. Newspapers, Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, vol. 5, no. 1, www.ascusc.org/jcmc/vol5/issue1/schultz.html

- Shahin, Jamal & Jan Bierhoff (2001), Connecting the Media and Research Worlds, Report prepared on behalf of MUDIA (Multimedia in the Digital Age) and IST, www.mudia.org
- Singer, Jane (1998), Online Journalists: Foundations for Research into their Changing Roles, Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, vol. 4, no. 1, www.ascusc.org/jcmc/vol4/issue1/singer.html
- Singer, Jane (1999), The Metro Wide Web: How Newspapers' Gatekeeping Role Is Changing Online, Paper submitted to the AEJMC Newspaper Division annual conference, New Orleans, LA, August, 1999
- Syngellakis, Anna (1997), Television in Greece in Coleman James et. al. (eds), Television in Europe, Exeter: Intellect, pp. 101-110
- Tankard, J. W. and H. Ban (1998), Online Newspapers: Living Up to their Potential? AEJMC Conference Papers, Baltimore, August 1998
- Trench, Brian (1997), Interactive Newspapers: From Access to Participation, Paper presented to the conference of Society of Newspaper Design Scandinavia, Billund, Denmark, May 1997, www.dcu.ie/staff/newspaers.html
- Tsagarousianou, Roza (1995), Political Culture and Mass Communication in Greece: The Athenian Press and Political Minorities in Demertzis Nikos (ed), The Greek Political Culture Today, 2nd edition, Athens: Odysseas, pp. 329-349
- Veglis, Andreas (2002), Locating Information in Greek Online News Resources, Mesogeios Mediterranee', vol. 16, pp. 177-191
- Veglis, Andreas & Andreas Pomportsis, (2003, Searching the Greek WWW, submitted to the 9th PANHELLENIC CONFERENCE IN INFORMATICS (PCI'2003).
- Ward, Mike (2002), Journalism Online, Kent: Focal Press
- Zollman, Peter (1997), Interactive News: State of the Art, Essay prepared on behalf of the Radio and Television News Directors Foundation (RTNDF), www.rtndf.org/resources/intnews/index.html