

**Nationalism Douze Points: the Discursive  
Reproduction of Turkish and Greek Identities in  
Eurovision Song Contest**

Alexandros Kampouris

105605006

Istanbul Bilgi University

Social Sciences Institute

International Relations Master's Programme

THESIS SUPERVISOR

ASSOC. PROF. DR. UMUT OZKIRIMLI

2007

**Nationalism Douze Points: the Discursive  
Reproduction of Turkish and Greek Identities in  
Eurovision Song Contest**

A dissertation submitted to the Social Sciences Institute of Istanbul Bilgi  
University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of  
International Relations Master's Programme

By

Alexandros Kampouris

105605006

İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi

Social Sciences Institute

International Relations Master's Programme

THESIS SUPERVISOR

ASSOC. PROF. DR. UMUT OZKIRIMLI

2007

Nationalism Douze points: the Discursive Reproduction of Turkish and  
Greek Identities in the Eurovision Song Contest

Eurovision Şarkı Yarışması'nda Türk ve Yunan Kimliklerinin  
Söylemsel Temsili

Alexandros Kampouris

105605006

Umut Ozkirimli: .....

Harry Tzimitras: .....

Serhat Guvenc: .....

Date of approval: 19/06/2007

Number of pages: 130

Anahtar Kelimeler (Türkçe)

- 1) Milliyetçilik
- 2) Söylemsel temsil
- 3) Eurovision yarışması
- 4) Türk milli kimliği
- 5) Yunan milli kimliği

Anahtar Kelimeler (İngilizce)

- 1) Nationalism
- 2) discursive reproduction
- 3) Eurovision contest
- 4) Turkish identity
- 5) Greek identity

## ÖZET

‘Batı’nın yerleşik devletleri’nin sağduyulu yaklaşımı, milliyetçi olguyu irrasyonel fikirlerin karışımı olarak tanımlar. Milliyetçilik, ‘bizim’ toplumumuzla ve toplumumuzun değer yargılarıyla bağdaşmaz. Milli kimlikler, zaman içerisinde o kadar doğal bir hal almıştır ki ‘bizim’ farklılığımızı ortaya koymayı amaçlayan show programlarında bile göze çarpmadan barınabilirler. Bu çalışma, Eurovision Şarkı Yarışması gibi ‘küresel’ ve ‘düşük kaliteli’ popüler bir yarışmada Türk ve Yunan kimliklerinin hangi yollarla ortaya koyulduğunu incelemeyi amaçlar. ‘Kendi’ kimliğimizin Türk ve Yunan medyasında temsil ediliş şekli ‘bize’ kendi içimizde tek-tip bir söylev kazandırır. Ayrıca bir süre için ‘diğeri’ ile yan yana bulunma, benzerlikler ve farklılıklar yoluyla aslında ‘kendi’ kimliğimizin özgünlüğünü gösterir. Bu çalışma, Türk ve Yunanın değişmez ve köklü kimlikler değil de, belirli kurumlar tarafından dayatılan sonradan kazanımlar olduğunu göstermeyi amaçlar.

## **ABSTRACT**

The commonsensical view of the 'established states of the West' on national phenomena identifies them as a stir of irrational feelings. Nationalism is incompatible with 'our' community and its values. In turn, national identities have become so enhabited and natural that they remain unseen even in spectacular shows aiming to perform 'our' distinctiveness. This study aspires to explore the ways in which Turkish and Greek identities are performed in 'globalized' and 'low-quality' popular contests such as Eurovision Song Contest. The tropes with which 'our' identity is represented in Turkish and Greek media reproduce 'us' discursively as internally uniform. More than that, the direct juxtaposition with the 'other', reproduces the originality of 'our' identity through similarity and difference. The study seeks to show that Turks and Greeks are not fixed and essential identities, but rather categories of practices reproduced by specific institutions.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

First and foremost I would like to thank Umut Ozkirimli for his overall contribution to the completion of this study. He has been helpful in many ways and I consider myself privileged to have him a supervisor. I am indebted to Harry Tzimitras for providing me with useful material for the study and for being kind enough to help me when I asked for it. Ezgi Ulusoy and Sinan Evcan have helped me in the (difficult) task of translating articles from Turkish to English. Needless to say that the exclusive responsibility for the translation of the articles falls on the author.

# CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	9
FIRST PART .....	13
A. SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONISM AND NATIONALISM.....	13
B. NATIONALISM AS A FORM OF DISCOURSE.....	16
C. REPRODUCTION OF NATIONAL IDENTITIES .....	18
I. LANGUAGE AND NATIONAL IDENTITIES .....	18
II. GENDER AND NATIONAL IDENTITIES .....	20
III. HOMELAND AND NATIONAL IDENTITY .....	21
IV. NARRATING NATIONAL HISTORIES .....	23
D. HEGEMONY AND NATIONAL IDENTITY .....	24
E. NATIONAL IDENTITIES AS NATURAL FACTS.....	27
F. INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF IDENTITIES .....	28
SECOND PART .....	32
EUROVISION SONG CONTEST: AN INTRODUCTION.....	32
A. INTRODUCTION: THE CONCEPT OF ESC .....	32
B. THE STRUCTURE OF EUROVISION .....	34
C. VOTING PROCEDURE.....	35
D. TURKS, GREEKS AND EUROVISION SONG CONTEST .....	37
THIRD PART: GREECE AND EUROVISION SONG CONTEST.....	40
A. REPRESENTATION OF NATIONAL IDENTITY .....	40
I. LANGUAGE AS A DENOMINATOR OF NATIONAL IDENTITY.....	40
II. PHYSICAL APPEARANCE AND NATIONAL IDENTITY .....	43
III. LIVE YOUR MYTH(S) IN GREECE: WHEN ARISTOPHANES MET TSITSANIS.....	47

IV. POLITICS OF VOTING AND EUROVISION SONG CONTEST .....	52
V. THE FLAG OF MY COUNTRY .....	56
VI. LANDSCAPE AND REPRESENTATION OF NATIONAL IDENTITY..	59
B. THE QUEST FOR HEGEMONY .....	62
C. INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF GREEKNESS .....	66
FOURTH PART: TURKEY AND EUROVISION SONG CONTEST .....	69
A. REPRESENTATION OF TURKISH IDENTITY .....	69
I. TURKISH: THE FLAG OF MY VOICE!.....	69
II. POLITICS AND KIN STATES .....	73
III. PHYSICAL APPEARANCE AND NATIONAL IDENTITY .....	76
IV. THE HOMELAND AS DREAMLAND .....	80
V. WAVING THE RED CRESCENT.....	86
VI. MYTHS AND NARRATIVES OF THE TURKISH IDENTITY .....	90
B. THE QUEST FOR HEGEMONY .....	93
C. INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF TURKISH IDENTITY .....	101
FIFTH PART: IMAGINING THE ‘OTHER’ .....	105
‘US’ AND ‘THEM’: PERCEPTIONS OF GREEKS FOR TURKS .....	105
A. TURKS IN THE IMAGINATION OF GREEKS .....	105
B. GREEKS IN THE IMAGINATION OF TURKS .....	115
CONCLUSIONS.....	119



## INTRODUCTION

*The Mermaid Song*, a song performed by Fotini Dara during the opening ceremony of the 2005 Eurovision Song Contest hosted in Athens, referred to the Song of Life. Through its verses, the land where “Music was first sung” and the people who first sung it and handed down this “sacred” song in every tongue and tradition are extolled. This is the land where Music was born, the homeland of ‘Greeks’. The opening ceremony of Eurovision contest informs us of the inauguration of a spectacular show, that of national identities.

The study aspires to discuss the reproduction of national identities of Turks and Greeks in a comparative way. Nationalism as a way of thinking is embedded in the social reality we live and is a taken for granted fact. This thesis departs from a social constructionist point of view and attempts to describe the ways in which Turkish and Greek identities are represented with regards to ‘inter-national’ contests.

The scope of the study concerning the reproduction of Turkishness and Greekness is limited to a content analysis (discourse analysis) of articles traced in newspapers from Turkey and Greece. The selection of newspaper reports as primary material for the exploration of the reproduction of Turks and Greeks serves a cause: it is the best methodological tool for the investigation of national phenomena as forms of discourses. Anderson (1991) argued that contemporary nationalism can be expressed in newspaper commentary. This study attempts to explore the ways the media reproduce national identities of Turks and Greeks in popular culture.

Nevertheless, this study confines its field of research in articles and commentaries found in newspapers concerning the Eurovision Song Contest.

Eurovision contest as the field of this study is selected mainly for two reasons: the dissemination of nationalist discourses in the field of popular is largely understudied, gaining its attention only lately. Thus, a study on a popular music contest can provide insights for an understanding of the operation and dissemination of national phenomena in the social world. Apart from that, not many studies focusing on Turkish and Greek identities are located in the realm of popular culture, thus this study aspires to 'open up' the field and 'extend' the focus of Turkish-Greek relations to popular culture. Lastly, Eurovision contest was particularly selected since the mainstream view holds that it produces cultural uniformity. Arguing against that thesis, the study purports to present the 'compatibility' of Eurovision contest with the staging of national identities. Yet, Eurovision contest is a contingency and not the focus of the study, which examines the manifestations of national identities and cultural belonging in the context of a popular song contest.

The study attempts to present the various ways in which national identities are discursively reproduced in articles concerning Eurovision contest. In turn, these ways are cited in newspaper articles and the particular claims about 'our', as well as 'their', identities are presented. These ways fall under six categories and are identified in both empirical cases. To present the claims of Greeks and Turks about themselves and their 'others', the study is divided in five parts.

The first part of the study attempts to provide the theoretical premises upon which lie the empirical findings. The study follows the social constructionist view for national phenomena, arguing for the placement of nationalism in the social sphere. For this essay, nationalism is a form of discourse, a particular version of events producing and reproducing particular ways of thinking about the world. Nationalist discourses operate in four levels which are reviewed in order to understand

nationalism as the general framework, the dominant discourse of the social milieu. Having identified nationalism as *the* way of thinking, the study focuses on national identities as forms of life acquiring their ‘content’ through the reproduction of nationalist discourses.

The second part of the study operates as a link between the theoretical background and the empirical case studies. In that part, the study bears a moment’s consideration on the structure of the contest and the voting procedure. The reproduction of ‘our’ nation as a unitary actor and a single entity voting ‘other nations’, thus legitimizing the view of the world order as a ‘world of nations’ attests to the ‘compatibility’ of Eurovision contest with the performance of national identities. Eurovision’s structure, as it is noted, reproduces ‘us’ living in the ‘international’ system as a natural and taken for granted fact.

The third part of the study embarks on the presentation of the Greek empirical case. Nationalist tropes, ways in which ‘our’ identity is represented in the media, are discursively invoked in order to make claims about ‘our’ community and Greekness. Nationalist discourses are evoked in Greek media and a particular discourse filling the ‘content’ of Greek identity is hegemonized at the expense of alternative ones. Later in the chapter, institutions which promote that particular discourse are identified through their representation in newspapers commentary. In the case of Greece, claims about ‘our’ identity are torn between two clashing views, the conservatives and the modernists. The latter was hegemonized through state-run institutions and was projected onto the stage of Eurovision ‘singing’ on behalf of the ‘whole nation’. In that sense, ‘our’ identity is reproduced as internally uniform.

The fourth part of the study presents the Turkish case in Eurovision contest. Nationalist tropes, as traced in newspaper commentary, reproduce ‘us’ as a

community in unison. Claims about Turkish identity form two main dichotomies: conservatives versus modernist and Western versus Oriental discourses. Finally 'our' identity is represented on stage as the bridge between East and West, a 'performance' backed by specific institutions.

The fifth part of the study attempts to trace the discursive construction of the 'other' through the analysis of newspaper commentaries. Stereotypical claims about 'our other' reproduce 'our' originality. In that sense, articles in Greek newspapers about the 'Turk' represent 'us' at the core of West and exclude 'them' in 'its' periphery. Moreover, 'Turks' are seen as the 'copy' striving to become like 'us', the model. On the contrary, 'Greeks' are imagined as close to 'us' due to cultural sharings of the Ottoman times. Nevertheless, 'they' are reproduced as 'appropriators' since 'we' are entitled as 'heirs' of the empire to talk about its cultural prominence.

The last part of the study wraps up the discussion arguing against the taken for granted and natural character of nationalism. Nationalist discourses are diffused in social practices and construct national identities as *the* social categories. Greekness and Turkishness are reproduced through newspapers articles as reified categories, as ever-lasting 'identities' with a fixed and essential 'content'. Nevertheless, as the study aspired to show, national identities are forms of life, categories of practice which are inhabited in the social realm and reproduced in ritualistic contests such as Eurovision.

## **FIRST PART**

### **A. SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONISM AND NATIONALISM**

The first part of the study attempts to discuss the social constructionist approach with regards to nationalism. The elements of a social constructionist approach for national phenomena place the latter in the social reality and its meanings. The key role to understand the power of nationalism is to understand the role of discourse in the production and reproduction of social meanings.

A multitude of divergent views about nationalism reveals its contested meaning. Billig informs us of various accounts ‘placing’ nationalism in the periphery of the social world, reducing it to a manifestation of an insurgency of militant movements stirred by irrational emotions (1995:16). On the other hand, another point of view sees nationalism as an ever-existing phenomenon linking it with a sense of natural order of things. In that sense, national feelings are related with the human condition arguing that national belonging is actually an inherent characteristic of human beings (*ibid.*:17)

Against such conceptualizations, the social constructionist outlook informs us of the non-natural character of meanings. As Burr notes, social constructionism cautions us to be suspicious of our assumptions of how the world appears to be (2003:3). The categories with which we apprehend the world do not necessarily refer to ‘natural’ characteristics. In the same vein, Brubaker notes that nations are understood as natural entities, even though they are social categories of a particular kind, categories of practice rather than substantial communities (2000:14). Social constructionism holds a critical stance against the identification of national phenomena as ‘taken for granted facts. The “world of nations” (Brubaker, *ibid.*:21;

Billig 1995) should not be perceived as a natural fact but as a construct. Hechter furthermore argues that national identities are not natural and inevitable identities, but specific forms of identification whose construction reveals their contingent character.

The social constructionist view holds that social interactions between people in everyday life produce the ways in which we understand the world. Nationalism is a particular way of understanding reality which is constructed by people through their social interactions. National phenomena, in their constructionist conceptualization, are not essential entities 'forgetting' their traces in the course of time, but rather social constructions dependent upon historical and cultural specificities<sup>1</sup> and produced by interactions between social actors. Nationalism is a social construct which represents<sup>2</sup>, thus renders meaningful, the world through a particular perspective.

Having located nationalism in the social realm, one needs to bear a moment's consideration in the means by which the production and reproduction of social meanings takes place. Discourses limit and channel what we can think and say, they signify, in Hall's words, the social world. Burr, following Foucault, notes that discourses

[R]efer to a set of meanings, metaphors, representations, images, stories, statements and so on that in some way together produce a particular version of events (*ibid.*:64)

Discourses represent social constructs and 'carry their meanings' to human agents.

They construct meaning and transmit it (Hall, *ibid.*:5).

---

<sup>1</sup> Burr notes that constructionism is embedded in historical and cultural specificities. Indeed, if a phenomenon is located in the field of social, it operates according to the relativities and arrangements of that society. Relativities of the social environment provide the ground for the contestation of diverse school of thought in nationalism studies. For detailed analyses and critiques see Ozkirimli 2000; Day and Thompson 2003.

<sup>2</sup> The term 'representation' is introduced by Hall in order to explain how we make intelligible the social world. The reality is represented in social practices, predominantly discourse, which in turn renders it intelligible to social actors (see Hall 2002; van Dijk 1998).

Discourses make it possible for us to see the world in a certain way; yet their operation is not merely confined to producing a particular view of the reality but also by reproducing it in both 'banal' and spectacular ways. As van Dijk notes, the repetitive 're' part implies that the act of production is being repeated (1998:228). If nationalism is a phenomenon socially produced, then reproduction is necessary for its diffusion and sedimentation in the environment and it is in that act of reproduction that we become 'forgetful' of its constructed character.

Nationalism operates as a construct embedded in the social reality. It is context-dependent operating in a different way according to the social context within which it is produced and reproduced. It is a particular discourse which stands in between 'us' as social agents and 'our' interactions rendering intelligible the way society works. It molds our way of thinking and it represents social meanings through the socialization of the community members. Thus, the social constructionist view helps in understanding the ideological force of nationalism. National phenomena are not to be solely located in the periphery of societies, reduced to insurgencies and armed fights. Instead, in 'established' nations, nationalism is produced and reproduced discursively in the social context representing meanings through its discourses.

## **B. NATIONALISM AS A FORM OF DISCOURSE**

So far, the social constructionist view of national phenomena has placed them in the very core of established societies arguing for an understanding of nationalism as an ideological form of discourse representing meanings through the socialization of human agents. What remains then is to see how this discursive formation operates and how it succeeds in diffusing its discourses in the social surrounding.

The key to understand nationalism and its powerful appeal to the people is to see it as an ideological discourse, a discursive framework, a way of speaking that shapes our consciousness” (Calhoun, 1997:3). In a similar vein<sup>3</sup>, Ozkirimli purports that nationalism is “a particular way of seeing and interpreting the world, a frame of reference that helps us make sense of and structure the reality that surrounds us” (2003:163). It is the nationalist discourse which constructs nations and its associated identities: nationalism is a way of constructing the social reality we live in by imagining communities and common bondages with people of the past and the future (Calhoun, 1997:12).

Nationalist discourses operate in four ways in a specific social context:

- The discourse of nationalism is articulated through the invocation of ‘us’ versus ‘them’. National identities are reproduced as an internally uniform ‘we’ as opposed to a stereotypically depicted ‘them’
- The discourses of nationalism legitimate particular approaches of the nation at the expense of others,
- It naturalizes itself reproducing the national world order as inevitable and taken for granted. The ‘world of nations’ is seen as an inescapable reality, a destiny,

---

<sup>3</sup> Such a conceptualization can be found as well in Hall’s “The social construction of nationalism. Sweden as an example”, 1998.



- Nationalist discourses operate through institutions. Specific outlooks of ‘our’ identity are hegemonized over others and are promoted as ‘official’ by certain institutions. In that sense, national identities are not perceived to be inherent and natural but outcome of enhabitation<sup>4</sup> and socialization (Ozkirimli 2003:33).

Nationalism, as a form of ideological discourse, constructs the framework within which social categories such as ‘nations’ and national identities arise. Before embarking on the discussion about the diffusion of nationalist discourses in the social context the relationship between nationalism and ‘national’ identity needs to be clarified.

---

<sup>4</sup> Enhabitation is a term used by Billig (*ibid.*:42) in order to refer to the unreflexive reproduction of nationhood. National identities are largely seen as habitual practices occurring while ‘we’ go about our lives.

## **C. REPRODUCTION OF NATIONAL IDENTITIES**

Having identified nationalist discourses as the general framework within which national identities render ‘themselves’ meaningful, the study attempts to present the various ways with which the national ‘we’ is reproduced in ‘our’ society. Nationalist tropes such as language, gender, the reproduction of homeland, the use of national narratives are invoked in order to account for the articulation and reproduction of ‘our’ identity.

### **I. LANGUAGE AND NATIONAL IDENTITIES**

Language as a cultural element was thought to bear a sense of ‘distinctiveness’. The world was always thought to be a world of linguistic diversity. In what follows, the national language is seen as a historical creation constructed in a uniformity of grammar and spoken form in order to talk about ‘our’ identity as ‘unique’.

Language is thought to be a natural way of reproducing ‘our’ distinctive character. It is almost unimaginable to perceive of the world as a linguistically uniform community. Instead, it goes without saying that an objective criterion of ‘our’ identity is the language. In fact, the emergence of vernacular languages and the gradual decline of popularity of the sacred languages, such as Latin, along with a combination of other historical contingencies led to the consciousness of ‘our’ distinctive character (Anderson 1991).

Nevertheless, the notion of one language, uniform as a written and oral form, is a historical creation aiming to reproduce the nation as a particular entity. Billig (*ibid.*:29) introduces the term ‘invented permanency’ in order to refer to the language as an ideological construction of nationalism. As he notes, the commonsensical notion that language differentiates cultures and peoples is indeed true, yet what nationalism constructed was a uniform language as the ‘official’ form of written and oral

communication used by a particular community, the national one. The idea was simple enough: those speaking the same language are liable to claim a sense of national bond (*ibid.*). What is explicitly stated is that the language, in its unison character, stands metonymically for ‘us’, the homogenous national community.

Apart from that, the reproduction of language as a uniform structure legitimated ‘our’ claims for the boundaries of ‘our’ nation. Kitromilides (2003) notes the role of Greek language in a two-level nationalization process: the construction of internal homogeneity through the teaching of ancient Greek and the legitimation of irredentist claims for the liberation of ‘unredeemed’ lands where Grecophones dwelled. In that sense, the ‘invention’ of a uniform language promotes the integration of a homogenous society speaking one language and at the same time claims for territorial expansion are legitimated through the invocation of one nation-one language motto. In the same vein, the campaign “Citizen, speak Turkish”<sup>5</sup> in early republican Turkey was initiated to promote linguistic uniformity, a *sine qua non* for the desired national homogeneity.

Ways of reproducing ‘our’ language as uniform constitute ways of imagining ‘our’ community as homogeneous and culturally in unison. Language displays in the most apt form the constructed character of national identities. An element of culture drawn from pre-modern times was attached an altogether new meaning since the language was used to ‘speak’ about ‘our’ nation.

---

<sup>5</sup> For a detailed analysis on the role of language for the formation of the Turkish nation-state see Aydingun and Aydingun 2004; Poulton 1997; Cagaptay 2006.

## II. GENDER AND NATIONAL IDENTITIES

Nationalist discourses reproduce the mythical unity of 'our' imagined community which divides the world into 'us' and 'them'. Stereotypical images sketched by and for 'our' community are highly intertwined with representations of bodily performances and gendered identities. In what follows, the gendered 'nation' and the nationalized gender talk about the role of gender in the reproduction of national identities.

Stereotypical images about 'our' identity bring gender and its discourses into the picture. Yuval-Davis (1997) underlines the various ways in which 'our' nation is projected onto female bodies. Either in its literal (reproduction of children) or in its metaphorical meaning, bodily performances and attitudes stand stereotypically for 'our' identity. Commenting on cultural reproduction, she notes two ways of gendering the nation: as 'symbolic border guards' and as 'embodiments of collectivity' (*ibid.*:23). She goes on further to argue that women in their 'proper' behavior stand symbolically for the national boundaries. Female bodies can transcend 'our' national borders and present 'our' distinctive character in 'others'.

Apart from that, especially women are bound to carry the 'burden of representation'. As Yuval-Davis notes, female bodies are constructed as the symbolic bearers of 'our' community's identity and honour (*ibid.*:45). In that sense, women stand metonymically for the whole displaying the morality of 'our' community, thus 'its' distinctive character. In turn, a moral representation of 'our' identity by the female body entitles 'us' to talk on behalf of 'all nations', evoking the syntax of hegemony.

Bodies of men and women stand metonymically for the whole performing 'our' uniqueness. Moral virtues of 'us', such as honor, as well as cultural aspects of 'our' nation are carried in and outside 'our' boundaries, territorial or mental.

### **III. HOMELAND AND NATIONAL IDENTITY**

The 'homeland' as a territorially delimited piece of land is a criterion for the imagination of a community in unison. This section draws upon the role of a bounded land, namely 'our' homeland, in the reproduction of 'our' identity.

The identification of a named territory 'belonging' to a national community is a subject common to various scholars of nationalism studies. Anderson (1991: 6) in his conceptualization of imagined communities refers to them as 'inherently limited', thus delineating them within finite boundaries beyond which 'others' live (*ibid.*:7). Smith notes that a main attribute for the distinctive character of ethnies is its association with a specific 'homeland' (1991:21). Gellner (1983:1) maintains that nationalism is a principle which holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent, in other words that ethnic boundaries should coincide with the boundaries of the political community. In all above accounts, a community limiting itself into a given piece of land beyond which others lie is a recurrent pattern.

In the same vein, the notion of a 'national identity' is represented metonymically by the imagination of 'our' homeland. Billig argues that the homeland is imagined both as the place of belonging and a symbol of the place of all of 'us' (*ibid.*:75). In that sense, a given piece of land symbolizes the unity of 'our' community. The homeland is a unity, as it can be argued by its name: each homeland is considered a special place with a unique name and clearly defined boundaries (*ibid.*).

Claims about the uniformity of 'our' community are legitimized through the reproduction of a particular territory as 'our' homeland. A particular form of grammar is invoked to reproduce the imagined community as internally uniform, 'our' home. The discursive reproduction of a named territory stands metonymically for the community as a whole. In that sense, the term 'Greece' is used to communicate both to 'us' and 'them' that 'Greece' is merely a spot on the map, a geographic region but it represents the homeland of all Greeks.

Yet, despite the fact that we live in a world of clearly delineated nation-states, 'our' homeland symbolically extends where 'we' are. Skrbis (1999:2-3) draws on Anderson's term 'long-distance nationalism' to refer to the symbolic extension of 'our' homeland in 'our' diasporic communities. As he argues, the interaction between diasporas and homelands involves a relativisation of space (and time). National boundaries are symbolically exceeded and extend to every corner where 'we' dwell. In that sense, 'our' homeland meets no boundaries, thus no limitations.

As it was argued before, the discursive reproduction of 'our' unity through the metonymic use of 'our' homeland involves a further vision about the world. Indeed, if there is 'Greece' standing for 'our' community, then 'our' world as a 'world of nations' is discursively implied. Such a notion is sketched out in map-making. The notion of 'one nation, one territory' is reproduced in map-making science. Calhoun notes that the representation of the world as divided neatly into territories with clear borders seems today a natural fact, yet this visualization of the world was a modern practice (1997:13). Kaiser (2001) notes the link established between nationalism and territorial consciousness. He argues that the reproduction of a given piece of land in pictures, stamps and flags (the logo-ization of national boundaries) promotes the image of the homeland in the minds of 'our' nationals, as well as the rest of the world.

To cut things short, the invocation of a specific, clearly defined territory is a *conditio sine qua non* for the imagination of ‘our’ community. Not only that, ‘our’ homeland stands for ‘our’ uniformity while reproduced as a named land standing for a national homeland. The ‘Greeks’, being reproduced as a community in unison through the term ‘Greece’ cannot but imagine that land as *the* homeland.

#### **IV. NARRATING NATIONAL HISTORIES**

The most fundamental way to determine the distinctiveness of “our” community is to exhort “our” glorious past. Thus, national histories and narratives construct how “we” define “our” community, thus demarcate it and differentiate it. Balibar argues that the myth of origin and national continuity is an effective ideological form for the imagery of national unity. Nations are constructed daily by moving back from the present into the past (1991:87). Billig reminds us of Anderson’s understanding of the national community as “an (imagined) community stretching through time, with its own past and own future destiny” (*ibid.*:70). In that sense, this community possesses a particular history that belongs to it alone. National narratives are seen as a way of preserving the distinctiveness of the national community. “We” are “we” (the first “we” implying the identification whereas the second the quality) as long as “our” national histories continue to exist.

The concept of national distinctiveness goes hand in hand with that of “authenticity”. Largely, national narratives are constructed in order to evoke narcissist feelings and a sense of a ‘true’ community. Smith notes that during the early years of nation-formation, myth-making was assigned the task of rediscovering the “true” ties of the community drawn from immemorial past (1999:61). Nevertheless, various kinds of myth-making emerged within the community, often contrapuntal to each

other (*ibid.*:58). Such a contest of myths had a dual role, on one hand created fractions among the members of the community, on the other it united them since out of the tension “emerges a great sense of dynamic activism and an enhanced communal self-consciousness” (*ibid.*). Ozkirimli notes that nations do not have a single history, but different narratives compete to establish their hegemony (2003:184). Bhabha is critical of unitary and ‘true’ national narratives, arguing that nations narrate themselves in an ambivalent way, pushing and pulling available cultural materials accordingly, in order to infer an immemorial past and an imagined unity of the community (1990:1-10).

National narratives and myths of ‘our’ glorious past are transformed by nationalist discourses in order to fill ‘nationally’ the ‘hollow’ category of national identities. Myths and histories of immemorial times reproduce ‘us’ as an age-old community moving through time, a uniform community whose ancient roots corroborate for ‘its’ authenticity.

#### **D. HEGEMONY AND NATIONAL IDENTITY**

So far it has been argued that national identities are articulated discursively through the use of nationalist discourses. The national ‘we’, evoked to speak on behalf of the community as a whole, is represented through four categories, as it is stated above. Yet, ‘our’ community is reproduced as internally uniform banishing internal dichotomies; indeed, various fractions and diverse social groups invoke nationalist discourses to gain hegemony and exert power on alternative discourses formulated by ‘internal others’.

National identities are presented as fixed and enduring entities representing the unity of the community. Nonetheless, this picture is at best a partial one. As Billig



argues, no ideology is characterized by a single voice or a particular attitudinal position (*ibid.*:87). The hegemonic discourse formulating national identities revolves round the issue of particularity and universality. Thus, the 'we' talk can become an ambiguous term, indicating the particularity of 'we', the nation, and the universality of 'we', the universally reasonable world (Billig, *ibid.*:90).

As it was argued in the case of national histories, there is no single voice of the nation. Different groups representing various fractions operate in the social context attempting to speak for the whole. Finlayson (1998) argues that political ideological discourses and groups attempt to re-activate the common sense notion of "nation" in order to legitimate their claims. Political ideologies with a wide ideological gap between them, such as conservatism and liberalism, attempt to address themselves as the guarantor of "this people's interests". Malesevic argues that nationalism is the dominant ideology of modern times within which other ideological discourses make themselves sound. Verdery makes a similar point when she argues that the "nation", seen as a symbol, is not an essential entity but consists of heterogeneous groups, thus heterogeneous meanings of its national identity exist. In her own words,

(Scholarship on nation) should treat....nationalism as having multiple meanings, offered as alternatives and competed over by different groups maneuvering to capture the symbol's definition and its legitimating effects (1993: 228).

Thus, there are various potential ways in which a national community can be imagined, but its final form is constructed by the dominant nationalist discourse. A particular 'we' of the nation appears to talk for the collective unity, the national 'we'.

This particularity and universality of national identities function at two levels: the national, as described above, and the inter-national one. In that respect, the national 'we' talks in the name of universal moral values, ideas applicable to the humanity as a whole: the national 'we' represents the universal 'we'. It is possible a particular voice of the nation to represent the interests of this international, universal order: 'we', in our great particularity, can be imagined to stand for 'all of us', for a universal audience of humanity (*ibid.*:89). In that sense, a particular nation seeks for international hegemony while addressing itself as the guarantor of ideas such as democracy, justice and security. So, that 'we' is both particular in the sense that it is articulated by a particular nation and universal in talking about themes common to the international context as well. A nation, by claiming for itself both these attitudes (particular and universal), claims for its domination over the "Others" not by excluding them but by talking on behalf of them.

The syntax of hegemony constitutes of a particular 'we' claiming to act for the whole. Billig introduces this term to describe that this "we"-grammar implies an "identity of identities" (*ibid.*:10), a special quality of 'us' who claim to speak in the name of all, including 'them' as well. In that sense, national identity invokes the narcissist feeling of people; 'we' are so powerful even to protect 'you'. Yet, the non-singular character of nations, the existence of various groups attaching to the nationalist discourse to make their claims 'rightful', their contestation and conflicting claims argues for the conceptualization of national identities as a contingent event. National identities are constructed by the 'voice' which holds hegemony over alternative ones. The contingency of their 'construction' and the heterogeneity of their meanings and practices accounts for their constant negotiation.

## **E. NATIONAL IDENTITIES AS NATURAL FACTS**

National identities are practiced socially through the evocation of nationalist discourses reproducing ‘us’ as *the* social category, thus excluding alternative discourses to talk about how society works. If ideological constructs are deemed to be successful to the extent that they naturalize themselves in social surroundings, nationalism seems to be banally inhabited in ‘our’ social world.

The discourse of national identity presupposes a certain ‘common sense’ of the nation as the field of every social interaction. Communities bear a particular “national” existence; people are identified by their national belonging while forgetting alternative ways of social categorization. Finlayson, quoting Laclau, describes the process of “sedimentation” of an ideology:

Insofar as an act of institution [of the social] has been successful, “forgetting of the origins” tends to occur; the system of possible alternatives tends to vanish and the traces of the original contingency to fade. In this way, the instituted tends to assume the form of a mere objective presence (Laclau, 1990:34; cited in Finlayson 1998).

Thus, the nation is seen as the “natural” field where social interactions take place and within which the national ‘we’ is loaded with so many meanings as the discourses that attempt to legitimate themselves through the use of that ‘we’. Verdery makes a similar point when she argues that “national symbolization includes as well the processes whereby groups within a society are rendered visible or invisible” (1993:230). The invisibility, thus naturalization of these groups can be achieved only by invoking the national ‘we’; the various social groups expose their arguments “within parameters that take nationhood for granted as the natural context of the universe” (Billig, *ibid.*:87).

## F. INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF IDENTITIES

The network of state apparatuses through which the dominant ideology diffuses itself into the social was a focal point for Althusser. The Ideological State Apparatuses (known as ISA's) distinguish themselves from the Marxist concept of State Apparatuses since, as Althusser notes, the former function primarily through ideology and secondarily through repression. This network is constituted of the political (the political system and parties), communications (press and media), cultural (literature, arts, sports), religious (the structure of the Church), educational (schools) apparatuses, each of which "contributes towards this single result in the way proper to it" The importance of Ideological State Apparatuses is depicted by two quotations of Althusser:

[N]o class can hold State power over a long period without at the same time exercising its hegemony over and in the State Ideological Apparatuses" (*ibid.*: 146)... [A]n ideology always exists in an apparatus, and its practice, or practices. (*ibid.*: 166). (1971:154)<sup>6</sup>.

Althusser, thus, holds that these apparatuses should be a *conditio sine qua non* for the persistence of the dominant ideology since them alone can guarantee for its persuasive (in oppose to their repressive) diffusion in the society. Furthermore, Althusser concedes that ideologies "live" in the means by which they are massively reproduced.

The educational apparatus, comprised of public and private schools, is the dominant and most efficient one. Balibar notes that the schooling system reproduces the official ideology of the state and "produces" homo "nationalis", individuals raised

---

<sup>6</sup> An empirical listing of the apparatuses can be found on Althusser's "Lenin and Philosophy", 1971, p. 143.

with the nationalist discourse of belonging to an imagined ‘we’ and an imagined ‘homeland’. Thus, both Althusser and Balibar cast light into the reproduction of the dominant ideology (in this case nationalism) through their means, state apparatuses. In that sense, ideologies are not repressively embedded in the social strata, but they require a sense of public consensus for their diffusion.

National(ist) discourses diffuse themselves to the social milieu through the operation of institutions and constitute themselves in everyday practices. Eriksen (1993) in his study on Mauritian and Trinidadian societies identifies nationalism as a “dual” phenomenon making itself visible and invisible to the social world by operating both at the level of formal organization of the state as well as that of civil society. Edensor (2002) makes a similar point when he refers to the facilitation and regulation of certain forms of life (allegiance to a national collectivity and national values) as they are provided by the state, and at the same time practices and forms which reproduce the nation as *the* common-sense entity.

Formal nationalism is connected with the bureaucracy of the state and its policies towards the cultural uniformity of the (national) people. Under the category “formal nationalism” falls every state-run effort to reproduce the national ‘we’. In that sense, rituals, national commemorations, waved flags and symbols form the wide array of the “universal language of nationalism” are invoked in order to connote uniformed social unity and a strong allegiance with the nation-state (Eriksen, 1993:5). By and large, the state through the function of its institutions attempts to reproduce a collective identity based on the cultural and the political national unity.

At the other side of the same coin stand the set of actions of civil society. “Informal nationalism” forges an identity based on a different value system than the one presented by formal nationalism. As Eriksen notes, criticism by civil society

actors against state policies concerning the “national interest” bear a form of contesting nationalist discourse. Nevertheless, they take place in the social reality defined in terms of nationhood; they do not threaten to dissolve the “national” unity of the “people” but to offer an alternative vision of the achievement of national goals. In that respect, neither of them can be addressed as more “authentic” than the other, because in practice they are *de facto* complementary, nobody lives with just one of them (*ibid.*:19).

Billig and his groundbreaking study on the different ways in which national allegiances are forged in mundane aspects of social life has brought the debate about reproduction in the centre of attention. Billig used a pair of antithetical terms, hot versus banal, to unveil the nationalist discourses and practices of “established” states of the West. “Banal nationalism” is introduced to cover the ideological habits which enable these established nations to be reproduced (Billig *ibid.*:6). In that sense, there is “our” patriotism, the set of actions of citizens who love their country, as opposed to “hot nationalism”, insurgencies and violent acts by extremist nationalists aiming to dissolve the national unity of a nation. Yet, nationalism is concealed behind both practices; it is the “endemic condition” rather than a moment of crisis.

The nationalist discourses of social vision and division cover a wide range of social reality. From everyday materials such as banners and newspapers to public statements of politicians interpellating<sup>7</sup> individuals as homo “nationalis”, the banal reproduction of the national ‘we’ is ubiquitous. As Billig argues, national identities are constantly flagged, or reminded in nations (*ibid.*:8). Yet, this constant

---

<sup>7</sup> Interpellation is a term introduced by Althusser in order to explain the relationship between individuals and ideologies. Ideologies interpellate, in other words hail individuals who are always already subjects to them (see Althusser 2002:31-39 in Du Gay, Evans and Redman (eds.) *Identity : a reader*, London ; Thousand Oaks, Calif. : SAGE Publications in association with The Open University.

remembering becomes so enhabited, embedded to the social reality that eventually it becomes forgotten (*ibid.*:8-9).

## **SECOND PART**

### **EUROVISION SONG CONTEST: AN INTRODUCTION**

Eurovision Song Contest is largely seen as the exhortation of a kitsch culture, thus in principle incompatible with national values. It is alleged to be a show of ‘low’ quality imitating Americanized patterns rather than a product of and for European peoples. Eurovision is thought to stage a globalized view of the world at the expense of national cultures’ diversity. Yet, this study attempts to show that Eurovision Song Contest is a ritual where national identities are performed and reproduced. Its structure and organization provide the best ground for the diffusion of nationalist discourse. The author argues that this contest is the stage where the national ‘we’ is articulated, hegemonized, naturalized and reproduced. This section discusses the coming into being of the Eurovision contest and its structure in order to argue that the objectives of the contest presuppose and reproduce a ‘world of nations’.

#### **A. INTRODUCTION: THE CONCEPT OF ESC**

The concept of an ‘inter-national’ song contest was born in a post-war Europe where the tragic implications of the World War reminded to the peoples the need to promote a model of cooperation. In 1955, the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) came up with the idea<sup>8</sup> of a competition among countries, represented by their respective broadcasters, which would participate in one television show simultaneously transmitted in all participant nations. The competition was based upon the Italian “San Remo Festival”, held for the first time in 1951. The first Eurovision

---

<sup>8</sup> The idea of a European show was formulated in a meeting in Monaco by Marcel Bezencon, but the term “Eurovision” was used for the first time by George Campey, a journalist working for EBU.



contest was held in 1956 in Lugano, Switzerland, among seven participants each of which was represented by two entrants.

Apart from being an initiative for the collaboration of peoples as a means for the perpetuation of peace, Eurovision was a technological experiment in live television: in those days, it was a very ambitious project to join many countries together in a wide-area international network. Since 1956, the Eurovision Song Contest has been uninterruptedly broadcast throughout Europe, as well as in Australia, Canada, India and the USA. Its vast popularity and continuous presence as a television program where different European (national) cultures pit against each other have been inscribed in the social memory. Eurovision Song Contest is not only a music contest but a ritual where ‘particular’ nations compete to prove the ‘universality’ of harmonious coexistence among national peoples.

The Eurovision Song Contest is a ritual which takes for granted and reproduces the world order as a ‘world of nations’. As its official rulebook states, it is an “annual, state-of-the-art, world-class television production of a music competition between songs representing different European countries of the members of the EBU” (Extract from the Regulations, Section One, 12/05/2007). In other words, it is a ritualized form of a song contest which interprets the world in national terms. Every song represents a country, thus talks with its particular voice, among a world of national countries. The song represents the particularity of the ‘nation’ and at the same time the ‘universality’ of ‘nations’ as a world order. The reproduction of nationhood through the Eurovision contest is corroborated by the description of its structure which is reminiscent of the ‘world of nations’<sup>9</sup>.

---

<sup>9</sup> Billig (1995) uses the term when he refers to the naturalization of nationalist discourses.

## **B. THE STRUCTURE OF EUROVISION**

The Eurovision Song Contest is organized annually by EBU, the professional association of European<sup>10</sup> radio and television broadcasts. Eurovision Song Contest operates in two levels, one being the national, the other the international. At the national level, every broadcasting organization-member of EBU- selects its own national song as it deems fit. As it is stated in the rulebook, the selection procedure is dependent upon the will of each member, although it is strongly recommended to follow a televised show using televoting, to ensure both popularity and a sense of representative entrant for the country. Every country is represented by one television broadcaster from that country and every artist can represent only one country. The selection of the national song and artist who will represent the country in the Grand Final aptly proves the reproduction of nationhood through the structure of the contest: ‘we’ as a nation decide how to select the sound and voice of ‘our’ distinctiveness. What’s more, the rulebook of 2003 contest in its seventh section, article 5, explicitly states out that each song or its performance should express some “national flavor”. Thus, Eurovision is a contest through which different nations legitimate ‘themselves’ in a world of ‘nations’.

The international level of the contest is the performance of national songs in the Grand Final. Once the national selection procedures of active members is completed, EBU members are admitted to the Contest Final if they are: a) the winner

---

<sup>10</sup> The term “European” is defined in geographical terms. EBU members are members of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) situated in the European Broadcasting Area (EBA). Thus, states which are not considered to be European, such as Israel and Morocco, have taken part in the contest.

of the previous contest, b) the members of the four greatest contributors<sup>11</sup> (at present France, Great Britain, Spain and Germany), c) participants eligible to take part in the contest but were not admitted to the previous contest, d) members which obtained the highest score in the previous Final. The eligible member-states then are represented by their selected artists in the final day and compete for the “Grand Prix of Eurovision Song Contest”. The competition is hosted in a country, usually the winner of the previous contest, which is responsible for the organization under the auspices of EBU. The Final Day consists of four parts: 1) the opening sequence, whose content is determined by the host country, 2) the performance of entrants, 3) the interval act which is used as an interlude between the performance and the announcement of the final votes each country has allocated and 4) the voting procedure.

### **C. VOTING PROCEDURE**

The organization of the voting procedure is structured in two levels again, one being the national process of selecting a song<sup>12</sup>, the other the international of voting for the winning song. EBU throughout the competition has used different voting systems for the nomination of the winner. In 1956, a jury was set up to determine the outcome of the contest. Since 1995, televoting became the predominant system used by EBU members: Eurovision viewers could vote for the song and the artist they preferred by calling to a specific phone line within a time limit determined by the broadcasting union. At the end of the song performances, each member in a live broadcast has to report its ranking of the ten most preferred songs. According to the

---

<sup>11</sup> In 1999 contest EBU established the criterion of the “Big Four”, as these countries are often called, in order to sustain its popularity and their financial contribution to the organization.

<sup>12</sup> The selection of the national representation is decided by the broadcasting organization, as it was stated before. Thus, it is up to it whether the national representative would be voted by national viewers or it would directly appoint to an artist to represent the nation to the Contest Final.

rules, the secretary in charge in each country should add up the number of votes obtained by each song allocating the votes in an ascending order; the song gaining the tenth highest number of votes is granted one point and so on up to the most preferred song which is granted 12 points. The value scale used by EBU is 1-12 points<sup>13</sup>, a practice introduced during 1975 contest.

The voting procedure describes aptly how Eurovision sketches the world order in national terms. The 'nation' is represented as an essential community, a homogeneous and an internally uniform agent voting as a whole. Nations appear as natural communities bearing distinctive characteristics and having a single voice concerning the allocation of votes. Furthermore, the voting system produces and reproduces the world order as an interplay, an interaction between 'nations' acting as individuals. The oft-quoted phrase "Greece gives twelve points to Cyprus" proves that 'nations' appear to act as individuals giving and taking, thanking and grudging just like people do. The personified image of the 'nation' is reproduced in the announcement of the final votes. Every country should appoint a spokesperson who represents that 'nation'. The greeting "Hello Greece" addressed to the secretary in charge shows how nationhood and the belonging to a 'national' community is a taken for granted fact in the Eurovision Song Contest.

Eurovision reproduces nationhood through the naturalization of the world order as a natural world of 'nations'. The social category termed 'nation' is presented as a natural fact; 'nations' perform their uniformity and distinctiveness while at the same time operating in a universe of 'nations'. Furthermore, as Yair and Maman (1996) argue, the rules of the voting procedure provide an understanding of the contest as an event where all 'nations' are equal, despite their size, population,

---

<sup>13</sup> In 1-12 scale, the numbers "9" and "11" are excluded.

language or economic power, and have free will to select both their representation as well as the final winner. Thus, the structure of the contest reproduces ‘nations’ both in particular and universal terms; despite their distinctiveness, the ‘nations’ essentially share common elements.

To cut things short, Eurovision Song Contest provides the best ground for the diffusion of the nationalist discourse in popular culture. As it was previously argued, the structure of the contest reproduces the world of nations separating the national (domestic) from the international (foreign). Its unit of analysis is the ‘nation’ conceptualized as an essential community operating as a uniform actor. Each ‘nation’ is represented as a single entity, be that the national artist, the spokesperson or the national broadcasting participant. The national ‘we’ is articulated in the sound and voice of the national artist, while this voice hegemonizes over other potential ones. In what follows, this study will attempt to show how national identities of Turks and Greeks are discursively reproduced in the Eurovision Song Contest.

#### **D. TURKS, GREEKS AND EUROVISION SONG CONTEST**

Reciprocity is the term that eloquently describes the Turkish-Greek relations throughout the history of Eurovision Song Contest. In what follows, a short history of Greece and Turkey covering the period from their respective entry until 2003 introduces the general part of the study about ‘Turks, ‘Greeks’ and Eurovision contest.

Eurovision Song Contest is a stage, literally and metaphorically, for the performance of the Greek distinctiveness. Greece entered for the first time the competition in 1974 and ranked in the eleventh position. The following year it abstained from the competition in reaction to Turkey’s admission; their relations were

tensed concerning the Cyprus issue and Turkey's intervention/invasion in the north part of the island. During the 1976 Hague competition, Greece returned with a song about Cyprus. The Greek entrant sang for the 'shattered ruins burnt by napalm' implying atrocities made by Turkish military. In 1979, the Greek representative appeared on the stage wearing ancient Greek togas and exhorting Socrates contribution to humanity. In 1982 contest, the Greek broadcasting agency withdrew its application because the Ministry of Culture claimed that the song would damage the country's reputation. The 1990's are a turning point since famous artists decide to represent Greece in the contest. In 1993, the Greek entrant described the 'homeland' as the land of light. Nevertheless, in the voting procedure Greece did not 'see the light' ranking in a low position. During the 1998 contest, the Greek broadcasting agency decided to select the song through the televoting system. In 2001, the Greek entrants won the third position, the best so far. Since 2001, Greece had been persistent to win the contest. Eventually, the victory came in 2005 contest and the 'Land of Light' hosted for the first time in 2006 the competition.

The 'adventure' of Turkey in Eurovision contest had many setbacks and eventually a moment of national celebration. Turkey applied for admission in 1974, yet its application was due; it finally entered the following year. This period is critical for Turkey since its operation on Cyprus was highly criticized by other countries and international organizations. Turkey was internationally isolated and its presence in a song contest provided a 'light' of communication with the world. In 1976-7 Turkey did not participate in the contest; it returned in 1979. 1980's is a turning point for Turkey since the broadcasting organization, TRT, decided to appoint a professional and famous artist to represent the country. In the 1980 Hague contest, the Turkish entrant sang for oil crisis, a contemporary subject during that time. Its oriental rhythm

and lively performance were thought to be expressive of the Turkish national music culture. In 1982 contest the song contained many words in English in order to win the hearts and minds of the 'European' peoples. In that sense, the Turkish representatives thought that viewers could be familiarized with the song and grant it with the winning votes. This practice was used the following year as well but it did not work out for Turkey: 1983 results placed it in the last position among eighteen participants. During early 1980's, the Turkish entries attempted to show a more westernized face of the country; Turkey was represented as a modern country, interested in global issues. In 1984, a mixture of Anatolian rhythms and modern sound along with pure Turkish language came back to assert the first position. Eventually, the song ranked in the twelfth position, the highest score ever achieved for Turkey. In 1986, Turkey wins the ninth position singing for a world issue again; this time the "Halley" comet inspired the Turkish entrant. During 1990's, the interest of people for the contest had faded, yet in 1997 Turkey won the third position, the best in its Eurovision history. This success was only to be forgotten by the first position that Sertab Erener won in 2003.

The short background of Turkey and Greece in the history of Eurovision is an introduction to the general part of the study about national identities and their 'performance' in Eurovision. Nevertheless, this flashback attempted to show that Turkey and Greece, right from their entry in the contest, staged the ways they perceive themselves. The performance of a distinctive character was the rule and not the exception. This study confines itself to the description of Eurovision performance of national identities of Turks and Greeks covering the years between 2003 and 2006.

## **THIRD PART: GREECE AND EUROVISION SONG CONTEST**

### **A. REPRESENTATION OF NATIONAL IDENTITY**

#### **I. LANGUAGE AS A DENOMINATOR OF NATIONAL IDENTITY**

This section attempts to introduce the ways with which the national ‘we’ is represented in Eurovision Song Contest. The nationalist tropes, which are invoked in order to reproduce ‘our’ identity as uniform, are analyzed through the discursive analysis of media and press coverage.

The Greek language and its use, or non-use, by the national representative provided the best ground for the clash of two approaches to fill in the meaning of ‘Greekness’. The first view is comprised of the adherents of national language in the contest as a means of representing ‘our’ particular Greek ‘spirit’. Kapranos (*Kathimerini*, 24-05-2003) transliterates the title of the 2003 entry “Never let you go”, originally in English, into Greek implying that the song is incompatible with ‘our’ identity since it does not use ‘our’ distinctive element: ‘our’ language. In his mind, the uniqueness of Greek identity can be codified by its language, unique among the Latin-descent languages of other European states. *Makedonia*, a local newspaper of Salonica makes a similar point:

How can a song represent a country when it repudiates its language? Is Greek language so poor and cacophonous that we should be ashamed of speaking in it? (24-05-2003).



Thus, the national 'we' should be represented by 'our' own language, since it is within that language that 'we' find the distinctive, pristine projection of 'our' identity. Xarhakos, a member of the European Parliament during that time argues for the official abstention of Greece as the least way of guarding its authenticity:

It is about time to draw our country off a contest which represents cultural decadence and music fascism (*sic*). We have to protect somehow the authentic culture which represents our country (*Apogevmatini*, 27-05-2003).

National language in its uniformity becomes informative of 'our' cultural authenticity, the core element of 'our' identity.

On the other side of the (same) coin, language is characteristic of 'our' originality, yet what is at stake is not the authentic representation of 'our' nation but a performance able to 'bring' 'us' the first position. This point of view became predominant during the 2004 and 2005 contests, where the quest for hegemony was the 'national affair'. This approach is far more dynamic than the abovementioned since they do not presuppose a fixed and stable conception of 'Greek identity', represented by the authenticity of 'its' language. Thanasoulas reviews this approach since he argues that the winning song of Greece was totally Greek, even though it was written in English (*Apogevmatini*, 23-05-2005). Language is a means for international success and not a representative element of 'our' distinctiveness. The daily newspaper *Apofasi* argues that it is the win that will promote the country, regardless of the language (24-05-2005; *Kathimerini*, 18-05-2005).

Ways of talking about 'our' language produce and constitute ways of describing 'our' identity. As it was argued in the previous paragraphs, the two different approaches regarding the issue of language constitute two divergent views

regarding Greekness. The first regards national language as a *conditio sine qua non* for the performance of ‘our’ uniqueness. A song written in Greek sings for the pride of being a Greek. This point of view is in line with an essentialist and ‘stable’ identity, one which is based on ‘objective’ cultural criteria for the identification of ‘our’ refined character. This view fits into the ‘underdog’ culture, a term used by Diamantouros in order to describe a specific social group characteristic of its introvert, conservative and ‘traditionalist’ outlook<sup>14</sup>. Eleftheriadis further notes that the ‘underdog’ culture is distinct for its ‘siege mentality’. It concentrates on threats posed by the international order and ‘foreigners’. *Makedonia* interprets the use of English in 2003 entry as “a sign of slavishness and subjection to foreign patterns, bereft of elements of Hellenism and its values (24-05-2003). Diamantakou further argues that:

The national anxiety of identity, the fear of conquest by the Westerners leads to the total subservience. We write English songs, we copy Western habits, a total subjection. (*Ta Nea*, 26-05-2003).

These threats head towards the nation as an essential community. The reified conception of the ‘nation’, the national ‘we’ should resist by aligning with the cultural elements that constitute its distinctiveness. The articulation of Greekness, thus, passes through the reproduction of ‘our’ unique language.

On the other hand, Greekness is performed in a more extrovert way aiming to succeed, rather than represent it as an authentic ‘identity’. This point of view talks about language as a constituent part of Greek identity, yet it is not preoccupied with

---

<sup>14</sup> Eleftheriadis (1999:11-2) succinctly describes the disjunction between ‘underdog’ and ‘modernizing’ culture. Despite the fact that these terms are used in order to explain political developments, certain aspects reflecting underdog and modernizing views appear on the debate about Eurovision.

performing ‘our’ originality. On the contrary, it attempts to establish a link between originality and hegemony over the contest. The Greek ‘identity’ is original since ‘we’ are better than ‘them’. This dynamic performance of nationness is verified in the statements of the then Greek minister of Tourism before the 2005 contest:

“We, the Greeks should compete for wins everywhere and in every possible manner, provided that we deserve it”. This outlook on national identity provides a negotiated framework within which ‘our’ distinctiveness is produced and reproduced. This view represents Greek identity as self-confident, outward-looking and susceptible to change.

## **II. PHYSICAL APPEARANCE AND NATIONAL IDENTITY**

The physical appeal of entrants and participants in a song contest is a matter of high importance. The appearance of an artist in front of a live audience as well as in the television sets of millions of people around the world does not merely provide the ground for a value judgement about his/her performance but a stereotypical judgement about the country s/he represents. This section describes how Greeks imagine themselves as ‘they’ watch ‘their’ entrant. Material culture such as stage attire, the connotations that are invoked to reproduce nationhood as well as generalizations and stereotypical claims traced in Greek media about the national entrant and the ‘nation as a whole’ argue for the performance of nationhood in the stage of Eurovision.

The ‘nation’ is reflected on the physical appeal of ‘our’ entrant in the 2004 Contest Final. The Greek entrant was a famous singer with huge popularity among teenagers, predominantly girls. His identification as the ‘ultimate sex symbol’ in Greece escorted his reputation in the song contest as well. In fact, according to

*Aggelioforos* newspaper, he was ‘charismatic’ throughout his performance and ‘won the hearts and minds’ of all spectators (17-05-2004). His physical appearance was exalted by every one of ‘us’ and in a sense, represented ‘us’:

Our Sakis is self-confident and aware of his statuesque body. He moves it gracefully while letting his gorgeous muscles be undressed in the end of his performance (*Ta Nea*, 14-05-2004).

The link between the ‘precious’ body and ‘us’ is noted by Papadopoulos as well:

This year our national vision has a full name: Sakis Rouvas. A ‘vision’ with striated muscles, beautiful face, a slender body and a shining smile! (*Ta Nea*, 17-05-2004).

These comments establish a generalized and stereotypical view of the artist as the literal and metaphorical representation of ‘our’ ‘nation’ in its reified form. In the abovementioned comments, ‘we’ are imagined both as a whole and an individual. Anderson’s oft-quoted phrase, the “imagined communities”, is realized in the image of ‘Sakis’, a ‘nation’ in person catching the eyes, attracting the attention of ‘others’ as he performs his distinct moves. His beauty, a natural and ‘objective’ characteristic, interwoven with his well-trained body, outcome of diligence and work form the essence of perfection. This perfection represents the quality of the ‘nation’ as a reified social category. As Tsalikoglu eloquently comments,

Sakis, by his statements and his performance connotes that he is one of ‘us’. This kid is ‘ours’, his flawless beauty, his body, it is all ours. (*Eleftherotypia*, 18-05-2004).

Hence, the 'nation' is reproduced through its personification in the artist. In the contest, as Papadopoulos argues, Greece is not an abstract community but has a name and a surname: Sakis Rouvas. The physical appearance of the artist is stereotypically generalized for the 'nation', either as a community or as a 'homeland'. In *Apogevmatini*, the appearance of the artist ('the heavenly image of Sakis') is likened with that of a Greek sight on summer (17-05-2004). The artist, thus, does not merely represent Greeks as a uniform and homogeneous community organically linked but also reproduces national identity through the exhortation of the national 'topos', the residence of the Greeks. The national artist's physical appearance refers to 'us' as a homogenous category living in 'our' homeland.

Physical appearance and attractiveness reproduce the ideal type of male which stands for the imagined community. The masculinity of Greek men is stereotyped and generalized in a self-satisfying way. The 'love life' of 'our' Sakis is proudly posted in media reports and the Greek singer is depicted as the 'ideal' type of man who charms women with both his physical appearance and his attitude. Thus, the masculinity of Greek men is stereotypically generalized by the charming figure of 'their' national artist. As Diamantakou (*Ta Nea*, 17-05-2004) argues, the fantasies and dreams of Greek men were projected on his well-trained body, reproducing in that way the 'myth' of Greeks as beautiful and charming. What is more, during the performance of the song the singer undressed two dancers standing next to him, as part of his show. Karkagiannis (*Kathimerini*, 18-05-2004) uses this scene to comment on the 'adroit' and 'swift' undressing of the dancers as a sign of a skillful man. Once more, the artist's masculinity is exalted and stereotypical images of Greeks as ideal types of 'skillful' men.

In turn, femininity and its compatibility with ‘our’ national identity were to be reproduced the following year. The entrant, Helena Paparizou, was likened with the mythological ‘Helen of Troy’, a woman of magnificent beauty. Female nature and identities are interlinked, since as Steans argues,

Their bodies may also be used to reproduce the boundaries of the national group, transmit its culture and become the privileged signifiers of national difference (1998:66; cited in Saarenmaa 2001).

Helena Paparizou, a second-generation immigrant who lived during her adulthood in Sweden, represented her ‘otherness’ through her “typically” Mediterranean physical appearance. As the Greek commentator for Eurovision contest stated, herself a second-generation immigrant, her appearance was the ground upon which racist and nationalist attitudes were displayed<sup>15</sup>. In that sense, ‘bodies’ living across national borders were interpreted in national terms and reproduced the ‘us’ versus ‘them’ discourse. Moreover, the national song which was selected to represent Greece in ESC 2005 would ‘travel’ to a promo tour initiated a month before the Contest Final. Thus, the national artist literally and metaphorically would ‘perform’ the national song, thus Greece, to ‘other’ countries. The contestant’s body was burdened to display ‘our’ distinctiveness and ‘our’ music culture to the rest of Europeans.

Masculine bodies are extolled, feminine beauties assume a mythological status, physical appeal and attitudes of an individual stereotypically apply for the ‘nation’ seen as an organic community. Yet, the performance of ‘our’ identity on stage is complete with the ‘nationalization’ of material culture such as dress. As early

---

<sup>15</sup> Excerpts of her interviews can be found on: <http://www.dream.net.gr/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=590> (in Greek) as well as in the magazine ‘Klik’: <http://www.klik.gr/214/pashalidou/default2.asp> (in Greek).

as 1976 Greece explicitly ‘narrated’ its history as an age-old nation through the attire of the entrants; they were wearing ancient Greek togas. In 1992, in a period when mass rallies were held in Salonica and Athens concerning the ‘Macedonian issue’ and fervent nationalism was at its height in Greece, the national entrant bore in her dress the Vergina Sun<sup>16</sup>. On the other hand, in 2003 contest, the Greek contestant’s dress was likened with a ‘medieval dress’, unable to display ‘our’ national identity. Its combination with the song, a ballad of ‘western type’ (*Ta Nea*, 26-05-2003) was interpreted as the total submission of ‘our’ national distinctiveness to the ‘Westerners’ and their traditions.

Bodies represent the qualities of ‘our’ nation wearing ‘our’ essential character. However ‘petty’ and ‘banal’ such practices appear, they reproduce the discourses of social vision and division. ‘We’ are represented as a coherent whole; ‘we’ identify ‘our’ characteristics in the bodies of the contestants, we display ‘our’ national narratives in dresses and clothes. Yet, ‘our’ myths are not adequately narrated, if ‘our’ temporal continuity is not explicitly stated.

### **III. LIVE YOUR MYTH(S) IN GREECE: WHEN ARISTOPHANES MET TSITSANIS**

The Ministry of Tourism had launched a campaign in 2006 for the promotion of ‘our’ homeland as a worth-visiting destination. The motto selected to attract the attention was “live your myth in Greece”. Postcards and clips of this campaign were used in association with the promo tour of the national song selected for the 2006 Contest

---

<sup>16</sup> The star of Vergina, or Vergina Sun is a 12-ray star, the emblem of the Macedonian dynasty. It was used as the flag of the Republic of Macedonia between 1992 and 1995 but it was withdrawn, due to the vehement opposition of the then Greek government.

Final. This section examines the ways in which this motto assumes its literal and metaphorical meaning. The national myths and narratives of ‘us’ are ‘lived’, performed live in 2006 contest final.

Ways of talking about ‘our’ national identity consists of ways of talking about ‘us’ throughout time. Nations attempt to reify and deify their ancient roots through myths and narratives traced back since times immemorial, thus at the same time defy their modern coming into being. In the case of Greece, the production of national time revolved around two concepts: revival and continuity. Liakos (2001) maintains that the modern Greek state incorporated the myth of ancient Greece through “the construction of the object of this narrative”. In other words, ancient Greece and its grandeur were not used as the temporal point of reference for Hellenism but rather ancient Hellenism was the basis upon which other forms of ‘Hellenism’ were to be embedded in. The term ‘revival’ (*paliggenesia*) was used to refer to ancient Greek values evoked for the distinction of ‘Greeks’ from the ‘others’.

The next step of the construction of a national narrative bereft of discontinuity is the appropriation<sup>17</sup> of the Byzantine period. Paparrigopoulos in his voluminous “History of the Greek Nation” attempted to create the grand narrative. The structure of the historical imagination changed from ‘revival’ to ‘continuity’. Liakos argues that Paparrigopoulos’ work “reifies Greek history and organizes it in terms of a main characteristic giving a particular meaning to each period” (*ibid.*:34). The national genealogy consists of five different versions of ‘Hellenism’, each attributing a novel meaning to it but at the same time ensuring and promoting an essential form of ‘Hellenism’ moving through time. The incorporation of the Byzantine era into a

---

<sup>17</sup> Liakos uses the term ‘appropriation’ to refer to the imagined transition from ancient Greek Hellenism to the incorporation of the Christian Hellenism, the Byzantine period.



‘coherent’ and continuous temporal scheme served the emotional attachment of the people to ‘our’ national history (Skopetea 1988).

National historiography constructed a linear and temporally uninterrupted concept of ‘Hellenism’ which stood for the a-temporality of ‘our’ imagined community. The narration of ‘our’ identity stretching to immemorial times is invoked in the 2006 Eurovision Contest Final to signify ‘our’ distinctiveness. During the interval act, a musical narrative of ‘our’ 4000 year-old history was performed, reminiscent of the scheme envisaged by Paparrigopoulos. The temporal scheme of ‘Hellenic’ continuity proposed by him consisted of five elements: a) ancient Hellenism, b) Macedonian Hellenism, c) Christian Hellenism, d) medieval Hellenism and e) modern Hellenism. In a similar vein, the show consisted of five parts demonstrating the “continuous Greek popular music in the course of time” according to its organizers.

The first part covered Greek antiquity and Greco-Roman era and it contained extracts from Aristophanes comedies where the Greek identity is constituted by a dualism. According to the show, on the one side stands the Apollonian spirit, expressive of the ancient Greek spirituality and morality whereas on the other stands the Dionysian spirit, expressive of the popular entertainment and libertine morals. The ‘Greek’ identity combines these extremes since it counterbalances in an elegant way the sophisticated sounds with the more blithe sounds of music. The impeccable organization of the Olympic Games in 2004 and the organization of Eurovision contest corroborates for the flexibility of ‘our’ identity to move from sophisticated to blithesome performances of ‘us’.

The second ‘stop’ of Hellenic music course throughout time includes the Byzantine Empire. As the organizers note, the Byzantine state extended from the

West to the East, yet the notion of its Hellenic character was uncontested. Through the performance of a Christian Orthodox hymn, this act attempts to stand for Hellenism as the cultural intermediary between East and West. 'Our' identity expresses in a single musical language the combination of two different cultural backgrounds and overall outlooks. Yet, the approach on Greek identity as moving confidently between the Oriental and the Occidental does not go uncontested.

The third part refers to post-medieval Greece through the performance of a song written by an Italian poet known during that time. The verses of the poem, despite its 'foreign' style of writing are assimilated to traditional Greek rhythm and melody. As the organizers note, the poet's 'high' culture and the popular rural music style fit into each other attesting to the compatibility of 'our' traditional music styles with 'high' cultural production coming from 'foreigners'.

The fourth part covers the period between the fall of Byzantium and the modern times. The sketch performed to demonstrate the continuity of Greek popular music was the shadow theatre and its renowned character, Karagiozis (Karagöz). According to the hosts of the show, shadow theatre was the cultural tradition which reproduced 'our' community as a single entity. It addressed in a jovial and 'light' way the virtues and vices of 'our' identity. Its 'popular' aesthetics and the 'popular' jargon it used was the basis for the contemporary 'popular' tradition of Greece. It is worth noting that, so far, there is no reference to the Ottoman era and the concept of Hellenism during that time. In fact, a cultural 'product' indicative of that age, Karagiozis, is appropriated in order to fill in the missing 'link' in the chain of Hellenism's continuity.

The fifth part of the journey of the 4000 year old Greek music tradition ends in the rembetika and buzukia culture, an outcome of the years following the exchange of

populations and the latter stage of homogenizing ‘our’ community. In that show, musical forms revolving around the use of buzuki, a musical instrument later known as the national musical instrument of Greeks, as well as dances blossoming during that time manifest how Greek ‘popular’ music was born in inter- and post-war period (see Pappas 1999). Apart from that, reference to rembetika music is a way of narrating through music the grief and mourning of ‘our’ nation. Contemporary ‘Greek’ popular music culture was embedded largely in Asia Minor newcomers and their music traditions which were interwoven with ‘underdog’ culture of that time referred to the ‘lost homelands’ of Anatolia.

The organizers of this show attempted to manifest Greek popular culture in music and dance by attributing to it two elements: multi-dimensional character and temporal continuity. The transition from ancient Greek tragedy to Byzantine hymns and through Karagiozis shadows’ theatre to rembetika and buzukia representations attests to two significant observations concerning the continuity of ‘Hellenism’. Initially, Hellenism is seen as an a-temporal essence moving across time without losing its substance, a cumulative process where Hellenism acquires a ‘new meaning’ in each of its aspect while at the same time enforcing its unity. Secondly, as Tsoukalas (1995) argues, ‘Greek Orthodoxy’<sup>18</sup> (*Ellinoxristianismos*) was an ideal solution for the issue of continuity but did not work out as a consistent identity. The controversial values of Hellenism and Christian Orthodoxy clash between each other producing a Janus-faced Greek identity looking at the same time to two completely different directions (*ibid.*:302).

---

<sup>18</sup> Greek Orthodoxy was a term introduced to describe succinctly the co-existence of ancient Greek grandeur and Orthodox universalism.

#### IV. POLITICS OF VOTING AND EUROVISION SONG CONTEST

Eurovision contest, throughout its history, was perceived to be the ground for the projection of politics concerning the European peoples. Besides, Eurovision as a concept was political aiming to establish links of cooperation between Europeans through a joint live broadcast of a popular music contest. Irrespective of whether Eurovision produces music of high quality, it is an apt example of an international forum where a nation can express its opinion about another without political or economic reservations. The songs' quality has not always been the sole criterion for the cast of votes between countries.

The press coverage in Greece approaches vote preferences of other countries in two ways: as an evaluation of current international developments and as an outcome of the friendship and kinship between specific nations. In 2003 contest, Great Britain's representatives ranked in the last position with zero points. Their total failure was not attributed to the quality of the song or its performance altogether, but to a form of protest by the European peoples against Great Britain's support to invade Iraq (*Ethnos*, 27-05-2003; *Ta Nea*, 27-05-2003; *The Guardian*, 26-05-2003). On the other hand, the win of Turkey was perceived to be as the welcoming of Turkey into the bosom of European Union. As the daily *Vradini* eloquently notes in its headline, "The E.U of music voted for Turkey. Turkovision!" (26-05-2003). In a similar vein, *Makedonia* quotes: "Turkey won without prerequisites and accession criteria" (26-05-2003).

What's more, the contest provides the ground for the projection of bilateral relations between states. During the 2004 Contest Final held in Istanbul, Kourkoulas gives a political dimension to the Greek entrant's popularity among the local media and public opinion:

Sakis Rouvas has intuited and took advantage of the special environment he has found in Istanbul. In which metropolitan city could he experience familiar food, social values and habits? The Turks have treated him with a hostile manner, themselves realizing the significance of this special environment (*To Vima*, 15-05-2004).

The 'special environment' quoted is the amelioration of Turkish-Greek relations and the rapprochement process which was initiated since lately. Politics, thus, play a significant role for the forging of alliances in the contest. In a sense, international relations between states are reflected in the way they are reproduced through the Eurovision contest.

Friendships and affinities between nations are deemed to be the first criterion for the casting of votes. As Clerides and Stengos (2006) argue, voting patterns accounting for tastes reflect some deeper sociological likes and dislikes stemming from cultural and geographical bonds. In that sense, 'the customary exchanging of votes between Cyprus and Greece' (*The Guardian*, 26-05-2003) is perceived to be a sign of kinship between the two states. Nevertheless, the disappointing results for both Cyprus and Greece in the 2003 contest were interpreted as an indication of international isolation (*Apogevmatini*, 26-05-2003). According to Greek coverings, during the 2004 contest the European continent was separated in three zones of influence, the North, the Mediterranean and the Eastern, the most powerful of them being the latter (*Eleftherotypia*, 18-05-2004; *Aggelioforos*, 17-05-2004; for a scholarly approach on the tripartite separation of Europe to spheres in order to explain voting preferences see Yair and Maman 1996). The perception of 'Greece' being a nation without siblings (*anadelfon ethnos*) was reproduced due to the politics of voting and the loss of a win.

In fact, the politics of voting in Eurovision, as depicted in the Greek media coverings, represent a 'Greece' living in a world of 'inhospitable' nations. Hatzigeorgiou attributes the loss of the 2004 contest to the new international order:

The main reason for losing was the demise (sic) of the Soviet Union. After its disintegration, Ukraine [the winning country] had neighbours- kin states- eligible to vote, thus won more votes than us, the nation without brothers (*Eleftherotypia*, 18-05-2004).

Heraclides notes that part of 'our' national self-image is the 'brotherless' nation. This image contains the 'us' part being assaulted, a victim of conspiracies against it, and the 'them' part, hostile to 'us' because it despises 'us' for 'our' cultural supremacy (2001: 68). Boukalas succinctly reviews this stereotypical image of Greeks:

We recalled that we are a nation without brothers; we delved into the past of the Cold-War era to discover 'anti-Greek' conspiracy plans for the existence of which we are evident... "Conspiracy": this is the certain conclusion we have reached. This alleviates our pain and remedies our hurt pride. We keep indulging fond hopes about our supremacy over the rest of Europeans (*Kathimerini*, 18-05-2004).

The national 'we', deprived of its neighbours and conscious of its solitude develops a 'siege mentality'. Greek identity is in danger, thus its distinctiveness should be under constant protection. Cultural elements such as 'our' religion and 'our' language-heritage of 'our' honoured predecessors- are the real shield against the 'outsider'. The siege mentality and its relevant rhetoric is evoked by the Church and the Romanticists, most notably Giannaras (for detailed analyses see Eleftheriadis 1999).

The 'brotherless nation' perception is shattered in the following song contest held in Kiev. The Greek entrant was victorious and the 'brotherless' nation-image gave way to the hegemonic perception. Koulouri disproves last year's representation of the contest as a ground for political voting rather than music contest. In her article she notes that,

This year's voting process has proved that preferences are not merely an outcome of politics, but of cultural affinities as well. The former Yugoslav states vote for each other due to a common culture shared among them for over fifty years...Greek music has been exported to neighbour states and in Balkan countries where Greek singers are popular Greece was granted the highest score (*To Vima*, 29-05-2005).

The perception of Eurovision contest as a field where politics intervene is a discursive trope evoked in order to give meaning to 'our' national failure. During the 2003 and 2004 contests, the Greek team's moral was high (*Adesmeftos Typos* 24-05-2003; *Ethnos* 24-05-2003; *Apogevmatini* 24-05-2003). The end of the contest found the national entrant in the 17<sup>th</sup> position and produced a feeling of injustice to the national public. In the aftermath of the contest *Apogevmatini* exclaimed in its headline: "Eurovision is nothing more than a bazaar of 'national' interests" (26-05-2003). In a similar vein, *Ethnos* attributes the low position to 'alliances' (26-05-2003). The following year, the Greek press attributed the loss to 'the diplomacy of former Soviet states' (headline of *Aggelioforos*, 17-05-2004; *Apogevmatini*, 17-05-2004). On the other hand, the first position in 2005 was seen as a clear victory of Greece ('Helena chanted Europe': headline of *Apogevmatini*, 23-05-2005).

## V. THE FLAG OF MY COUNTRY

BBC commentator Terry Wogan in Athens 2006 contest introduces the viewers to the opening ceremony noting the presence of “flags of all nations”, thus welcoming them to the representation of the ‘world of nations’. Moreover, the fact that these flags are waved by fans, wrap inside them victorious singers bear a moment’s consideration. In the following section, the various ways with which media represented the flagging of ‘our’ distinctiveness will be discussed.

Eurovision Song contest is one of the most renowned music shows globally. Its annual, uninterrupted since its introduction in 1955, continuity accounts for its identification as a ritualized practice, the most “anticipated music event” for European peoples. In such a ritualistic environment, the role of national flag as a reminder of ‘our’ identity does not go uncontested; for as Marvin and Ingle argue (1999), rituals consolidate a sense of belonging to ‘our’ community. The attachment of the individual body with the ‘national’ body is represented through the symbolization of the flag. *Apogevmatini* implies the national unity which the flag symbolizes:

From the moment on he (the national entrant of 2004 contest) wore the ‘blue-and-white shirt’ everybody loved him, they felt he was theirs (15-05-2004).

Thus, the national ‘we’ is commemorated in every waving of ‘our’ flag which becomes *the* flag, inhabited in ‘our’ social surroundings.

The commemoration of ‘our’ uniform identity can be achieved through two ways of ‘flagging’ it: reflexively and unreflexively. Photos of the victorious 2005 Greek entrant waving ‘our’ flag on the one hand and holding the trophy on the other communicated the message of victory to ‘us’ who were waiting ‘back’ in the ‘homeland’. Not only that, the press coverage discursively waves ‘the’ flag as a



metonym of 'our' community. Following the victory of Greece in 2005, Archbishop Christodoulos stated that "what matters is 'our' flag to hoist proudly" (cited in Boukalas, *Kathimerini* 24-05-2005). Areteos writes about big and smaller Greek flags waving, among others, in front of the venue during the 2004 Istanbul contest (*Ta Nea*, 17-05-2004). The flag, in that sense, stands for 'us', 'our' presence is represented by 'our' flag. During the performance of the 2004 representative, Greek flags were 'shaking' in the beat of the song. A whole 'nation' was celebrating its live performance consciously and after its end the "hands with the waved Greek flags dropped" (*Ta Nea*, 17-05-2004). The unwaved flagging of nationhood had assumed its role.

The unreflexive flagging of 'our' identity is concealed in mundane practices we do while going about our lives. Even though Billig identifies 'banal nationalism' in the field of everyday and routine practices, 'shreds' of banality can be found in the field of the spectacular and ritualized practices like Eurovision. To start with, the official logo established by EBU in the 2004 Istanbul contest mindlessly reminds the 'identity' of the host country. The name of the contest, Eurovision, is written on the logo and the letter 'v' is substituted with a heart (in the shape of a 'v') filled with the host country's flag. Logos are used by organizations and collectivities in order to sustain a clear identity, to be distinct from others. The official logo hangs in social spaces; it is posted in relevant websites and is broadcast in television programmes. In all these mundane instances, while peoples' lives go on routinely, the 'homeland' of the host country is mindlessly reproduced by the 'unflagging' of its flag.

Collective memory is reminded in other mundane practices such as the attire of fans. Areteos mentions in his reportage how 'our' flag is a fashionable trope, apart from a national(ist) one:

Women wearing blouses with the Greek flag stamped on them wave the flag in a pandemonium of flags and national symbols (*Ta Nea*, 17-05-2004).

In fact, the ‘fashionable’ flag of ‘ours’ is a trend emerging after the 2004 contest. As Hatziantoniou notes,

The white T-shirts with the flag stamped became a trendy outfit. In fashion magazines top models were shot wearing them. Bathing suits in ‘national colours’, white-and-blue sheets, commercials of singers wrapping the flag around them played a role in the functionality of a symbol (*Eleftherotypia*, 7-15/08/2004).

As it is elegantly stated in the previous article, ‘our’ flag outreaches its previous ritualized form, since it is not merely a ‘national symbol’ remembered only during commemorations but a ‘functional’ accessory, a ‘fashionable’ outfit. It seems that it is trendy to be a Greek, apart from being proud of it. This trend goes on uncontested in foreign places as well, from Turkey to Portugal (see Tzanelli 2006 for the use of Greek flag in Euro 2004 championship).

The representation of flag as the metonym of ‘our’ community is argued in reference to individuals’ bodies and their interrelation with the ‘national’ body. As Marvin and Ingle argue, what the flag is, at the level of ritual gesture, is a body (*ibid.*:42). It stands in between the individual and the bodies that constitute a community (imagined in the way Anderson conceptualizes it). Bistika while reviewing past events of history where Greeks united ends up arguing that the 2004 entrant “unites us all since he bears the flag on his shoulders and does everything

possible ‘for Greece’” (*Kathimerini*, 14-05-2004). The national flag, thus, stands metonymically for the ‘national’ body, for all ‘Greeks’.

The flag used for the reproduction of ‘our’ unity is the same used to signify ‘our’ hegemony over ‘them’. Photos published in Greek newspapers the day after the Contest Final depict the Greek entrant holding ‘our’ flag on the one hand and the trophy on the other. This photo attempts to communicate the message of victory to ‘us’. The message is clear: ‘we’ are the top, ‘we’ can speak on behalf of Europe.

## **VI. LANDSCAPE AND REPRESENTATION OF NATIONAL IDENTITY**

Natural scenery and landscape, reproduced in the form of images and pictures of the ‘homeland’, are used in the Eurovision contest to inform about the ‘identity’ of the hosting country. In 1990, during the contest held in Yugoslavia the practice of filmic postcards, a set of images promoting the host country’s particularities was introduced to the contest. Since then this tradition goes on, depicting the ‘homeland’ as an exotic place. Drawing from filmic postcards of Eurovision contest held in Athens this section analyses how images of the ‘homeland’ talk about ‘us’ as a national community.

The landscape as a natural space is reproduced through the discourses of journalists and writers. Billig (1995) refers to the linguistic term ‘deixis’ in order to show how homeland is discursively made ‘homely’. Words like ‘here’ and ‘this’ indicate the deictic utterances of place. As he notes,

The deixis of homeland invokes the national ‘we’ and places ‘us’ within ‘our’ homeland...This ‘this’ is the place of the evoked unseen and unseeable audience. It is evoked as the national place of ‘us’, conceived as a community (*ibid.*:107).

The deictic use of words which reproduce ‘the’ nation as habitual makes the homeland more ‘homely’, a familiar place to live (*ibid.*:108). As a result, the homeland is made both present and unnoticeable by being presented as the context, ‘we’ are unmindfully reminded who ‘we’ are and where ‘we’ are (*ibid.*:109).

The discursive reproduction of ‘the’ homeland in the Greek press coverage revolved around the deictic use of the definite article ‘the’ and utterances which show transition from ‘the’ place of origin to other places. Kapranos wonders if “popular music made in Greece is a product that could be exported abroad” (*Kathimerini*, 18-05-2004). In that phrase, ‘our’ homeland is contained within national boundaries; the nationalist discourse reproduces ‘us’ as residents of an explicitly defined territory and ‘them’ as the outsiders, the foreigners.

Furthermore, ‘Greece’ is represented as the point of reference, the starting point of the national ‘we’. *Eleftherotypia* (18-05-2004) uses the word ‘send’ to state that ‘our’ national representative has left the homeland. Consequently, the wish is to ‘return’ ‘coming back’ with the trophy (*Kathimerini*, 14-05-2004; *Apogevmatini*, 18-05-2004). This discursive pairs ‘go-return’, ‘send-come back’ are rhetorical forms which reproduce ‘our’ homeland as a given piece of land outside of which ‘others’ extend. What’s more, the homeland is represented as *the* point of reference, the start which ends only by the return of ‘our’ representative to his/her ‘basis’, his/her ‘home’.

Apart from that, ‘our’ homeland is represented as the homely place, the home of all Greeks. *Eleftherotypia* expresses its relief for not winning the 2004 contest because “we should not host a contest of songs with no national character, a competition of songs whose nationality is unknown due to their uniformity” (23-05-

2004). A typical picture of a family life is depicted in the abovementioned phrase. The landlords, 'we', do not wish to host 'them' in our 'home'. The image of 'our' homeland as *the* context and 'us' living in that space aptly shows the claims Greeks make for themselves through the depiction of the 'homely' home. Furthermore, the fact that the contest is seen as incompatible with our national(ist) values clearly makes the distinction between 'us', willing to live in a 'world of nations', and 'them'. To quote Billig once more, 'they' do not oppose merely 'our' particularity, but the very moral order 'we' claim to represent (*ibid.*:91).

The reproduction of 'us' living in 'our' homeland becomes a natural fact through the use of the definite article. Diamantakou comments on the third position in the 2004 contest by noting that "the nation sought for the miracle" (*Ta Nea*, 17-05-2004). Through the use of the article 'the', the country need not be named to be indicated as the ground in which such a statement is made. *The* nation is 'our' nation. Interestingly enough, nationalist discourses can move flexibly between the discourses of universality to that of particularity. As it was argued in the previous paragraph, 'our' identity was embedded in a world of nations, yet in this phrase 'our' identity is defined as *the* nation. 'Our' nation is not named but just implied by the deictic use of words and 'we' go about 'our' lives reproducing unreflexively the 'world of nations'.

The reproduction of 'us' in a national world contains the identification of 'us' as a part which can speak for the whole. Billig argues that nationalist discourses seek for the hegemonization of 'us' over 'them' by naturalizing the nationalist outlook of the world order. The 'syntax of hegemony', a term invoked to describe the discourses evoked by certain 'nations' claiming to speak for universal values is employed in the case of Athens 2006 Contest Final. During the opening ceremony, a part of the contest

where usually host countries display the particularities of their identities<sup>19</sup>, a Greek singer performed a song about the universality of music. Its verses, fraught with names of ancient Greek mythical creatures of the sea, praised ‘*the* Land where Music was first sung’. Later on, the singer identified that land as ‘this’ Land. The evocation of ‘our’ homeland as *the* land of universalities<sup>20</sup> plays its role on the reproduction of Greek identity. The syntax of hegemony, as Billig informs us, always evokes a rhetorical form of a ‘we’ acting on behalf of a universal morality of right (*ibid.*:89). The national ‘we’ is implied by ‘our’ homeland as the ‘mother’ who gives birth to such universal themes as music and theatre. Thus, ‘we’ can talk on behalf of all of ‘you’ about something which ‘we’ created, but all of ‘us’, ‘we’ and ‘you’, enjoy. In that song, Greekness evokes the voice of universality to talk about music.

## **B. THE QUEST FOR HEGEMONY**

Nationalist discourses evoke ways in which ‘our’ identity is reproduced as internally uniform. This section, arguing against the stereotypical imagination of Greeks as a single entity, attempts to present the discourses speaking on behalf of ‘our’ identity, their divergence and convergence.

The period covered in this study seems to be the turning point in the history of Greece in Eurovision contest so far. Until then, the competition was largely seen as a venue for the performance of ‘our’ distinctiveness. The language of the ‘national’ song was in Greek and the overall performance of the song should be reminiscent of ‘us’. In 2003, the starting point of this study, the first attempts to produce a high quality representation aiming for the first position and cling to a more ‘Western’

---

<sup>19</sup> EBU holds that some parts of the contest are organized by the host country for the purpose of promoting the country and its particularities.

<sup>20</sup> Immediately after the end of the song, the Greek commentator hailed live: ‘Welcome to the land where theatre was born’.

pattern were made. The attempt failed, yet the message was communicated: the ‘paradigm’ has shifted; Greece shall display its ‘authenticity’ not by projecting its ‘unique’ culture but by aiming to win the first spot. The cultural hegemony of ‘Greek spirit’ ought to be displayed on stage; it should be performed rather than merely claimed.

Diverse views on ‘Greekness’ and how it should be represented through the contest attest to the heterogeneity of national identity. In the Greek media two potential versions of ‘Greekness’ appear in its writings. The traditionalist outlook expressed its own claims to ‘Greekness’ by exalting language as a *conditio sine qua non* for the ‘authentic’ display of ‘our’ identity. In that perspective, Papadopoulos (*Ta Nea*, 17/05/2004), Kapranos (*Kathimerini*, 24/05/2003) and Papadakis (*Eleftherotypia*, 24/05/2006) promote an inward-looking and ‘traditional’ outlook on the representation of ‘Greek’ identity. Moreover, they identify Eurovision as a contest of ‘low’ quality, thus incompatible with staging national identities. This view, largely coinciding with what Diamantouros has termed ‘underdog’ culture addresses those cultural elements which ‘preserved’ ‘our’ distinctiveness throughout time. In their mind, ‘Greekness’ is essential and rather stable, revolving around objective criteria such as language.

On the other hand, a more outward-looking and self-confident ‘Greek’ identity is projected in the writings of other journalists. This view is far more dynamic than the previous one since it seeks to promote ‘our’ international successes, regardless of their ‘quality’. Kourkoulas (*To Vima*, 15/05/2004) succinctly reviews this approach by representing the modern face of Greece in 2004 entrant’s overall presence in the contest. The modern face of Greece is more outward-oriented, dynamic and “determined to challenge present realities without resorting to inwardness”. Helena

Paparizou, the winner of 2005 contest final proves this: “We showed the modern aspect of Greece” (*Apogevmatini*, 23/05/2005).

Despite their different views on how ‘Greekness’ should be performed, these two discourses presuppose that there is an essential national community sharing a fixed identity. Their scope of interest is not outside nationhood but rather they evoke nationalist discourses in order to speak for the whole nation. Adherents of the traditionalist view, such as Papadopoulos, attempt to talk on behalf of ‘our’ nation when he states that “a song with American verses cannot express ‘our’ cultural richness, thus is incompatible to perform Greekness” (*Ta Nea*, 17/05/2004). On the other hand, as *Eleftheros Typos* maintains, Eurovision contest, Euro 2004 football championship and the successful organization of the Olympic Games in their ‘motherland’ are three representative examples of a self-confident and modern Greece (23/05/2005). In both instances, an essentialized and fixed identity of ‘our’ community is presupposed. Both views evoke the syntax of hegemony, referring to their view on ‘Greekness’ as ‘our’ collective identity. In that sense, they attempt to speak for the whole ‘nation’ and legitimate their claims.

Furthermore, the putative homogeneity of ‘our’ identity is shattered by opposing claims inside the imagined ‘we’. Internal divisions and conflicts of ‘our’ community plague the uniformity of ‘our’ identity. Tzanelli (2006) in her study about Euro 2004 and the construction of different types of ‘Greek’ identities refers to the hostility between North and South Greece. In a similar vein, this conflict appears in Eurovision 2006 contest as well, since the prefect of Salonica, Panagiotis Psomiadis, demanded that the contest be held in Salonica instead of Athens<sup>21</sup>:

---

<sup>21</sup> The article is online accessible in Greek: <http://www.hri.org/news/greek/mpegrb/2005/05-05-23.mpegrb.html#32>.



Athens had successfully organized the 2004 Olympic Games and a vast amount of money has been invested in constructing its infrastructure...The Prime Minister had stated out publicly that the time of regional development in Greece had come...Therefore bearing in mind proclamations made before by the government about Salonica's new role as the metropolis of culture, we propose that the Eurovision Song Contest be held in our city.

Reading through the lines of Salonica prefect's statement, there seems to be a differentiation between periphery and centre. The periphery in that case is identified in Salonica and its (putative) role as the centre of cultural events and a metropolis of Southeastern Europe. Elsewhere, the conflict between Athens and Salonica is presented as a tension between Southerners and Northerners<sup>22</sup>. Thus, a uniform and homogeneous national identity does not exist; in turn, there are various fractions of ingroups competing to legitimate their claims through the evocation of the syntax of hegemony.

Apart from claims to 'our' identity formulated by the interplay of various versions which stem from diverse fractions of 'our' community, 'our' identity hegemonizes over the 'others' claiming to speak on behalf of them as well. The metonymic representation of European music by 'us' is a common theme for Greek press coverage after 2005 victory. The online news website<sup>23</sup> in Greece elegantly notes that "Europe's Number One is Greece". During the 2006 Contest Final, a news website proudly announces the award for the winner of Eurovision, a clef interwoven with an ancient Greek pillar combining music with the Greek spirit of harmony and classicism<sup>24</sup>. In that sense, 'we' are eligible to speak on behalf of all nations about the universal value of music. This award is both particular and universal since the

---

<sup>22</sup> The article accessible in Greek: <http://www.in.gr/news/article.asp?lngEntityID=626436> .

<sup>23</sup> The reference can be found in Greek: <http://www.in.gr/news/article.asp?lngEntityID=625645> .

<sup>24</sup> The article is accessible in Greek: <http://www.in.gr/news/article.asp?lngEntityID=707795> .

contribution of 'our' identity in the universality of music is inscribed in it and at the same time 'we', speaking on behalf of all participants, attribute the award to the most talented national performer.

This part of the study attempted to identify the dichotomies, clashes and differentiations embedded in 'our' national identity. It is not homogeneity that defines national identities; rather they should be seen as a process of dynamic and constant reconstitution using available discourses. Yet, as Edensor warns us, the fluidity of identity does not mean that it lacks coherence but rather that there should be constantly reproduced to ensure fixity (*ibid.*:29).

### **C. INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF GREEKNESS**

The nationalist discourse does not arise in a social vacuum but it is run by certain institutions empowered to forge a national(ist) outlook (Ozkirimli 2003:33). 'Our' identity is presented as a coherent set of elements and values shared by all of 'us'. This section attempts to identify how 'Greekness' is sketched by the institution eligible to take part in the Eurovision Song Contest, the public broadcast union of Greece, ERT. The way 'our' identity is projected onto shows, performances and official discourses of ERT and its officials attempts to draw insights about the claims the official state makes about 'Greek' identity.

Eurovision Song Contest as a structure is embedded in broadcast associations-members of EBU, the official organizer of the competition. If a country's broadcasting union participates as an active member in EBU, then the state is eligible to compete. Thus, the public broadcasting union operates as a representative of that 'nation'. In the case of Greece, it is argued that ERT, the public broadcasting

corporation evokes a modernist view of ‘Greekness’ in its claims about the national ‘we’.

The national broadcasting corporation ERT from 2004 contest onwards invokes a more dynamic representation of ‘Greekness’ aiming to win the contest instead of displaying the distinctive national culture. In 2004, the national entrant is selected by ERT officials directly and not by a national selection procedure, as it was the rule since then. Apart from that, the promo tour organized for the promotion of the song and the overall promotion of the Greek representative was much more vocal than in previous times. In 2005 as well, the national representative was selected by ERT and the song was voted by viewers. Besides that, the amount of money spent on the promotion of the songs during the last years outnumbered previous expenses.

Furthermore, ERT was backed by various institutions in its quest for the hegemony. This does not go uncontested in the press coverage. Boukalas (*Kathimerini*, 18/05/2004) notes that ERT treats this year Eurovision contest as a “national issue”. Receptions and parties were organized in Greek embassies of European capitals (*To Vima*, 15/05/2004; *Eleftherotypia*, 29/05/2005). The 2004 contestant was welcomed and congratulated formally by the mayor of Athens (*Apogevmatini*, 18/05/2004) and the 2005 contestant was nominated as the official ambassadress of National Tourism Ministry in order to promote the song and ‘our’ Greek identity (Makri, *Eleftherotypia* 29/05/2005). In that sense, the modernist view of ‘our’ identity was promoted by state-run initiatives aiming to promote ‘our’ nation in the contest. Following the victory in 2005 contest, the syntax of hegemony was evoked to represent the whole ‘nation’ as the winner of the award. It was not the national entrant, but ‘our’ nation, metonymically represented, which was reflected in her image.

The victory of ‘our’ representative was a moment of celebration for ‘the nation’ and its official ‘guarantors’. The president of the Republic, the Prime Minister, members of the cabinet, members of the Parliament and leaders of religious institutions such as the Orthodox Patriarchate and the Church of Greece stood before the metonymic representation of ‘our’ identity and paid their tribute. Statements congratulating ‘our’ entrant were publicly held (see *Apogevmatini*, 23/05/2005 for comments and congratulation letters sent by politicians), official receptions were organized and the Prime Minister himself congratulated ‘our’ victorious girl<sup>25</sup>. The nation in its formal ambience (the political elite) regardless of the ideological frictions between political parties, in one voice, ‘our’ voice, gathered to commemorate its uniform identity.

Apart from that, ‘our’ identity was performed during the 2006 contest held in Athens. The opening ceremony where the singer exalted ‘our’ homeland in an outward-oriented and ‘Western-like show’, the interval act where ‘our’ particularities were interwoven with the universalities of ‘our’ (as a nation among nations) international culture and ‘Greekness’ was performed as an age-old concept, self-confident and sustaining harmoniously its linear continuity, the overall organization which was successful and flawless<sup>26</sup> reproduced the dynamic, modernist identity of ‘Greeks’ embedded in ‘our’ immemorial past.

To cut things short, the state either in its formality, by the syntax of hegemony as articulated by politicians of various ideological backgrounds, religious leaders, or through the public broadcasting corporation produced and reproduced ‘our’ identity as a single voice echoed by modernists discourses. Helena Paparizou once more corroborates: “We are the modern face of Greece. Europe is our home”.

---

<sup>25</sup> The article online accessible in Greek: <http://www.in.gr/news/article.asp?lngEntityID=626237>

<sup>26</sup> Article accessible in Greek: <http://www.in.gr/news/article.asp?lngEntityID=707898> .

## **FOURTH PART: TURKEY AND EUROVISION SONG CONTEST**

### **A. REPRESENTATION OF TURKISH IDENTITY**

#### **I. TURKISH: THE FLAG OF MY VOICE!**

The Eurovision Song Contest provided the best ground for the articulation of two clashing perspectives regarding the use of language. This part attempts to analyze how these two perspectives were formulated through the discourses of journalists in the Turkish media.

The debate concerning the use of Turkish in the song representing ‘our’ nation became quite heated during the period of the study. The national singer in 2003 announced that, for the first time in ‘its’ history, Turkey would be represented by a song with English verses. Right after the announcement, fervent articles in favour or against English formed two clashing ‘camps’: the conservatives and the modernists. Hadi Uluengin in his article refers to those who see an English song as the ‘ultimate betrayal of Kemal Ataturk’s linguistic reforms and the total subjection to the globalization’ (*Hurriyet*, 27/05/2003). In a similar vein, Akyildiz presents the conservative point of view in one motto: “We are Turks and we sing in Turkish” (*Hurriyet*, 08/03/2003). *Milliyet* identifies in ‘our’ language the flagging of ‘our’ distinctiveness: “My Turkish, the flag of my voice!” (29/05/2003). The author goes on arguing that every (national) culture is defined in terms of its language, the predominant element through which nations perceive themselves and their ‘others’. The following year, an article in *Zaman* titled as “Are you ashamed of Turkish?” quotes Kemal Ataturk’s saying:

The Turkish language is a sacred treasure for the nation. For, all our memories, our moral values, our successes have been handed down due to our language. Our language is the nation's heart and soul. (31/01/2004)

The Herderian conceptualization of language as stated by Ataturk and reproduced by a newspaper is the meeting point of all abovementioned articles. Language is seen as the unique element of 'our' culture; if 'our' culture is to be represented, then 'our' language should be the vehicle bearing its distinctiveness. Derya K rođlu, a famous singer marks that 'it is not possible to reflect our values and our culture by singing in a foreign language' (G rel, *Zaman* 28/01/2004). What's more, the 'threat' of a globalized language endangers 'our' national culture as a whole. The representative of the Confederation of Public Sector (Kamu-Sen) notes:

"The preservation of a national culture can be guaranteed by the protection of the national language...We are against the decision of the public broadcasting agency to prefer a song in English for the representation of the country" (*Zaman* 14/05/2004).

The representation of 'our' nation in an international competition became 'hot news' in a Parliament session as well. Hararli (*Hurriyet* 23/04/2003) notes that an MP of the ruling AKP government cast his doubt whether a song in English can perform the Turkish culture better than a Turkish one.

The vehement reaction of the conservative view brought into surface a friction between two views. The adherents of the modernist view voiced their counter-argument. Akyildiz claims that Eurovision contest is the best ground for the 'opening' of Turkey to the international environment (*Hurriyet* 08/03/2003). Uluengin notes that a song in English and Turkishness are not incompatible since language is a vehicle for communication. As he states,

“Erener is consistent with the language-vehicle of a global world defined in terms of supply and demand. If English is the dominant language in that world, what’s wrong in performing in English?” (*Hurriyet* 27/05/2003).

A dynamic and outward-looking sense of Turkishness arises from the writings of these authors. Language is not seen as the ‘treasure of the nation’ which should represent the authenticity of ‘our’ identity. Besides, originality stems from hegemony, not closure. Uluc makes this point by stating that

Indeed, the very fact that we represent our authenticity in that language spoken by the West to the extent of winning their (Westerners) hearts and minds shows our unique skill and dexterity (*Sabah* 27/05/2003).

Thus, the dynamic Turkish identity is performed in a stage where hegemony is the alternative word for ‘authenticity’. This spirit is traced in a report issued by OGAE Turkey, an organization of Eurovision fans, where the quest for hegemony is explicitly stated. In that report, OGAE favors the decision to be represented by a song in English since English language has proved to be an important reason for winning the contest (cited in *Hurriyet* 04/03/2003).

The two approaches of Turkishness compete in the discursive field of media to talk about the originality of ‘our’ identity through the debate on language. The conservative view traces ‘our’ authenticity in ‘our’ mother tongue. Bulut notes that “Turkey lost its essential elements by winning Eurovision, the contest where mother tongues are defeated” (*Yenicag*, 28/05/2003). In that phrase, the term ‘mother tongue’ stands for ‘national identity’. The author sketches Eurovision contest as the melting pot of (national) languages, thus the first position attests to the loss of ‘our’ original

character. National culture is perceived as authentic to the extent that it is expressed by 'our' national language. On the other hand, the then Minister of State Besir Atalay conforms to the modernist point of view:

What matters in international contests is not the performance of national cultures but a show able to win (*Zaman* 15/05/2003).

Thus, the performance of 'our' original culture in a world of 'national cultures' is proven only by winning the inter-national contest. The dynamic and outward-looking concept of Turkishness is directly clashing with the more introvert and fixed perception of Turkish identity as presented by the conservatives' 'camp'.

The two approaches contesting to speak for the originality of 'our' identity sketch different frameworks for the first position of the 2003 entrant in the competition. The conservative view refers to Eurovision as a 'light' contest incompatible with nations and national cultures (see *Hurriyet* 21/04/2003). As a result, the song in English ranking corroborates for the originality of 'our' identity. As *Yenicag* notes, this prize awards the originality of our language (26/05/2003). On the other hand, the modernist view sees the win in an inter-national contest an excellent promotion of 'our' nation (Uluengin *Hurriyet*, 27/05/2003). As the 2003 entrant exclaims, "I will do my best to make Turkey's name be heard everywhere" (*Hurriyet* 23/04/2003).

Despite their divergence, both discourses are constructed upon a common premise: national identity is represented as essential. In both cases, 'Turkishness' is reproduced as an essential category, an ever-existing and always existed quality. The debate on 'our' language as indicative of 'our' identity reproduces Turkishness as a



reified category, an imagined community assumes discursively 'its' life and 'our' life as bearers of national identities goes about uncontested.

## **II. POLITICS AND KIN STATES**

The following chapter focuses on the political aspect of the contest, as presented in the Turkish media. The claims made about 'us', 'our' friends and foes attempt to sketch out how 'we' perceive 'our' stance in a 'world of nations'.

The voting procedure in Eurovision contest brought about heated debates among fans and viewers each year. Politics and 'special relations among states are perceived to affect to a large extent the final outcome. Kalegasi in his article shows accustomed to the 'known alliance' between Greece and Cyprus as far as the highest rate of points (12 points) is concerned. Other 'alliances' stated by the author such as the Scandinavian block share votes and influence the final result (*Radikal* 22/05/2004). Coskun notes that the contest is highly political implying that Turkey's first position could be an outcome of current political developments such as the decline of the Turkish Parliament to allow US troops to cross over the country on their way to Iraq and Turkey's potential accession to European Union (*Radikal*, 30/05/2004). An article published in *Sabah* argues that the voting procedure is not conducted according to the quality of the song but the proximity and affinity of nations (17/05/2004).

Nevertheless, the tense relations between Turkey and Armenia on the one side and Cyprus on the other are staged in Eurovision Contest in a different way than in real politics. Armenia was granted ten points by Turkey in the 2006 contest and various views surfaced in media coverage. *Hurriyet* maintains that the song

representing Armenia was voted by Turks because of cultural sharing between the two peoples:

Armenians and Turks have lived together for many years in the same cultural background...The rhythm of folk songs can be sung in both languages...To cut things short, Armenia has entered the contest by appropriating our culture and music (Gedikli, cited in *Hurriyet* 23/05/2006).

What is implied by this quotation is that 'we' did not vote for 'them' but for a cultural product deemed to be 'our' own, or at least familiar to 'us'. On the other hand, Armenia being granted ten points by Turkey is seen as a "gesture of good will" by the latter in order to ameliorate its foreign relations with the former. The stake here is politics as they are projected through the stage of a music contest (*Posta*, 23/05/2006). In another article published in *Posta*, 'we' are represented as generous and impartial:

There is no politics in us. In Eurovision contest, Turkey allocated its votes impartially and without 'national objectives' (23/05/2006).

The national 'we' is reproduced as a coherent whole acting as an agent of morality, in conformity with the 'official' values posed by the inter-national contest. 'Turks' are an example to follow for 'we' apply the rule of law and morality. 'We' represent not only the qualities of 'our' nation but the very moral system as it should be in a world of nations. Thus, being 'us' is being as 'we' (the world of nations) should be.

Furthermore, the 'hostilities' of the past between Cyprus and Turkey seem to be at ease during the 2003 competition. Turkey was granted eight points by Cyprus for the sake of peace in the island, as the Greek Cypriot representative commented.

*Zaman* reproduces the Greek Cypriot covering of the issue: “Rums (sic) boast about awarding Turkey the first position” (27/05/2003). At some headings, the Greek Cypriot press is projected as hostile and attempting to appropriate the recognition of the first position: “We gave Turkey the number one position” is a statement made by a Greek Cypriot newspaper. On the other hand, *Yenicag* reproduces coverings of Greek Cypriot articles stating that angry Greek Cypriots have initiated a campaign to trace those who vote for Turkey” (29/05/2003). During the 2004 Istanbul contest the issue concerning how Cyprus Republic will be addressed by the host commentator comes into the fore. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is consulted in order to be in line with the official policy of Turkey in regards with the issue of the recognition of Cyprus Republic. The fact that the Greek Cypriot did not use Istanbul’s<sup>27</sup> official name when he saluted the hosts was described as a ‘diplomatic crisis’ (Akbas, *Hurriyet* 20/05/2004). Moreover, during the 2006 contest comments made by the Greek-Cypriot representative were perceived to be hostile to ‘us’ (*Hurriyet*, 21/05/2006). The comments were quoted and ‘we’ were reproduced as hostile to ‘them’. In that perspective, ‘we’ are reproduced as the ‘others’ of Greek Cypriots. ‘We’ make claims about ‘us’ and ‘them’ both from within and outside ‘our’ imagined community.

Adding to the aforementioned, claims about kinship and affinity partly reproduce ‘our’ identity and its uniqueness. *Hurriyet* notes that Azerbaijan expressed its reaction for the ten points granted to Armenia and its singer who originated from a territory in dispute between Armenia and Azerbaijan (22/05/2006). *Posta* (23/05/2006) reproduces the image of Azerbaijan as a kin state. In a similar vein, *Vatan* (15/05/2004) refers to a group of MPs of ruling AK party launching a campaign

---

<sup>27</sup> The Greek-Cypriot commentator used the name ‘Konstantinoupolis’ implying somehow that he did not perceive Istanbul as a Turkish territory.

in the Parliament hall to vote for Bosnia. As it is implied in the article, Bosnia was the most suitable option for 'our' identity since 'we' cannot vote for 'our' nation. In that sense, 'our' identity is projected partly onto the kin nation, yet it is 'our' identity that is reproduced as 'unique' and precious to 'our' eyes.

Eurovision contest is perceived to be a field where politics, kinships and hostile relations between 'nations' are projected without further implications. 'Nations' are reproduced in 'their' reifying glamour; they are represented as agents acting as individuals. 'Nations' vote for 'others' according to their 'moods' and special preferences. 'They' tend to like or dislike, approve or disapprove; 'they' are represented having gentle feelings such as generosity and magnanimity. 'Our' nation is reified depicting Turkey acting as a coherent whole. More than that, the very term 'Turkey' and 'Turks' used in press coverage reproduce 'our' nation as an individual. The personification of 'our' nation presupposes that 'we' mindlessly forget 'our' community to the extent that 'it' is unseen. On the contrary, what 'we' see is an internally uniform and single agent performing what 'we' stand for in a 'world of nations'.

### **III. PHYSICAL APPEARANCE AND NATIONAL IDENTITY**

Physical appearance in a inter-national contest is reminiscent of 'our' qualities. The stereotypical image of Turks is performed in the bodies and 'our' values are displayed in the physical appeal of the contestants. This section attempts to argue for the discursive reproduction of 'our' identity as a monolithic category through comments and articles traced in media with regards to the physical appeal and the outfit of national entrants.

Eurovision contest is a contest where ‘nations’ and their image are represented by a single artist. In front of the stage, it is the national entrant that performs ‘us’. In that aspect, it is ‘natural’ to represent ‘us’ through his/her physical appearance. During the 2004 contest held in Istanbul, a rock group was selected to represent Turkey to the competition. Ozdemir Erdogan was highly critical of the physical appearance of this band:

“We cannot be represented in an international contest by a group whose members have colored hair, bear tattoos on their arms and most importantly wear crosses” (Oktay, *Milliyet* 15/02/2004).

What is explicitly stated in the quoted sentences is the incompatibility of ‘our’ identity with ‘the bodies’ burdened with the load to represent it. These bodies do not reproduce ‘our’ identity; they are informative neither of ‘our’ nation nor of ‘our’ qualities. This sentence is premised upon a stereotypical image of a ‘Turk’ whose criteria the members of the group do not meet.

The incompatibility of ‘our’ identity with the image of four youngsters singing in English, wearing crosses, having tattoos and their hair dyed is shattered by the invocation of another stereotypical image. In the same interview, Gokhan Ozoguz, a member of the group replies to the allegations of incompatibility with ‘us’:

Should we appear on stage wearing fez<sup>28</sup> and riding on camels? Would we represent Turkey better if we wore traditional costumes and hold swords? We need not perform our Turkishness in fixed ways of representation. It is because of such perceptions that we cannot get out of the vicious circle we are inscribed in (Oktay, *Milliyet* 15/02/2004).

---

<sup>28</sup> Traditional cap which was worn during the Ottoman Empire.

In these claims 'Turkishness' appears wearing its modern outfit and represents 'our' distinctiveness in a dynamic and negotiated way leaving behind 'traditional' outlooks and an inward-looking mentality.

Adding to the aforementioned, the projection of 'our' identity in the representatives' performance need not merely talk about 'our' particularity but 'our' universal values as well. Vatan newspaper implies that the appearance of the national entrant was more sensational and 'erotic' as it should be:

We have got used to watching nude (sic) artists in our days and ours was the most nude of all (26/05/2006).

'We' watch 'us' reproducing 'our' moral nudity, thus producing negative stereotypes for 'our' universal values. *Sabah* newspaper notes the depiction of 'our' voice as the voice speaking on behalf of all nations in the jacket of the 2004 national representative. According to the article, the singer had sewn the symbol of peace in the interior of his jacket (16/05/2004) calling for 'peace, love and respect' at the end of the song. The singer had voiced the universal request for 'peace' among nations. The particular 'voice' of the Turkish representative had just voiced his demand in the name of all nations. On the contrary, a critical comment informs us of the incongruity between amorality and 'Turkishness'. Ozturk comments on the appearance of the rock group 'Athena' entering the 2004 contest:

There is no difference in the appearance between this group and foreigners drug addicts walking around at nights and scaring everyone with their physique...Which part of Turkey do they represent? (*Vakit*, 20/05/2004).

In the same vein, Kumbasar makes the same remark when he combines ‘corruption’ and the bodies of the entrants:

[I]t seemed as if they were not members of a music group but a bunch of drug addicts standing helpless on the stage (*Yenicag* 17/05/2004).

The authors of these articles imply that ‘Turkishness’ is an essential and given identity that cannot be represented in a contest by ‘its’ marginal, or even ‘outgroup’ fraction. The fact that TRT commentator used the terms ‘Athena’ and ‘Turkish representatives’ together throughout their performance corroborates the fact that ‘they’ were not recognized as Turks but their ‘Turkishness’ should be reminded (Kumbasar *Yenicag* 17/05/2004). The identification of foreigners with drug addiction and subsequently the identification of the music group as ‘our’ internal ‘other’ is a view communicated by specific newspapers and highly criticized by more ‘moderate’ and mainstream writers (see Ozgenturk, *Sabah* 12/06/2004). Yet the stereotypical claim about ‘our’ identity is made: ‘We’ are neither amoral nor ‘ugly’ drop-outs. The ‘internal’ and ‘external other’ discourse has been evoked to talk about ‘our’ identity by excluding ‘them’.

If the bodies of rock groups’ members are ‘excommunicated’ as ‘corrupt’ and amoral, it is the women bodies that carry the ‘burden of representation’ (Yuval-Davis 1997:45). Yuval-Davis argues that women bodies are constructed to symbolize the collectivity’s honor. In the article of *Vatan* cited above, the woman’s body fails to bear the honor and morality of ‘our’ community. In a similar vein, the national entrant’s body, despite her beauty seems a bit ‘weird’ covered in tattoos (*Vatan*,

26/05/2006). The reproduction of 'our' community as honorary and pure does not go hand-in-hand with body art and 'unrefined' bodies.

Female and male bodies perform live 'our' distinctive character claiming to represent 'our' community as uniform. The bodies of the contestants, as it was shown in the case of the 'rogue' rock group in 2004 Istanbul contest, reproduce the boundaries of the national group through the 'otherization' of internal and external 'outgroups'. The exclusion of outgroups speaks both for the uniformity of 'us' (as opposed to 'them') and for the qualitative distinction; 'we' are not 'you'.

#### **IV. THE HOMELAND AS DREAMLAND**

Nations are synonymous with particular social and historical landscapes which produce that space as 'our' space and reproduce a more 'homely' image of 'our' homeland. In that sense, land- and cityscapes talk about 'us' reproducing 'our' particularity. The following section attempts to analyze the discourses of the 'homeland' traced in media coverage in Turkey as well as the visualizations of 'our' homeland appearing as a 'dreamland'.

Social spaces and places of gatherings reproduce 'our' community as internally uniform. Places where 'we' informally meet represent 'us' as a community socializing in public places. During the 2004 contest, images selected for the filmic postcards described 'our' daily life: instants captured from the Grand Bazaar or Taksim Square in Istanbul 'speak' for the community as a whole. Apart from that, informal places of assembly provide the ground for the affirmation of 'our' society as tolerant to diverse cultures (Edensor 2002:48). Both of the social places mentioned above are destinations for thousands of tourists bearing their 'different' identity. The



socialization of 'local' people with tourists reproduces 'our' identity as foreign-friendly and open to 'others'. At the same time, 'our' identity is represented as internally uniform and self-confident to open 'itself' to different ways of thinking and acting.

Apart from social spaces, historical places and spectacular monuments reproduce the uniformity of 'our' identity. Edensor terms as 'iconic sites' spatial symbols narrating histories of an immemorial and glorious past (*ibid.*:45). These monuments serve as 'sacred centres' (Smith 1991:16) which symbolize the uniqueness of the national 'we'. In the same vein, Ayasofia and the Blue Mosque, the monument-landmarks of Istanbul are captured in their interior and exterior space in the filmic postcards. In that sense, 'our' nation is identified in one photo and the homeland is made more homely: 'we' are in 'our' land. 'Our' identity becomes as unique as the monument which stands for 'us' in the course of time.

Claims about Turkishness traced in media coverings are identified with regards to a social space with monumental value: the hamam. Hamam, a kind of bath dating since the Ottoman times, is perceived to be a living tradition of ages, a way of representing 'our' distinctiveness. Sertab Erener, the national entrant of the 2003 contest shot the video clip of the song in a traditional hamam in order to depict a part of Turkish culture to the 'others' (Hararli, *Hurriyet* 23/04/2003). Thus, the combination of a song in English, in order to be intelligible for 'Europeans' with the depiction of 'our' unique hamam tradition can guarantee for an authentic representation of 'our' contested identity.

Divergent views concerning the reflection of 'our' identity came to the fore. Bulut in his article notes that the clip does not narrate correctly the tradition of the hamam, thus in a way offending and downplaying the importance of a cultural aspect

of 'us' (*Yenicag* 28/05/2003). Others pointed at the stereotypical imaginings such a depiction invokes (*Hurriyet* 21/04/2003). To their mind, the clip represented an extremely Oriental view of Turks, implying a figure of the Turk riding a camel, wearing a fez and brandishing a sword. (*ibid.*). The Oriental outlook is incompatible with 'our' identity.

The clash of the two different views over how Turkishness is originally reproduced through the depiction of a social space argues against the internally uniform representation of 'our' identity. Hamam as a place is invoked in order to manifest the homogeneity of 'our' community, yet it provides the ground for the confrontation of various views appearing to talk on behalf of Turkishness. On the one hand, the hamam tradition represents the historical links of 'us' with 'our' forefathers; 'our' identity is reflected in such a historical space. At the same time, hamam represents a social place, a quotidian landscape where 'our' identity unreflexively assumes 'its' authentic character. On the other hand, the representation of 'our' space in the video clip is perceived to be in discordance with 'our' tradition, thus fails to narrate 'our' authenticity. The juxtaposition of various discourses proves that Turkishness is constituted by a dynamic cul-de-sac between Occidental and Oriental, traditionalist and modernist, inward and outward-looking discourses.

Social spaces and spectacular places are particles of 'our' homeland representing the whole. Pictures of iconic sites and cityscapes imply that there is a national territory containing these sites: 'this is Turkey'. Another way of discussing national identity is the grammar linking people and place (Billig, *ibid.*:78). In that sense, Turkey as the homeland of all Turks reproduces the imagined community as a single, uniform entity living in delineated boundaries. Babahan in an article titled as

“This is Turkey” refers to individual successes of men of letters (Orhan Pamuk), athletes (Mehmet Okur) and artists (Sertab Erener) which promote ‘us’ as a whole:

These achievements represent Turkey to the rest of the world as an economic power which pays particular attention to the fields of science, sport and art (*Sabah* 26/05/2003)

The term ‘Turkey’ does not merely imply a geographical region but stands for a homogeneous community, the homeland of Turks. The phrase ‘this is Turkey’ is a metonym for ‘our’ community described as internally uniform and outward-looking. In the same vein, Bulent Arinc, president of the Parliament, stated that Turkey is proud for the first position brought by Sertab Erener. (Cited in *Radikal* 27/05/2003). Once more, Turkey is merely a spot in the map, it represents ‘us’ as a single entity. Moreover, particular cities assume the responsibility of talking on behalf of ‘our’ homeland: Vatan notes in its title that “Eurovision contest brings international recognition since one sixth of the world will watch Istanbul.” (15/05/2004). Istanbul stands metonymically for ‘us’. The grammar of ‘our’ homeland as *the* homeland is supported by discourses which display a ‘point of reference’, a starting point. Initially, the very term ‘abroad’ in Turkish (yurtdışı), meaning outside of the home, points to the perspective from which ‘we’ look at the geographies extending beyond ‘our’ territory. In the same vein, the song for the 2005 contest is “sent on behalf of Turkey” (*Zaman* 29/03/2005) and in turn, Sertab Erener “comes back with the trophy” (*Sabah* 26/05/2003). In both instances, ‘our’ homeland is reproduced as *the* homeland, ‘our’ departing and ‘our’ returning point.

The homeland as *the* home of all Turks is reproduced visually during the 2004 Istanbul contest. While the voting procedure took place and each representative

allocated live the results of the televotes, 'his/her' country was indicated as a miniature on the top right of the television screen. The message was both reflexively and unreflexively stated: this is Turkey calling!<sup>29</sup>The reproduction of the homeland as a territory extending within specified and delineated boundaries reproduces 'us' as the legitimate 'owners' of that land<sup>30</sup>. At the same time, the particularity of 'our' nation extending within a given territory reproduces 'us' living in a 'world of nations'. 'Our' community lives in a bounded land outside of which 'other' communities extend.

The mental picture of the world as a map consisting of colored countries communicates the message of the prevalence of nationalist discourses. 'We' are reproduced as a national community dwelling within given boundaries, outside of which 'others' extend. In some instances though, 'remote nationalism' and the presence of a diaspora outside of 'our' territory living like 'us' and originating from 'us' can talk about 'us'. Kaleağası notes in his article how the image of Turks in Europe is complete:

Turks are a part of a music contest celebrated among members of the European family, regardless of the different geographies. The colors of their hair, eyes and skin; their achievements, their modern outlook reveal that they are part of Europe. They are not offspring of immigrants; they are the Turks of Turkey. Adding to that, artists, musicians and showmen of Turkish origin dwelling in countries-members of European Union mainly vote for Turkey; a shining Turkey is projected in European media and attempts to rub out existing prejudices and negative perceptions of Europeans for Turks (*Radikal* 22/05/2004).

---

<sup>29</sup> This is the phrase used by representatives of a country when they are asked in live broadcast by the presenters to allocate the votes.

<sup>30</sup> Of all countries participating in the 2004 contest only Cyprus was not depicted as a piece of land within boundaries.

Turks living in Europe, thus, are the necessary supplement for the completion of 'our' identity. They are the extension of 'our' community in others' territory, the projection of 'our' identity abroad. Physical distance becomes a matter of minor relevance, 'our' bounded community is extended to every 'corner of the world' and 'we' are reproduced as everywhere-existing Turks. Indeed, the relativisation of distance (Skrbis 1999) between the diasporic community and *the* homeland reproduces 'our' identity as a-spatial, extending symbolically the boundaries of 'our' community to every place where there are 'Turks'. *Yenicag* comments on the victory of the 2003 contest as an outcome of the nationalist (*milliyetçi*) feelings of the diaspora Turks:

The Turks who live in Europe have proven their formidable power and effectiveness when they display their nationalist feelings... What matters now is Turkish leadership and foreign policy-makers to use these populations accordingly in order to promote the interest of Turkey regarding the Turkish-European relations (31/05/2003).

In that sense, 'our' identity is represented as powerful and self-confident, able to have an effect on and promote 'our' benefits. The diaspora Turks are the symbolic extension of 'our' will, desires and objectives.

To cut things short, claims about 'our' homeland constitute discourses of defining 'our' identity. Social spaces are visualised in order to symbolize 'our' homogeneous community and 'its' authenticity, derivative of 'our' traditions still in use. Historical places stand for 'our' uniqueness and talk about 'us' as legitimate owners of 'this' land. 'Our' homeland stands for 'our' discursive metonymic representation as uniform identity and becomes an uncontested land through the use of a grammar; Turkey becomes *the* place, the starting and the returning point, the perspective to look at the world. Nonetheless, 'our' identity is particular and

universal at the same time; ‘we’ are at home and ‘we’ are everywhere. ‘Long-distance’ nationalism and the symbolic relativisation of space reproduces ‘our’ identity as an a-spatial organic community.

## **V. WAVING THE RED CRESCENT**

National symbols such as flags stand for ‘our’ identity communicating the message that ‘we’ are a single entity. In commemorations and celebrations such as the Eurovision contest ‘our’ identity is flagged reflexively on stage or among the audience. This section attempts to analyze how ‘our’ flag acquires meanings through its discursive reproduction in the media.

Ways of referring to ‘our’ flag constitutes ways of talking about ‘us’ as a community in unison. In media coverage, ‘our’ flag is implied by using terms indicative of ‘its’ distinct character. *Sabah* (06/03/2006) in an article employs the term ‘crescent-starred’ (ay yıldızlı) to refer to ‘our’ flag. The depiction of the flag is used as a metonym of ‘our’ flag and the name need not be referred since ‘we’ all understand what it stands for; ‘we’ recognize the meaning of the crescent-starred. In the same vein, the color of ‘our’ flag is used to remind ‘us’ unreflexively that ‘we’ are at ‘home’. *Sabah* cites in an article statements made by the TRT Director General, Senol Demiroz, where he informs us of the color with which the venue of the contest is decorated: red, reminiscent of the Turkish flag (03/05/2004; *Cumhuriyet* 03/05/2004). The term ‘decorated’ is used in both its literary and metaphorical meaning, since the venue and subsequently the contest is honored by the prevalent presence of ‘our’ flag in the space. In that sense, the stadium is constantly flagged, a way of reminding ‘us’ unreflexively that ‘we’ are ‘here’. So, when Terry Wogan welcomes BBC viewers to a stadium full of ‘flags of all nations’ ‘we’ know that

'ours' is the biggest, thus the most important and the best. The color of the venue, reminiscent of 'our' flag, constitutes a mindless way of reproducing 'our' homeland as 'homely'.

'Our' flag's color and depiction is not only indicative of 'our' homeland but can communicate messages of 'our' hegemony through its visualization. *Sabah* in an article notes that Erener, right after 'our' victory went on stage for the award holding the Turkish flag (25/05/2003). At the same time, photos circulated in media depicted Erener holding the trophy and the flag. The message was clear: 'we' had won and the presence of the flag verifies it. This flag represents 'our' identity in two ways, one being reflexive, and the other unreflexive. In the former case, the 'flag' is waved, 'our' community is flagged and the message being communicated by watching Erener waving the flag is that 'we' are victorious. The flag in the hands of Erener reproduces 'us' as a single entity and symbolizes 'our' hegemony. At the same time, it is a 'natural' fact for 'Turkey's' representative to receive the award bearing 'our' flag in her shoulders. The flag in the latter case is mindlessly waved, it is merely observed since 'we' always see 'our' national representatives in various occasions 'wearing' the flag in times of international success. Indeed, as Marvin and Ingle note, 'wrapping' in the flag is a systematic practice in fashion, sport and civic life (1999:54). Either reflexive or unreflexive a waving of the flag, 'our' community is reproduced as an internally uniform community: 'we', as the community of all Turks, have won. More than that, 'our' flag does not merely talk about 'our' particular identity but bears the universality of hegemony: its presence in the stage, next to the award communicates the message both to 'us' and 'them' that 'we' are the victorious winners of Eurovision.

Moreover, 'our' flag's waving communicates universal messages that display the moral order of the 'world of nations'. *Aksam* in an article notes that Greek, Turkish and Cypriot flags were waved all together in the 2003 venue; the co-existence of the flags was a manifestation of a cry for peace (26/05/2003). Furthermore, in another article it is mentioned that the 2004 entrants of Greece and Cyprus were photographed holding a Turkish flag in their hands (*Aksam* 14/05/2004). This direct message for peace, to quote the newspaper's words, was communicated through the presence of 'our' national symbol. The flag is not merely national in that sense but a universal symbol representing universal values such as peace, love and respect, as it can be implied in the case of the 2004 stage design<sup>31</sup>, co-existing with the red color of 'our' flag in the venue. The Turkish flag reminds 'us' of 'our' authentic and particular character and at the same time reminds 'us' as international audience of our moral duties and pursues.

So communicative a symbol of 'our' identity, 'our' flag can not but assume sacredness informative of 'our' purity. Unlike the case of Greece, where the national flag was functionalized as a fashionable and trendy stamp to decorate outfit, the Turkish flag did not lose its sacred character. The 2006 national entrant's announcement that she was willing to wear a crescent-starred dress for the contest final (Atal, *Sabah* 06/03/2006) was met with scepticism. The reason was the enactment of a law (Turk Bayragi Kanunu<sup>32</sup> No.2893/22-09-1983, article 7) prohibiting the use of flag as an outfit. Nevertheless, legal advisers and a judge claimed that the regulation be amended, if the symbol is not denigrated aesthetically.

---

<sup>31</sup> Sabah cites statements by Demiroz in which he maintains that the 2004 stage theme was designed to invoke the motto: 'Under the same sky: love, peace and respect'. At the same time, as noted above, he stated that the venue was painted in red to remind 'us' of 'our' flag's color.

<sup>32</sup> The regulation is accessible online. Retrieved on 27/05/2007:  
<http://www.hukuki.net/kanun/2893.15.text.asp>



The article titled as “The flag on the head, not on the hips”<sup>33</sup> maintains that ‘our’ national representative can be glorified if used in a ‘prudent’ and ‘correct’ manner. Supposedly, one of the ‘correct’ ways is to ‘wear’ the flag in the head, as it was the case in the video clip of the song where Sibel Tuzun wore a hat bearing the ‘red crescent-starred’. In that sense, ‘our’ flag should be ‘worn’ in parts of the body where its spiritual value<sup>34</sup> is not denigrated but extolled. There could not be more appropriate part of the body than the head for the placement of ‘our’ flag. If a scene had to be visualized in order to make my point clear, that would be the moment of a coronation. The flag symbolizes the crown which is placed in the head of ‘our’ chosen one. Contrasted to the ‘noble’ image of a coronation, ‘our’ flag is represented in a ‘vulgar’ way if it is placed on the hips.

What is implied in the vulgarization of the hips is the connotation linking the hips, especially of women, with a show-off of sexuality. That part of the body is thought to be overtly sexual, thus it cannot ‘bear’ the morality and purity of ‘our’ flag. ‘Our’ community’s values cannot be represented in that part of the body which motivates ‘corrupt’ and amoral feelings such as lust and eroticism. What’s more, ‘our’ nation cannot adorn a part of the body whose beauty is doomed to last only temporally. The juxtaposition of the head with the hips shows the symbolic placement of ‘our’ nation. The nation adorns the head, the physical ‘vault’ of the mind, which along with the heart symbolizes the spiritual and ‘eternal’ part of human beings. Bodies die and decay, whereas ‘minds’ and ‘souls’ cannot be captured by time or space. It is exactly in that ‘content of the vault’ where ‘our’ nation is represented; ‘it’ too, is reified as an eternal being, an essentialized community extending in the depths and widths of time and space. In fact, ‘our’ nation is this imagined community which

---

<sup>33</sup> Original title in Turkish: “Bayrak basta olur ama kalcada olmaz”.

<sup>34</sup> As stated in article 7, the Turkish flag cannot be used by no means in such a manner that its spiritual value is denigrated and harmed.

had a past, a present and a future, the spirit of all Turks which will never die and will always be represented in the fabric depicting a crescent and a star.

'Our' flag symbolizes 'our' identity in its wholeness, be that 'our' distinctive character or 'our' universal values pervading the international order. It represents 'us' as a community in unison while at the same time claims to 'talk' in front of an international audience communicating messages that affect us all, as an international community. 'Our' flag's sacred character, reproducing 'us' as a unique and eternal entity, can only be placed at the head. 'We', the Turkish community, are reified as an eternal entity moving in the course of time and space without losing 'our' essence. The placement of 'our' nation in the head, a metonym for the mind, can be combined with Billig's finding about nationalism as a way of thinking. Indeed, nationalism is a way of thinking (Billig *ibid.*:61) and it is in this field that the 'nation' should recognize 'its' presence in both a symbolic and a habitual level. It is in 'our' minds that 'nations' exist as a reified category and it is in 'our' heads that 'nations' are represented and extolled as imagined communities.

## **VI. MYTHS AND NARRATIVES OF THE TURKISH IDENTITY**

Ways of narrating myths of 'our' identity constitute ways of talking about 'our' uniqueness. National narratives in the case of Eurovision contest are performed live on stage, assuming the form of dances and songs exalting 'us'. The past is molded with the present in a spectacular show of a music group originating from Turkey and performing age-old Turkish folk dances.

National narratives and myths of 'our' identity were performed during the interval act of the 2004 contest by the 'Sultans of the Dance', a group consisting of professional dancers. The group which followed the path of an Irish-originated group,

the Lords of the Dance, presented a fifteen-minute theatrical dance show containing so diverse dance styles and forms, from folk Anatolian to belly dances and modern ballet. In fact, the history of folk dances is linked with the territory which was claimed to have hosted some of the most significant civilizations.

The first part of the show embarked on performing the distinctive character of the Shamanist tradition. And (1976:5) maintains that the Shamanistic rituals of the Ural-Altai region, where the first Turks descended, had a major impact on folk dances of Anatolia. Among these, he refers to the tradition of the drum, a necessary instrument for the Shaman without which could not induce ecstasy (*ibid.*:17-8). The drum of the shaman became the *davul*, the Anatolian version of the shaman drum, the most important instrument in Anatolian dances. Apart from the drum, the shamanist tradition revives in Anatolian dances in the form of animal mimicry performed during the dance. This tradition is performed in the first part of the 'Fire of Anatolia', the show presented by the Sultans of the Dance.

The second part revolves around the universal battle between 'good' and 'evil', performed through a theatrical dance act. This act narrates the final battle between the power of good and evil and the eventual prevalence of the 'innate goodness of humanity'. The universal values of 'our' identity are performed in that battle in a particular way since 'the mother of all battles' is visualized through 'our' Anatolian dances. Apart from that, the depiction of the dancers as soldiers dancing in a unison and structured manner under the sound of a military march reminds 'us' of 'our' myths as a nation of soldiers. In that sense, the 'myth of military nation' (Altınay 2004) is reproduced and 'we', as the sons of soldiers, are entitled to talk about the final battle shaping the destiny of humanity.

The third part comes after the prevalence of the innate goodness of humanity and depicts a group of women performing belly dances. Dehmen (2003; unpublished thesis) argues that Oriental dances follow the commemoration of the victory of good. Even though Oriental dances are not linked with Anatolia, it is informative of 'our' identity moving across the bridge linking East and West. 'Our' identity contains elements dating since the Ottoman Empire, which was exoticized and Orientalized in Western writings. In that sense, 'our' identity is narrated as the heir of an empire of mysticism and exoticism. Indeed, the presence of whirling dervishes in the opening ceremony reminding 'us' of 'our' close contact with the divine and the depiction of 'Oriental' dances informs 'us' and 'them' of 'our' cultural and moral fluidity. 'Our' identity contains both the exaltation of 'our' spirit reaching the divine and at the same time the exaltation of the body as libertine.

The fourth part of the show depicts a group of dancers performing a *horon*, a form of dance from the Northern part of Anatolia. The myths and narratives of 'our' nation are interlinked with territory through the dance performance of the Sultans of the Dance. As Dehmen argues, throughout their show Anatolia is reproduced as an essentialized entity, an extension of native Turkish lands (*ibid.*:38). Anatolia is perceived to be a mosaic of cultural traditions, colors and dances added by every civilization stepping to 'this' land. As it is noted in the booklet of the Sultans of the Dance, it is today that 'we' breathe life into the spirit of age-old music and dance legends. In that perspective, the voice of Anatolia as a mosaic is heard by 'us'. Claims about 'our' age-old history are narrated through the history of 'this' land, reproduced as 'our' homeland. The shamanist tradition of 'our' forefathers revives through the use of musical instruments of Anatolian dances and at the same time the history of so diverse civilizations as Greek, Hittite and Persian is revived in 'our' dances stemming

from 'our' homeland. As it is noted in the group's web page, 'we' narrate the history of 'this' land through the dances of 'Turkey'.<sup>35</sup>

Claims about 'our' age-old history reproduce 'our' homeland as the natural borders of 'our' identity. Dehmen notes that through the dancing performance 'our' homeland is reproduced in its actual borders as the extension of Anatolia (*ibid.*:55). Anatolia is the point of reference, the 'motherland', with which all territories are linked. In the Eurovision show, Anatolia is linked with its north region through the *horon* performance, informative of the Black Sea traditions, and its central area where shamanist tradition revives. 'Turkey', in that sense, is performing its uniformity through the cultural linking of 'our' motherland, Anatolia, with the rest of its territories.

## **B. THE QUEST FOR HEGEMONY**

Turkishness is represented in the press coverage as an essential fact, an identity having a particular content which attests to its uniqueness. This section attempts to provide the claims made about 'our' identity. As it is argued, Turkishness is constituted of various points of view and competing approaches filling 'its' content in different ways. The various perspectives of looking at 'our' identity and the clashing views affirm the dynamic and negotiated character of national identities.

### 1. Modernists versus conservatives

The Turkish identity moves between the lines of two forms of disjunction which constitute 'its' content. The modernists' position, as discussed in the section about language presupposes that there is an essential 'Turkish' identity born by 'us',

---

<sup>35</sup> Retrieved at 23/05/2007: <http://www.fireofanatolia.com/FrontsideEN/aboutusanad1.aspx> .

yet it is susceptible to change. Ozkok refers to the national entrant during the 2003 contest and her song:

This song [performed in English] is our own blood picture, the compound elements that constitute yourselves...The rhythm of the song is coded in my genes, a familiar sound since my childhood...Our dancers, even though they come from Germany are a part of our *new self*' (*Hurriyet* 28/05/2003 emphasis added).

The abovementioned quotations reproduce 'us' as bearers of an essential identity which changes constantly adjusting to the environment of a 'world of nations'. 'Our' identity competes with 'others' in a quest for hegemony.

On the other hand, the conservatives approach is far more inward-looking, based on objective criteria such as culture. Akyildiz, Director General in Kamu-Sen (the Confederation of Civil Servants) refers to the first position achieved in 2003:

Some people give a wrong direction to our culture, our language, our art, our laws, to cut things short our essential values are being internally distorted... A certain form of (external) dominance in the fields of culture, society, politics, law and sovereignty has haunted them. (*Yenicag* 28/05/2003).

This rhetorical form embarks on the uniqueness of 'our' (national) culture to speak for 'our' distinctiveness. What is more, this concept of Turkishness develops a siege mentality where external 'others' attempt to distort 'our' purity.

The 'siege mentality' is reproduced not only by external 'others' but by 'internal others' as well. Balibar (1994: 63) elegantly notes that nations have two types of 'otherness' to perceive themselves, an 'external' and an 'internal'. The second category involves such a deviation from 'our' norms that they are represented

as ‘external others’ threatening the purity of the nation. The internal ‘otherization’ of the modernists’ view is a rhetorical form evoking the ‘us versus them’ discourse. The aforementioned comment made by Akyildiz attests for the ‘internal other’ distorting ‘our’ very quality. *Zaman* comments on the debate about language and the ‘rightful’ way of representing ‘our’ national culture by publishing an article titled “Are you ashamed of Turkish?” (31/01/2004). The term ‘you’ serves a dualism: it is evoked in order to ‘otherize’ counter-propositions and at the same time is juxtaposed to the term ‘Turkish’, an essential and ‘natural’ fact. Thus, those who are implied as ‘you’ in the phrase dissent from *the* element of ‘our’ distinctiveness. The message of a threat stemming from ‘our’ (as a nation) within has been communicated and the ‘siege mentality’ has assumed a role on its own.

## 2. West<sup>36</sup> versus East

The second pair of divergent views constituting Turkish identity is the cul-de-sac between West and East discourses. Such discourses claim to answer to the question ‘where do “we” belong?’. Media coverage about Eurovision contest makes claims about ‘our’ identity through the evocation of Western and Eastern discourses. Moreover, the way ‘Europe’ is reproduced in media reports provides the ground for a definition of the national ‘we’.

Discussions about ‘us’ being ‘Western’ or ‘Eastern’ have come to the fore during the Eurovision contest. The first component of the term ‘Eurovision’ monopolized the lively debates about ‘our’ distinctiveness. Largely, two types of discourses made their way to talk about Turkishness. The first constituted of a

---

<sup>36</sup> The term ‘West’ is used interchangeably with the terms ‘Europe’, ‘European Union’ and ‘Occident’. The study uses the term quoted each time by the author of each article.

confidence about 'our' belonging to the 'West'. Hizlan implies right from the title 'our' Western-oriented identity: "Turkish Renaissance". In the article, he implies the cultural affinity of Turkish identity with the 'West':

Release, at least for a while, your mind, feelings and spirit from politics and indulge in art and culture; there you shall see the different face of future Turkey (*Hurriyet* 27/05/2003).

The face of future Turkey is envisaged in 'three victories', Orhan Pamuk's literature prize, Ceylan's prize in Cannes film festival and Eren'er's win in the Eurovision contest. These victories represent the Renaissance of 'our' identity in Western terms; 'we' focus on 'our' cultural advance, be that in the field of 'high' or 'popular' culture. Moreover, the separation from politics points out the author's presupposition: there is no need to prove 'our' belonging to the West through the road of politics; 'we' are part of the West and 'our' culture and its successes corroborate for that. In a similar vein, *Vatan* comments on the importance of Eren'er's success: "Either you want it or not, we are Europeans" (23/05/2006). Cultural successes corroborate 'our' sense of belonging to a group of countries sharing the same values. "How can a non-European country win a European music contest and represent its music?" Eksi notes (*Hurriyet* 28/05/2003).

Music, as a cultural element, is a mirror of 'our' identity. Eksi elegantly displays how a success on the cultural field can vindicate 'our' belonging to the West:

Undoubtedly, Eren'er has manifested the truth of a claim we are trying to prove for years...this was not merely a song contest but an opinion poll of the European public opinion about Turkey...Sertab Eren'er handed over to us what our politicians could not attain for four hundred years now, our European identity certificate (*Hurriyet* 28/05/2003).



What is implied by Eksi is that ‘our’ culture is not merely represented in European cultural values, but it *is* a part of that culture as well. What remain are the political criteria to be met. In the same vein, Schulz notes that “Turkey’s place is Europe” since Turks share the same cultural traditions and the same concerns with European peoples (*Radikal* 09/04/2004). Once again, what is at stake is not ‘our’ cultural affinity which is a given fact, but the political developments.

‘Our’ cultural affinity with the West becomes salient when it is affirmed by ‘Europeans’. *Hurriyet* reproduces an article of a Swiss newspaper arguing that the impeccable organization of the 2004 contest verifies that “Turkey belongs to Europe” (18/05/2004). *Sabah* cites an article published by a Danish newspaper:

It is about time to stop wondering if Turkey, in terms of its politics and geography, belongs to Europe. The successful organization and the high-quality show should be rewarded with accession in E.U (*Politiken*; cited in *Sabah* 18/05/2004).

Geography as a criterion of ‘othering’ or accepting Turkey is used by Kaleagasi as well. Based on a ‘European’ point of view, he states that geography should not be an objective criterion for the classification of states as European or not; instead European values are universal, they do not apply to a certain continent (*Radikal* 30/01/2006). In that perspective, the ‘European’ point of view is used to prove ‘our’ belonging to Europe.

Cultural affinity and shared bonds between ‘Turks’ and (the rest of) European ‘peoples’ represent claims about ‘our’ identity. Before addressing the various ways in which ‘we’ are Europeans, an elaboration in terms and definitions is needed. The bulk of the above mentioned articles does not refer to a divergence between Occidental and

Oriental discourses, but solely refer to ‘our’ compatibility with European values in terms of culture and universal outlook. The premise upon which this view lies does not see Turkishness moving between Oriental and Occidental discourses. Instead, ‘Turkey’<sup>37</sup> has proved by its culture and its adherence to ‘European’ values that it is Western-oriented.

The debate over the compatibility of European values with ‘our’ identity has provided some remarks about ‘us’. According to the articles cited above, ‘we’ are Europeans because ‘we’ share common cultural themes and traditions, one of which being the Eurovision contest. Apart from that, ‘we’ have proven ‘our’ disciplined and well-organized mentality. The fact that ‘Turkey’ organized successfully the 2004 contest was perceived to be the recognition of ‘our’ western-oriented mentality. The perception of the Orientalist- that ‘we’ are not- acting in a sloppy and disorganized manner is unreflexively reproduced. Nonetheless, the fear of ‘our’ disorganized mentality is represented in the comment of Armagan Caglayan:

I have to admit, though, that I watched the show with the feeling that at anytime troubleshoot due to technical reasons would occur during the live broadcast (*Hurriyet* 19/05/2004).

On the other side, the ‘Oriental’ part of ‘our’ identity is visually and discursively reproduced in the Eurovision contest. The first ‘stage’ upon which the ‘Oriental’ projection of ‘our’ self was projected was Erener’s video clip for the 2003 song. The clip shot in a hamam, depicted girls dancing ‘Oriental’ dances performing them in an overtly sexual manner. Akyildiz (*Hurriyet* 26/04/2003) notes that ‘Turkish’ identity cannot be represented by ‘an extremely Oriental (Oryantal) clip’

---

<sup>37</sup> The term ‘Turkey’ is put under quotation marks because it informs us of the metonymic representation of the community of Turks.

(*Hurriyet* 21/04/2003). Right after Erener's win in the 2003 contest, *Radikal* exclaims in its title: "A belly dance conquers Europe!" (25/05/2003). 'Belly dance' and 'Oriental' dance are used interchangeably but the meaning they are attributed is totally different: the former is identified symbolically as a conqueror, whereas the latter is rejected as 'incompatible' with 'our' identity. Interestingly enough, both of them imply the invocation of Orientalist discourses as the 'Other' of the West; in the first case the very term 'conquer' shows the perspective by which the practice of belly dance looks at the West: something is conquered by an 'outsider' and not from within. In the second case, the term 'Oriental' invokes the stereotypical representation of 'our' other:

The figure of the Turk brandishing a sword and riding a camel wearing a fez is implied by the broadcast of this clip (*Hurriyet* 21/04/2003).

The reproduction of Orientalist visualizations to make claims about what 'we' are not takes place in the 2004 contest as well. During the interval act, a fifteen minute break where usually the host countries present a show promoting 'their' distinctive character, a belly dance act was included among others. Dehmen argues that the inclusion of a belly dance act signified the identification of the 'Oriental' as 'our' 'other'.<sup>38</sup> Nevertheless, *Milliyet* reproduces an article posted by BBC:

The Turks have organized a magnificent show full of colors of the exotic East (dogu) (17/05/2004).

---

<sup>38</sup> Dehmen notes that 'Oriental' representations of 'us' were to be banned in 1980's. The performance of belly dancing in television broadcasts was banned in 1980, only to be lifted some years later. Now, mainly private TV channels broadcast belly dances.

The uncontested representation of 'us' through the eyes of a European mass media implies the acceptance of 'our' identity as an interplay between East and the West. Indeed, claims made about 'our' identity reproduce this interaction between Western and Eastern discourses projecting 'Turkishness' as the meeting point of the two. 'Turkey', standing for 'us' as a whole, is neither exclusively in the West nor in the East but it combines both harmoniously. The 2004 contest's presenter projects this flexible perception of 'our' identity in the city hosting the show:

"...this is the first time the contest is held in a city which bridges two continents..."

An instant shot projected during the contest's filmic postcards displayed the bridge of Bosphorus, the initial link between the two continents: Europe and Asia. In fact, it is in that very spot, literally and metaphorically, that 'we' stand: 'we' are the bridge linking the East and the West.

Apart from the 'internal' clashes and divergences struggling for the legitimation of their views through the evocation of nationalist discourses, a similar practice is followed for the representation of 'our' world by 'us'. The syntax of hegemony is evoked in order to present 'Turkey' as the legitimate guarantor of the universal values of the world of nations. The name of the group invited to present the interval act in 2004 manifests the claims 'we' make about 'us' as a universal audience. "The Sultans of the Dance" is the 'syntax of hegemony' where the particular voice of Turkey, represented through the display of Anatolian dances and its age-old history, talks about the universal value of reconciliation and collective (inter-national) enjoyment through music performance and dance. 'We' entitle 'ourselves' to talk on behalf of all nations about something that matters 'us' (as the

universal audience, including and represented by ‘us’). In the same vein, a gesture for ‘peace, love and respect’ made by the 2004 entrant was interpreted as the message of ‘Turkey’ to the rest of the world (*Sabah* 16/05/2004). *Milliyet* presents ‘Turkey’ as the savior of Eurovision’s future, since the 2004 contest was seen as the critical point due to the change of regulations and its low popularity (17/05/2004). ‘We’ guaranteed for the success of a cultural tradition that brings ‘us’ all together.

The internal segmentation of ‘our’ community to a multitude of diverse views talking about Turkishness is overlooked by the evocation of the syntax of hegemony. Each and every fraction evokes the nationalist vision of ‘us’ and ‘them’ in order to legitimate its own outlook. Thus, Turkishness is attributed a stable and reified character, an essential core which every view attempts to define. On the other hand, the syntax of hegemony is applied in the inter-national world order; claims about universal values prove the fluidity of nationalist discourses moving between (and beyond) the particular and the universal ‘we’. In that sense, ‘we’ are represented as a coherent whole living in a ‘world of nations’.

### **C. INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF TURKISH IDENTITY**

The interplay between divergent discourses within ‘our’ community leads to the construction of ‘our’ identity, whose entity is essentialized and attributed a fixed meaning. This construction is promoted and pursued by certain institutions in order to acquire an ‘official’ status. In other words, the hegemonization of a particular discourse about ‘us’ goes hand in hand with ‘its’ institutionalization. In the following, the constructed meaning of Turkishness is reviewed and the institutions which made it the ‘official’ are sketched out.

Eurovision contest as an inter-national forum operates through the representation of a 'nation' by the official broadcast agency. Consequently, the unit of analysis deciding over procedural matters is the public broadcast company of every country. It, alone, decides the representation and the ways in which 'our' identity will be performed on the stage. As it was stated before, 2003 was a critical point for Greece, since it was in that contest where the 'strategic decision' to pursue hegemony at any cost was taken. In the case of Turkey it seems that there is no such critical point but one can argue that the official policy, as it is presented since 2003, is coherent and a single element is pervasive in all contestants: the performance of 'our' identity as the bridge between East and West.

Despite the different approaches in the performance and the overall show of the national entrances since 2003, a common pattern is followed: Turkey is presented as the point (be that geographical or cultural) where the two extremes are brought together. "Our' identity is perceived to provide a 'safe haven' for the co-existence of what 'others' consider as unthinkable: the performance of both East and West as a coherent whole. In that sense, the belly dances of Erener performed in a hamam where she sings in English is seen as "the best promotion for Turkey" (*Hurriyet* 26/04/2003). 'Turkey' is represented as the bridge between West, since the national entrant uses English in the song, and East, depicted by the belly dancers and the traditional hamam images.

The 2004 contest held in Istanbul provided the best ground for the performance of 'our' identity as moving between East and West. The opening ceremony act involved last year's winner singing in English and a group of whirling dervishes at the back. Once more, 'we' manage to bring values of the West and East together; on the one hand, the 'progress' of the West and the communication of all

peoples through the use of English and on the other hand, the religious mysticism of the East merged harmoniously in 'our' identity. This pattern was followed once more in the interval act, where the 'Sultans of the Dance' group performed a mixture of 'our' Anatolian dances with modern ones, such as ballet. The 2005 song was performed in Turkish by a woman with musical studies, married to a 'foreigner' and living in Paris, a woman who shatters the 'stereotypical' image of 'Turks'. During the 2006 contest the national entrant Sibel Tuzun was selected for representing the country. The song was performed half in Turkish and half in English and its name was "Superstar" written with Turkish characters. In that sense, 'Turkey' does not meet the West but rather stays on the bridge going back and forth.

Throughout the period under study, TRT, the state broadcast agency, was the institution which opted for the hegemonization of this particular discourse over potential others. TRT Director General talks in *Milliyet* about the victory in the 2003 contest:

(The victory) has nothing to do with the government. During Gul's premiership, the government attempted to withdraw the song (*Milliyet* 28/05/2003).

An MP of CHP-the opposition party- underlines the crucial role of TRT in the victory by stating that it is worth congratulating the Director General, the artist and the composer for this success (*ibid.*). The 2004 contest in Istanbul, a Western-like show organized under the auspices of TRT, and the visualization of 'our' identity in both the whirling dervishes and the 'western' music group which represented 'us' proved that the state broadcast agency opted for the promotion of 'us' as the bridge between the West and East. Demiroz evoked the syntax of hegemony to talk on behalf of 'us'

(*Hurriyet* 17/05/2004). During the 2006 contest, TRT decided that the contestant sung the song both in Turkish and English. In that sense, 'our' identity is not an essential entity but it is promoted by certain institutions and it is inhabited in banal and spectacular practices.

Moreover, TRT was supported by the political elite in its decisions to promote that particular approach of 'our' identity. *Radikal* cites statements made by Atalay, Minister of the State, implying that 'our' identity is displayed in 'its' authentic sense by the quest for the first position in the contest (15/05/2003). Moreover, claims about 'our' identity verify official objectives and 'national' policies. Kursat Tuzmen, another Minister of State noted:

The first position we won in Eurovision is a touchstone of our intentions and our will to follow the path of accession to E.U (*Sabah* 26/05/2003).

What Tuzmen implies is that 'our' identity, as represented in the contest, is in accordance with 'our' political objectives. Adherence to Western values means the hegemonization of 'us' as the bridge between West and East.

'Our' identity is granted an 'official' status through its institutionalization. Yet, its institutionalization does not mean that this identity is seen as the identity of all Turks. What is implied by this section is that certain institutions of the official state promote particular discourses at the expense of others in order to achieve their objectives. The 'modern' face of Turkey evoking Western discourses of progress and Eastern discourses of religious mysticism and exoticization are not always the dominant form of talking about 'us'.



## **FIFTH PART: IMAGINING THE ‘OTHER’**

### **‘US’ AND ‘THEM’: PERCEPTIONS OF GREEKS FOR TURKS**

National identities are constituted in a negotiated framework and between various fractions and social groups attempting to communicate their views by evoking the nationalist discourses of ‘us’ imagined as a coherent and organic whole. Nevertheless, there is always a ‘them’ juxtaposed to ‘us’. ‘Our’ identity is always constituted in contradistinction to ‘them’. This part attempts to analyze claims about how Turks are represented in Greek media coverage. Before addressing the ways with which Greeks imagine Turks as the ‘others’ of ‘themselves’, a clarification is to be noted: the terms ‘Greek’ and ‘Turk’ are treated as social categories, as imagined communities. In that sense, the study argues against the identification of national identities as monolithic categories.

#### **A. TURKS IN THE IMAGINATION OF GREEKS**

Ways of talking about Turkish identity constitute ways of representing ‘them’ through the quotation of ‘their’ language. Turkish words, used by Greeks in their everyday life, are quoted in newspapers in order to communicate the message of Turkey’s victory to ‘our’ community. *Adesmeftos Typos* uses the title “Hanim Eurovision” to refer to the first position won by Sertab Erener (26/05/2003). In the same vein, *Aggelioforos* formulates in Turkish ‘their’ success: “Tamam for Sertab, aman for

Mando” (26/05/2003). Thus, ‘we’ represent ‘them’ in terms of ‘their’ language; the term ‘hanim’ is not informative merely of the national singer, but of the community as a whole. Additionally, ‘their’ success in the contest is represented through the juxtaposition of psychological states between the two singers, consequently the two nations: Turks celebrate, Greeks weep. The quotation of Turkish words common to Greeks reproduces Turks as a uniform linguistic community; Turks’ identity is attributed objective and recognizable criteria in order to delineate it. ‘Their’ language stands for ‘them’ as a whole. Yet, the point of reference departs from ‘us’: ‘hanim’ and ‘tamam’ are used according to their meaning and context in ‘our’ community. The reproduction of ‘them’ departs from ‘us’ in ways intelligible to ‘us’.

The next nationalist trope invoked to describe ‘them’ as a way of sketching ‘us’ is the invocation of ‘our’ homeland as a point of reference. The deictic reproduction of ‘our’ homeland through the description of ‘them’ takes place in Greek press. ‘Turkey’ is reproduced as a ‘neighboring country’ (*Aggelioforos* 26/05/2003) or with the informal term ‘neighbor’ (Harvalias, *Ethnos* 27/05/2003; *Apogevmatini* 26/05/2003). In that sense, what is implied is that there is a ‘here’ representing ‘us’ as a geographically bounded territory adjacent to which ‘they’ extend. Nevertheless, the term ‘neighbor’ bears a moment’s consideration in Turkish-Greek relations since it has been granted a ‘special meaning’. The term ‘neighbor’ was one of the first popular manifestations of the rapprochement process initiated after the 1999 earthquakes which afflicted both countries. The headline ‘Thank you neighbor’<sup>39</sup> was used by *Hurriyet* (21/08/1999) to express ‘Turkey’s’ gratitude for the immediate response of Greek authorities and the dispatch of a rescue group. Since then it was used in a political context symbolizing the rapprochement process between the two

---

<sup>39</sup> Translated from Turkish: ‘Tesekkurler komsu’.

countries and stood in Greek media as a metonym for 'Turkey'. In that sense, the term is used both to refer to 'our' other in geographical terms extending to an adjacent territory as well as to our 'other' with which 'we' have a 'special' relationship.

Nevertheless, despite the geographical proximity, there is a gap dividing 'us' and 'them' in terms of where we belong. Another trope invoked by 'us' in order to talk about 'them' is the identification of Turks in the 'periphery' of West. Oriental discourses are brought into the fore in 'our' imagination of the 'other'. The Turkish word 'hanım', as stated above, represents Turks in 'our' 'Western' environment where that term has an Oriental and exotic meaning. Whereas in Turkish it means 'lady', in Greek it invokes an 'Oriental' meaning (Diamantakou, *Ta Nea* 26/05/2003). The perception of Greeks for Turks as 'Oriental-looking' is reproduced in Kolovou's comments about the organization of the contest in Istanbul:

Turks have surprised us with the organization of the contest; I am not sure whether this surprise is pleasant or not, yet they managed to get rid of their Eastern (anatoliki) 'costume' and wore the European one" (*Vradini* 14/05/2004).

Another comment made in *Ethnos* represents Turks as 'Oriental', thus as 'outgroups'. The author of the article comments on the music, the dress and the overall performance of the Turkish singer arguing that it is "reminiscent of the Orient (anatoli)" (26/05/2003). *Apogevmatini* goes further to liken Erener to an odalisque (26/05/2003), thus representing the Turkish entrant as a fantasy figure of the 'Orient'. In all articles cited above, stereotypical images of the 'Orient' are envisaged in the national representation of the Turks. 'They' are represented as a monolithic category belonging to the East rather than the West.

What is more, rhythms and dances of the national entrant are attributed a national and an Oriental 'content' at the same time. Andrikopoulou contrasts the performance of the Turkish and the Greek songs respectively:

Turkey appeared on stage with Oriental (anatolitiko) music and English verses performing an amazing choreography...Mando had a descent appearance and Western music (*Eleftheros Typos* 26/05/2003).

The author articulates an 'Oriental versus Occidental' discourse in order to describe the difference of 'us' from 'them'. 'We' are the descent Westerners amazed by the dances and the rhythm of the 'Orient' 'other'. It goes without saying that the 'Orientalization' of Turkey by 'us' is followed by the exotic image of the 'other' capturing 'our' eyes:

Sertab, in a harem-looking ambience, performed a dance which stirred the audience. The ballet consisted of a group of houri<sup>40</sup> (sic) shaking sensually their bellies and hips (Diamantakou, *Ta Nea* 26/05/2003).

The Greek claims over the overtly sexual performance of Turkish dancers represent the stereotypical imagination of the Turk as an authentic image of the East, as it is seen through 'our' Western eyes.

Turks are represented as 'our' 'others', the West, but at the same time 'they' attempt to be included in 'us' in 'every way that they can'. The title of the song<sup>41</sup> for the 2003 contest was quoted several times since it interpreted the will of 'Turkey' to

---

<sup>40</sup> In Islamic tradition, houris are heavenly beings providing with physical pleasure those entering Paradise.

<sup>41</sup> The title of the Turkish entrance for 2003 contest was: 'Everyway that I can'

become one of 'us'. Yet, such titles were reproduced mainly in the conservative press. Eurovision is seen once again as the forum where 'politics' are staged. In an article published in *Eleftherotypia*, Eurovision is seen as the only ground where Turkey can prove its Europeanness:

Turkey opted for selecting an English song in order to fulfill the criterion of acceding to Europe (26/05/2006).

In the same vein, titles such as 'Turkey won without criteria and preconditions' (*Makedonia* 26/05/2003) sketch out the portrait of Turkey willing vehemently to become one of 'us'. Nevertheless, what is implied in articles interplaying between the participation of Turkey in Eurovision and the (eventual) membership in European Union is explicitly stated in *Aggelioforos*:

Turkey has not achieved yet to enter European Union but realized a 28 year-old Greek dream: the first position in Eurovision; a contest producing cultural and linguistic uniformity (26/05/2003).

A contest where (national) cultures merge into a melting pot cannot but be incompatible with 'Europe'. *Ethnos* quotes a statement by the Greek Minister of Culture during that time, Evangelos Venizelos, where he notes that

European Union strives for cultural diversity...Indeed, it is a paradox for Europe to be represented in a culturally uniform contest (26/05/2003).

Turkey in the abovementioned statements is represented as the 'copy' of the Western 'model', mainly an imitation of the 'West' which cannot account for its originality. A similar point is made by Robins:

[T]he Turkish elites have constantly measured their achievements according to their resemblance to the European model (or, rather, their image of what it is) (Hall and Gay 1996:67-8).

The division between Eurovision and European Union marks the difference between model and copy. The original aspect of belonging to West and its values system is perceived (by Greeks) to be European Union and Eurovision is largely a light version, a copy of the 'model' and its values. As it was quoted earlier, Turkey is perceived to strive for gaining a 'Western' status by 'circumventing' the authentic (therefore a demanding task) path to European values. Its modernization process is limited merely to petty and light acts of proving its Western status. Thus, Turkey is, as Ahiska (2003) noted, the 'copy' of 'our' model and consequently it (Turkey) is doomed to stay at the periphery of the 'West' whereas 'we' are at its core, both in terms of progress and of adherence to values.

On the other hand, in some mainstream newspapers Turks are reproduced as culturally close to 'us'. Kourkoulas comments on the perception of Turkish media about the Greek contestant:

Sakis symbolizes what the average educated Turk sees in modern Greece. A culturally similar society which adjusted to the challenges of modern times... (*To Vima* 15/05/2004)

The similarity of Turkish and Greek culture, both identified as modern, represents the ‘other’ as one like ‘us’. Furthermore, Kourkoulas describes the relations between Turks and Greeks in a framework similar to the term ‘cultural intimacy’ introduced by Herzfeld. Cultural intimacy, as Theodossopoulos notes, relates to this sense of ‘inside-ness’ realized in familiar contexts, the sharing of meanings, points of view, and parts of social life which one can easily understand without having to say much. In the same vein, Kourkoulas maintains that

(Sakis Rouvas) comes in touch with familiar tastes, moves in an urban surrounding, which if seen from the perspective of aesthetics, does not differ from his own, he communicates directly with a social environment whose background is moulded with the same values and habits (*To Vima* 15/05/2004).

The reproduction of ‘their’ homeland as ‘hospitable’ or, in a sense ‘homely’, represents the Turks as sharing cultural values and having a common outlook.

Another category of perceiving Turks draws upon national histories and myths to represent ‘them’ as the significant ‘other’ (Millas 2004; Heraclides 2001). National narratives constitute the history of ‘our’ nation as a linear continuity in the course of time. Throughout ‘our’ history, the ‘other’ is represented as an appropriator and obstructs ‘our’ true objectives. Bistika in *Kathimerini* ‘narrates’ the history of ‘our’ nation by noting the presence of the ‘Turk conqueror’ depriving ‘us’ of ‘our’ freedom. The singular grammar invoked ‘otherizes’ stereotypically the community as an individual with a single suppressive behavior. *Alfa Ena*<sup>42</sup>, a newspaper adhering to the nationalist-populist party LAOS is highly critical of the ‘appropriation’ of ancient

---

<sup>42</sup> ‘Alfa Ena’ is a marginal newspaper expressive of extreme right-wing views, thus by principle fraught with Turco-phobic discourses. It is quoted in this study in order to present a complete range of views concerning ‘them’.

Greek monuments by Turks during the projection of filmic postcards in the 2004 contest final (22/05/2004). In fact, the conservative press reproduces the image of the Turk using the same stereotypical discourse with what Heraclides terms 'nationalist (*ethnikistiki*) school of thought (*ibid.*:45-6). According to that view, Turks have an inferiority complex because Greeks are more 'civilized' and 'advanced' than them. Turks are represented 'occupying' or, in a way, not 'owning' the territories they dwell since 'that' land is indicative of the past Greek glory.

Ways of talking about 'them' constitutes ways of perceiving 'our' community. Turks are reproduced as a single community in unison, despite 'their' internal contradictions. Harvalias in an article notes that Turkey has two faces, one being the modernist, the camp of Euro-philes located geographically mostly in Istanbul and the Aegean coast, the other of "Islamic-Asian underdeveloped masses" dwelling in the "mainland" (*Ethnos* 27/05/2003). He refers to the successes of the modernist elite reflected on the win of Eurovision in 2003 and the film award of a Turkish director in Cannes. The 'modern' face of Turkey is projected on the successful organization of the 2004 contest (*Apofasi* 17/05/2004), in spite of the initial reservations about 'its' ability to host a well-organized contest (*Ethnos* 27/05/2003). On the other hand, the 'other' face of Turkey, the underdeveloped masses of the mainland slow down the course of Turks (Harvalias, *Ethnos* 27/05/2003). Despite their divergence, the two faces of 'Turkey' intersect at one point, as Harvalias argues: the quest of 'national' interest which according to the author is irreconcilable with 'concessions' in 'their' demands. Harvalias sketches out a coherent and essentialized construction of the Turkish identity. The Turks are imagined to hold an uncompromising stance in 'their' national objectives, unwilling to make concessions, thus unable to discuss. The



negative image of Turks as ‘unyielding’ and ‘enemies of dialogue’ leads to the verification of ‘their’ hostility to Greeks:

Modern Turkey has two faces, nevertheless its policy towards Greece is a coherent whole...Turks have a unitary specter concerning their relations with Greece regardless of religious or class differences (Harvalias, *Ethnos* 27/05/2003).

‘Turkey’, a community in unison when it comes to ‘national interest’ is reproduced as a ‘country which never changes’ its ‘official’ policy against compromise and concessions towards ‘us’. Turks are represented as an overtly nationalist community prioritizing ‘their’ ‘national interests’ at all costs and with no ‘sacrifices’. The Turcophobic perception of the ‘nationalist’ school of thought in Greece is set in motion representing Turks as hostile to ‘us’.

The reproduction of a stereotypical image of the Turk stemming from the conservative point of view involves ways with which ‘we’ and ‘they’ are afflicted by the West. The otherization of the ‘West’ perceived as a coherent identity hostile to ‘our’ ‘true’ Orthodox faith used to be a common theme in Greek imagination. This type of nationalist discourse is largely diffused to the public by the Church (for studies on the relation of Church and the ‘West’ see Molocotos-Liederman; Fokas 2000; Chrysoloras 2003) and the neo-orthodox school of thought (for studies on neo-orthodoxy see Heraclides 2001:81-123; Eleftheriadis 1999). The ‘West’ is seen as a coherent entity which misinterpreted the ‘true’ meaning of ancient Greek scholarship. Apart from that, ‘Westerners’ covet the ‘true’ meaning of Christianity as expressed through ‘Orthodoxy’. Even though such a discourse was not traced in articles

concerning Eurovision, Delipetros in *Apogevmatini* reviews the anti-Western formulation of neo-orthodoxy:

The blue-white striped with the cross on its corner, the very symbol of Paleologos dynasty<sup>43</sup> is not a decoration pattern for a contest where we satisfy the desire of Franks ...such amusement is ample in tourist restaurants of Athens and Antalya (26/05/2003).

This marginal point of view reproduces Turks and Greeks as afflicted by the desires and wishes of 'Franks', metonymically standing for Europeans. 'Our' essential identity is denigrated in a cheap and low quality contest. Furthermore, the projection of 'our' national identity (our in the sense of both 'us' and the Turks) is displayed in ways which coincide with 'their' current perceptions about 'us'.

Ways of talking about Turks constitute ways of talking about 'our' identity and 'its' boundaries. As it was previously stated, the invocation of 'West versus East' discourses stands for 'our' differentiation from 'them' as well. 'We' are the Westerners, interchangeably used with the term 'Europeans', in terms of values and culture. In that sense, Turks are exiled at the 'periphery' of 'Europe' attempting to imitate and follow 'us'. The relation between the Greek and the Turkish identity, as it is claimed by Greeks, is seen through the 'Western' scope. 'We' make claims about 'them' but the West sets the rule according to which the imagination of Turks takes place. Greeks imagine 'their' identity, as it is narrated through the national myths and the temporal continuity of Hellenic spirit molded with Christianity, to be in the 'core' of the European values. 'We' are the 'centre' of Western intellectual thought and morality whereas Turks are 'exiled' to its margins attempting to become one of 'us'.

---

<sup>43</sup> Paleologos was the name of the last dynasty which reigned Byzantine Empire before its final demise by the Ottomans in 1453.

‘We’ stand from the viewpoint of ‘our’ ‘Western’ values and culture and ‘other’ ‘them’ as Eastern-oriented.

## **B. GREEKS IN THE IMAGINATION OF TURKS**

Turkish perceptions for Greece, as it is represented discursively in newspapers coverings, revolved around the issue of politics. Turks did not seem to preoccupy themselves with the ‘Greek other’ but largely perceived ‘their neighbor’ as friendly and closer to ‘their’ culture. Instead, Armenia<sup>44</sup> and Cyprus were ‘otherized’ as ‘unfriendly’ and ‘prejudiced’ against ‘us’. Largely, comments on Greece cover the issues of current political developments and claims of ‘Turks’ about the appropriation of specific ‘Turkish’ cultural aspects by Greeks in order to perform ‘their’ distinctive character.

Turks perceive Greeks in a more ‘neutral’, if not friendly way than the Greeks do for the Turks. *Hurriyet* in an article notes that the win was celebrated “enthusiastically in the streets of Athens” mentioning that Greeks celebrated by waving their flag and dancing in the (Black Sea) rhythm of the winning song (22/05/2005). A positive image, reminiscent of ‘our’ celebrations during the 2003 contest is invoked to refer to the ‘common’ way of enjoying ‘our’ successes. Public manifestations of Greeks success as a familiar practice and cultural proximity, as the Karadeniz dance would imply, reproduce the image of Greeks like ‘us’.

Cultural bonds between Turks and Greeks promoted the notion of a sharing cultural background which binds ‘us’ and ‘them’. Sakis Rouvas, the 2004 contestant in Greece makes sense of the cultural proximity between Turks and Greeks:

---

<sup>44</sup> Reports and articles representing Armenia as ‘Turkey’s other’ appear from the 2006 contest onwards, since Armenia did not participate earlier in Eurovision.

In fact, I already feel like a winner here. People in Turkey make me feel like that (*Hurriyet* 15/05/2004).

The image of a Greek, represented in the singular 'I' of the national contestant, is discursively reproduced as feeling 'homely' in 'our' society. If 'Turkey' embraces into its arms an 'outgroup' to the extent that s/he feels 'homely', then 'we' are seen as a hospitable and friendly people.

Cultural bonds between the two 'peoples' were further corroborated by the bonds of reconciliation politics. The mainstream media in Turkey extensively reproduced in the popular field the rapprochement process initiated between the political elites of the two countries. Kirbakis' article is titled: "This is the milieu of friendship" and refers to joint co-operation initiatives for the promotion of Turkish-Greek relations, including Eurovision contest (*Hurriyet* 20/05/2006). Moreover, the discursive representation of the Turkish and Greek flag, once perceived to be a symbol of hostility and tensions for both, waving side by side symbolizes the win of 'peace' and reconciliation (*Hurriyet* 18/05/2006).

The friendship between Turks and Greeks talks in a positive way about 'us'. *Sabah* addresses the 2004 Greek contestant as a Turco-phile (Turksever) (Berberakis *Sabah* 23/04/2004) who was assaulted by Greek and Greek-Cypriot nationalists while he held a concert in the green line in Cyprus. The positive image of the 'other' shows the friendly relationship between 'us' and 'them'. Moreover, positive coverage on Greek media reproduces 'our' identity. *Hurriyet* cites a TV commenting on the organization of the show by the Turks:

The Turks hosted the contest and organized an amazing show (*Hurriyet* 13/05/2004).

Such manifestations of appreciation by the ‘other’ reproduce ‘us’ as a disciplined, successful uniform community. At the same time, such evaluations attest for ‘our’ position in the West.

Yet, ‘our’ friendly feelings are not unconditional. When ‘our’ love for the neighbor is not reciprocated, ‘we’ feel betrayed and deceived. *Hurriyet* in an interview of the 2005 winner Helena Paparizou expresses Turkey’s feeling of betrayal:

“Turkey awards Greece twelve points, Greece shows zero for Turkey” (23/05/2005).

The use of the words ‘award’ as opposed to ‘show’ are indicative of the agents’ feelings. On one hand, ‘Turkey’ awards points, that is provides the highest possible evaluation, in other words acknowledges the significance of Greece; on the other hand Greece shows zero, in other words it not only acknowledges the significance of ‘us’ but displays its indifference, it shows zero interest for ‘us’. Belge elegantly notes, in the form of a personal observation, the feeling of betrayal felt by Turks when they find themselves in a formal relationship with their friends (thus perceived to be an intimate and life-long relationship) Greeks (Belge 2004:32). In the same vein, a feeling of smoldering disappointment and ‘betrayal’ is discursively reproduced: ‘we’ gave you everything but ‘you’ did not even care for ‘us’. The feeling of the “betrayed fiancé” (*ibid.*) is represented through the Eurovision contest.

Perceptions about Greeks in the cultural level reproduce ‘them’ as proprietors of ‘our’ distinctive culture. An article in *Milliyet* titled “Greece brought to the top the

Ottoman culture” (25/05/2005) functions in three ways to reproduce ‘us’ through ‘them’. Initially, the Greek show is discursively represented to the eyes of the newspaper’s readers as an “Ottoman tradition”. The Greeks, thus, are reproduced as ‘proprietors of ‘our’ tradition (for this pattern of otherization see also Millas 2004:27) and ‘we’ are represented as ‘owners’ and ‘heirs’ of Ottoman culture. In the same article it is implied that Ottoman culture is part of European culture, since the latter’s peoples have voted for a song reminiscent of Ottoman rhythm and dance (*ibid.*). In that sense, the first position of Greece accounts for ‘our’ compatibility with European identity. Ottoman Empire, the sick man of Europe’, has been transformed to Turkey, the ‘slick man of Europe’.

## CONCLUSIONS

Nationalism is a way of thinking, a way to make sense of the social world surrounding us. It is embedded in quotidian and everyday practices; it is celebrated in cultural contests and spectacular shows; it is reproduced as the unique way of understanding the world. This study sought to explore the ways in which a music contest acquires its social meaning as a real fact happening in the 'world of nations'.

Media coverage in Turkey and Greece have identified Eurovision contest as a popular and 'petty' music contest, unable to reflect national cultures. Eurovision is seen largely as a manifestation of popular music aiming to produce cultural uniformity. National identities cannot be performed in an 'inter-national' stage where globalization prevails. Yet, throughout the study, we have seen contestants wrapping in, wearing and waving 'our' flag, narrating 'our' age-old histories through musical shows and reproducing 'our' myths through dances. Bodies have stood for Greeks and Turks as essential entities; in turn Greece and Turkey are represented as individuals celebrating, weeping, voting and dancing on stage. Cultural elements are perceived to be metonyms talking about 'our' community as a whole and unique entity. Ways of voting verify 'our' solitude in an international system.

Consequently, the ways in which 'we' represent 'our' identity consists of ways of imagining the content of 'our' identity. 'We' imagine 'ourselves' to be a single voice, in some instances the best of Europe, in others the nation without 'brothers'. 'We' try to make 'our' particularity be heard and at the same time 'we' voice 'our' universality. 'We' pose 'our' community between Western and Oriental discourses only to reproduce 'us' in the core of the former and to exclude 'our' other in its

periphery. Furthermore, 'we' imagine ourselves to be the 'bridge' linking the West and East, thus bring together the two poles in a harmonious way. Besides, that latter attests to 'our' distinctive character.

National identities are constructed through images of resemblance and difference. In that sense, there is always an 'other' through which (either by juxtaposition or by similarity) 'we' can make claims about 'us'. In the case of Greeks, 'our' Western outlook is reproduced discursively through the 'otherization' of Turks to the East. In that sense, the Turk as a monolithic category is the primary 'other' that helps concretize the sense of 'our' Western belonging. It has been a common theme in Greek nationalist discourses to identify 'us' in the core of European values both in terms of theory and practice. In terms of theory, ancient Greek thought and scholarship has provided the fundamentals of European values expressed through Enlightenment. 'Our' forefathers have given birth to Western values, thus 'we', as the modern link of a linear-in terms of temporal and spatial- continuity, are entitled to perceive 'ourselves' in the core of Western values. In terms of practice, the fact that 'we' belong to the institution realizing the Western values- the European Union- corroborates for 'our' placement in the core of Europe. Thus, the Greek interpretation of national narratives referring to the linear continuity of Hellenism and contemporary political decisions places 'us' at the heart of Europe. As Argyrou (2006) notes, it is the West (and its discourses about 'its' self and the 'oriental' other) that sets the rule according to which the imagination of both 'us' and Turks takes place. Thus, if 'we' place 'ourselves' at the heart of Europe, 'they' are marginalized to 'its' periphery. What lies in the premises of such imagination is the uniformity of a Western (or European) identity, part of which 'we' are and 'they' are not.



Furthermore, both positive and negative discursive images of the 'Turk' reproduce the imagined community of Greeks. Initially, the very fact that 'we' stereotypically refer to the 'Turks' as a whole means that 'we' construct 'ourselves' through the difference as an internally uniform community. The 'other' need not merely stand for contrasting categories but also should be reminiscent of 'us'. Thus, cultural proximity, the identification of language as a denominator of nationness, the evocation of national narratives in order to sketch a stereotypical image for the 'Turk' provide the classification of 'us'. It is through negation and internalization that 'we' achieve the negotiation of 'our' identities, thus to account for 'its' dynamic character.

On the other hand, Turks do not regard Greeks as the significant 'other'. "Our" identity, as discussed through the forum of Eurovision contest, constitutes of constant negations and confirmations. 'We' acknowledge 'our' cultural proximity and at the same time negate 'them' as proprietors of 'our' Ottoman legacy. The content of what it is to be Greek acquires its meaning according to the context, once again set by the West. In that sense, ways of talking about 'our' relations with 'Greeks' constitute ways of displaying 'our' identity as both accepting and negating 'our' differences. The hegemonized discourse formulating 'our' identity reproduces 'us' as Westerners among 'fellow-Westerners' and at the same time as culturally dependent. Once again, the reproduction of 'us' as the bridge of Bosphorus walking towards modernity with the narratives and the cultural elements of 'our' nation takes place through the negotiation of 'our' difference with 'them'.

This study has sought to explore the claims made about Turkish and Greek identities. Divergent formulations of the nation 'talking' metonymically for 'us' as a community in unison communicate their views evoking nationalist discourses to gain legitimacy. 'Others' are represented as similar and different at the same time, close

and distant from 'us'. Yet, what remains uncontested is the natural character of national identities in the social milieu.

Despite the dichotomies, internal antinomies and divergences, national identities are reproduced as reified<sup>45</sup> categories possessing natural and permanent criteria. In that sense, 'Turks' and 'Greeks,' despite their mutual 'otherization' share a common point: they perceive 'themselves' and 'their others' as natural categories. Turkishness and Greekness are reproduced as natural and taken for granted facts, inevitable outcomes of a logical order 'forgetful' of their constructed character. National identities as natural identities lead us to the final destination of nationalist discourses: their sedimentation in the social realm. However spectacular or celebrated Greekness or Turkishness is performed in the Eurovision contest, Greeks and Turks are represented as natural entities; however fervently flags are waved, 'our' nationhood is perceived to be an essential and fixed category.

---

<sup>45</sup> Reification is a term used by Brubaker in order to argue against the natural and granted character of national phenomena. Nations should not be treated as reified, thus enduring and organic, categories but rather as a particular kind of social categories embedded in habitual practices. Nations become natural because they are 'learnt', everyday practices rather than 'eternal' communities (Brubaker 1996:chapter one; Ozkirimli (*ibid.*:171-173)).

# **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

## **1. Primary material**

### **A. Newspapers in Greece**

- Adesmeftos Typos, 19/05/2003-29/05/2006
- Aggelioforos, 17/05/2003- 29/05/2006
- Apofasi, 27/05/2003- 29/05/2004
- Apogevmatini, 27/05/2003- 27/05/2006
- Eleftherotypia, 18/05/2003- 29/05/2006
- Ethnos, 19/05/2003- 29/05/2006
- Makedonia, 24/05/2003- 25/05/2006
- Kathimerini, 24/05/2003-29/05/2006
- Ta Nea, 26/05/2003- 29/05/2006
- To Vima, 26/05/2003-29/05/2006
- Vradini, 19/05/2003-29/05/2006

### **B. Newspapers in Turkey**

- Aksam, 15/05/2004-29/05/2006
- Cumhuriyet, 15/05/2003- 29/05/2006
- Hurriyet, 04/03/2003- 29/05/2006
- Milliyet, 19/04/2003- 29/05/2006
- Radikal, 20/05/2003- 29/05/2006
- Sabah, 20/05/2003- 29/05/2006
- Vatan, 20/05/2004- 29/05/2006
- Vakit, 20/05/2004
- Yenicag, 15/05/2003- 29/05/2006
- Zaman, 20/05/2003- 29/05/2006

## 2. Secondary sources

Ahiska, Meltem (2003) 'Occidentalism: The Historical Fantasy of the Modern', *The South Atlantic Quarterly*, 102:2/3, 351-379.

Althusser, Louis (1971) *Lenin and philosophy, and other essays*, New York: Monthly Review Press.

Altınay, Aysegul (2004) *The myth of the military nation: militarism, gender, and education in Turkey*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

And, Metin (1979) *Dances of Anatolian Turkey*, Brooklyn: Dance Perspectives.

Anderson, Benedict (1991) *Imagined communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*, New York: Verso.

Argyrou, Vassos (2006) 'How Greeks think: about Turks for example', *South European Society and Politics*, 11 (1), 33-46

Aydingun, Aysegul and Aydingun, Ismail (2004) *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, 10, 415-432.

Balibar, Etienne and Wallerstein, Immanuel (1991) *Race, nation, class: ambiguous identities*, New York : Verso.

Balibar, Etienne (1994) *Masses, Classes, Ideas: Studies on Politics and Philosophy Before and After Marx*, trans. James Swenson. New York : Routledge

Belge, Taciser Ulas (2004) *Voices For The Future. Civic Dialogue Between Turks And Greeks*, Istanbul: Bilgi University Press.

Bhabha, Homi K. (ed.) (1990) *Nation and Narration*, New York: Routledge.

Billig, Michael (1995) *Banal Nationalism*, London; Thousand Oaks, Calif. : Sage.

Brubaker, Rogers (2000) *Nationalism reframed: nationhood and the national question in the New Europe*, Cambridge [England] ; New York : Cambridge University Press.

Burr, Vivien (2003) *Social Constructionism*, London; New York: Routledge.

Cagaptay, (2006) *Islam, secularism, and nationalism in modern Turkey: who is a Turk?*, London ; New York : Routledge.

Calhoun, Craig (1997) *Nationalism*, Buckingham: Open University Press.

Chrysoloras, Nikos (2003) *Why Orthodoxy? Religion and Nationalism in Greek Political Culture*, 1st LSE PhD Symposium on Modern Greece.

Clerides, Sofronis and Stengos, Thanassis (2006) 'Love thy neighbor, love thy kin: Voting Biases in the Eurovision Song Contest', *Discussion Papers 2006/1*, accessible at: [www.econ.ucy.ac.cy/research/working\\_papers/2006/1-2006.pdf](http://www.econ.ucy.ac.cy/research/working_papers/2006/1-2006.pdf).

Dehmen, Bedirhan (2003) *Appropriations of folk dance at the intersection of the national and the global: Sultans of the Dance*, Bogazici University (unpublished thesis).

Dijk, Teun Adrianus van (1998) *Ideology. A multidisciplinary approach*, London ; Thousand Oaks, Calif. : Sage Publications.

Edensor, Tim (2002) *National identity, popular culture and everyday life*, Oxford; New York: Berg Publishers.

Eleftheriadis, Pavlos (1999) 'Political Romanticism in Modern Greece', *Journal of Modern Greek Studies*, Volume 17, 1999.

Eriksen, T.H (1993) 'Formal and Informal nationalism', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 16 (1), 1-25

Finlayson, A. (1998) 'Ideology, Discourse and Nationalism' *Journal of Political Ideologies*, 3 (1), 99-118.

Gellner, Ernest (1983) *Nations and Nationalism*, Oxford: Blackwell.

Hall, Patrik (1998) *The social construction of nationalism: Sweden as an example*, Sweden; Lund: Lund University Press.

Hall, Stuart (2002) *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, London ; Thousand Oaks, Calif. : Sage in association with the Open University.

Hechter, Michael, (2000) *Containing nationalism*, Oxford ; New York : Oxford University Press.

Heraclides, Alexis (2001) *Greece and the threat from the East (I Elada ke o eks anatolon kindinos)*, Athens: Polis (in Greek).

Kaiser, R.J. (2001) 'Geography', in A.J Motyl (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Nationalism*, vol.1, San Diego, Cal.: Academic Press, 315-33

Kitromilides, Paschalis (2003) *Enlightenment, nationalism, orthodoxy : studies in the culture and political thought of South-eastern Europe*, Aldershot, Hampshire ; Brookfield, Vt. : Variorum.

Liakos, Antonis (2001) 'The Construction of National Time: The Making of the Modern Greek Historical Imagination', *MEDITERRANEAN HISTORICAL REVIEW*, 27-42

Marvin, Carolyn and Ingle, David (1999) *Blood Sacrifice and the Nation*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Millas, Hercules (2004) *The Imagined 'Other' As National Identity*, CSDP

Molokotos-Liederman, Lina (2003) 'The religious factor in the construction of Europe: Greece, Orthodoxy and the European Union', 1<sup>st</sup> LSE Phd Symposium on Modern Greece.

Ozkirimli, Umut (2003) *Contemporary Debates on Nationalism: a critical engagement*, Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York, : Palgrave Macmillan.

Pappas, Nicholas (1999) 'Concepts of Greekness: the recorded music of Anatolian Greeks', *Journal of Modern Greek Studies*, Volume 17.

Poulton, Hugh (1997) *Top hat, grey wolf, and crescent : Turkish nationalism and the Turkish Republic*, London : C. Hurst & Co.

Saarenmaa, Kaisa (2001) 'Female narratives and national identities in globalizing Finland- A reflection from the field of Cultural Studies', *M.A thesis*, University of Lund.

Said, Edward (2003) *Orientalism*, New York : Penguin Books.

Scrbis, Zlatko (1999) *Long-distance nationalism: diasporas homelands and identities*, Brookfield, VT : Ashgate Pub.



Skopetea, Elli (1988) *The Model Kingdom and Megali Idea: Views of the National Problem in Greece 1830-1880 (To Protipo Vasilio ke I Megali Idea: Opsis tou Ethnikou Provlimatos stin Elada 1830-1880)*, Athens : Ekdoseis Polytypo

Smith, Anthony (1991) *National Identity*, London : Penguin Books.

Smith Anthony, (1999) *Myths and Memories of the Nation*, Oxford ; New York : Oxford University Press.

Tsoukalas, Konstantine (1994) 'History: Myths and prophecies: the narration of Greek continuity (Mithi ke hrismi: I afigisi tis elinikis sinexias)' in *Nation-State-Nationalism (Ethnos-Kratos-Ethnikismos)*, Proceedings of scientific symposium, Athens: Sholi Moraiti.

Tzanelli, Rodanthi (2006) 'Impossible is a fact: Greek nationalism an international recognition in Euro 2004', *Media, Culture and Society*, 28 (4): 483-503

Verdery, Katherine (1996) 'Whither 'Nation' and 'Nationalism'?' in Balakrishnan (ed.) *Mapping The Nation*, London ; New York : Verso.

Yair, Gad and Maman, Daniel (1996) 'The Persistent Structure of Hegemony in the Eurovision Song Contest', *Acta Sociologica*, 39, 310-325.

### 3. INTERNET SITES

<http://www.dream.net.gr/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=590>

<http://www.klik.gr/214/pashalidou/default2.asp>

<http://www.hri.org/news/greek/mpegrb/2005/05-05-23.mpegrb.html#32>

<http://www.in.gr>

<http://www.hukuki.net/kanun/2893.15.text.asp>

<http://www.fireofanatolia.com/FrontsideEN/aboutusanad1.aspx>

<http://www.doteurovision.com>

<http://www.ebu.ch>

<http://www.douzepts.com>

<http://www.oikotimes.com>

<http://www.eurovisionclub.com>

<http://www.eurovision.tv>

<http://www.eurovisionathens.gr/>

<http://ogaeturkey.wordpress.com/>

<http://www.esctoday.com/>

<http://www.trt.com.tr/wwwtrt/anasayfa.aspx>

<http://www.ert.gr/eurovision/>