

## **Peace or Conflict? Turkish and Greek Press Discourse on Football Matches ·**

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It is evident that the press coverage of international sport/football events plays a crucial role in consolidating nationalist discourses and the public perceptions about the ‘Other. Rhetoric of ‘us’ and ‘other’ is ubiquitous in the press coverage of international sport/football events. The case of Turkish and Greek press is mainly significant since there has been a historical and current ‘hostility’ between two states. In this regard, the aim of this study is to make a comparative analysis from 1988 to 2006 through the representation of football matches in three high-circulated daily newspapers and two daily sports newspapers in Turkey and Greece, in regard to reconstructing nationalist discourses

### **1-The Theoretical Framework: Football, Nationalism and the Press**

The inter-relationship between (the media coverage of) sports/football games and nationalism have been examined by a number of studies (Alabarces, Tomlinson and Young, 2001; Blain, N., Boyle, R. & O'Donnell, H, 1993; Bishop and Jaworski, 2003; Crolley and Hand 2002; Duke and Crolley 1996; Giulinotti, 1999; Maguire, Poulton and Possamai, 1999a; Maguire, Poulton and Possamai, 1999b; Poulton, 2004; Rowe, 1999)<sup>1</sup>, and the connection between the media sport and nationalism has proved to be a fertile area of study. The close relationship between sport and nationalism is especially visible in the international sporting events.

As the national sport in many countries, football is the mirror of the notion of “imagined communities” (Anderson, 1983) especially in the matches between two national teams since it is too easy to imagine the nation through those 11 football players (Duke and Crolley, 1996:4). As Hobsbawm (1990:143) argues, “the imagined communities of

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<sup>1</sup> For the relationship between nationalism and football in Turkey, see Bora, 2001; Bora and Erdoğan, 1993; Erdoğan, 1993; Kozanoğlu, 1999 and Gökalp, 2006. For this connection in Greece, see Tzanelli, 2006.

millions seem more real as a team of eleven named people.” “Sportsmen representing their nation or state” became “primary expressions of their imagined communities.”

The state of ‘encounter’ in football matches reflects the most natural and ‘innocent’ appearance of nationalist/essentialist ‘us’ and ‘other(s)’ distinction. It thus provides a *mimetic* representation of the struggle between nations which is constructed as ‘history’s engine’ by nationalist ideologies. This encounter equips the struggle between nations with precise and statistical representations of victory (Bora, 2001:559). Therefore sportive victories are experienced as if they were political victories; defeats on the other hand cause deep disillusionment (Colome, 1993: 126).

Needless to say, there is also a clear articulation between press and nationalism. Anderson has mainly underlined the role of newspapers in the daily reproduction of nationhood. In explaining how a nation is collectively imagined, Anderson (1983:35) speaks of newspaper reading as a “mass ceremony which is repeated by thousands of people at daily intervals.” Whatever the impact of globalizing trends, as Guibernau (1996:148) argues, mass media will continue to play a prominent role in the reconstruction and dissemination of nationalist discourses. As Billig (1995:119-126) argues, there is no doubt that sports news flags nationalism quite strongly. “All the papers, whatever their politics, have a section in which the flag is waved with regular enthusiasm. This is the sports section” (119). Through the coverage of international sport/football tournaments, the media reinforce identifications, so making the nation more ‘real’ than ‘imagined’ (Poulton, 2004:452).

Nevertheless, nationalism in the field of sports cannot totally eliminate divisions/tensions within nations. That is to say, it is not always possible to fulfil the ideological construction of national unity through sports/football. The reproduction of dominant ideologies and discourses through the field of sports is neither irresistible nor free of contradiction. In the field of sports, local or particular belongings may sometimes outweigh the construction of national unity (Giulianotti, 1999: 32, 66-68).

However, as the significance of national identities and the hegemonic positions of nationalist discourses are effective at present in spite of the erosion of nation-state and national identity because of globalisation process, the crucial connection between football and nationalism will definitely continue to bear importance in different forms. “The nation state remains a powerful image and central point of reference for the invoking of group identity of the (implied) readers. Moreover, the imagery of the nation has been shown to rest on common sense, unproblematic and unproblematized notions of uniformity and

conformity” (Bishop and Jaworski, 2003:266). In this sense, it is possible to argue that the Rhetoric of ‘us’ and ‘other’ is omnipresent in the news texts focused on the international football matches.

## **2-Methodology**

Our study aims to examine the reconstruction of Turkish and Greek nationalist discourses from 1988 to 2006 through the press coverage of football matches among the national and club teams of the two countries through the textual analysis. This comparative study is based on news stories of three high-circulated daily newspapers and two daily sports in both countries. The Greek newspapers that were selected and examined are: 1) *To Vima* 2) *Eleftherotypia* 3) *Eleftheros Typos* 4) *Athlitiki Iho* 5) *Filathlos*. The Turkish newspapers that were selected and examined are: 1) *Hürriyet* 2) *Sabah* 3) *Posta and Zaman* 4) *Fotomaç* 5) *Fanatik*.

National teams and club teams of the two countries played nine (seven of them is official) matches between 1988 and 2006. Additionally, four matches were played between a Turkish team (Trabzonspor) and the Greek Cypriot teams (APOEL FC and Anorthosis Famagusta).

The comparison of the Greek and Turkish press through in depth analysis demonstrates that same events are portrayed and interpreted in a similar way. As Entman (1991:6) underlined, comparing news coverage of same events is crucial since “the critical textual choices that frame the story” are revealed. However, our study does not explore how Greek and Turkish readers perceived the games coverage. However it is possible to argue that the selected newspapers may have constituted “an important element in shaping the rang and impact of opinion” (Chang, 1989:34). In a word, the news discourse about the matches between Greek and Turkish teams plays an undeniable role in modifying and consolidating the public perceptions about the ‘Other’.

The best way to understand the role of the media in politics is to view them as part of the overall political system and of the relations between the two countries. Media is an important component which ‘foreign policy decision-makers take into considerations as they develop their policies’ (Naveh 2002:2) since it both constrains leaders and officials yet provides them with opportunities to advance their goals (Gilboa, 2002).

Our approach is founded on the premise that mass media role in the construction and reconstruction of nationalist discourses is of high importance. Furthermore, as recent

studies demonstrate (Wolfsfeld, 2004; Panagiotou, 2005), mass media play a central role both in the promotion of conflict and peace.

We've examined the headlines and leads of the news texts focused on the pre - and after the football games related to these thirteen matches in the ten dailies in total. Our study does not explore how Greek and Turkish audiences perceive the news coverage. However it is evident that the news discourse about the matches between Greek and Turkish teams plays an undeniable role in modifying and consolidating the public perceptions about the 'Other.' It is also certain that "the national media have been among the many factors that have contributed to the aggravation and perpetuation of tension between the two countries" (Özgüneş and Terzis, 2000:405). As in the words of Rumelili (2005:9),

In Greek-Turkish relations, the media plays a dual mediating role between the governments and public opinion: it 'manufactures consent' for government policies towards the 'Other; and it plays an important role in shaping the public opinion that leaders have to take into consideration. Until recently, the Greek and Turkish media has exercised this dual influence in a conservative, conflict-enhancing direction.

In this context, thus, it might be argued for the beginning that the press coverage of football matches among the national and club teams of the two neighbouring countries play an undeniable role in the reproduction of nationalist discourses. But we should bear in mind the fact nationalism has never been a monolithic phenomenon. In other words, each nationalism have been made of discourses of nationalism that compete with each other, while presenting permeability to an important extent. Therefore, the question that needs to be answered first of all in this study is: What kind of nationalism is being reconstructed in the press of the two countries? Is it a kind of patriotism that offers pride in one's home country? Or do news discourse of both print media reproduce sentiments of national superiority? Briefly, this study is constructed around the following questions: Do they derogate/pejorate the 'rival' team by way of rude jargon and glorify their own team/country? Do they use ethnic stereotypes and negative images in the news discourse? Do they 'other' the 'rival' football team and its nation/country as 'enemy' by means of metaphors related with militarism and violence. In general, do they contribute to the increasing friendship and peace between the two countries especially after the earthquakes of 1999? Or, do they contribute to the deepening and consolidating the tension?

### 3- Analysis and the research findings

As it is evidenced from these headlines, the long-standing political and military rivalry between Turkey and Greece makes football matches between the two countries particularly crucial and ‘sensitive’ occasions for the sports press.

**Measures taken in fear of violent actions** (November 5, 2003-Vima)

**Fear of episodes in the game overshadow the game** (August 3, 2005-Vima)

**Football lost, politics won Turkey-Greece: 3-1** (September 21, 1988-Eleytherotypia)

**The two foreign ministers watched the game as a move to downplay the tension** Fenerbahçe-Panathinaikos 1-1 (October 31, 2002-Vima)

**Fear of events:** The demonstrations in Fener Patriarchate the other day tightened the atmosphere before Greece-Turkey match tomorrow. (September 7, 2004-Sabah)

**Two neighbours keep a stiff upper lift tonight** (September 8, 2004-Zaman)

As it will be seen in the following part, the mass circulated press coverage of the football matches between the two countries reinforce and consolidate the nationalist discourses. The print media of the two countries underlines ‘we’ identification of the both sides with their own nations. On the other hand, they both stress the otherness of each other and confirm and disseminate a fear of the ‘other.’

#### 3-a (Nationalist) Historical References

“Sport is a crucial component instrumental in “keeping alive” nations’ “dreams of their special charisma.” International sporting contests tend to reawaken “sleeping memories” and renew deeply laden national habitus codes. As such, they tend to fuel the historic and ongoing strains and tensions (Maguire, Poulton and Possamai, 1999:439, 441). In this sense, throughout the Turkish and Greek press coverage of the football matches between the two countries, there are many references to past national and military histories of the countries. As it is evidenced from these headlines, the emotional power that the headlines exercise in these games is strongly connected with the past of the two countries.

**Let’s go for victory: We are coming across Greece whom we have always won** (March 29, 1989-Hürriyet)

**They choose special stadium:** Karaiskaki stadium is of great importance to Greece. It bears the name of their national hero who initiated rebellion against the Ottoman Empire in the 1800’s. By taking the match to this stadium, Greeks aimed to ignite their audience and to make repress Turkey (September 9, 2004-Hürriyet)

**Severe Provocation:** Many newspapers published in Turkey today will write headlines such as “May friendship win.” We ask them: Which friendship? The name of the stadium Greeks chose for this match is Georgios Karaiskaki. Who is this Karaiskaki? The defeated general in the battle of independence against the Ottomans... The Greek Federation did not conceal their intentions to

ignite audience in the choice of this stadium... And the press kept abreast with the federation... Some newspapers wrote, "Turks are our primordial enemy." (September 8, 2004-Fotomaç)

The first match is played in Karaiskaki Stadium in Piraeus. Karaiskaki is the name of the general rebelled against the Ottoman Empire. The second match will be played today in İnönü Stadium bearing the name of a Turkish commander who forced the Greeks to submission. Let's see who wins (June 4, 2005-Sabah)

**Ayşe shall go on vacation:** As a result of the peace operation initiated with this password, Turkey brought peace to the Turks and Greeks in Cyprus in July 20, 1974. Precisely 31 years later Trabzonspor is bringing peace and friendship both to the Turks and the Greeks. (July 26, 2006-Sabah)

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### **3-b Eventful matches or banner and flag crisis in the tribunes**

In this study, we have paid specific attention to the 'eventful' matches since a group of fanatics of both sides have managed to manipulate not only the news discourse but also the discursive space of the two countries. In short, because of these groups, nationalist winds blow in the two countries at least in our context. Especially in Fenerbahçe-Panathinaikos matches (October 31, 2002), a group of Greek fanatics opened a map demonstrating Cyprus just as a Greek island. They also opened a banner saying that "*The best Turk is a dead Turk*" and "*Constantinoupolis is the Capital of Greece.*"

... "*The best Turk is a dead Turk*" banner was opened before the match, but the banner was immediately removed on warnings by Panathinaikos authorities (November 15, 2002-Zaman)

**Grim photograph:** Greek supporters opened yellow Cypriote flag in the tribunes, and beat tempo with "*Cyprus is ours and ours it shall it remain*" demonstrating their rage (November 6, 2003-Star)

**Double Provocation: Fanatics obscure demonstrations of friendship** When Greek fanatics provoked FB supporters by opening the flag of Cyprus demonstrating Cyprus as a Greek island, FB fans responded by opening a poster of Mehmet the Conqueror (November 1, 2002-Sabah)

**Conquest poster raised:** Fenerbahçe supporters hung a conquest poster on the marathon tribune. The poster, which read "*Istanbul since 1453*" and demonstrated Mehmet the Conqueror on a ramping horseback, yielded the reactions of Greek supporters. The banner was removed on UEFA observer's request (November 1, 2002-Fanatik)

On the other hand, a group of Turkish fanatics opened a poster's of Istanbul's conquest demonstrating Mehmet the Conqueror on a ramping horseback. They also opened a Cyprus map on which was written "*If you want peace you should recognize Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus.* Although the majority in tribunes ignored fanatics and applauded friendship, these actions of handful fanatics shadowed the friendship atmosphere and caused one-sided and biased reporting in the news texts of the two countries.

**Scandal:** The banners the Greeks hanged on the tribunes: *Sh... shall pour on Atatürk's grave, Istanbul is the capital of Greece, Cyprus is one and ours.* (November 6, 2003-Sabah)

**They demonstrate their rage:** We constantly give messages of friendship and end the tension between the two countries. But with no avail... Because Greek citizens take up the issues of Cyprus, Istanbul and most importantly the Great Leader Atatürk in every chance they have, and they try our patience. They've also turned the Olympiakos-Galatasaray match played in Rizoupolis Stadium to a political arena (November 6, 2003-Fanatik)

**Grim Provocation by the Greeks!:** Greek supporters assaulted to the busses carrying GS team and press members all along the way and opened banners on which was written "*Istanbul is the capital of Greece*" (November 6, 2003-Hürriyet)

It is possible to note that these events are magnified by media to further support existing bias and prejudices. For that reason, it might be argued that the discourse of sports pages tends to fuel the historic and ongoing strains and tensions by making historical references.

**The Turks have shown their real face again** (Eleytheros typos)

**The Turkish media emphasized the political aspects of the game** (Eleytherotypia)

**Provocative claims by Fenerbahce** (Eleytherotypia)

**Turks provoked. They have waived flags of the Turkish-Cypriot pseudo-state,** (Filathlos)

**The fans were provoked by Fatih Akyel, while they were shouting in favor of PKK,**  
(Eleytheros typos)

**The Turkish fans has provoked by opening banners on which was written "İstanbul 1453" and "do you remember my grandfather"** (October 21, 2003-Vima)

**The Turkish provocation. "We" go to the next round** (November 5, 2003-Eleytherotypia)

**A climate of terror by the "Grey Wolves"** (August 24, 2006-Eleytheros typos)

**The fear for violence overshadow the game** (Vima)

**Greece-Turkey peace (?)** (September 8, 2004-Vima)

While the newspaper coverage of the international football matches usually evoke past and present hostilities, it is possible to point out that the situation is quite different in our case. As it is seen from these examples, historical hostilities are generally evoked by a group of ultra-nationalist fanatics, and then they are represented and disseminated by the press. In other words, Turkish and Greek sports press are neither directly responsible from this hate speech nor the unique source of this discourse. Yet, it is obvious that the Turkish and Greek journalists are the main actors in highlighting, manipulating and sensationalizing these events in such an ultra-nationalist discourse.

**Grim Provocation by the Greeks!:(November 6, 2003-Hürriyet)**

**A game with a lot political implications** (January 7, 2004-Athlitiki Iho)

**Is it football or a political game? Galatasaray-Olympiakos 1-0** (October 21, 2003- Filathlos)

**This friendship does not serve us well** (June 5, 2005-Zaman)

**Ardent and fanatic Greek audience does not cause exuberance** (September 9, 2004-Sabah)

**Increasing nationalism in Greece has revived fanaticism** (September 7, 2004-Sabah)

**Nationalistic fever of the Turkish media: They hail the victory of the national team as a political one** (Vima)

**The Turks have shown their real face again** (Eleytheros typos)

**The Turkish fans provoked us by waving Turkish Cypriot Flags** August 11, 2006-Eleytheros typos)

**The Turks are following ‘hooligans policy’** (June 4, 2005-Eleytheropia)  
**In the name of the country. Trabzonspor-Apoel FC** (Eleytheros typos)

Being the most typical characteristic/presupposition of nationalism throughout the world, the stereotyping/generalization of a particular act to the whole nation is a presupposition continually used by Turkish and Greek sports press. In this way, on the one hand, the representation of national identities as the fixed and unique possible subject of identity has been provided. On the other hand, within an ethnocentric and essentialist context, the Turkish and Greek national identity and nationalism are projected towards future by the continuous discursive construction of a monoblock of categories/nations that have always existed and been hostile to ‘us’

### **3-c (Metaphorical) Militaristic headlines**

In sports press, the representation of football matches with lexical choices that are unrelated to football, especially those including violence and militarism, is, of course, not particular to Turkey and Greece. On the contrary, this situation is prevalent in other countries too.

**We’ve precipitated Greek defense** (September 22, 1988-Sabah)  
**Athenian torture 4-1** (November 15, 2002-Fanatik); **An eye for an eye** (November 14, 2002-Fotomaç) ; **Victory time** (September 21, 2003-Fotomaç)  
**The Lions (GS) lie in ambush in Athens** (November 5, 2003-Hürriyet)  
**Anatolian Blaze on the other side of the coast** (September 8, 2004-Sabah)  
**The Great Attack** (September 8, 2004-Fotomaç)  
**We’ll hit like the Russians** (Sports Supplement-H) (June 3, 2005-Zaman)  
**Victory at this dawn: No passage to Greece!** (June 4, 2005-Posta)  
**Let’s go for victory** (June 4, 2005-Sabah) **Greek coup in Trabzon** (July 27, 2005-Fotomaç)  
**Epic time** (August 3, 2005-Fotomaç)

However, the fact that Greece and Turkey achieved their nation-state status through armed struggles against one another has been particularly important in this context. “The two peoples, in order to hold on to the best defined part of their identity—their nationhood—have to continue recalling their national liberation struggles in history textbooks, national celebrations, religious services and the media, thus bringing conflicts and clashes to the fore and nourishing distrust” (Özgüneş and Terzis, 2000:408).

**A more than welcomed victory** (Filathlos)  
**We believed in victory. Greece-Turkey: 0-1** (March 29, 1989-Athlitiki Iho)  
**Slogans shouted in the stadium saying that: Greeks has won a gold metal in Smirni at 1922** (Vima)  
**Greece is seeking victory over Turkey’s match** (March 29, 1989-Athlitiki Iho)

**A historical victory** (July 26, 2005-Eleytherotypia)

**The heroes conquered Trapezounta** (August 5, 2005-Vima)

**Heroes have managed to get draw in the most 'heated' stadium. Turkey-Greece: 0-0** (June 4, 2005-Athlitiki iho)

**Committed to fight and win** (Eleytheros typos)

**A climate of terror by the "Grey Wolves"** (August 24, 2006-Eleytheros typos)

**We have avoided a Greek-Turkish war** (Greece-Turkey: 0-0 08/09/2004), Vima

### **3-d Distribution of uniforms and flags in matches**

One of the most significant national(istic) icons, flags of the both countries have been frequently used as a visual material since the 1990's in the sports pages of newspapers. However, there is an issue which much more important than the use of Turkish and Greek flag as a visual material: Especially in the 2000's, football federations started to distribute flags and national uniforms. Following are the headlines and leads of newspapers related to this issue:

**Greek Federation distributes 27 thousand uniforms:** Before the Greece-Turkey match, Greek Federation distributed 27 thousand uniforms to the audience in the tribunes. It was noteworthy that Greek authorities gave a uniform to each audience as a present (September 9, 2004-Zaman)

**Free uniforms:** The sponsors of Greek national team worked a lot before the Turkey match... It was stated that around 30 thousand uniforms were distributed to audience in the stadium entrance (September 9, 2004-Fanatik)

**Red and White Everywhere:** National team uniforms and Turkish flags were distributed to each audience in the match (June 5, 2005-Hürriyet)

**Welcome to banquet:** 10 thousand burgundy-blue balloons will fly into the air in the Anorthosis match, and 20 thousand Northern Cypriote and Turkish flags will be distributed (August 3, 2005-Fanatik)

Needless to say, this practice or 'invented tradition' plays a crucial role in the 'nationalist mobilization' of not only the supporters in the stadiums but of the whole nations of the two countries.

### **3-e Headlines emphasizing friendship**

We must underline that the 'negative' or the nationalist examples examined so far are the only examples of the representations in the sports press of the two countries. On the other hand, especially Turkish sports press emphasized friendship in a sensible manner. It is certain that this situation is very much related with the changing government policies and with the relatively softening diplomatic relations.

**Our national team is playing against Greece after 40 years' time:** "May the match of friendship shall be played in a friendly atmosphere" (September 21, 1988-Hürriyet)

**The new step to friendship that started with 'the Spirit of Davos' is taken in İnönü Stadium** (September 21, 1988-Sabah)

**We beat Greece in a friendly way. 3-1:** Everything is nice... The weather is nice... The match is nice and above all, this 'friendship' is nice. (September 22, 1988-Sabah)

**A Welcome with flowers:** Preparing to host the 2008 championship, the flags of Turkey and Greece are unfurled. The two countries give a message of friendship to the world (October 31, 2002-Hürriyet)

**Turkish-Greek friendship has not been dissolved: 1-1** (November 1, 2002-Zaman)

**Third Bridge on the Bosphorus:** Breeze of friendship blew in the İstanbul Bosphorus yesterday (October 31, 2002-Fanatik)

**Turks and Greeks hand in hand, heading to 2008** (October 31, 2002-Fotomaç)

**Kalimera!** (October 21, 2003-Star)

**Match Ends, Friendship Remains** (September 8, 2004-Posta)

**Our neighbor hasn't upset us** (September 8, 2004-Posta)

**Friendship has won** (September 9, 2004-Posta)

**An Affair of Friendship** (September 9, 2004-Hürriyet)

**Friendship is not spoilt in the Aegean Sea** (September 9, 2004-Zaman)

**Friendship wins. Greece 0 – Turkey 0** (September 9, 2004-Sabah)

**May friendship win!** (June 4, 2005-Sabah)

**Nobody can ruin our friendship** (p.33-) (June 5, 2005-Hürriyet)

**Things left to be resolved** (August 10, 2006-Vima)

**The two national teams confront each other in the shadow of Davos spirit. Turkey-Greece: 3-1** (September 21, 1988-Eleytherotypia)

**The match has underlined the rapprochement between the two nations Greece-Turkey: 0-1** (March 29, 1989-Filathlos)

**A draw in the game a victory in the rapprochement of the two nations (Greece-Turkey: 0-0** (September 8, 2004-Eleytherotypia )

**A draw in the game a victory of the fanatics Fenerbache-Panathinaikos 1-1** (October 31, 2002-Vima)

**A chance for friendship not war Greece-Turkey: 0-0** (September 8, 2004-Eleytherotypia)

**The rapprochement at stake Galatasaray-Olympiakos 1-0** (October 21, 2003-Filathlos)

**A joint effort to combat the tension among the fans of the two teams Fenerbache-Panathinaikos 1-1** (October 31, 2002-?)

Moreover, as shown in the headlines quoted below, we should not underestimate that a number of football matches between Turkey and Greece are also reported fairly neutral way.

**Landmark match for Galatasaray (GS):** GS is hosting Greece's Olympiakos in İstanbul today. (October 21, 2003-Hürriyet)

**The lions (GS) revive hope:** (October 22, 2003-Hürriyet)

**GS has revived 1-0** (October 22, 2003-Sabah)

**GS has knocked down Olympiakos and held on to Champions League** (October 22, 2003)

**Even Zeus cannot be saviour** (June 4, 2005-Fotomaç)

**For the first time in history a Greek Cypriote team is playing against a Turkish team** (July 26, 2005-Posta)

**The first official match with the Greek Cypriotes** (July 26, 2005-Hürriyet)

**All for each other** (August 3, 2005-Fanatik)

**Trabzonspor: 1- Apoel:0** (August 24 10, 2006- Hürriyet; August 24 10, 2006-Sabah)

**May first friendship and then Trabzon win** (July 26, 2005-Fanatik)

**Turkey-Greece 2-0** (January 8, 2004-Athlitiki Iho)

**Greece-Turkey: 0-1** (March 30, 1989-Athlitiki Iho)

**Panathinaikos is to write history today** (November 14, 2002-Athlitiki Iho)

**Olympiakos is looking for a new start in İstanbul** (October 21, 2003-Eleytherotypia)

However, the newspapers of the two countries make use of the rhetoric of ‘us’ and ‘them’ even in the headlines seems to be quite neutral, as evidenced in the headlines quoted below:

**Our national team is playing against Greece as a return match of the 3-1 score for the sake of “the Spirit of Davos”** (March 29, 1989-Sabah)

**Our national team has won Greece with ease once again** (March 30, 1989-Hürriyet)

**May this be our night of victory in Europe!** (October 31, 2002- Zaman)

**We are ready for *sirtaki*!** (November 5, 2003-Star)

**We’ve missed victory: Greece 0- Turkey 0** (September 9, 2004-Posta)

**We deserved to win. Turkey-Greece: 0-0** (June 4, 2005-Filathlos)

**They have disgraced us** (referring to the stance of Panathinaikos team) **Fenerbache-anathinaikos 1-1** (October 31,2002-Eleytherotypia)

**The whole nation is watching Panathinaikos,** (?-Eleytheros typos)

**A Stolen victory. Turkey-Greece: 2-0** (January 8,2004-Eleytherotypia)

**The referee was against us. Galatasaray-Olympiakos 1-0** (Filathlos)

**Disgrace the Greek team was harassed in the Turkish stadium** (August 03, 2005-Vima)

#### **4- Concluding Remarks**

Our findings demonstrate that the football matches between Turkey and Greece are being used by the mass circulated Turkish and Greek dailies to reconstruct an intense form of nationalist discourse rather than increasing friendship and peace between the two countries. For both cases, it is clearly evident that the political climate between the two states influences the way that sports events are reported. In times of crisis or tension, not only the headlines but also the news discourses are articulated into more essentialist, parochial and fanatic nationalism.

We do consider that the images displayed regarding the sports events between the two countries are crucial in any attempts of reconciliation. The way that the other is presented in the Greek newspapers is following the dominant ethnocentric approach of Greek Turkish relation in its most extreme though we have to note.

For the Greek case, there is a major difference between the quality press and the sports press since the latter is much more ethnocentric in orientation. Another difference between the way that the sport and the other papers have covered the events is that the latter is influenced by the government policies or their ideological preferences while this is not the case for the sport press. The prevalence of militaristic or negative headlines especially in the case of the sport press we have to bear in mind that it is connected with the way that these newspapers operate, regarding the coverage of sports events. Especially

in the case of the Greek press this is a tactic that aims to attract readers and a choice that is commonly used even in games between Greek teams.

Our study shows the framework in which the Greek-Turkish relations takes place is more complex, since the ‘enmity’ between the two nations have influenced the whole spectrum of their between relations. As Millas (2004:53) argues “due to historical reasons each party conceives the ‘other’ as a prospective threat or as a challenge to its identity and interprets each of his actions accordingly, creating a vicious circle where the national perceptions and the negative images concerning the other dictate the vigilant attitude of ‘our’ and which in turn also aggravates the attitude to the ‘other’”

As Millas (2004) revealed this argument in his study on the Greek and Turkish schoolbooks, this explanation is also relevant in press coverage of the football events, through the discourse which strengthening the strong ‘we’ and ‘other’ distinction. In a word, united ‘us’ against the ‘Other.’ On the other hand, the discursive strategies are employed in the coverage of the football matches in such a way that places them into a package “that is culturally resonant and professionally valuable.” Since football is a “valuable consumer commodity which has to be packaged in an attractive and therefore marketable linguistic form” (Crolley and Hand, 2002), the deregulation of the media sector in Turkey and Greece in the 1990s led to fierce competition among the news media and nationalist reporting helped to keep the ratings and circulations up (Rumelili, 2005:10).

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