



**Maria Xenofontos and Christina Prassou**

**“The Impact of the December riots on the Image of Greece: News Coverage by International Media – A Quantitative Content Analysis”**

The present study focuses on the way the international television media have depicted the events which unfolded from the 5<sup>th</sup> of December and until the 31<sup>st</sup> of December 2008 in Athens and Greece, on the pretext of the shooting and death of a fifteen year old youth by a police officer in the center of Athens, and the rioting that ensued. Data was collected by means of a pioneering automated digital system for searching and tracing television and radio references in real-time and by keyword, phrase or topic. The system monitors on a 24hour basis international media from the USA, Great Britain, Canada, China as well as Pan-Arabic media. MatrixMedia platform has been utilized in the real-time monitoring of TV and radio broadcasts, the tracing of historical trends, analysis of image-making processes and crisis management. From the findings of the survey it follows that international media have substantially increased their references during this particular period, with extensive reportages by correspondents, live connections and systematic coverage of the events in their news, while the riots in Greece ranked amongst the first items and could be regarded as being the dominant issue of the news reports. This type of news coverage accentuates its importance to that of a critical event. To an event, that is, whose news coverage has the capacity for reshaping the nation image. The key word correlated with this particular television coverage was “riot”, which is used as the basic interpretational key. Additionally, while previous research project conducted by MatrixMedia have shown that news coverage from British media had, in the past, been much more negative than from American ones, in the context of the present study and due to the dynamics of the event, this negativism in the coverage of Greece is diffusive. Finally, we shall attempt a qualitative analysis of the visual material that has been accumulated.

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