

Reporting foreign affairs in Greece and Turkey: 'National interest' vs truthful journalism

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This is a draft paper of a work in progress containing a partial presentation of findings¹

Abstract

Anderson notes that people are willing to kill or be killed for the sake of the nation. Billig adds that people accept myths as history, or describe their feelings as patriotism, while they view the same feelings of 'others' as nationalism. With respect to journalists, Nossek holds that the more 'national' the issue they report on, the less professional they become. Drawing on Nossek, Tılıç, Özgüneş and Terzis and on primary research findings (discourse analysis and interviews with Greek and Turkish journalists), we demonstrate that journalists detect signs of nationalism in the press of the 'other' but not in their own writings, although their own nationalist bias is evident for colleagues from the 'other' side. With respect to reporting on foreign policy, our study confirms that Greek and Turkish mainstream journalists are generally observed to prefer defending 'national interest' as defined by the elites, to defending 'public interest' as a civic concept. Their discourse repeats the official political discourse, while a critical stance on issues of foreign policy is absent, even from journalists critical to the government on other issues. Hence, we maintain that subjugation of reportage to the 'national interest' undermines any journalist's ability to report honestly and truthfully.

Introduction

The rationale for this paper was the realisation of a prevailing issue in the social and political actions of Turkey and Greece; the issue being a mutually negative preoccupation towards the neighbouring 'other' (Millas, 2004). The purpose of this investigation was to examine the role the media play in this issue; whether they just reflect it or they are part of the problem, being themselves preoccupied and applying a biased - rather than an impartial - stance. The main aim, therefore, was to find out whether Greek and Turkish journalists working in the mainstream newspapers perform their jobs, when reporting the 'other', as independent professionals defending "public interest" or they rather opt to defend the "national interest" as this is defined by the elites. In other words, this study aims to reveal whether Turkish and Greek mainstream journalists repeat the official discourse, which determines the 'national interest', or they digress from it and form their own discourse instead.

1 This paper constitutes a draft report of a project in progress. There is only partial presentation of the research data. In this form, it was presented in the 65th Annual International Conference of the Political Studies Association (PSA), 30th March - 1st April 2015, Sheffield, UK. For more information please contact:

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Historical - Cultural Background

When Greeks say “I became a Turk”² they mean “I got furious”; when Turks say “here's a Greek head”³ they mean “how mulish is s/he”. It does not take a semiotician to derive from these examples that the stereotypical idea of the neighbours for each other leans toward the negative. When someone reads history textbooks of the two countries (Millas, 1991: 25-27), when they read Turkish and Greek novels (Millas, 2001: 186), or when they hear official statements made by politicians, diplomats or the military of both sides (Hadjidimos, 1999: 5; Tılıç, 2006: 20), they understand clearly that Turks and Greeks represent the 'national other' for Greeks and Turks respectively. The definitions of Turkishness and Greekness presuppose a suspicious stance toward the 'other' (Anastasakis et al, 2009: 1; Özkırmımlı and Sofos, 2008: 2; Millas, 2002: 119-120). The modern Greek nation-state was founded in 1830, after the Greeks successfully rebelled against Ottoman rule, the modern Turkish nation-state was founded (transitioning from the Ottoman to the Republican system) in 1923, after Turkey won a war against Greece. Each other's national identity, therefore, has been defined as a violent rejection of the other's historical, cultural, political, and sociological frameworks. This identity has also been framed through the mixing of fear, negative feelings and harsh criticism towards the 'other' (Anastasakis et al, 2009: 1-2). The media of Turkey and Greece have been fomenting anxiety, by setting and creating the tone of the conflict (Özgüneş and Terzis, 2000: 409; Terzis, 2008: 147).

Theoretical context: The media as a Theatre of 'Banal Nationalism'

Anderson (2006), Hobsbawm (1990) and Smith (1991) argue that nationalist ideologies cannot be conceived or imagined without contrasting 'us' with 'others'. Burns (1995: 317) argues that the idea of the nation is a “sentiment rooted in broad historical, geographical, linguistic, or cultural circumstances. It is characterized by a consciousness of belonging, in a group, to a tradition derived from those circumstances, which differs from the traditions of other groups.” Hartley (2007: 156), emphasising Anderson's characterisation of 'Imagined Communities', regards 'nation' as a 'relational term'. Das and Harindranath (2006: 10) argue that “the essence of a nation is a psychological bond”. Anderson (2006: 58), citing Hugh Seton-Watson⁴, drives the case to an (interesting) extreme, by stating that “no 'scientific definition' of the nation can be devised”. What

2 In Greek “έγινα Τούρκος”.

3 In Turkish “işte Rum kafası”.

4 Seton-Watson, H. (1977). Nations and States: An Enquiry into the Origins and the Politics of Nationalism. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press.

is important, however, is not the theoretical impossibility of defining 'nation' scientifically, but the practical reality that billions of people take the idea of 'nation' for granted; consider themselves as belonging to one; feel they are very different from 'others' (usually better); are proud of their collective and inherited being; who - ultimately - may be ready to kill or die “for these inventions”, as Anderson (2006: 141) puts it.

'Nationalism' is not limited to denoting either movements for independence and sovereignty in colonial or semi-colonial countries, or right-wing extremism in the western world. The idea of 'nationalism', as a socio-psychological state rather than a political ideology, includes the billions of people described above (practically all of us), who feel that their collective identity is based on differences from 'others'. According to Billig, nationalism “is not a particular political strategy, but it is the condition for conventional strategies, whatever the particular politics” (1995: 99). 'Banal nationalism' includes our readiness to accept invented myths and habits as ancient history and traditions (ibid: 25); to describe our feelings about our homeland as a rational, justified and defensive 'patriotism', while exactly the same feelings of foreigners are described as irrational, fanatical and aggressive nationalism (ibid: 55-56); to not question why 'we' are always the innocent victims and 'others' are always the aggressors (ibid: 152). The media are part of this 'banal nationalism' reality, by both reflecting and reproducing it. Western journalists, when arguing for immigration restrictions cite 'our' tolerance, and 'their' intolerance, as a reason for excluding them (ibid: 82). During the Falkland war, the British press sided with Thatcher who called the miners who refused to strike “the best of British”; similarly, during the (first) Gulf war, the US press depicted those who did not support Bush as the “unpatriotic enemy within” (ibid: 101). As it will be shown later, journalists in Turkey, Greece and Cyprus are not an exception to this rule.

Nationalism and the media

Do, then, concepts of 'national identity', 'national interest', 'patriotism' and the like relate to the factors they take into account and the criteria they apply in order to select the news they publish? Do they affect the manner in which they present their reports? Nossek conducted extensive primary research into these questions and found that “journalists generally handle any tensions between their journalistic values and the need to meet national ends by having a belief system such as patriotism” (2004: 347-348). The author notes that there are exceptions, but holds that “journalists who lack the 'right attitude' earn themselves labels like 'irresponsible' and 'ideological'” (ibid: 348). Nossek’s findings are consistent with those of Shamir, who showed that most Israeli journalists would rather place the nation's image and morale, along with a broad

definition of the national interest, before their own professional values (Shamir, 1988: 594). They reinforce Paterson's assertion that "in the business of international news [...] governments have traditionally dictated the coverage agenda" (Paterson, 1999: 26). And they are bolstered by those of the Glasgow Media Group, which found that the journalists' "loyalty to the national 'consensus' [...] and belief in national interests [could] override the divisions and conflicts in [...] society" (Glasgow Media Group, 1995: 130).

Building on these grounds, two interesting points can be made: a theoretical one and an empirical one. The theoretical one is based on Billig's thesis that 'banal nationalism', that is an unconfessed nationalistic feeling and spontaneous reaction -of practically all of us- on smaller or larger everyday issues, is an ideology within other ideologies, meaning that "nationalism should not be equated with the particular strategies of populist right-wing parties, for this would underestimate the scope of nationalist assumptions" (1995: 99). The empirical point is based on research by Nossek (2004), who applied Roeh and Cohen's (1992) 'openness' and 'closedness' concepts, where the more 'open' refers to rather adequate and the more 'closed' to rather biased news coverage. Nossek analysed the rhetoric of journalists, and determined if their stories were more or less 'open' or 'closed', based on criteria such as: balance, fact/commentary, neutrality, labels, historical references, sources, emphases etc. He summarised, then, that

"how 'open' or 'closed' a story is depends on how balanced and factual its presentation. Thus the fewer historical allusions and emotive labels there are, and the greater the variety of sources, the more open the story will be and vice versa" (Nossek, 2004: 355).

Nossek's findings refer to the concept of journalistic practice of framing (Entman, 2004: 3-6 & 9-13; Gamson et al, 1992: 384-386) foreign news according to their definition as 'ours' (of interest to own country) or 'theirs' (indifferent for own country). If they are 'theirs' they are reported as 'open' stories; if they are 'ours', then "the national position takes precedence over professional norms" (Nossek, 2004: 363).

Journalistic Professionalism versus patriotism

We have noted above that what is considered as 'patriotic' or serving the 'national interest' is routinely defined by governments and established social institutions (educational, religious, military etc.), with most media in each country adopting their definition and labeling as 'unpatriotic' whoever disagrees with them. We view 'patriotism' or 'national loyalty', therefore, as the feeling of belonging to a country, accompanied by the tendency to defend the country's interests (as determined by the government and the ruling elite), taking for granted that they are

always legitimate and righteous. Regarding defining journalistic professionalism, we clarify that we use the term conventionally, more like a desire rather than taking the concept for granted. Then, based on journalism's supposed commitment to public service (Dennis, 1996, cited by Singer, 2003: 143), and in an attempt to codify the theoretical diversity with respect to its components, we summarise its attributes as being: competence, integrity and adequacy; the last one being explained in terms of factuality and impartiality. Impartiality, in turn, is explained in terms of neutrality or detachment and honest selectivity, while factuality may mean accuracy, or otherwise avoidance of distortion of reality while reporting the news and avoidance of bias or suppression of any point of view (McQuail, 2005: p. 200-203).

Press-state relations and 'indexing' of news

With his study *Toward a theory of press-state relations in the United States*, Lance Bennett (1990: 106) concludes that mass media news professionals tend to "index" the range of the viewpoints according to the views of government about the given topic. For Bennett (1990: 111) **indexing** is not done on an individual level, since the norms which reside both in social structures and minds of agents in this structure, are not easily extracted from the minds of individual journalists or on the walls of newsroom, so journalists "just know" most of the time what is and what is not news. For those stories that qualify, they also "just know" how to develop reportage and editorial content (Bennett, 1990: 111).

The idea of "indexing" raises a question: Could journalists perform their participant role of being a "critic of government"? On the other hand, are they only neutral reporters who provide government based information to the public? If the contents of news are determined by the political elites, is it possible to say that the information which is sent to the public is balanced and impartial to make them evaluate the policy decision on foreign affairs? Under the indexing rule, it is easily seen that the manipulative control of governments over the news coverage is the major obstacle to the independence of journalists and the free flow of balanced political information in the public.

Following Bennett, with their *Government's Little Helpers US Press Coverage Of Foreign Policy Crises*, Zaller and Chui (1999) have analyzed thirty five cases which were selected from the list of "selected principal events in US foreign policy from 1945 to 1991" in John Spainer's *American Foreign Policy Since World War-II*. The study attempts to explain variations in the hawkishness or dovishness of coverage foreign policy crises and for this purpose, Times and Newsweek's coverage of selected cases were tested. With the study *Government's Little Helpers US Press Coverage of*

Foreign Policy Crises, Zaller and Chui (1999) have concluded that the most of recent studies argue that that news media have the tendency to mirror the political elite based opinion, what Lance Bennett (1994) has referred as the idea of “indexing”. Lance Bennett’s study of coverage of US policy toward Nicaragua is one of the fundamental works to understand the press dependence on governmental source in order to test “indexing hypothesis”.

Literature Review: Re-presentating Turks and Greeks as the 'other'

Millas⁵ holds that Turkish and Greek literature “was generally in step with the process of nation building and the search for national identity” (2009: 97). He explains that portrayals of Greeks and Turks in the other's literature had - in most cases - been positive or neutral before the formation of the nation-states (2001: 293), something that radically changed immediately after the nation-states were formed. He shows that (before nation-states) Turkish and Greek characters were not even presented as the 'other'. And he points out a contradiction: writers who (after the emergence of nation-states) in their fictional writings portrayed characters of the 'other' most usually extremely negatively, in their memoirs referred to actual 'others' in very positive ways (Millas, 2009: 98). This demonstrates that the image of the 'other' as perceived (or as it was felt that it 'had' to be presented) was different than the one actually experienced.

Turkey and Greece in the media of the 'other'

Özgüneş & Terzis (2000: 405) maintain that the mainstream media in Turkey and Greece contribute to the perpetuation of tension between the two countries. They hold that journalists play “a major role in 'manufacturing consent' and in legitimising the claims and nationalist positions of the governments in both countries (ibid: 409). And they do so by applying a combined effect of a 'spiral of silence' (Noelle-Newman, 1973: 108) and a 'spiral of hate speech’”. This double spiral effect is caused by two factors: (1) the fear that they will be labelled as traitors and (2) constant peer pressure (Özgüneş & Terzis, 2000: 422-423; Tılıç, 2000: 251 & 269). An important factor leading to biased reporting about the 'other' in Turkish and Greek journalism is an over-reliance on official sources (Özgüneş & Terzis, 2000: 410-414; Tılıç, 2000: 346; 2006: 19), something that makes one Turkish journalist wonder: “If one does not have doubts about, and does not cross-check, what the press officer of the ministry says, then what is the difference between the press officer and the journalist?” (Tılıç, 2000: 159 - our translation). Tılıç (2006: 20) also indicates that even in

5 Hercules Millas is (privileged or condemned to be) both a Greek and a Turk, having been a Turkish citizen of Greek ethnic origin. He has lived in and taught at universities of both countries.

cases where the attitude towards the 'other' in the press of the two countries softens or becomes positive, this occurs "in parallel with [the] official state policy". Other constraints to unbiased reporting are: direct state intervention (Hadjidimos, 1999: 15; Özgüneş & Terzis, 2000: 415), extensive self-censorship and a tendency to conform to the mainstream or hegemonic views (Hadjidimos, 1999: 13 & 26; Tılıç, 2000: 289 & 450-451), stereotypic framing of all issues pertaining to the 'other' (Şahin, 2011; Özgüneş & Terzis, 2000: 408; Terzis, 2008: 144; Hadjidimos, 1999: 21; Tılıç, 2000: 526), organisational problems - such as to meet tight deadlines - which result in one-sidedness (Hadjidimos, 1999: 18) because there is insufficient time to research the position of the 'other' (Özgüneş & Terzis, 2000: 414), a reason that Tılıç (2006: 19) rather considers to be an excuse. But above all, it is the journalists' belief that they have a **duty to safeguard the 'national interest'** and the 'national image', rather than their desire to report accurately in all cases (Tılıç, 2000: 333; 2006: 22-23; Özgüneş & Terzis, 2000: 416), that causes them to cover issues concerning the 'other' in alignment with official historical and political theses (Şahin, 2011; AEGEE, 2004). This occurs even when they are aware that facts do not support the view they express or they disagree with certain government policies (Tılıç, 2000: 461), thus reproducing false impressions and "mainstreaming binary oppositions" (Terzis, 2008: 143).

In this context and referring specifically to the issue of reporting news on foreign policy involving the 'other', Tılıç (2006: 19) argues that "the way Turkish papers reported about Greece, either positively or negatively, always paralleled the official state policy". He bases his argument on the observation that "prior to 1999 [when both Greece and Turkey were hit by deadly earthquakes and the two governments helped each other on a humanitarian basis, moves that lead to the implementation of a policy of rapprochement between the two sides], dog-fights were always portrayed by columnists in Turkish newspapers as the result of the bad Greek other, who provoked the incident". On the contrary, in examples of newspaper stories from 2006 that the author provides (ibid: 21) journalists take a much more lineant and compromising stance, which -however- is in step with wider positive developments in the relations of the two countries. Tılıç (ibid) comments that "it is not so difficult to report in this way during a period when the Chiefs of Staff of the two countries are meeting with each other and cracking jokes and talking about dialogues and peaceful solutions to their problems". Therefore, Tılıç (ibid) concludes that "'this 'language of the media' is not the result of an independently minded journalism [...] Rather, it is the direct result of a change in language use of the primary definers – of generals, prime ministers and ministers".

Methodology

The methodology of the study comprises an analysis of newspaper stories through the methods of qualitative Discourse Analysis and quantitative Content Analysis, complemented by in-depth semi-structured Interviews of Greek and Turkish journalists.

The Discourse Analysis is an adapted form of Teun van Dijk's (1988) relevant approach. Van Dijk (ibid: 24) suggests an analysis of the textual and contextual dimensions of news stories, which will provide an association of the units of language use to the implied ideology they contain. According to that, the headlines and schematic structure of news stories were selected for analysis in this project as macro structural features of the news text, while their syntactic features and the lexical choices of journalists were selected as micro structural characteristics. The sample for this part of the analysis included the three leading mainstream Turkish newspapers, Sabah, Hürriyet and Milliyet, and specifically the way they covered two significant issues directly related to the Greek-Turkish relations, one of negative and one of positive character. The former occurred in the beginning of 1999 and refers to the events surrounding the arrest of Abdullah Öcalan, leader of the PKK Kurdish guerilla organisation, who had found refuge at the Greek Embassy in Nairobi, Kenya; the latter, around the end of the same year, refers to the earthquake that hit the Marmara region of Turkey and the change in the relations of the two countries that followed the disaster.

For the Content Analysis, following the guidelines of Krippendorff (2004: 103-109), physical, categorical and thematic distinctions are made. Representative of these distinctions are the following units that have been selected for recording and analysis: a) physical: number of relevant stories and their proportion with respect to the total number of stories in each newspaper edition, size of stories in number of words, page location and inclusion or not of a photograph; b) categorical: aspect of the 'other' the story refers to (bilateral relations, Cyprus, minorities etc.), journalistic genre (reportage, opinion, interview etc.); c) thematic: descriptive or judgemental, in positive or negative tone. In the coding schedule, indications of importance attributed to news about the 'other' have been operationalised (such as number and size of stories, page position, having a photograph or not, the source of the story etc.), as well as indications of modality and possible bias (descriptive or judgement words, actors in the stories etc.). The sample included the newspapers Ta Nea and To Vima from Greece and Hürriyet from Turkey.

The sample for the interviews of this study consists of ten experienced newspaper and television journalists from Greece and Turkey; all of them deeply involved in - or well aware of - reporting about the 'other'. According to how the interviews developed, there were various questions asked; to clarify points the interviewees made; to ask the interviewees to mention examples of what they referred

to; to ask them to verify that the interviewer's understanding and interpretation were correct etc. Conducting and analysing the interviews was realised in six steps, which - adapted for the needs of the present study - from Kvale (2007: 102-103) were: (1) Participant describes self and routine; (2) Participant refers to relationships, structures and procedures; (3) Interviewer (during interview) condenses and interprets, seeking confirmation of interpretation; (4) Transcript analysed by interviewer (participant's understanding + new perspectives); (5) Re-interview / follow up in a few cases: participant's comments on interviewer's interpretations; (6) Relate interview to participant's (pre-interview) action.

Research findings (selective)

Discourse Analysis - Öcalan's arrest

Most headlines of Greece-related news in the Turkish newspapers of period are sensational, apparently aiming to increase the readers' curiosity on the event; for example: "Greece PKK War" (17.02.1999, Hürriyet); "Greece is clean handed!" (28.02.1999, Milliyet); "Secret Affair of Greece and PKK" (13.03.1999, Sabah). In the period of crisis, the reporters choose the word "Yunan" to refer to the Greek side, while, in normal times, the Greek side is referred as "Yunanistan" or "Atina" in the press. In the specific period, the words used in the headlines are generally harsh and accusatory. Especially when reporting the Turkish government's statements, their harshest and most accusatory words are used in the headlines by the reporters as can be seen in the following examples: "**Remorseless** Greece" (28 .02.1999, Sabah); "Shame on you our **so-called** neighbour" (08.02.1999, Sabah); "Greece's hand is covered in blood" (24.02.1999, Milliyet).

Discourse Analysis - Marmara earthquake

This section includes the Discourse Analysis of the Greece-related news texts published in three Turkish mainstream newspapers during the month after tremendous earthquake occurred in Marmara Region in Turkey on August 17, 1999. During the analysis period, another earthquake happened in Athens on September 7, 1999. After these earthquakes in both countries, the two countries supported each other in their difficult times by sending humanitarian aid to each other. In this context it was observed that the word "neighbour" was often used to refer to Greece in most of the news texts in the analysis period, as seen in the following examples: "Thank you neighbour" (21.08.1999, Hürriyet); "Get well soon, neighbour" (08.09.1999, Milliyet); "Hürriyet's thanks moved the neighbour" (23.08.1999, Hürriyet); "Bravo neighbour" (23.08.1999, Sabah); "We haven't known you like this neighbour" (22.08.1999, Sabah).

Content Analysis - Indicators of attention and interest

The quantitative Content Analysis showed that the Turkish and the Greek newspapers do not differ in volume concerning the overall number of references to the 'other', as the Turkish paper included at least one such story in 29 out of 38 editions published in the examined period and the Greek paper in 28 of the 35 editions. There were 66 stories in the Greek newspaper, representing 2.9% of the total number of stories and 2.2% of their total volume (the measure being the number of words), and 64 stories in the Turkish one, representing 2.44% of all stories and 2.64% of total volume. The prominence of position and the inclusion of photographs, two more indicators of attention, did not also differ significantly.

The two parties differ in what they consider to be newsworthy. About 30% of the stories in the Greek newspaper referred to Turkish-Greek relations, a magnitude that was only 11% in the Turkish newspaper. This finding confirms the asymmetry mentioned in the literature on Turkey-Greece relations, about Turkey being the number one 'national' concern of Greece, while the reverse is not the case for Turkey (Hirschon, 2009: 90-91). Of the stories that did not directly refer to bilateral issues, the Turkish newspaper devoted 38.6% to Cyprus, while the Greek newspaper was at only 2.17%. The extensive reference to Cyprus in the Turkish press (especially during the period covered by this investigation) is comprised primarily of the complications to the accession process of Turkey into the European Union (EU) due to the unresolved Cyprus problem.

Similarly, about 35% of the Turkish newspaper stories concerned the Greek minority of Turkey (mainly the Orthodox Patriarchate of Istanbul and a few more community issues), while only 8.7% of the stories in the Greek newspaper mentioned the Turkish (officially just 'Muslim') minority of Greece. It was noticed that 15% of the stories about non-bilateral issues in the Greek newspaper referred to the ethnically Greek community of Turkey, though there was no story in the Turkish newspaper about the ethnically Turkish community of Greece.

Content Analysis - Indicators of source influence

With respect to the journalistic genre of the stories, there was also difference. More than half stories in the Greek newspaper were written by diplomatic or defence editors, a finding indicating the type of concern Turkey represents for Greece (i.e. often related to threats or disputes). On the contrary, 39% of the stories published in the Turkish newspaper were written by its Greek correspondent, while only half this amount of the Greek newspaper stories were produced by its Turkish correspondent. It is observed that correspondents living in the host country tend to

demonstrate a deeper understanding of the 'other's' culture, mentality and overall realities than journalists depending mainly on the official sources of their own country. This observation is also confirmed by the findings of this investigation, as it will be shown subsequently, while discussing the results of the qualitative in-depth Interviews.

One more indication of the special significance Turkey has for Greece was that more than 10% of the stories referring to the 'other' were interviews, while there was no interview concerning Greece in the Turkish newspaper during the period covered by this investigation. The newspapers of the two countries present a great similarity concerning their reliance on official sources: 86% for the Greek one and 89% for the Turkish one, meaning that the civil society and ordinary citizens of the 'other' are rarely used as sources or appear as actors in the newspapers of both countries.

Content Analysis - Indicators of stance

The last part of this content analysis, though expressed in numbers, tends to stand on the border between quantitative and qualitative analysis. It aims to interpret the style and tone of the stories published and infer whether there is a negative preoccupation in them. It is admitted that the subjective judgement of the investigators is involved in this task, while one could also challenge the findings as ideologically influenced. To reduce such an effect (also to make the rules as explicit as possible, so that the research is replicable), we mention examples - from the stories of the sample - of what I consider to be 'positive', 'neutral' and 'negative' lexicalisation (our translations).

Examples of positive headlines:

“We became slaves of our controversies” (Ta Nea, 3 December, 2009: 10-11); “Cooperation is in the interest of Turkey and Greece” (Ta Nea, 6 December, 2009:34); “Well said by the Patriarch” (Hürriyet, 20 December, 2009: 4); “A friendly chat in Kardak” (Hürriyet, 20 December, 2009: 23).

Examples of neutral headlines:

“Erdoğan is going to Washington tomorrow” (To Vima, 6 December, 2009: 83); “Is it the end of the Doğan 'empire'?” (Ta Nea, 31 December, 2009: 50); “Why Dora lost” (Hürriyet, 1 December, 2009: 28); “Our letter about Cyprus was responded to orally” (Hürriyet, 3 December, 2009: 28).

Examples of negative headlines:

“Double provocation” (Ta Nea, 9 December, 2009: 12); “Ankara plays games with Frontex” (Ta Nea, 20 December, 2009: 32); “The Greek-Cypriots threaten to veto...” (Hürriyet, 6 December, 2009: 32); “Our nation has been hurt” (Hürriyet, 21 December, 2009: 24).

According to the above criteria, we considered the vocabulary of the headlines and the text of all stories in the sample and found that in the Greek newspaper, about 15% of the headlines and text

were creating a positive impression, 36.5% were expressed neutrally and a significant 48.5% tended toward the negative. In the Turkish newspaper, the positive tone prevailed in about 22% of the stories, 39% were neutral and about 39% had a negative stance. An important clarification is necessary here, because there is a false impression created, since we have included the Greek-Cypriot side in the notion of the Greek 'other'. Because, of the Turkish-EU complications previously described as being caused by the Cyprus issue, there is a negative stance in the Turkish media against the Greek-Cypriots, which does not reflect negatively on the Greeks of Greece. Therefore, it has to be underlined that, from the 39% of stories with negative tone in the Turkish newspaper, about 23.5% specifically concern the Greek-Cypriots and about 15.5% the Greeks of Greece. So, if the Greek-Cypriots are excluded, a comparison of stories with negative preoccupation towards the 'other' would provide a value of 48.5% in the Greek newspaper and only 15.5% in the Turkish one.

“Our patriotism, their nationalism”

The in-depth Interviews showed that it was easier for the interviewees to identify nationalistic tendency and bias in the media of the 'other', but (as the conversation developed) almost all of them, in one way or another, confirmed that the rule - in their own country too - is that journalists handle stories relevant to the so-called sensitive 'national' issues with particular care, considering not only journalistic values and principles, but also 'patriotic' ones. Haluk Şahin provided an example of an editorial meeting at Nokta magazine, in the early 1980s, when - as they considered publishing a story about violence in Cyprus between Turks from Turkey and Turkish-Cypriots:

One of our reporters said: 'if we publish this story, the Greek press would make inappropriate use of this'.

This attitude, some indicated, is sometimes 'voluntary', in the sense that they self-censor, because they know that their editor is not going to approve of a story that contradicts the dominant or official stance, and sometimes it is a result of a conflict within a media organisation, with one possible outcome being that the journalist loses their job. Ariana Ferentinou provided an example regarding a report she made for Star Channel. The report concerned the Öcalan trial, when all Greek media reported that the captured leader of the PKK (Kurdish rebel organisation) had made statements of respect towards, and compliance with, the principles of the Turkish state, supposedly under the effect of drugs and psychological violence. Ferentinou stated:

I was reporting live on TV. The 'lead' to the story, from the Athens studio created an impression completely different from the one I had experienced and was about to describe. I reported the truth and got fired...

The hegemonic trend

As a rule, the interviewees also confirmed that the mainstream media of their country present the stories about the 'other' in a more or less uniform way, regardless of the possible significant ideological and political differences they maintain while covering domestic issues. Mihalis Vasiliadis, speaking about the Greek press, states: “when it comes to a story about Turkey, I don't see much difference between 'Eleftherotypia' and 'Eleftheri Ora'⁶, even though we are talking about journalists with very different mentality.” Similarly, Mehveş Evin said about the Turkish press:

When it comes to Greece, there is a historic preoccupation. [The editors] of more or less all newspapers, are rather suspicious. In a way thinking: 'Hmm, what did they do again?'

While most findings were consistent with our thesis that the 'adequacy' component of professionalism (as defined in the 'theoretical context' chapter) is often violated due to nationalistic bias, some interviews also illustrated indications of violations of the 'competence' component, in the sense that many journalists are complacent about the stereotypes concerning the 'other' and do not endeavour to educate themselves, in order to perform their duty at an adequate level. The exceptions to this are the foreign correspondents of both Turkey and Greece (based in the 'other' country), who appear to have a better understanding of the 'other' culture, as well as society and politics, so that their reporting is more balanced. Nur Batur admits:

When I was looking at Greek matters from Turkey, I was also writing one-sidedly, based on the information available here. When I moved to Greece as a correspondent, I understood the Greek mentality much better.

Professionalism versus 'patriotism'

Violations of professionalism by journalists of all sides, according to examples provided by the interviewees, included: withholding essential information, at times distorting the truth even as perceived by the journalists themselves, their writings conforming to the majority views (even when they personally disagreed with that view), so that they avoided conflicts with the audience or their supervisors, allowing their official sources to interfere with the conduct of their professional activity, and accepting misleading headlines to their stories as a 'necessary evil'.

To the question whether, in Turkey, an official could arrange beforehand a (supposedly spontaneous) question and answer session, Metehan Demir replied that “ the same thing happens

⁶ Eleftherotypia is a left-of-centre Greek daily, and Eleftheri Ora an ultra-nationalist, right-wing one.

in the White House as well. It's a routine around the world.” Manolis Kostidis said that he overheard a Greek journalist expressing a personal view that deviated from the norm on a 'national issue', and yet, the very next day, he read in the newspaper a standard (aligned with the predominant view) article on the matter signed by the very same journalist.

Nikos Meletis, a Greek diplomatic reporter, and Makis Pollatos, a Greek defence reporter, stated their understanding that Turkey poses a threat to Greece. They admit, however, that the Greek press is full of stereotypes about Turkey, and that many of the journalists covering these issues do not really possess the necessary knowledge to do that effectively. Aristotelia Peloni said that Greek journalists have to struggle in order to convince their editors whenever they want to write something contrary to the dominant view about Turkey. She also said that positive news are usually not considered to be newsworthy when they are about Turkey, thus causing mainly negative stories about the 'other' to be published. And Mihalis Vasiliadis referred to the fact that he had been sued and taken to a court of justice in two cases: once in Turkey, for allegedly spreading Greek propaganda through his writings, and once in Greece, for allegedly spreading Turkish propaganda through his writings.

Discussion

When the lexical choices of the journalists while reporting Greece-related news during the period in discussion are analysed, it is clearly seen that a peaceful atmosphere in the Turkish - Greek relations affects the lexical choices of the journalists. For example, in the headline “Ankara is hopeful for Yorgo” (21.01 2000, Hürriyet) only the first name “Yorgo” of the Greek Foreign Minister is used. In the same way, Yorgo is used in the headline “Friendly Conversations of Yorgo-Ismail” (23.01.2000, Milliyet). The usage of the first name of the Greek Foreign Minister by the mainstream newspapers indicates that the rapprochement between the two countries affect the lexical choices of the journalists.

The findings of the quantitative Content Analysis, conducted during a neutral or regular (not particularly positive nor negative) period for the Greek-Turkish relations, establish that Turkish and Greek press refer often and extensively to the 'other'. They do so by relying primarily on the official sources of their own country, and the overall stance towards the 'other', reflected in their news stories and opinion articles, is - as a rule - neutral to negative. The negative stance is observed more in the Greek press with a significant 48.5% of relevant stories, while a negative tone towards the Greeks (of Greece) was observed in only 15.5% of the Turkish press stories, which - however -

rises to 39% if the Greek-Cypriots are included in the count of stories with negative tone; a number which - though significant - is still lower than the corresponding Greek measure.

The findings from the Interviews, in conjunction with the Content and Discourse Analyses, confirm the three basic hypotheses of this investigation, that is: (1) nationalistic bias indeed prevails in the media of Turkey and Greece, (2) this bias operates in opposition to principles of professionalism, such as reporting adequately, in the sense of seeking to report accurately, completely and in a balanced manner, and (3) this nationalistic tendency constitutes a dominant or hegemonic trend, deriving from the journalists' (but also the audience's) cultural and educational upbringing, which continues to be reflected and reproduced by the media.

Concluding remarks

The study concluded that Greek and Turkish mainstream journalists are generally observed to prefer defending national interest to defending public interest when reporting on events related to the 'other'. It can be said that with their dependence to official discourse, they have a pro-state publishing policy instead of critically evaluating the attempts of foreign policy makers and informing the public which is away from being objective professionals. For the interviewees of this investigation it was easy to detect signs of nationalism in the press of the 'other', though - sometimes - it was not so easy to detect these signs in their own writings. However, their own nationalist bias was evident for their colleagues from the 'other' side. Tılıç (2000: 89), appreciating Downing's comparative analysis of media models, explains that, while people may find it difficult to realise how the media in their own society function, when observing another society, they can easily wonder: "how is it possible to believe in such things?".

As journalists from both sides investigated here view themselves as patriots, but - for the same reasons they are patriots - they view the 'others' as nationalists, in the negative sense of the term, it is understood that the distinction between the two concepts is anything but clear. In fact, in agreement with Billig's (1995) thesis, the findings of this investigation support the view that the only difference between 'patriotism' and 'nationalism' is that the former is 'ours' and the latter is 'theirs'. Nossek's (2004) argument, that 'the more national [the media content] the less professional [the journalist]' is also confirmed by the results of this research: that adherence or subjugation of reportage to nationalism precludes or, at best, severely undermines any journalist's ability to report 'adequately'.

The findings of this project are also supportive of Westerståhl and Johanson's (1994) argument, that ideology is practically placed in the centre of the process of news selection and evaluation,

and all other criteria enter the picture only after securing an ideological clearance. 'Ideology', in the framework of this investigation, means the 'patriotic' or 'nationalist' emotional constraints and restraints, that prove to transcend any other ideological and political belief journalists may have. Realising, then, that nationalism, in its banal version, skews all other ideologies by virtue of its ubiquitousness in daily life, it is argued that it is a hegemonic trend in the Greek and Turkish societies strongly influencing the output of journalists and therefore, the media content in these countries.

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