

# Media and Nationalism

## The Macedonian Question

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As divisive political ideologies in the era of globalization, contemporary nationalisms differ considerably from the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century nationalisms. They are fueled by the worldwide antinomy between the global and the local. Because nationalism is rooted deeply in different political cultures, nationalist biases affect the way journalists and media organizations select and present news stories about national collective identities and the national “others.” However, it is legitimate to expect that supranational developments will redirect selection criteria of news coverage toward a less parochial and more responsible attitude on the part of the press.

In this article, an effort is made to examine the positions of fourteen leading Greek newspapers, taking as a point of departure an earlier study on the Macedonian question and expanding it to include the interim accord between Greece and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. It is argued that in comparison to the past, we see an important alteration of the normative framing of the articles, from an ethnocentric to a polycentric approach. However, an analysis of the results also demonstrates that this shift does not reflect a deeper and permanent change in the nationalistic attitude of the Greek newspapers on the Macedonian question.

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From the last century until the 1960s, the mass media, together with other ideological state apparatuses, were in a position to organize the social imagery focusing on the concept of nation, national interest, and national identity. Such an organization of the social imagery was accomplished through various policies controlling frequencies and has led to a more or less firm construction of consent in the name of the nation and the people (Deutsch 1966:96–106; Herman and Chomsky 1994:297–307; Price 1995:5–11; Tuchman 1978:209). This consent derives from the symbolic as well as the imaginary pattern of “us and them” and is mainly applied through occasional media events and the application of news selection criteria and their presentation, especially on foreign policy issues as well as the international relations of a country (Dayan and Katz 1992:196–97).

Nineteen years ago in a well-known study, Herbert Gans concluded that in TV news bulletins the nation is presented as a unified entity framed in anthropomorphic terms. He also concluded that ethnocentrism forms one of the main

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and durable journalistic values through which the news is selected and presented (Gans 1979:19–21, 42–52, 297–98; Schudson 1997:19). According to Murray Edelman, the nation is presented in the news as an entity that competes and conflicts with one or more nations (1972:12–15). This is intensified in periods of international crisis, when the notion of the national interest loses any stable empirical and rational reference and is converted into a symbol with which the citizen-spectators of the events are identified in a mythically archetypal way.

As a matter of fact, for major groups of the population, the media determine the level of knowledge as well as the information concerning national alliances, foreign policy and its actors, the “national other,” and the image of the planet from a geopolitical point of view. It is not accidental that the nationalist movements of the last century were based on typography, a situation that led Marshall McLuhan to call typography the “architect of nationalism” (1987:170). In his view, the printed word facilitated the rise of national languages, the generating of a common code of communication, and, consequently, the shared perception of a common destiny. Moreover, nationalism between the wars was also helped by radio because it managed to make people have a sort of common fear, to collectively dream about and hate the “other” at the same time.

Given the impact of nationalist biases in selecting and presenting news stories as well as the outburst of nationalist mobilizations in Greece between 1991 and 1993, this article tries to examine the position of the Greek newspapers concerning the Macedonian question and the interim accord between Greece and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), signed in September 1995. This agreement was considered to be an amelioration of the relationship between the two countries.

## **Nationalism and the Media in the Era of Globalization**

Contemporary nationalist phenomena should not be seen as a simple reemergence or resurrection of the past, of something that has always been out there intact and self-contained. As divisive political ideologies in the era of globalization, contemporary nationalisms differ considerably from the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century nationalisms. They are fueled by the worldwide antagonism between the global and the local. The wider process of globalization takes place both on the level of systemic integration (i.e., economy, technology, and communications) and on the level of social integration (life-world). However, this occurs in an asymmetric way from place to place, as far as the rhythm and range of the process are concerned. As a consequence, today’s nationalism is the local reaction of political systems and collective identities to various supranational processes (Held 1991:197–235; King 1991; Massey 1991; Robertson 1992:161–66; Robins 1991:21–44).

The nationalist mobilizations in the late twentieth century are influenced by television's pictures and its capacity to construct an imaginary national community at a distance. The directness of television's picture and sound permits a focus on a "local" and "isolated" event in order to convert it to an event of national or international interest (Meyrowitz 1985). Television can better coordinate the demands and aims of the "distant others"; it is a friendly tool for making the narrative feasible at a distance as well as creating ethnic group identity, especially when the development of the TV stations belongs to or addresses national or ethnic minorities (Husband 1994:1–19; Mowlana 1997:230–31; Smith 1990:175; Thompson 1995:188; Wilson and Gutierrez 1985).

Of course, this does not mean that old and contemporary nationalisms are caused by the media of communication, but the media have been one of the structural prerequisites that facilitated their genesis and spread. Nonetheless, after nationalism has been firmly established as one of the dominant political ideologies, it affects news media content in a complex way.

It would not be too much to say that today one can discern two cardinal trends regarding national identifications and the media. On the one hand, the plethora of fast-moving and changing pictures and signs, which are a consequence of television's logic (Altheide and Snow 1979) and its commercialization, makes the identification with the nation ambiguous, intermittent, and sometimes precarious. This is because the citizen-viewer is interpellated by different and often antinomic discourses (Morley 1984:163–73; White 1992:161–202), and hence the national monopoly over the control of social imagery is altered in various analogies. This is something that has been witnessed in the last quarter of the twentieth century and seems to be an outcome of broadcasting deregulation as well as of the globalization of the economy and information (Lash and Urry 1994:3–4, 190–93). Naturally, this promotes not only the feeling of co-belonging, but also any other collective identity that tends to disguise a "neo-tribal" function (Bauman 1993:141–44; Demertzis 1996a:370–75; Featherstone 1995:46–47, 120; Maffesoli 1996:72–103).

As Philip Schlesinger notes, "The relations between media and national identity today are . . . affected both materially and conceptually by wider, rapidly shifting, political, economic and cultural configurations" (1991:298). This means that the national consciousness has become a mediated consciousness and that the narrative codes of television have caused important changes in regard to the way individuals understand the nation and experience their national identity. Today, national identifications are gradually relativized and reproduced as simulations of the usually taken for granted national identity (Desaulniers 1986:112–22; Luke 1995:99; Zizek 1996:192–98).

At the same time, another main trend exists: While the globalization of communication has led to a limited cultural diversification of content, the au-

dience maintains an important part of its national particularity through which it selectively interprets the internationalized messages to which it is exposed. The news, both in the press and on TV news bulletins, maintains its national orientation, even in the selection of international news that is presented (Negrine and Papathanassopoulos 1990:159, 182). Regardless of the internationalization of the media or the globalization of the economy and information, the ethnocentric standpoint remains in many cases the main way of collecting, assessing, and presenting the news.

In effect, language and images used and disseminated by the news media may exert distinctive influence on the audience as far as foreign policy issues are concerned (McCombs et al. 1991:83–84) because there is normally limited personal experience and involvement in these issues, whose presentation is usually in tandem with popular expectations nurtured by national stereotypes, particularly during periods of nationalist fervor (Gagnon 1997:139; Lake and Rothchild 1997:130). It makes a difference whether a possible military action against another country is defined as “a new Vietnam” (as was the case with NATO and U.S. military intervention in Bosnia) or as “a campaign against a new Hitler” (as in the Gulf War). Also, it makes a difference whether an issue is grouped in the agenda of “national affairs” rather than in that of “domestic affairs” or whether foreign laborers deprived of citizenship rights are described by media narration as “guest workers.” Obviously, each definition activates different schemes for processing and interpreting information provided by the media, suggesting, therefore, different modes of decodification (McLeod et al. 1991:235–66).

Media stories on foreign affairs consist of imposing standardized assumptions over events that must be covered by the dictates of the prevailing news standards (ritualized news format, illustrated lectures, etc.). What is more, during periods of nationalist ardor, the media may generate a climate of moral-national panic by defining the national “other.” It could be suggested that the assistance of national stereotypes in the writing and presentation of the news in the press, on the radio, and on television depend on the conjuncture of particular national episodes, the position and the kind of nationalism in the political culture of each country, and the media’s dependence on official sources and the state.

In response to globalizing tendencies in international politics and economy, the collapse of Socialist Yugoslavia, and the turmoil in the Balkan peninsula in the 1990s, Greece’s foreign policy was marked with a strong nationalist flavor. The basic research question of this article is whether, within the main tenets of Greek political culture, the press reflected the nationalist posture of political elites and the general public or kept a more or less independent attitude. In other words, did the Greek press adopt the attitude of an independent institution of the public sphere, or did it overreact in its coverage under the pressure of a crisis situation?

## A Brief Overview of Greek Nationalism and the Press in Greece

Both historic and recent forms of Greek nationalism are far from unequivocal. On the one hand, some nationalists defined the nation in terms of its classical heritage and enlightenment ideals. On the other hand, some were proponents of a resurrected Byzantine empire; they understood the nation in terms of Orthodox Christianity. From the very beginning, religion connected Greece with the East, while its classical civilization, rediscovered by Greeks through western intellectuals, connected her with the West (Kohn 1967:534, 536). Plainly in any case, Greek nationalism has been more “cultural” than “political”;<sup>1</sup> it is chiefly religion and language that define the nation, rather than universal citizenship rights. It is indicative, for instance, especially in Adawautios Korais’ outlook, that in the Greek intelligentsia’s ideology of “risorgimento” nationalism in Greece, citizenship and Christian religiosity were one and the same (Kohn 1967:542).

The interrelation between Greekness and Orthodoxy is imprinted in modern Greeks’ self-identity as much as in numerous institutional aspects of public life. It is not accidental that Greece is portrayed as the “most believing of European nations” (Martin 1978:277); the virtual identification of Greekness or Hellenicity with Orthodoxy has made it difficult for various minorities to become fully integrated into the dominant political culture (Demertzis 1996b:225–47; Diamandouros 1983:43–69). As a matter of fact, therefore, this sort of cultural nationalism prevailed in recent mobilizations in Greece concerning the country’s policy in the Balkan peninsula. “Historical rights,” rather than “political rights,” coupled with the exaltation of Hellenic civilization’s uniqueness, preoccupied public discourse. So far, this sort of reasoning has precluded the prospect of a rational settlement of Greece’s relations with other Balkan countries, and especially FYROM. Prominent politicians from various parties, like Stelios Papathe melis and Authouis Samaras, base their visibility on the issue of the Macedonian question by adopting a tough cultural nationalist stance. In 1993, Samaras founded a new party and centered his election campaign almost solely on this question.

Historically, the Greek press has developed simultaneously with state building. In Greece, as in other countries, the state has played a decisive role in the media sector. This can be easily seen in the press laws. The state has enforced formal rules and has provided substantial financial aid, on which individual enterprises, unable to cover production costs, became dependent. In addition, newspapers have a long history of divisions along party lines. The establishment of political parties in the late nineteenth century occurred in tandem with the establishment and the growth of the modern Greek press. Each party had its own paper, and in some instances, the party leader was also the editor. Gradually, as the parties and the papers separated, an identity of interests was maintained. During the junta of Colonels (1967–1974), some newspapers were

forced to close down; censorship and surveillance, with all of their consequences, were daily occurrences (Papathanassopoulos 1990).

Since the fall of the dictatorship in 1974, the press has been going through a process of transition, and a new era has begun. First, advertising has begun to play a decisive role in press revenues. The purely partisan press has gradually declined, and more market-oriented newspapers have come to dominate the sector. Second, since the mid 1980s, entrepreneurs and ship owners have gradually become the new owners of the Greek press, and the commercial media have been owned by fewer and fewer hands.

However, as in other countries, Greek newspapers still have a political color, but now they appear to function more as commercial enterprises rather than as party outlets. This is also related to the introduction of private television channels and the decline in newspaper sales. By the mid 1990s, there were about 160 local, regional, and national daily newspapers in Greece. However, the fourteen largest nationally circulated daily titles are located in the capital city of Athens. In a highly centralized country, in which more than 50 percent of the population resides in the capital, it is not a surprise that the Athenian press dominates the market.

### **The Macedonian Question in Media and Political Agendas**

Together with public rituals, the mass media, both print and electronic, contributed to the recent uprising of Greek nationalism (Sofos and Tsagarousianou 1994). We may legitimately assume that with regard to such a complex and unobtrusive issue as the dissolution of Yugoslavia, the media's agendas could affect public opinion to a great extent:

- As soon as the new state of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) appeared in early 1992, Greek society and the Greek government faced two principal options: Either follow a moderate and tolerant nationalism, or observe a tough ethnocentric nationalistic line. With few exceptions, the latter attitude prevailed, though recently there has been some hesitation, such as in the persistence of the Greek side concerning the official name of this country. Only recently have some news media started using the name FYROM; since late 1991, the media have called this country Skopje (which is an exaggeration, since this is the name of the country's capital city) and characterized it as a "tiny state" (insinuating, perhaps, that it could be easily erased from the map or signifying Greece's imaginary superiority). The entire population of FYROM was identified as Skopjeans, as if all Greeks were identified as Athenians.<sup>2</sup> Finally, the ethnocentric attitude toward FYROM disregarded the fact that the majority of its citizens are also Orthodox, a possible link between the two neighbors that might have mitigated the mutual discord.

The crux of the dispute was the name, not religion. This points to the fact that nationalism is a relative and relational phenomenon and that every single nationalist discourse is of an inherently articulatory nature—that is, combining and excluding various issues and themes so as to construct a transparent opposition between “us and them.” Nationalism is about an interplay between historical memory and oblivion: The Orthodox link had to be erased from collective memory, and the entire confrontation had to focus on the name of the new state.

- With the adoption of a series of narrative techniques and ideological strategies (Edelman 1988:66; Thompson 1990:60–67), Greece was presented as a “brotherless nation,” as a righteous victim, a nation that was hunted almost everywhere and by everyone, a nation that had to defend its historical rights to friends and foes, and a nation that did not fit into any international community or alliance. Consequently, a shift between a defensive and an offensive nationalist discourse has prevailed since 1991 in both media and political agendas. This can be easily traced by quoting the titles of some articles on the Macedonian question from prominent Athenian newspapers:

“We and the Barbarians of Europe,” *Eleftheros Typos*, June 14, 1992

“The Europe of Idiots,” *Eleftheros Typos*, December 13, 1992

“Lord Save Your People,” *Kathimerini*, April 26, 1992

“Athens Is a Victim of German Plot,” *Kathimerini*, July 26, 1992

“The Trap Is Well Founded,” *Eleftherotypia*, June 14, 1992

“Skopje: They Want Stick and Carrot,” *Eleftherotypia*, December 20, 1992

The “linguistic categorization” (Edelman 1977:23–41) of the above themes defines the situation, activates restricted schemes that organize information, limits and directs the process of message decodification, and thus influences the views of the “spectators.” This linguistic categorization, which is a part of a wider political spectacle, performs certain ideological functions that stigmatize all those who have different preferences. A consequence of this strategy, as has been mentioned, is the construction of consent, a pacification, and the effectuation of a widespread fear that contributes to social cohesion (Edelman 1964:12–13). It seems, therefore, that the press did not relativize and simulate national identity, at least as far as direct reporting of specific mobilizations on the Macedonian question were concerned. One should expect such a relativization and hybridization with respect to the longitudinal and cumulative effects of print media to social behavior and national con-

sciousness, rather than with respect to short-term coverage of national episodes, which is subjected more to ready-made stereotypes of journalistic routines. Clearly then, nationalism is quite deeply ingrained into contemporary Greek political culture.<sup>3</sup>

### **The Macedonian Question and the Interim Accord in the Greek Press**

To be sure, the press did not cause the nationalist uprising under discussion, but it did contribute to it and reinforce it for political as well as economic reasons. What we sought to find out was the exact ways it did so. For this purpose, a research program, conducted by the Department of Communication and Mass Media of the National and Capodistrian University of Athens, analyzed the way the Greek press reported the Macedonian question between 1991 and 1993.<sup>4</sup> In the present study, the Athenian press is monitored with respect to the interim accord between Greece and FYROM signed in 1995. Both studies employed a content analysis of the research material.

#### **Previous Research on the Macedonian Question and the Press**

The first research study on the way the Greek press reported the Macedonian question between 1991 and 1993 included the Sunday editions of the five largest Greek newspapers (*To Vima* [Tribune], *Eleftherotypia* [Free Pressing], *Eleftheros Typos* [Free Press], *Kathimerini* [Daily], and *Macedonia*).<sup>5</sup> The first four are printed in Athens but circulate all over the country; *Macedonia* is printed in Thessaloniki and circulates mostly in Northern Greece. The five newspapers cover most of the Greek political range. The time span of the material researched was seventeen months, from mid-December 1991 (when the Macedonian question was raised for the first time by the European Union) until April 1993 (when the new state at the northern border of Greece was recognized by the United Nations as the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia [FYROM]).

The result of this systematic micro-census of the above-mentioned Sunday editions was a total of 1,883 articles singled out as units of analysis: 196 of them (10.4 percent) were front-page articles. Any article referring directly or indirectly to the Macedonian question, the Yugoslav crisis, or the issue of national identity, national interest, and so on was taken as a unit of analysis. Each article was classified according to the following characteristics/variables:

**Type:** whether it was (1) an editorial, (2) an opinion piece, or (3) a news report

**Content:** whether it referred to (1) general-theoretical topics related to nationalism, national questions, or the international system; (2) the Macedonian question; or (3) the Yugoslavian crisis



**Kind:** whether its focus was on (1) national identity or (2) national interest. That is, whether attention was given to issues concerning national minorities, national-ethnic homogeneity, ethnic cleansing, national history, traditions, religion, and so on or to suggestions for foreign policy tactics and strategy that would service the national interest of Greece.

**Normative framing:** whether it expressed (1) an ethnocentric or (2) a polycentric normative outlook.<sup>6</sup> More explicitly, whether the article revealed a tough-minded attitude toward the nation as the supreme identity and form of social solidarity, or whether it considered it in a nonprivileged way (i.e., as one among other identities that may take priority over it).

The articles were distributed unevenly in the five newspapers as follows: *To Vima* had 23.4 percent of the articles; *Eleftherotypia*, 23 percent; *Eleftheros Typos*, 21.1 percent; *Kathimerini*, 14.7 percent; and *Macedonia*, 17.8 percent. We might have expected *Macedonia* to have published more on the relevant topics because its audience is almost exclusively concentrated in Thessaloniki and Northern Greece (the Greek region of Macedonia), where the nationalist zeal was much more intense than anywhere else in the country.

With respect to type of article, the number of editorials (7.3 percent) was significantly lower than the number of opinion pieces (46.4 percent) and news reports (46.3 percent). It should be noted, however, that *Macedonia* published almost twice as many relevant editorials (13.1 percent) as any of the other Sunday papers. *To Vima*, which is actually the biggest Sunday paper in Greece, adopted an entirely different stance: It had the smallest number of editorials (3.6 percent) but the greatest number of relevant articles (65.7 percent). This is mainly due to the fact that it is the paper par excellence of the political elite, and it publishes many signed articles on various public issues.

In terms of the content of the articles, the Macedonian question was the most common topic (47.5 percent), compared with general-theoretical analyses (35 percent) and articles on the Yugoslavian crisis (17.5 percent). It seems that the Yugoslavian crisis was regarded by the Greek newspapers as a much more remote issue than the Macedonian question, although the two issues were interconnected. Furthermore, most of the editorials (56.2 percent) and the news reports (50.9 percent) were concerned with the Macedonian question, whereas the opinion pieces were mainly divided into general-theoretical topics (44.2 percent) and the Macedonian question (42.7 percent). In addition, the great majority of the front-page articles (68.4 percent) had content relevant to the Macedonian question.

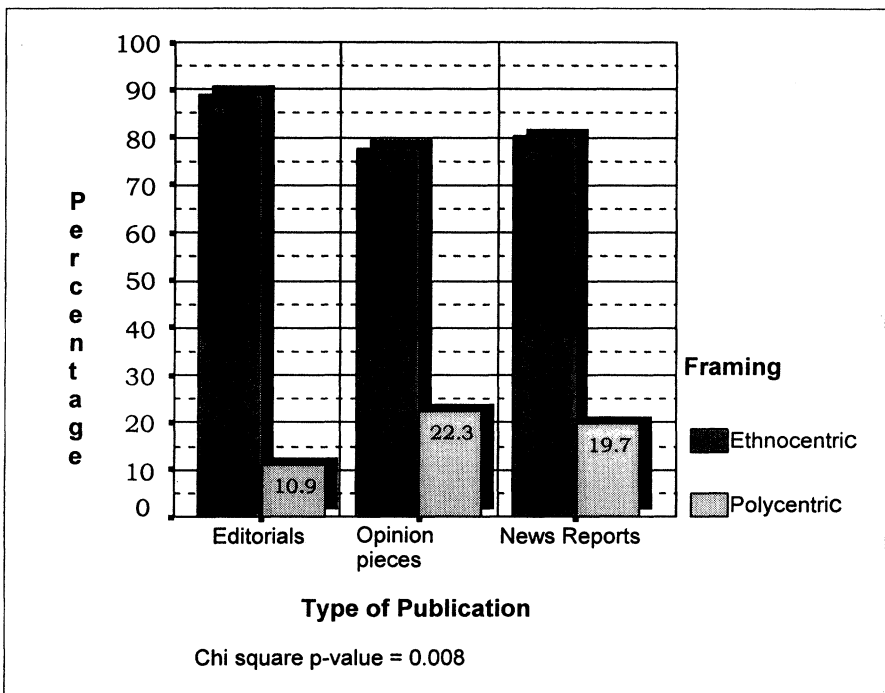
Regarding the kind of articles in total, those focusing on national identity (55 percent) occurred 10 percent more often than those focusing on national interest (45 percent). Opinion pieces were almost equally divided as far as this variable is

concerned, with percentages of 49.3 percent and 50.7 percent, respectively. The editorials unevenly stressed national identity (57.7 percent) at the expense of national interest (42.3 percent), while the same pattern was observed in news reports, with corresponding percentages of 60.2 percent and 39.8 percent.

The overall distribution of the last variable, the ethnocentric-polycentric normative framing, is the most revealing result, manifesting a widespread cultural nationalist outlook in the Greek press of that period. A significantly high proportion of 79.7 percent of the articles were classified as ethnocentric, whereas only 20.3 percent of them were characterized as polycentric. Also, apart from *Eleftherotypia*, a left-centrist paper whose style is in between tabloid and broadsheet<sup>7</sup> and that could be considered discordant as far as normative framing is concerned, the ethnocentric framing overshadowed the polycentric one in extremely unbalanced (separation) ratios, ranging from 80 percent to 100 percent ethnocentric framing over 20 percent to 0 percent polycentric framing. Moreover, by observing the type of publication, the particular pattern is not altered (Figure 1).

**Figure 1**

Macedonian Question Research: Normative Framing per Type of Publication



Source: Armenakis et al. (1996).

The percentage of ethnocentric editorials was found to be 89.1 percent, whereas the percentages of opinion pieces and news reports of similar “framing” were lower (77.7 percent and 80.3 percent, respectively). This may mean that within a general nationalist setting, journalists and columnists were relatively less tough-minded nationalists than editors. Also, only 10.7 percent of the relevant front-page pieces were polycentric.

It goes without saying, therefore, that in the early 1990s, the Greek newspapers, both tabloid and broadsheet, did not manage to overcome the cultural nationalist tradition of Greek society. They all exhibited a strong ethnocentric nationalism that clearly contradicted the social responsibility that the press is supposed to maintain in critical situations. This is also confirmed by the findings of another research study that focused on the ethnic stereotypes of the Greek newspapers during the same period (Panagiotopoulou 1996). Once again, only a small minority opposed current nationalist trends from the very beginning.

After 1993, public attention on the Macedonian question was devalued, and the news coverage on the same issue seemed to have completed its life cycle. At the same time, opinion polls have shown a gradual rise of less dogmatic judgments concerning the dispute over the name of the new state. Naturally, the issue has not completely disappeared from the news agenda, but it does not hold the same position as it did in the past, especially in 1992. With the changeover of the government in October 1993 and despite the embargo of FYROM, one can see the willingness of the Greek political leadership to smooth down the crisis. This direction led to the international conjecture that Greece appeared to face problems with all of its neighboring countries; a situation that weakened its position in the international arena and in the European Union.

### **The Interim Accord between Greece and FYROM and the Press**

The change concerning the political climate was also supported by the agreement with the Albanian government concerning the rights of the Greek minority in Albania and the Albanian immigrants who work, legally or illegally, in Greece. However, this change was also helped by an amelioration in terms of the relationship between Greece and FYROM through an interim accord between the two countries (called the First Party and the Second Party) on September 13, 1995, which, however, leaves aside the final resolution of the international naming of the neighboring country. That agreement consists of twenty-three articles, and its principal points can be summarized as following (United Nations 1995):

- “The First Party [Greece] recognizes the Party of the Second Part [FYROM] as an independent sovereign state and the two Parties shall establish diplomatic relations at an agreed level with the ultimate goal of relations at ambassadorial level” (article 1).

- “The two Parties shall establish a liaison office at their capitals; the Parties hereby confirm their common existing frontier as an enduring and inviolable international border” (articles 1.2 and 2).
- “Each Party undertakes to respect the sovereignty, the territorial integrity and the political independence of the other Party” (article 3).
- “The Parties shall cooperate with a view to facilitating their mutual relations notwithstanding their respective positions as to the name of the Party of the Second Part [FYROM]. In this context, the Parties shall take practical measures, including dealing with the matter of documents, to carry out normal trade and commerce between them in a manner consistent with their respective positions in regard to the name of the Party of the Second Part” (article 5.2).
- “The Party of the Second Part hereby solemnly declares that nothing in the Constitution can or should be interpreted as constituting any claim by the Party of the Second Part to any territory not within each existing border” (article 6.1) and “each Party shall promptly take effective measures to prohibit hostile activities or propaganda by State-controlled agencies and to discourage acts by private entities likely to incite violence, hatred or hostility against each other” (article 7.1).

This interim accord with FYROM was a hallmark for repositioning Greece in the international community, and it was signed in the middle of a very crucial conjuncture during the war in Bosnia. In the meantime, the nationalistic mobilizations in Athens and Thessaloniki cooled down, and some opinion polls indicated that the Greek public was ready to accept a new agreement with FYROM as well as the name. What caused this change in attitude? Was it due to a new understanding of the reality of the situation or simply the outcome of boredom with an unresolved issue? Certainly, no definite answer can be given here. The change, however, was evident in the way the issue and the interim accord were covered by the Greek press.

The methodology for choosing the newspapers in this research was based on criteria designed to cover the various political views of newspapers across the entire spectrum of the Greek party system, as well as their sales and geographic areas, where most of the Greek population is located. In accordance with these criteria, fourteen newspapers were chosen: *To Vima*, *Ta Nea*, *Eleftherotypia*, *Eleftheros Typos*, *Kathimerini*, *Macedonia*, *Rizospastis*, *Apogevmatini*, *Avgi*, *EPOCHI*, *Adesmeftos Typos*, *Avriani*, *Ethnos*, and *Thessaloniki*.

The research material consisted of a total of 237 articles. This number refers to the majority of articles of that particular time period because it incorporates all articles of the fourteen newspapers mentioned above concerning the crucial dates and time span of the interim accord of September 1995. The systematically sampled articles of interest were published on the following dates, all in 1995:

- The two Sunday editions before the signing of the agreement (September 3 and 10)
- The editions of the event day (September 14)
- The editions of the day after the event (September 15)
- The two Sunday editions after the signing of the agreement (September 17 and 24)

The articles were used as units of analysis, and their titles and headings were examined. They were classified according to the following criteria/variables:

**Type:** (1) editorials, (2) opinion pieces, (3) news reports, or (4) interviews

**Location:** (1) front page or (2) inner page in the newspaper

**Title characterization:** (1) positive, (2) neutral, or (3) negative, according to the critical attitude concerning the agreement

**Normative framing:** (1) ethnocentric or (2) polycentric, corresponding to the same framing previously mentioned

**Political identity:** (1) pro-government or (2) antigovernment. This distinction was based on the general political position of the newspapers derived from the cleavages of the Greek political system. The newspapers *To Vima*, *Ta Nea*, *Eleftherotypia*, *Macedonia*, *Ethnos*, and *Thessaloniki* were characterized as “pro-government” and the rest as “antigovernment.”

The authors classified the analyzed units simultaneously in order to achieve intercoding reliability. Following the collection, examination, and classification of the articles, an electronic structured data file was created containing the research material. The statistical editing, processing, and analysis of the data were done with the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

With respect to the publication dates, two weeks before the signing of the agreement (September 3, 1995), the Sunday editions dedicated only 6 articles to the issue (2.5 percent), while the following week (September 10), the number increased significantly to 56 articles (23.6 percent). The anticipated agreement was an issue of high journalistic interest as the date of the agreement came close. On the day of the event (September 14), 36 articles (15.2 percent) were published, mostly news reports, compared to the day after the event, when 64 related articles (27 percent), mainly news reports and opinion pieces, appeared. On the first Sunday after the event (September 17), the issue continued to be covered extensively by 52 articles (21.9 percent), while the Sunday editions of September 24 were limited to 23 articles (9.7 percent).

We should note, however, that the issue did not provoke the absolute attention of the press. This happened because in that particular period, the big stories were the anticipated resettlement of Andreas Papandreou's government, the intraparty politics of the governmental Socialist Party (PASOK), the publication by two tabloids of some nude photographs of Papandreou's wife, the appearance of Papandreou in the International Fair of Thessaloniki, and his "adventurous" visit to the island of Patmos. As a consequence, the interim accord with FYROM provoked less attention. The day after the agreement, the Greek dailies gave different amounts of attention to the event: The 64 articles are broken down as follows: *Ta Nea*, 1 article; *Avgi*, *Rizospastis*, and *Eleftheros Typos*, 2 articles each; *Macedonia*, 3; *Eleftherotypia* and *Avriani*, 5 each; *Thessaloniki*, 7; *ÉKathimerini* and *Apogevmatini*, 8 each; *Adesmeftos Typos*, 10; and *Ethnos*, 11.

In terms of their type, the 237 items were distributed as follows: 7 of them (3 percent) were editorials that directly expressed the position of each newspaper. Moreover, 63 items (26.5 percent) were opinion pieces, similar to those that appear in Sunday editions, 141 items (59.5 percent) were news reports, and 26 (11 percent) were interviews with politicians and others involved with the Macedonian question and the interim accord.

In terms of the article location, it was of interest that during the whole month of September 1995, only 14 front-page articles (5.9 percent) were dedicated to the issue, and most of them appeared on September 14 and 15. Five of the fourteen newspapers in the research study had two or more front-page articles. The decline in front-page articles compared to the 1994 research (10.4 percent) was due to two factors: (1) the elevation in the news agenda of the intraparty politics of the party in power (PASOK) and (2) the general fatigue of the public over the issue.

The title characterization of front-page articles fluctuated from negative (e.g., "It's a Shame: We Gave Everything to Skopje," *Adesmeftos Typos*, September 14, 1995) to positive and optimistic (e.g., "New Routes Are Open to the Balkans," *Kathimerini*, September 10, 1995). Of the 14 front-page articles, 9 were neutral, and 3 were negative. The picture, however, changes concerning the assessment of titles in the inner pages: Of the 223 titles of inner-page articles, 108 (48.4 percent) were negative, 78 (35 percent) were neutral, and 37 (16.6 percent) were positive (Table 1). However, the overall picture was ambiguous. On the one hand, the negative titles (46.8 percent) dominate, whereas on the other hand, the positive titles (16.5 percent) in addition to the neutral ones (36.7 percent) change the general negative press approach with respect to the accord, at least with respect to the characterization of their titles. In the appendix, we provide a sampling of the inner-page titles that appeared in each newspaper.

A reading of the titles and articles reveals two more elements:

1. A certain anti-Americanism was exhibited by some newspapers that

**Table I**

Cross-tabulation of articles according to title characterization and location

Article Location			
Title Characterization	Front Page	Inner Pages	Total
Positive	2	37	39 (16.5%)
Neutral	9	78	87 (36.7%)
Negative	3	108	111 (46.8%)
Total	14 (5.9%)	223 (94.1%)	237 (100.0%)

Chi square  $p$ -value = 0.075.

have traditionally been friendly to Greek political forces and that, up to that point, were arguing that Greece must belong to the West and for this reason must have good relations with the United States. This shows that the nationalistic discourse can be articulated with heterogeneous components in order to alter the boundaries of social and political identities. The nationalistic anti-Americanism of the conservative forces in Greece comes to meet the traditional anti-Americanism of the Left, since the anti-imperialist rhetoric of PASOK was replaced by the nationalist rhetoric of the conservative forces. This was more obvious in the Aegean Crisis concerning the Imia islands in 1996, when the socialist prime minister thanked the U.S. government for its role in the crisis with Turkey, provoking the arousal of the mainly conservative members of the parliament.

2. Even when the titles and articles expressed a positive view for the interim accord, the terms *Skopje* or *Skopiano* were used in a ubiquitous way. The newspapers *Avgi* and *Macedonia* were the only exceptions to the rule. In effect, the avoidance of using more precise terms like *FYROM* or *Macedonian question* signifies an insistence on the semantics of nationalism, a drawback, in the last analysis, of accepting reality, and a collective disregard of a repeated error (i.e., that the name of a state cannot be replaced by the name of its capital city). This is also an indication that the sector of the press that welcomed the interim accord followed and still follows the steps of the government concerning the name and does not dare to adopt a more flexible appellation.

Moreover, research results concerning the normative framing of the articles are quite interesting: 132 articles (55.7 percent) were written on the basis of a polycentric, reasoned approach to the idea of the nation and national interest, which is understood under the spirit of moral responsibility. The remaining 105 articles (44.3 percent) followed an ethnocentric, uncompromising approach. It is worth noting, however, that most articles in this research with a polycentric

**Table 2**

Cross-tabulation of articles according to type and normative framing

Normative Framing			
Type	Ethnocentric	Polycentric	Total
Editorial	4	3	7 (3.0%)
Opinion piece	34	29	63 (26.5%)
News report	53	88	141 (59.5%)
Interview	14	12	26 (11.0%)
Total	105 (44.3%)	132 (55.7%)	237 (100.0%)

Chi square  $p$ -value = 0.094.

approach were news reports (88 articles, 66.7 percent)—articles that, on the one hand, analyze the facts and, on the other, present the news of the events. As shown in Table 2, in the other three article types (editorials, opinion pieces, and interviews), the ethnocentric approach has been more frequently adopted in comparison to the polycentric approach of the news reports.

Therefore, the fact that news reports imposed most of the polycentric “normative framing” signifies at the same time that newspapers have not substantially altered their ethnocentric stance regarding the issue, to the extent that editorials, opinion pieces, and interviews represent or express more precisely the political stance of a news organization. On the contrary, news reports demand a more neutral and fair journalistic approach, which typically comes closer to polycentric views of the issue. Thus one can argue that the alteration of the Greek press with respect to the Macedonian question and the interim accord arises from pragmatism rather than a deep change of attitude.

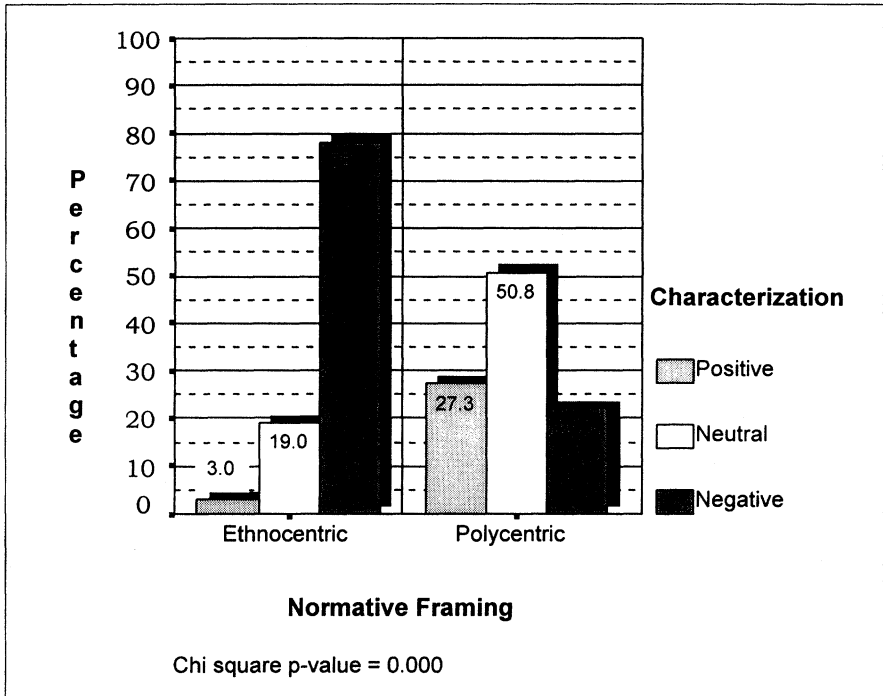
Moreover, attention has to be given to the relationship between the title characterization and the normative framing of the articles (Figure 2). In the case of the ethnocentric articles, this relationship is precise and indisputable: The overwhelming majority of the ethnocentric articles had negative titles (78.1 percent), only a small number of them were accompanied by neutral titles (19 percent), and only three articles had positive titles. This picture, however, changed in terms of the polycentric articles: Although we would expect more positive titles, this did not occur. The newspapers maintained a cautious stance, choosing mainly neutral titles (50.8 percent); 27.3 percent of them had positive titles, and the rest (22 percent) had negative titles. In other words, it seems that the newspapers both adopted a polycentric stance and refused it. Therefore, it can be said that the newspapers tried hard to find a balance between reality and ideology concerning this unresolved issue.

This particular pattern was similarly observed in the relationship between the title characterization of the article and the political identity of the newspaper (Figure 3). The pro-government newspapers used primarily neutral titles



**Figure 2**

Interim Accord Research: Title Characterization with Respect to Normative Framing



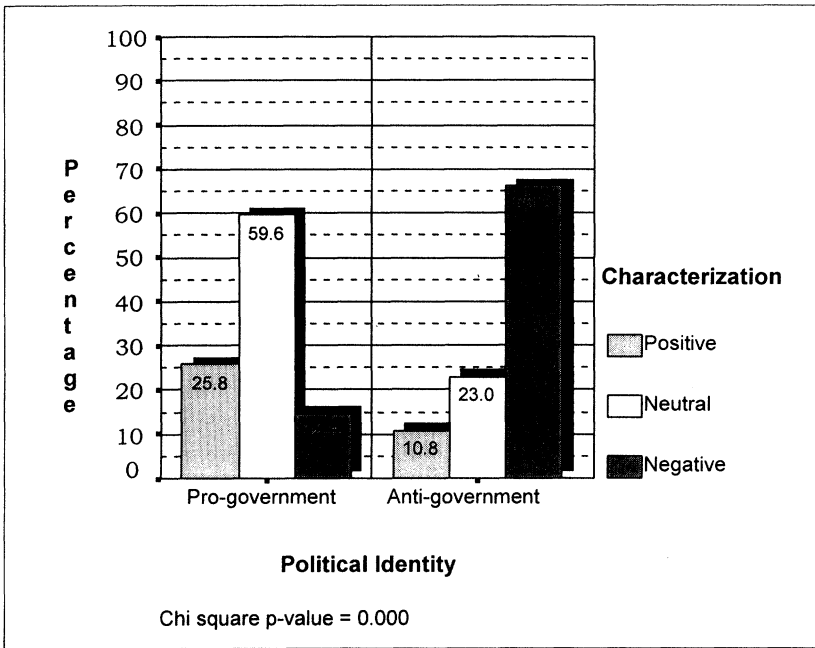
(59.6 percent) and positive titles (25.8 percent); only 14.6 percent of these articles had negative titles. On the other hand, the titles in the antigovernment newspapers were mostly negative (66.2 percent), rather than neutral (23 percent) or positive (10.8 percent). Thus the newspapers insisted once more on performing their traditional function within a clientist political system.

Finally, the association of the normative framing of the articles with respect to the political identity of the newspapers followed, more or less, the above model (Figure 4). The pro-government newspapers published mainly polycentric articles (75.3 percent), in contrast to the antigovernment newspapers, which generally approached the issue with an ethnocentric point of view (56.1 percent).

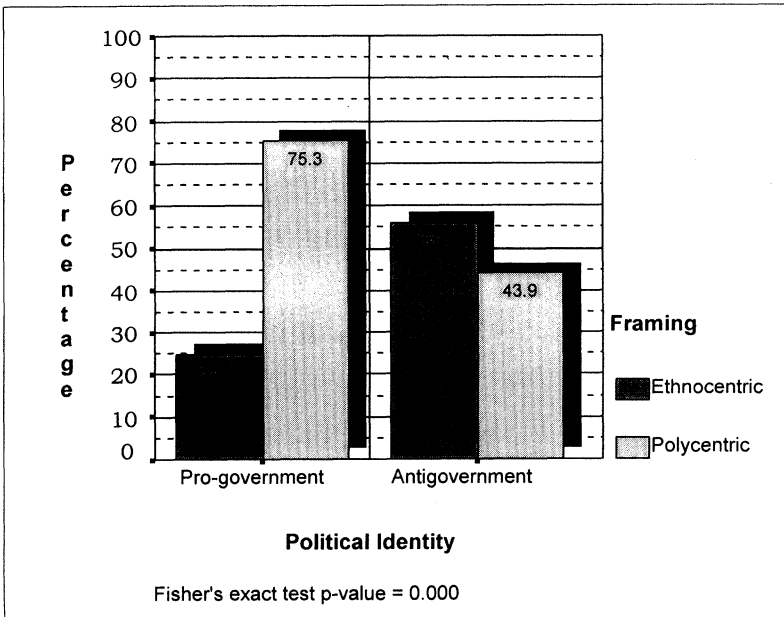
**Conclusions**

In this article, the position that the Greek press adopted with respect to the Macedonian question and the interim accord between Greece and FYROM in September 1995 was examined through the screening of 237 articles published in fourteen newspapers. The conclusions can be summarized as follows.

**Figure 3**  
Interim Accord Research: Title Characterization with Respect to Political Identity



**Figure 4**  
Interim Accord Research: Normative Framing with Respect to Political Identity



Although between 1992 and 1993 the Macedonian question dominated the publications, the interim accord between Greece and FYROM was not given predominant attention if we take into account the number and the frequency of the front-page articles. In contrast to the past, the normative framing of the articles reflected a polycentric, rather than an ethnocentric, approach. This is evident in the majority of the news reports.

As concerns the interim accord, the Greek newspapers reproduced their traditional attitude—that is, by supporting or criticizing government decisions. An analysis of the results also demonstrates that the normative framing shift of the articles does not reflect a deeper and permanent shift in the nationalistic attitude or stance of the newspapers on the Macedonian question as it was expressed in the early 1990s. On the contrary, this shift seems to be precarious and an outcome of a political conjuncture.

In sum, the normative universalistic potential of globalization seems to have had a scant effect on the Greek papers' presentation of the country's policy toward its Balkan neighbors. Greek papers seem to react locally to the effects of global international politics, leaving intact their traditional functions in the Greek political and party system. Had they embraced the nonparochial universalistic potential of globalization, they probably would have adopted a more comprehensive and thoroughly responsible attitude toward the public and the government.

Perhaps this would be too much to demand from a Balkan country's press (or from any other national press in similar circumstances). Greece, however, is also a West European country with a considerable democratic tradition, and we might expect more from its newspapers in a national crisis. Yet the press alone cannot make up for the absence of a deep-rooted civil society, on which the social responsibility of the press is ultimately based.

We know that in countries with atrophied civil societies, nationalism, and especially its tough-minded culturalist version, flourishes. Hence the Greek newspapers' ethnocentric outlook is hardly a surprise; neither is their recent polycentric twist toward the Greece-FYROM interim accord. They are both explained by the wider political cultural context: the Greek papers' quasi-clientelistic dependence on government and political parties, as well as their commercial character. This explanation, however, unveils a deficit in internationalism and social responsibility, which is not going to close in the near future.

## Notes

1. This is a distinction widely held by students of nationalism. See, for instance, Alter (1994) and Hayes (1960).
2. The entire case is too complex to analyze in this article (see Allcock 1994; Sofos 1996); it suffices to say that the Macedonian nationality should not be confused with the geographic region called Macedonia, divided between three nation-states: Greece, Bulgaria, and

FYROM. That is why the slogan “Macedonia is Greek,” voiced during the 1992–93 nationalist mobilizations in Greece, was confusing as far as the international image of the country was concerned.

3. Because we did not study specifically the impact of electronic media, we risk the intuitive claim that they contributed in recent nationalist mobilizations in a similar way.
4. The research team of this program comprised Antonis Armenakis, Dimitris Charalambis, Nicolas Demertzis, Theodor Gotsopoulos, and Roe Panagiotopoulou (1996).
5. In 1992 and 1993, the Athens Sunday papers included in the research shared 66 and 68 percent of the entire circulation of Sunday papers in Greece, respectively.
6. For the ethnocentric-polycentric differentiation, in the sense used here, see Fukuyama (1994:23–28); Habermas (1995:339–43); Schwarzmantel (1991:22–24, 194); and Tamir (1993:167).
7. Forty-eight percent of *Eleftherotypia*'s articles were classified as “ethnocentric” and 52 percent as “polycentric.” Also, 59 percent of the polycentric articles were concentrated in this particular newspaper.

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## Appendix

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1. In Search of a Common Position for the Name of Skopje
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3. How the Whole Setting Was Changed
4. Possibly the Name Won't Be Discussed

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2. The Greek Advantages from the Interim Accord
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