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RETHINKING THE 1999 TURKISH-GREEK RAPPROCHEMENT: THE LEADERSHIP, EARTHQUAKE AND CIVIL SOCIETY TRIAD

1999 TÜRK-YUNAN UZLAŞMASINI YENİDEN DÜŞÜNMEK: LİDERLİK, DEPREM VE SİVİL TOPLUM ÜÇLÜSÜ

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ABSTRACT

The year of 1999 can be defined as breakthrough in relations between Greece and Turkey after the tumultuous years. Since the 1999 rapprochement, Turkish-Greek relations undergone a positive change that bilateral relations have improved dramatically. Turkish-Greek rapprochement is one of the complex foreign policy case with critical multiple actors' involvement and shaped by the impact of internal and external elements. This research paper aims to contribute to the literature by examining the domestic determinants of the 1999 rapprochement. Therefore, this paper adopts bottom up focus by analyzing the intergovernmental and societal level dialogue that simultaneously occurred in both countries. I argue that several combined domestic factors helped the realization of the 1999 Turkish-Greek rapprochement process through bringing about new perceptions of bilateral relations between Greece and Turkey. These domestic factors are the leadership of foreign ministers (Papandreou-Cem) in both countries, twin earthquakes that struck both countries (Izmit-Athens) and improving civil society efforts in both countries.

Keywords: *Greece, Turkey, Foreign Policy, Rapprochement, Turkish-Greek Relations*

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ÖZET

1999 yılı Yunanistan ve Türkiye arasındaki ilişkilerde çalkantılı yıllar sonrasında bir dönüm noktası olarak tanımlanabilir. 1999 yılı uzlaşmasından beridir Türk-Yunan ilişkileri olumlu değişimler geçirmekte olup, ikili ilişkiler önemli ölçüde gelişme göstermiştir. Türk-Yunan uzlaşması kritik ve çoklu aktörlerin dahil olduğu, iç ve dış faktörlerin etkisiyle şekillenmiş, karmaşık dış politika olaylarına bir örnektir. Bu çalışmanın ana amacı 1999 uzlaşmasının iç belirleyicilerini (etkenlerini) inceleyerek yazına katkı sağlamaktır. Bu nedenle çalışma aşağıdan-yukarıya odaklanma benimsemiş olup, iki ülke arasında eşzamanlı oluşan hükümetler-arası ve toplumlar-arası diyaloğu analiz etmektedir. Etkileşim içinde olan çeşitli iç faktörler 1999 Türk-Yunan uzlaşmasının gerçekleşmesine, ikili ilişkilere yeni algılamalara yol açarak katkıda bulunmuştur.

Çalışmada bu iç faktörlerin iki ülkenin dış işleri bakanlarının (Papandreou-Cem) etkili liderlikleri, iki ülkede kısa aralıklarla gerçekleşen depremlerin (İzmit-Atina) ve iki ülke arasında gelişmekte olan sivil toplum girişimleri olduğu öne sürülmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Yunanistan, Türkiye, Dış Politika, Yakınlaşma, Türk-Yunan İlişkileri*

Introduction

This paper examines the domestic determinants of the 1999 Turkish-Greek rapprochement by focusing in particularly the year of 1999. The 1999 Turkish-Greek rapprochement is one of the most important episodes for the bilateral relations between Greece and Turkey that has paved the way for positive change in Turkish-Greek relations. Thus, the case represents a worthwhile example for the foreign policy studies literature. Foreign Policy Analysis studies offer that foreign policy making is a twofold phenomenon in which national leaders play a two-level or nested game between international and domestic politics and the important elements of foreign policy derives from issues of domestic politics as well as foreign relations.[1] Robert D. Putnam's seminal work on the logic of two-level games examines the complex relation of foreign

1 Laura Neack, *The New Foreign Policy: Power Seeking in a Globalized Era*, (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2008), p. 7.

policy making and domestic politics through offering an analytical perspective and providing a valuable theoretical framework.[2] The Turkish-Greek rapprochement is one of the complex cases with critical multiple actors' involvement and shaped by the impact of internal and external elements. However, much focus of the earlier research in the literature of Turkish-Greek relations on the rapprochement adopted structural approaches with emphasizing external factors such as the Cold War, regional factors, and the EU in a way that the focus had been on examining the external factors. It is crucial to note that these are all significant factors shaping state policies and preferences in the case of the Turkish-Greek rapprochement. Thus, this paper acknowledges that structural changes in the 1990s (end of the Cold War) and the external developments (insecurity caused by the Kosovo War) had an important role for paving the way to the rapprochement process. However, bottom up elements also have been of utmost importance in the bilateral relations of Turkey and Greece. That is, change in the political elite's in countries and societal developments can lead to apparent shifts in policies. Therefore, to answer the question as follows:

What were the *domestic* determinants of the 1999 Turkish-Greek rapprochement?

This paper examines the 1999 rapprochement by focusing on domestic factors that contributed the intergovernmental and non-governmental (societal) level dialogue that simultaneously occurred in both countries with their asymmetrical and symmetrical elements. As noted above, domestic changes and factors can be helpful to have more explanation to understand the rapprochement process. Therefore, I argue that several combined domestic factors helped the realization of the 1999 Turkish-Greek rapprochement process through bringing about new perceptions of bilateral relations between Greece and Turkey. These domestic factors are the leadership of foreign ministers (Papandreou-Cem) in both countries, twin earthquakes that struck both countries (Izmit-Athens) and improving civil society efforts in both countries. To solve the rapprochement puzzle, this paper is organized in the following way. The first part examines the literature of the Turkish-Greek rapprochement. In the second part, the post-1999 period is briefly addressed for the purpose of having a full account of the process. The third part is the

2 Robert D. Putnam, "Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games", *International Organization,* Vol. 42, No. 3, 1988, pp. 427-460.

core of the paper which provides research findings by presenting the triadic elements of the rapprochement in detail. Lastly, the concluding part discusses the arguments and summarizes the research.

Review of the Literature

Turkey and Greece both have been NATO allies since 1952. However, this has not prevented problems between the two countries. The two countries had faced near-war situations several times in throughout the history.[3] The tangible problems of modern Greece and Turkey had started to come to the forefront in the early 1950s and 1960s which resulted in armed conflict over Cyprus in 1974. Moreover, Greece and Turkey have experienced serious near-war situations in 1960s, 1970s and 1990s over Cyprus, the continental shelf, airspace and small islets in the Aegean Sea.[4] The 1990s also had been highly tense years for the two countries' relations due to 1996 Imia/Kardak, 1997 S-300 missiles and 1999 Öcalan Crises.[5]

The year 1999 can be defined as a breakthrough in the relationship between Turkey and Greece after the political turbulence of the Öcalan affair resulted in the capture of the leader of the Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK) in February after a stay at the Greek embassy in Kenya.[6] The two countries' political elites had initiated the 1999 rapprochement process.[7] Since then, Turkish-Greek relations have undergone a positive change and relations have improved dramatically combined with the decisions taken at the end of the 1999 Helsinki Summit at which Greece lifted its veto on Turkey's membership.

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3 Dimitris Tsarouhas, "The Political Economy of Greek–Turkish Relations", *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 1-2, 2009, p. 40. For further information please refer to: Dimitris Keridis and Dimitris Triantaphyllou (Eds), *Greek-Turkish Relations in the Era of Globalization*, (Herndon, Virginia: Brassey's, 2001).

4 Bahar Rumelili, "Liminality and Perpetuation of Conflicts: Turkish-Greek Relations in the Context of Community-Building by the EU", *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 9, No. 2, 2003, pp. 213 –248; James Ker Lindsay, *Crisis and Conciliation: A Year of Rapprochement Between Greece and Turkey, (*London and New York: IB Tauris, 2007), pp. 1- 44.

5 Theodore Couloumbis, "Greek Foreign policy: Debates and Priorities", in Coloumbis, T., Kariotis, T. C., Bellou, F., *Greece in the Twentieth Century*, (Portland, Or.: Psychology Press, 2003), p. 39; "Yunanistan'a 'şimdilik› ambargo yok", Hürriyet, 25 February 1999, <http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/haber.aspx?id=-64985>, (Date Accessed: 7 March 2015).

6 Panayotis Tsakonas, *The Incomplete Breakthrough in Greek-Turkish Relations: Grasping Greece's Socialization Strategy*, (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p. 72.

7 Dimitris Tsarouhas, "The Political Economy of Greek–Turkish Relations", p. 40.

After Turkey's candidacy was decided at the Helsinki summit, nine bilateral agreements were signed between Greece and Turkey on low politics issues by excluding areas related to high matters of national security (high politics). Those agreements included issues of cooperation on fields like tourism, culture, finance, technology and science, sea transport, protection of investment, fight against international organized crime and illegal immigration.[8] These efforts of cooperation were later expanded to issues of agriculture, energy, and coping with natural disasters.[9]

A literature of Greek–Turkish rapprochement has emerged since the year of 1999.[10] The reasons behind the turn in conflicting relations to a positive

8 Hulusi Kılıç, *Bilateral Agreements, Essential Documents and Declarations Between Turkey and Greece since the Proclamation of the Turkish Republic*, (Ankara: Dışişleri Bakanlığı, 2000), pp. 385-444; George Koukodakis, "Greek-Turkish Rapprochement and Turkey's EU Membership Quest: Turning Rhetoric into Reality", *Turkish Policy Quarterly*, Vol. 12, No. 2, 2013, p. 158.

9 Alexis Heraclides, "Greek-Turkish Relations from Discord to Détente: A Preliminary Evaluation", *The Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 1, No. 3, 2002, pp. 17-32.

10 Othon Anastasakis, "Greece and Turkey in the Balkans: Cooperation or Rivalry?", *Turkish Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 1, 2004, pp. 45-60; Mustafa Aydın and Kostas Ifantis (Eds.), *Turkish-Greek Relations: The Security Dilemma in the Aegean*, (London and New York: Routledge 2004), pp. 1-303; Spyros Economides, "The Europeanisation of Greek Foreign Policy", *West European Politics*, Vol. 28, No. 2, 2005, pp. 471-491; Ahmet O. Evin, "Changing Greek Perspectives on Turkey: An Assessment of the Post-Earthquake Rapprochement", *Turkish Studies,* Vol. 5, No. 1, 2004, pp. 4-20; N. Emel Ganapati, Ilan Kelman and Theo Koukis, "Analysing Greek-Turkish Disaster-Related Cooperation: A Disaster Diplomacy Perspective", *Cooperation and Conflict*, Vol. 45, No. 2, 2010, pp. 162-185; Ayten Gündoğdu, "Identities in Question: Greek-Turkish Relations in a Period of Transformation?", *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 5, No. 1, 2001, pp.106-117; Ioannis Grigoriadis "Unripe Fruits of Rapprochement: Greek-Turkish Relations in the Post-Helsinki Era", *International Journal,* Vol. 67, No. 1, 2012, pp. 119-133; Alexis Heraclides, "Greek-Turkish Relations from Discord to Détente: A Preliminary Evaluation", *The Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 1, No. 3, 2002, pp. 17-32; Kostas Ifantis, "Greece's Turkish Dilemmas: There and Back Again", *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 3, 2005, pp. 379-394; Leonidas Karakatsanis, *Turkish-Greek Relations: Rapprochement, Civil Society and the Politics of Friendship*, (New York: Routledge, 2014), pp. 1-284; James Ker Lindsay, "Greek-Turkish Rapprochement: The Impact of Disaster Diplomacy'?", *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 14. No.1, 2000, pp. 215-232; James Ker Lindsay, *Crisis and Conciliation: A Year of Rapprochement Between Greece and Turkey*, (London and New York: IB Tauris, 2007), pp. 1-192; George Koukodakis, "Greek-Turkish Rapprochement and Turkey's EU Membership Quest: Turning Rhetoric into Reality", *Turkish Policy Quarterly*, Vol. 12, No. 2, 2013, pp. 157-165; Eda Kuşku, "The Shadow of Past Rivalry: Limits of Post-1999 Dynamism in Greco-Turkish Relations", *Caucasian Review of International Affairs (CRIA*), Vol. 2, No. 3, 2008, pp. 156-165; Ziya Önis and Şuhnaz Yılmaz, "Greek-Turkish Rapprochement: Rhetoric or Reality?", *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 123, No. 1, 2008, pp. 123-149; Bahar Rumelili, "Liminality and Perpetuation of Conflicts: Turkish-Greek Relations in the Context of Community-Building by the EU", pp. 213-248;

have been examined by many Greek, Turkish and other scholars. However, there is no consensus regarding the explanation of this rapprochement process. On the one hand, some scholars examined the issue in light of the Europeanization of Greek foreign policy and Turkey's EU accession process by basically arguing that Greece socialized its foreign policy with supporting the need for Europeanized Turkey to have more secure relations.[11] On the other hand scholars from the realist school underline that post-cold war structure with its regional insecurities created necessity for such reconciliation. Therefore rapprochement was a strategically planned rational initiative which "was becoming increasingly necessary in the new international context".[12] Regarding this, Ifantis pointed out that, "The perception of the 'Turkish threat', a 'political heritage' of the years since 1974, has taken on a different and more complex form, given the new post-Cold War geopolitical realities affecting Turkey's international position and its internal development".[13] Moreover, many scholars suggested the importance of the increasing civil society activity since the 1990s and the personal leadership of the foreign ministers, Ismail Cem and George Papandreou and yet others considered the importance of the exogenous shock provided by the earthquakes.[14] Some scholars' reference to the fundamental change in relations on the role played by foreign ministers in 1999, Ismail Cem and George Papandreou who both favored constructive dialogue is also important to be noted.[15] The impact of the two earthquakes

Eugenia Vathakou, "Greek–Turkish Peace Processes as Autopoietic Systems" in Constantine Arvanitopoulos, *Turkey's Accession to the European Union: An Unusual Candidacy,* (Berlin, Heidelberg: Springer, 2009), pp. 133-146.

11 Apostolos Agnantopoulos, "The Europeanization of National Foreign Policy: Explaining Greek Support for Turkey's EU Accession", *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 1, 2013, pp. 67-87; Bahar Rumelili, "Civil society and the Europeanization of Greek–Turkish Cooperation", pp. 213-248; Ziya Öniş and Şuhnaz Yılmaz, "Greek-Turkish Rapprochement: Rhetoric or Reality?", pp. 123-149.

12 Theodore Couloumbis and Kostas Ifantis, "Altering the Security Dilemma in the Aegean: Greek Strategic Options and Structural Constraints. A Realist Approach", *Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 2, No. 2, 2002, pp. 1-25; Panayotis Tsakonas, *The Incomplete Breakthrough in Greek-Turkish Relations: Grasping Greece's Socialization Strategy*, pp. 1-289.

13 Kostas Ifantis, "Greece's Turkish Dilemmas: There and Back Again", pp. 381-382.

14 Alexis Heraclides, "Greek-Turkish Relations from Discord to Détente: A Preliminary Evaluation" , pp. 17-32; Ayten Gündoğdu, "Identities in Question: Greek-Turkish Relations in a Period of Transformation?", pp. 106-117; Erik Siegl, "Greek–Turkish Relations: Continuity or Change?", *Perspectives: Central European Review of International Affairs,* Vol. 18, 2002, pp. 40–52, cited by Bahar Rumelili, "Civil Society and the Europeanization of Greek–Turkish Cooperation", *South European Society and Politics*, Vol. 10, No. 1, 2005, pp. 43–54.

15 Ioannis N. Grigoriadis, "Unripe Fruits of Rapprochement: Greek-Turkish Relations in the Post-Helsinki Era", pp. 120-121; Ziya Öniş and Şuhnaz Yılmaz, "Greek-Turkish Rapprochement:

that hit Turkey and Greece in August and September 1999 has been addressed differently by various scholars and many of them have discussed about linking the rapprochement between Greece and Turkey to the two earthquakes. Many illustrated that the rapprochement process had begun a few months before the 1999 earthquakes as a result of a positive relationship that emerged between Greece and Turkey out of the Kosovo crisis.[16] While some analysts and the media had a tendency to claim that earthquakes led to Greek-Turkish cooperation,[17] most research studies conclude that the rapprochement between Greece and Turkey was not the outcome of the 1999 earthquakes, but had already started before the earthquakes happened.[18] Official talks that led by Papandreou and Cem had facilitated by this two unexpected earthquakes.[19] That is, earthquakes catalyzed the reconciliation process but did not create it. Other analysis on the earthquakes' role on the rapprochement supports that conclusion as well.[20] In this manner, Grigoriadis argues,

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Rhetoric or Reality?", pp. 123-149; Bahar Rumelili, "Civil Society and the Europeanization of Greek–Turkish Cooperation", *South European Society and Politics*, pp. 43–54.

16 Ayten Gündoğdu, "Identities in Question: Greek-Turkish Relations in a Period of Transformation?", p. 107; Dimitris Keridis, "Earthquakes, Diplomacy and New Thinking in Foreign Policy", pp. 207-214; James Ker Lindsay, "Greek-Turkish Rapprochement: The Impact of Disaster Diplomacy?", pp. 215-232; James Ker Lindsay, *Crisis and Conciliation: A Year of Rapprochement Between Greece and Turkey*, pp. 44-123; Eda Kuşku, "The Shadow of Past Rivalry: Limits of Post-1999 Dynamism in Greco-Turkish Relations", pp. 156-165.

17 Dimitris Keridis, "Political Culture and Foreign Policy: Greek-Turkish Relations in the Era of European Integration and Globalization", *A NATO Fellowship Final Report*, 1999, <http://www.nato.int/acad/fellow/97-99/keridis.pdf> (Date Accessed: 15 November 2014); For further information please refer to: "How the earth moved for Athens and Ankara", The Guardian, 24 January 2000, <http://www.theguardian.com/Columnists/Column/0,,238693,00.html>, (Date Accessed: 7 March 2015); "Ege'de Deprem Diplomasisi", Hürriyet, 11 September 1999, <http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/haber.aspx?id=-101290>, (Date Accessed: 7 March 2015).

18 James Ker Lindsay, "Greek-Turkish Rapprochement: The Impact of Disaster Diplomacy?"; James Ker Lindsay, *Crisis and Conciliation: A Year of Rapprochement Between Greece and Turkey*; Stavro Mavrogenis and Ilan Kelman, "Perceptions of Greece-Turkey Disaster Diplomacy: Europeanization and the Underdog Culture", *Balkanistica*, Vol. 26, 2013, pp. 73-104.

19 Thanos Dokos, "Greece in a Changing Strategic Setting", in Richard Clogg (Ed.), *Greece in the 1980s* ,(New York: St Martin's Press, 1983), p. 48.

20 Mustafa Aydın and Kostas Ifantis, *Turkish-Greek Relations: The Security Dilemma in the Aegean*; Ioannis N. Grigoriadis, "Unripe Fruits of Rapprochement: Greek-Turkish Relations in the Post-Helsinki Era"; Ilan Kelman, "Acting on Disaster Diplomacy", *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 59, No. 2, 2006, pp. 215–40; Ziya Öniş and Şuhnaz Yılmaz, "Greek-Turkish Rapprochement: Rhetoric or Reality?", pp. 123-149; Panayotis Tsakonas, *The Incomplete Breakthrough in Greek-Turkish Relations: Grasping Greece's Socialization Strategy,* pp. 1-289.

> *The earthquakes allowed for a stunning wave of mutual sympathy and compassion. While there was no causal relationship between the post-earthquake sentiment and the rapprochement process, the two peoples was clearly more willing to accept a breakthrough in bilateral relations than had been previously thought.*[21]

Some alternative studies also were conducted to investigate the dynamics of the rapprochement. Several scholars have been examined media representations of Turkish-Greek relation in the two countries with examining changing dynamics of the discourses.[22] For example, Lazarou examined the Greek media discourse towards Turkey by particularly focusing on the Greek press between 1997 and 2003. By analyzing Greek print media, the author argues that certain narratives have transformed between 1997 and 2003. That is, those changes have been linked to the Europeanization of Greece and Turkey. The author notes that change in Greek foreign policy agenda has reflected in the media as well through using a certain discourse. Therefore, the Greek press has gradually followed this transformation by promoting discourses of rapprochement.[23] A recent project by Ifantis, Triantaphyllou and Kotelis titled as "National Role and Foreign Policy: A Descriptive Study of Greek Elites' Perceptions towards Turkey" reports that the 1999 rapprochement strategy was approved by the majority of the Greek elites (who were academicians, diplomats, politicians, press, military, businessman).[24] Similarly, a public opinion survey conducted by Çarkoğlu and Kirişçi found out that the

21 Ioannis N. Grigoriadis, "Unripe Fruits of Rapprochement: Greek-Turkish Relations in the Post-Helsinki Era", p. 121.

22 Neslihan Özgüneş and Georgios Terzis, "Constraints and Remedies for Journalists Reporting National Conflict: the Case of Greece and Turkey", *Journalism Studies*, Vol. 1, No.3, 2000, pp. 405–426; Elena Lazarou, "Mass Media and the Europeanization of Greek-Turkish Relations: Discourse Transformation in the Greek Press 1997-2003", *Hellenic Observatory Papers on Greece and Southeast Europe*, GreeSE Paper No. 23, London School of Economics and Political Science, London, UK, 2009, pp. 1-49.

23 Elena Lazarou, "Mass Media and the Europeanization of Greek-Turkish Relations: Discourse Transformation in the Greek Press 1997-2003", pp. 41-45.

24 Kostas Ifantis, Dimitris Triantaphyllou and Andreas Kotelis, "National Role and Foreign Policy: A Descriptive Study of Greek Elites' Perceptions towards Turkey", *Hellenic Observatory Papers on Greece and Southeast Europe*, GreeSE Paper No. 94, London School of Economics and Political Science, 2015, p. 27, <http://content-mcdn.imerisia.gr/pegasus/Multimedia/pdf/Ifantis-Triantafylloy-(PROJECT-REPORT)_id3368652.pdf> (Date Accessed: 29 December 2014), and <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/63265/1/__lse.ac.uk_storage_LIBRARY_Secondary_libfile_shared_repository_Content_Hellenic%20Observatory%20(inc.%20GreeSE%20Papers)_GreeSE%20Papers_GreeSE-No94.pdf>, (Date Accessed: 15 August 2015).

majority of the Turkish public supported the rapprochement process.[25] In overall terms, the literature regarding the explanations for the Turkish-Greek rapprochement can be illustrated with the four main positions[26].

Evaluation of the Turkish-Greek Rapprochement

It is necessary to clarify what is meant by the Turkish-Greek rapprochement before focusing on the domestic determinants of the phenomenon. As mentioned above, the year 1999 is considered as a turning point for Turkish-Greek relations. Although the period from 1999 and onwards has been described with various terms such as reconciliation, thaw or detente[27], this paper adopted the term 'rapprochement' since it has a more suitable meaning to define the substantial developments between Turkey and Greece during the year of 1999[28]. In this context, rapprochement can be basically defined as the development of friendlier relations between countries or groups of people who have been regarded as enemies[29].

In retrospect, there have been three rapprochement attempts between Greece and Turkey.[30] The first attempt of was made by Atatürk and Greek Prime Minister Venizelos in 1930.[31] The second attempt, which is known as the Davos Process, was initiated by prime ministers of the time Turgut Özal and Andreas Papandreou.[32] However both processes were short lived and they were spoiled by major political crisis between two countries. Although the 1999 rapprochement process did not spill over into resolution of the Cyprus and the Aegean problems, significant developments have been realized in

25 Ali Çarkoğlu and Kemal Kirişçi, "The View from Turkey: Perceptions of Greeks and Greek-Turkish Rapprochement by the Turkish Public", *Turkish Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 1, 2004, p. 147.

26 See table 2 in the appendix section.

27 Alexis Heraclides, *The Greek-Turkish Conflict in the Aegean: Imagined Enemies*, p. 144.

28 See discussion for the differences between rapprochement and reconciliation: Seunghoon Emilia Heo, *Reconciling Enemy States in Europe and Asia,* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), pp. 59-61. See also for the detailed analysis of bilateral rapprochement processes; Tony Armstrong, *Breaking the Ice: Rapprochement Between East and West Germany the United States and China and Israel and Egypt,* (Washington: United States Institute of Peace, 1993).

29 "Definition of rapprochement", <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/rapprochement>, see also <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/rapproch ement>

30 Ziya Öniş and Şuhnaz Yılmaz, "Greek-Turkish Rapprochement: Rhetoric or Reality?", p. 123.

31 Ziya Öniş and Şuhnaz Yılmaz, "Greek-Turkish Rapprochement: Rhetoric or Reality?", p. 124.

32 Ziya Öniş and Şuhnaz Yılmaz, "Greek-Turkish Rapprochement: Rhetoric or Reality?", p. 124.

the fields of low politics.[33] Nine bilateral agreements were signed shortly after 1999 in the following areas[34]: cooperation on customs administration, economic cooperation, enhancing investments, environmental protection, tourism, maritime transport, science and technology, cultural cooperation and cooperation on combating crime, organized crime, terrorism, drug trafficking and illegal immigration. Since 1999, the relations have improved fundamentally compared to pre-rapprochement period of relations combined with the Turkey's EU candidacy process. As Grigoriadis argues, the December 1999 Helsinki summit was a crucial point for the freshly started rapprochement process when Greece agreed to the decision of considering Turkey as a European Union candidate.[35] George Papandreou stated on the importance of the Greek decision in Helsinki summit that;

> *Helsinki was a culmination of the new phase in Greek foreign policy. What instigated this fundamental change in our foreign policy? Three major elements can be credited: political forces engulfing the region in the post-Cold War period, new realities of the 'globalized' world, and a reevaluation of Greece's national interests.*[36]

It is worth noting that until 1999 from the early the 1920's nineteen treaties signed and only nine of them came into force between Turkey and Greece.[37] Considering the post-1999 developments, there have been noticeable changes to be happened. The so called unexpected rapprochement had led the signing of more than 70 agreements between countries from 2000 to 2015 which nurtured the social, political and economic development of their relations. This process has contributed to the intensification of both high level and societal cooperation. In 2008, Greek Prime Minister Karamanlis visited Turkey which took place after 49 years of non-visiting, opened the door for reciprocal visits of Foreign Ministers' and Prime Ministers' from

33 Ioannis N. Grigoriadis, "Unripe Fruits of Rapprochement: Greek-Turkish Relations in the Post-Helsinki Era", p. 122.

34 See more on official documents: Joint Communique signed after the meeting of high officials of the Foreign Ministries of Turkey and Greece, 16 September 1999, <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/joint-communique-signed-after-the-meeting-of-high-officials-of-the-foreign-ministries-of-turkey-and-greece.en.mfa>, (Date Accessed: 12 December 2014).

35 Ioannis N. Grigoriadis, "Unripe Fruits of Rapprochement: Greek-Turkish Relations in the Post-Helsinki Era", p.121; "Simitis'den Zeytin Dalı", Hürriyet, 12 December 1999, <http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/haber.aspx?id=-118496>, (Date Accessed: 7 March 2015).

36 Ayten Gündoğdu, "Identities in Question: Greek-Turkish Relations in a Period of Transformation?", p. 112.

37 See table 5 on appendix section.

both countries. Thus in 2010, Prime Minister Erdoğan constituted the first official visit of the last 16 years by a Turkish Prime Minister to Greece. More importantly, since 1999 there have not been any major tensions erupting between the two parties although the natural gas exploration activities in the Mediterranean have recently accumulated some noteworthy tensions. As Heraclides argues, within one year, the outcomes of the Turkish-Greek rapprochement were already palpable.[38] For instance, the volume of bilateral trade reached to 1,979 billion Euros by the end of 2009.[39] As Tsarouhas (2009) notes, trade is one of the most important economic sectors that went hand in hand with improved relations.[40] Regarding the economic cooperation, trade, transportation and tourism have been fruitful areas. For example, between the years 2002 and 2011, Greek Foreign Direct Investment in Turkey has reached to 6.6 million dollars in total. Moreover, despite that economic crisis had harshly affected Greece since 2010, the volume of Turkish-Greek bilateral trade reached 5 billion dollars in 2012. Between 1999 and 2012, the number of Greek people who visited Turkey increased to 669,823 from 146,000 and the number of Turkish people visiting Greece increased to 466,166 from 114,453.[41] Nevertheless, societal cooperation has been particularly intensified with the rapprochement process and through the increasing funding provided by the European Union. Friendship and partnership organizations as well as other multilateral interaction societies were established through civil society organizations. Therefore cooperation and interaction between people, students, universities, think thanks and local municipalities in two countries have been fostering.[42] An example of this is the increase of exchange programs for students and joint research projects between academicians and peoples of the two countries.[43] Furthermore, another example of non-governmental cooperation was in the cultural area. 'A Touch of Spice' (2003), which is one

38 Alexis Heraclides, "What Will Become of us without Barbarians? The Enduring Greek–Turkish Rivalry as an Identity-based Conflict", p. 151.

39 "Relations between Turkey and Greece", *Republic of Turkey's Ministry of Foreign Affairs Press Releases*, <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/relations-between-turkey-and-greece.en.mfa>, (Date Accessed: 12 December 2014).

40 Dimitris Tsarouhas, "The Political Economy of Greek–Turkish Relations", p. 45.

41 George Koukodakis, "Greek-Turkish Rapprochement and Turkey's EU Membership Quest: Turning Rhetoric into Reality", p. 161.

42 George Koukodakis, "Greek-Turkish Rapprochement and Turkey's EU Membership Quest: Turning Rhetoric into Reality", p. 161.

43 Ahmet O. Evin, "Changing Greek Perspectives on Turkey: An Assessment of the post-Earthquake Rapprochement", p. 8.

of the most popular Greek movies, addressed the issue of the expulsion of the Greek minority in Istanbul in the 1960's by adopting a more sympathetic angle.[44] Overall, at the both governmental and non-governmental levels, the Turkish-Greek rapprochement has contributed to the progressive relations that have been growing since 1999. However, Turkish-Greek rapprochement has still not reached the level as the Franco-German rapprochement is. There has been no considerable attempt to build an institutionalized cooperation between two countries on political, economic and cultural fields, as in the case of Franco-German rapprochement.

Issues at Stake: The Tumultuous 1990's

To understand the 1999 rapprochement comprehensively, it is useful to examine conditions and incidents for Turkish-Greek relations right before the process. In 1990s, relations were highly tense between Greece and Turkey. Several crucial incidents increased the tension and stress between two states. In 1996, Imia/Kardak crisis emerged and two countries came into brink of war over small islet in the Aegean Sea which the war was prevented by US government's mediation. Moreover in 1997, another trouble emerged about the installment of Russian made s-300 missiles system in Republic of Cyprus. Turkey perceived the actions as provocation and the issue had continued to threat the stability between two countries for a one year or so until the Greek-Cypriot president, Clerides decided to install missiles to Crete rather than Cyprus.[45] Furthermore, in 1997 EU summit of Luxembourg, Turkey did not find room European Union candidacy with several other countries. As known the political resolution of Cyprus problem is one of the conditions to be fulfilled to have EU membership for Turkey. Therefore Greece had used Cyprus problem as leverage to pressure Turkey for accepting Greek position. For Turkey, Luxembourg summit was a huge disappointment. Thus, it further distressed the relations between Greece and Turkey due to the role of Greek veto in the summit.

Along with the bilateral problems, some regional developments had also influenced the course of events between two countries in 1990s. Kosovo War of 1998 constituted a regional security threat for both Greece and Turkey

44 James Ker Lindsay, *Crisis and Conciliation: A Year of Rapprochement Between Greece and Turkey*, p. 103.

45 Andreas Kotelis, "Preconditions for Successful Rapprochement: A Comparative Analysis of the Greek-Turkish Rapprochement Efforts", (Unpublished Phd Dissertation, İhsan Doğramacı Bilkent University, Ankara, 2013), p. 207.

and it was creating new challenges regarding organized crime and illegal immigration. It made evident that, the security of Greece and Turkey depended on the security of the each other in a highly tense region that the two cooperated on humanitarian matters to assist Kosovo under to tutelage of NATO. Finally, bigger problem emerged for Turkish-Greek relations afterward of the arrest of PKK leader. Öcalan was arrested with Greek Cypriot passport after he took shelter at Greek embassy in Kenya. Prime Minister Simitis had no control over developments which he realized that some decisions were taken without his consent. The situation put Simitis government into a both political and international pressure. It also unraveled that some events were engineered without Greek government's control. Öcalan crisis caused resignation of the Greek foreign minister Pangalos in a way that Papandreou was appointed for the position by Simitis. In Turkey, Öcalan crisis had led frustration towards Greece. While Turkish politicians reacted with harsh statements that condemn Greek support to terrorism, there also occurred societal reaction through protesting Greek government in front of the embassies.

However all of these challenges and tensions two countries experienced in 1990s can be considered as a wake-up call for two countries' state elites and societal spheres. These made clear that there need a change to stabilize the relations somehow that it had become more and more challenging to live with instability. Therefore, there was a proper environment for rapprochement to be foster.

Pushing Towards the Process: The Domestic Determinants

As was pointed out in the introduction, while acknowledging the variety and complexity of factors for the rapprochement process, this paper suggests that the role of the leadership, disaster (earthquake) diplomacy and civil society efforts offer an insight into the 1999 rapprochement process as being domestic determinants of the process[46].

The Role of the Leadership

When examining the determinants of the 1999 Turkish-Greek rapprochement, the decisive role played by the influential Foreign Ministers of the two countries, George Papandreou and Ismail Cem, should not be underestimated. As it is known, the nationalist and skeptic stances in terms of the policy

46 See table 1 on the appendix section.

making for the bilateral relations towards each other have been rooted in political culture of both nations. Whether the hawkish or dovish leadership is influential in foreign policy making would have utmost importance for the dynamics between two countries. The appointment of George Papandreou-a known moderate and modernizer[47]-as foreign minister in the aftermath of the Öcalan crisis has been crucial for the turn of the Greek-Turkish relations.[48] Six weeks after the Öcalan affair, foreign ministers George Papandreou and Ismail Cem took careful steps towards the normalization of relations between their respective countries. Cem-Papandreou leadership had the fresh sense in terms of devising mutual interest areas to improve cooperation between the two states.[49]

The two ministers exchanged letters on 24 May 1999[50] and 25 June 1999[51] as part of their aim to restore relations. On May 1999, Cem wrote to Papandreou and offered that the two countries should discuss and examine ways in which to find a way for reconciliation. In June, Papandreou wrote back and proposed a number of areas of mutual concern such as tourism, the environment, and organized crime. Papandreou wrote and pointed out the importance of their leadership: "I have always been of the view that personal contacts between us can in many ways be productive. They particularly can be useful if we are to define common approaches, ways and means to address outstanding bilateral issues and enhance mutual confidence".[52] Furthermore, Papandreou wrote that, "Both Greece and Turkey have rich cultural traditions. Building a multicultural Europe means that we need to enhance our cultural identities and understand each other's specificity".[53] This expression sharply differs from the comment of Papandreou's predecessor, Foreign Minister Theodoros Pangalos who stated

47 Panayotis Tsakonas, *The Incomplete Breakthrough in Greek-Turkish Relations: Grasping Greece's Socialization Strategy*, p. 73.

48 Ioannis N. Grigoriadis, "Unripe Fruits of Rapprochement: Greek-Turkish Relations in the Post-Helsinki Era", 2012, p. 120

49 James Ker Lindsay, "Greek-Turkish Rapprochement: The Impact of Disaster Diplomacy?", p. 228.

50 Letter from İsmail Cem to George Papandreou, 24 May 1999, <http://www.oocities.org/turkishgreek/papandre.htm>, (Date Accessed: 8 December 2014).

51 Letter from George Papandreou to İsmail Cem, 25 June 1999, <http://www.oocities.org/turkishgreek/papandre.htm>, (Date Accessed: 8 December 2014).

52 Ker Lindsay, *Crisis and Conciliation: A Year of Rapprochement Between Greece and Turkey,* p. 50.

53 Ker Lindsay, *Crisis and Conciliation: A Year of Rapprochement Between Greece and Turkey*, p. 125.

on Greek Mega TV in 1997[54]. Pangalos said, "Turkey is expansionist. Some fractions from Turkish diplomatic and military cadres are after the Greek borders in the Aegean Sea. In this case we have nothing to do with Turkey".[55] That is, one and a half years before the letter exchange between Cem and Papandreou, in February 12, 1998 Cem had sent this similar version of letter to the then Foreign Minister Pangalos[56]. However no reconciliatory initiative was taken by Pangalos.[57] This illustrates the importance of the leadership well. Soon after the letter exchange, the two ministers, Cem and Papandreou met in New York at the 'Friends of Kosovo' meeting (30/6/1999) and found opportunity to talk face to face on Turkish-Greek relations. They decided to establish a working group which composed of senior diplomats from the two Foreign Ministries that would find formulation to promote greater bilateral cooperation in the areas of low politics[58]. Therefore two ministers took careful step to find common grounds of cooperation. Regarding this Cem stated, "Without raising high expectations, without being too assertive, I consider this a positive step in the right direction. I hope that those steps will go on"[59].

Rounds of talks occurred in Ankara (26-27 July 1999) and Athens (29-30 July 1999) to discuss the items on the agenda. By that time, the process initiated by two leaders of the countries had faced undesirable constraints. In Greece and Turkey, there were many people who were upset about the talks between the two countries. For instance, during the bilateral talks in Ankara in July, the Greek Orthodox cemetery in Istanbul was attacked and a number of gravestones were desecrated.[60] Similar to that, in Greece Papandreou criticized heavily by the nationalist traditional circles in the country due to the interview

54 See more on İsmail Cem, *Türkiye Avrupa Avrasya: Strateji, Yunanistan, Kıbrıs*, pp. 93-94.

55 İsmail Cem, *Türkiye Avrupa Avrasya: Strateji, Yunanistan, Kıbrıs*, p. 93; Ayten Gündoğdu, "Identities in Question: Greek-Turkish Relations in a Period of Transformation?", p. 107.

56 See full text: <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/a-call-for-peace-from-turkey-to-greece_br_february-12_-1998.en.mfa>.

57 İsmail Cem, *Türkiye Avrupa Avrasya: Strateji, Yunanistan, Kıbrıs*, p. 113.

58 "Press Relase Regarding the Understanding Reached between Turkish and Greek Foreign Ministers", 22 July 1999, <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/press-release-regarding-the-understanding-reached-between-turkish-and-greek-foreign-ministers_br_july-22_-1999.en.mfa>, (Date Accessed: 12 December 2014).

59 See on Hürriyet Daily News, 2 July 1999, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/default.aspx?pageid=438&n=cem-an-important-step-taken-in-turco-greek-ties-1999-07-02>, (Date Accessed: 7 March 2015).

60 James Ker Lindsay, *Crisis and Conciliation: A Year of Rapprochement Between Greece and Turkey*, p. 54.

he gave to the Greek magazine. In that interview, Papandreou used to the word 'Turkish' to define the Muslim minority in Thrace.[61] While this caused negative reaction in Greece, it was attracted positive attention in Turkey[62]. While rounds of talks had been continued aiming to signing cooperation treaties by the end of the year of 1999, Papandreou unofficially visited Turkey in October 1999 that was important for this developing rapprochement. Throughout Cem-Papandreou dialogue and three rounds of diplomatic talks, the two countries had already started to improve their relations.[63]

In the same way as Papandreou, Ismail Cem also was a moderate figure who had a Western education and a Social Democratic background. However, many scholars widely argued that Papandreou was the real driving force behind the rapprochement.[64] This might be realistic not because Cem was not enthusiastic about the Turkish-Greek rapprochement but due to asymmetries between the two leaders in their political environments. These asymmetries can be outlined as follows. Firstly, Papandreou's political environment was less constrained then Cem's political circle. For example, Papandreou had good relations with and had the confidence of Prime Minister Costas Simitis.[65] Costas Simitis was the one who appointed Papandreou. Thus, Simitis was the one who aimed to make paradigmatic change in Greek foreign policy orientation to stabilize the relations with Turkey. Simitis's choice to appoint Papandreou was a rational

61 Foreign and Commonwealth Office, "Edited Transcript of a Doorstep Interview Given by the Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, and the Greek Foreign Minister, George Papandreou", London, Monday, 18 October 1999.

62 "Bravo Yorgos Fırtınası", 7 August 1999, <http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/haber.aspx?id=-94958> (Date Accessed: 7 March 2015); "Yorgo'ya istifa baskısı", 31 August 1999, <http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/haber.aspx?id=-93791>, (Date Accessed: 7 March 2015); "Bravo Yorgo kıyameti", 30 August 1999, <http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/haber.aspx?id=-93631>, (Date Accessed: 7 March 2015).

63 See table 1. For further information please refer to: "Türk- Yunan görüşmeleri 3'üncü turda", Hürriyet, 26/10/1999, <http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/haber.aspx?id=-109759>, (Date Accessed: 7 March 2015); "Türk ve Yunan dışişleri bakanları bir ayda beşinci kez görüştü", Hürriyet, 2 June 1999, <http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/haber.aspx?id=-83215>, (Date Accessed: 7 March 2015).

64 Philip H. Gordon, "Post-Helsinki: Turkey, Greece and the European Union", *The Strategic Regional Report*, Brooking Institution, 2000; James Ker Lindsay, *Crisis and Conciliation: A Year of Rapprochement Between Greece and Turkey,* pp. 44-123; Stephen F. Larrabee, "Turkish Foreign and Security Policy: New Dimensions and New Challenges", in Zalmay Khalilzad, Ian O. Lesser, F. Stephen Larrabee, *The Future of Turkish-Western Relations: Toward a Strategic Plan*, (Santa Monica: RAND, 2000), pp. 21-51.

65 For further information please refer to: James Ker Lindsay, *Crisis and Conciliation: A Year of Rapprochement Between Greece and Turkey*, p. 120.

one. Therefore, not only Papandreou but also Simitis had showed real interest in resolving bilateral disputes with Turkey. Furthermore, Papandreou had the fortune of being the son of Andreas Papandreou and the grandson of Georgiou Papandreou who were highly respected by the party members (PASOK) that gave him a kind of soft political power in the process. On the other hand, Cem had no similar relations with the Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit who was a leftist nationalist and a controversial figure in Greece due to his role in the Cyprus intervention of 1974. Secondly, Cem lived the constraints of the coalition government which was newly formed and highly instable at that time that rise of nationalism in Turkey was discussed a lot. The coalition included the right wing parties of ANAP (Motherhood Party) and MHP (Nationalist Action Party) of which MHP had highly far right orientation. Therefore it is right to argue that Papandreou had a more advantageous position towards shaping the process than his counterpart Cem.[66]

The Role of Disaster (Earthquake) Diplomacy

Another determinant for the explanation of the rapprochement process may be the 1999 earthquakes that struck both Greece and Turkey that opened the way for the so called disaster diplomacy. Disaster diplomacy can be defined as "the study of the links between disasters and diplomatic relations".[67] In the Turkish-Greek context, it refers to whether the disaster related cooperation after the earthquakes could create diplomatic cooperation between Turkey and Greece at governmental and non-governmental levels. Several studies[68] argued that, "disasters can catalyze, but do not create cooperation among states in conflict".[69] Therefore in the Turkish-Greek case, it can be argued that earthquakes made possible the already started rapprochement process to achieve public approval from both societies by influencing nationalistic rhetoric

66 James Ker Lindsay, *Crisis and Conciliation: A Year of Rapprochement Between Greece and Turkey*, p. 121.

67 N. Emel Ganapati, Ilan Kelman and Theo Koukis, "Analysing Greek-Turkish Disaster-related Cooperation: A Disaster Diplomacy Perspective", p. 162.

68 Ilan Kelman and Theo Koukis, "Disaster Diplomacy," *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 14, No. 1, 2000, pp. 75-105; Ailsa Holloway, 'Drought Emergency, Yes ... Drought Disaster, No: Southern Africa 1991–93', *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 14, No. 1, 2000, pp. 254–76; James Ker Lindsay, "Greek-Turkish Rapprochement: The Impact of Disaster Diplomacy?"; James Ker Lindsay, *Crisis and Conciliation: A Year of Rapprochement Between Greece and Turkey*, pp. 57-73.

69 N. Emel Ganapati, Ilan Kelman and Theo Koukis, "Analysing Greek-Turkish Disaster-related Cooperation: A Disaster Diplomacy Perspective", p. 164.

of both states towards the other.[70] Through this altering process, the civic and state level cooperation was catalyzed which fostered the positive public opinion towards the enemy regarded as 'other'. As Kirişçi pointed out:

> *In both countries developed powerful political, military as well as economic constituencies against dialogue and cooperation. In the case of Turkey, Greece was depicted as a country longing to achieve the 'megali idea' and conquer Istanbul while in Greece Turkey came to be seen as wanting to revive the Ottoman Empire and bring back at least a good part of Greece under its control.*[71]

That is, these kind perceptions which had been common in both countries had experienced some change due to the developments that occurred during the aftermath of the earthquakes. After several months of starting the dialogue between the two foreign ministers, both countries were hit by deadly earthquakes. After the earthquake hit İzmit in August, Ankara received a call from Papandreou requesting Greek assistance. Papandreou contacted with Cem show that Greece is ready to offer any help if Turkey needs. Then Greece had established an emergency rescue team, EMAK, and the services of the team were offered to the Turkish government to assist in whatever way possible.[72] Other than official response, Greek society was also responsive to the earthquake tragedy. For instance, Greek Church offered assistance and NGO's like Médecins Sans Frontières, the Trade Union Centre of Thessaloniki, and the Greek Women's Association also offered help the people.[73]

In September, Athens has struck by earthquake and Turkey was the first to respond to the news. Turkish rescue team AKUT offered assistance. It was the first time that AKUT carried out an operation in a foreign country.[74] Thus, public reaction in both countries was important to be noted. Public opinion became positive which challenged stereotypical perceptions and enduring enemy images of the past. Therefore, it can be argued that "disaster diplomacy is a process of citizen diplomacy that has legitimized, and generated popular

70 Ayten Gündoğdu, "Identities in Question: Greek-Turkish Relations in a Period of Transformation?", p. 106.

71 Kemal Kirişçi, "The 'Enduring Rivalry' between Greece and Turkey: Can 'Democratic Peace' break it?", p. 40.

72 James Ker Lindsay, *Crisis and Conciliation: A Year of Rapprochement Between Greece and Turkey*, p. 57.

73 Andreas Kotelis, "Preconditions for Successful Rapprochement: A Comparative Analysis of the Greek-Turkish Rapprochement Efforts", p. 214.

74 James Ker Lindsay, *Crisis and Conciliation: A Year of Rapprochement Between Greece and Turkey*, p. 68.

support for an official process that had already been put in place several months earlier".[75] For example one of the popular newspapers in Greece, published as article titled "We Are All Turks". A similar move came from the Turkish newspaper article titled "Neighbor, We Could Not Have Known You Are Like That". (*Ta Nea* 20 August 1999 and *Sabah* 21 August 1999). In fact, media in both countries have played a crucial role in the reproduction of stereotypical and nationalist discourses towards one another.[76] For example in the Greek press, Turkey often is reflected as an uncivilized country which does not belong to Europe, especially in the years between the 1997 Luxembourg and 1999 Helsinki Summits.[77] However in general, media coverage in the aftermath of the earthquakes allowed for positive sentiments to develop[78].

> *"The earthquake disasters offered the missing links between the government and the people. People-led activities blossomed when they saw their enemy suffering. That led to and was bolstered by positive comments from the media. After each earthquake, much of the media in both countries began to challenge the dominant discourse and avoided sensationalist opinions supporting the notion of enemies.*[79]

75 James Ker Lindsay, "Greek-Turkish Rapprochement: The Impact of Disaster Diplomacy?", p. 230.

76 Neslihan Özgüneş and Georgios Terzis, "Constraints and Remedies for Journalists Reporting National Conflict: the Case of Greece and Turkey", *Journalism Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 3, 2000, pp. 405–426; Hercules Millas, "National Perception of the Other and the Persistence of Some Images", in Mustafa Aydın, and Kostas Ifantis, (Eds.), *Turkish-Greek Relations: The Security Dilemma in the Aegean*, (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), pp. 53-67; Umut Özkırımlı and Spyros A. Sofos, *Tormented by History: Nationalism in Greece and Turkey*, (London: Hurst & Co, 2008), p.1-288.

77 Elena Lazarou, "Mass Media and the Europeanization of Greek-Turkish Relations: Discourse Transformation in the Greek Press 1997-2003", p. 21.

78 See more on news coverage about earthquakes: "Efharisto Poli File", 21 August 1999, <http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/haber.aspx?id=-97417>, (Date Accessed: 7 March 2015); "Tarihi Bir Gün", 26 August 1999, <http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/haber.aspx?id=-98250 >, (Date Accessed: 7 March 2015); "Dostluğumuzu Daima Hatırlayın", 26 August 1999, <http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/haber.aspx?id=-98255> (Date Accessed: 7 March 2015), "Atina'dan Kadirşinas Türk Halkına Teşekkür", 1 September 1999, < http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/haber.aspx?id=-99474>, (Date Accessed: 7 March 2015); "Perastikasu Gitoniamu" (Geçmiş Olsun Komşum), 8 September 1999, <http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/haber.aspx?id=-100620>, (Date Accessed: 7 March 2015); "Ege'de Deprem Diplomasisi", 11 September 1999, < http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/haber.aspx?id=-101290>, (Date Accessed: 7 March 2015); "Ortak Kurtarma Gücü", 21 September 1999, <http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/haber.aspx?id=-103154>, (Date Accessed: 7 March 2015); "Bayrağımıza Atina'da Alkış", Hürriyet, 21 September 1999, < http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/haber.aspx?id=-103155>, (Date Accessed: 7 March 2015).

79 Stavros Mavrogenis and Ilan Kelman, "Perceptions of Greece-Turkey Disaster Diplomacy: Europeanization and the Underdog Culture", p. 92.

Thus the public opinion was remarkably affected by the images of human suffering of the familiar[80] that the earthquakes assisted in the legitimization of the rapprochement process. Therefore, I argue that although disaster diplomacy was not the most important trigger for the rapprochement process, the earthquakes enabled two societies to challenge prejudiced and antipathetic views towards each other to a more sympathetic manner. For instance, journalist Anna Stergiou commented in the Greek newspaper Elefterotypia that:

> *When we saw the corpses of Turkish mothers and babies, our eyes were filled with tears. Maybe these same mothers would be crying over their children after a possible Greek–Turkish conflict. We have been spending millions of drachmas for armaments and now we are feeling something that we never felt before. The great pains of these people did not make us happy. The pains of these people left a sour taste and a lump in our throats.*[81]

International media also had covered the Turkish-Greek cooperation during the earthquakes. For instance, Stephen Kinzer provided an account of the earthquake solidarity in the *New York Times* in his articles titled "A Natural Disaster Helps Draw Two Enemies Closer"[82] and "Earthquakes Help Warm Greek-Turkish Relations."[83] Overall, these incidents indicate that earthquakes provided an opportunity for people to create an empathy and solidarity[84] that had fostered the realization of the started rapprochement process. As Kelman and Mavrogenis (2013) point out, for the political elite, the earthquakes were the golden opportunity for which they were waiting to legitimatize their preferred

80 Alexis Heraclides, "Greek-Turkish Relations from Discord to Détente: A Preliminary Evaluation", p. 19.

81 Ayten Gündoğdu, "Identities in Question: Greek-Turkish Relations in a Period of Transformation?", p. 112; Bahar Rumelili, "Liminality and Perpetuation of Conflicts: Turkish-Greek Relations in the Context of Community-Building by the EU", p. 238.

82 A Natural Disaster Helps Draw Two Enemies Closer, 22 August 1999, <http://www.nytimes.com/1999/08/22/weekinreview/the-world-a-natural-disaster-helps-draw-two-enemies-closer.html>, (Date Accessed: 7 March 2015).

83 Earthquakes Help Warm Greek-Turkish Relations, 13 August 1999, <http://www.nytimes.com/1999/09/13/world/earthquakes-help-warm-greek-turkish-relations.html>, (Date Acc essed: 7 March 2015); "Atina'dan Kadirşinas Türk Halkına Teşekkür", Hürriyet, 1 September 1999, <http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/haber.aspx?id=-99474>, (Date Acce ssed: 7 March 2015).

84 Ayşe Betül Çelik and Bahar Rumelili, "Necessary but not Sufficient: The Role of the EU in Resolving Turkey's Kurdish Question and the Greek--Turkish Conflicts", *European Foreign Affairs Review*, Vol. 11, No. 2, 2006, p. 216.

and ongoing rapprochement policy.[85] In his memoir book, İsmail Cem states that, "During those tragic earthquakes, solidarity that two societies provided each other had accelerated the process of rapprochement. Greeks and Turks found out that they think about each other more than generally thought".[86] Despite that earthquakes did not create the rapprochement process, the two societies were more prone to accept new thinking in bilateral relation due to post-earthquake environment. The two states and societies had challenged the existing perceptions through cooperating with each other afterwards of the earthquakes.[87]

The Role of Civil Society Efforts

Last element of this triadic explanation of the 1999 rapprochement process is the civil society efforts between Greece and Turkey[88]. There are different interpretations and definitions of the term civil society but basically it is "a sphere of social interaction between the household and the state which is manifested in the norms of community cooperative, structure of voluntary association and network of public communication".[89] Civil society cooperation and activism may have a profound impact and can be highly influential to foster bilateral relations. Historically, civil society has not been strong in both Greece and Turkey due to various political and economic reasons.[90] Yet, since the 1980s, there has been cooperation between the Turkish and Greek civil society sphere. Nevertheless, political issues were there to mar the civil society efforts. Organization for Peace was established in 1979 which was closed

85 Stavros Mavrogenis and Ilan Kelman, "Perceptions of Greece-Turkey Disaster Diplomacy: Europeanization and the Underdog Culture", p. 96.

86 İsmail Cem, *Türkiye Avrupa Avrasya: Strateji, Yunanistan, Kıbrıs*, p. 150.

87 See The Assistances After the Earthquake No: 144, 19 August 2000, <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/the-assistances-after-the-earthquake_br_no_144-_august-19_-2000.en.mfa>, (Date Acces sed: 12 December 2014).

88 See table 4 for pre-1999 Turkish-Greek civil society efforts.

89 Craig Berry and Clive Gabay, "Transnational Political Action and Global Civil Society in Practise: The Case of OXFAM", *Global Networks*, Vol. 9, No. 3, 2009, pp. 339-358.

90 Fuat Keyman and Ahmet İcduydu, "Globalization, Civil Society and Citizenship in Turkey: Actors, Boundaries and Discourses", *Citizenship Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 2, 2003, pp. 219-234; Paul Kubicek, "The Earthquake, Europe, and Prospects for Political Change in Turkey", *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 5, No. 2, 2001, pp. 34-47; Dimitris Sotiropoulos, "Colossus with Feet of Clay: The State in Post-authoritarian Greece" in Harry J. Psomiades and Stavros B. Thomadakis (Eds.), *Greece, The New Europe and The Changing International Order,* (New York: Pella Publishing, 1993), pp. 43-56.

down following the 1980 coup in Turkey aimed to create collaboration between Greek and Turkish leftist movements.[91] Other civil society organizations which were established in the pre-1999 period are Greek-Turkish Friendship Committee (1986), Turkish-Greek Friendship Association (1987), Journalists for Peace in the Aegean and Thrace (1996), Helsinki Citizens Assembly (1996), AEGEE Greek-Turkish Cooperation (1996), WINPEACE (1997), ICOMOS (1997), Greek-Turkish Forum (1998).[92]

Also singers and artists from Greek and Turkey have started organizing joint concerts and cultural activities since the early 1980s.[93] Moreover, some Greek and Turkish municipalities started to cooperate on the areas of tourism. In the 1990s, the Turkish History Foundation collaborated with Greek and Turkish historians together to change nationalistic and hostility promoting content of schoolbooks in two countries.[94] Thus, at economic level, the two Business Councils (the Turkish-Greek Business Council and Greek-Turkish Business Council) were established in the two countries in 1988 to promote cooperation in the business sector. Another example of pre-1999 civil initiative is the Greek-Turkish Forum established in 1998 by journalists, academics, businessmen and retired diplomats to maintain and enhance a dialogue between the two societies.[95] However, until the actual setting of the rapprochement at the state level, civil society organizations had not been able to find full opportunities to express their motives regarding Turkish-Greek reconciliation. Furthermore, with improving intergovernmental relations, civil society cooperation has flourished between businesses, tourists, students, scholars, journalists and artists between the two states.[96] On the one hand, Greek and Turkish people

91 Leonidas Karakatsanis, *Turkish-Greek Relations: Rapprochement, Civil Society and the Politics of Friendship*, p. 230.

92 See detailed analysis of Turkish-Greek civil society cooperation in Leonidas Karakatsanis, *Turkish-Greek Relations: Rapprochement, Civil Society and the Politics of Friendship,* pp. 1-28.

93 Zülfü Livaneli, "On Turkish and Greek Civil Society Dialogue", pp. 11-16.

94 Orhan Silier, "A Lot Can be Done to Curb the Effects of Chauvinism" in T. Ulaş Belge (Ed.), *Voices for the Future: Civic Dialogue Between Turks and Greeks*, (Istanbul: Istanbul Bilgi University Press, 2004), pp. 101-106. See also "Barbar Türk'e Son", Hürriyet, 27 October 1999, <http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/haber.aspx?id=-109962>, (Date Accessed: 7 March 2015).

95 Soli Özel, "Rapprochement on Non-governmental Level: The Story of the Turkish–Greek Forum", p.274. See also "Dostluğun Üç Sesi", Hürriyet, 6 November 1999, <http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/haber.aspx?id=-111873>, (Date Accessed: 7 March 2015).

96 Nora Fisher Onar and Othon Anastasakis, "Sustaining Engagement? On Symmetries and Asymmetries in Greek–Turkish Relations", *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 3, 2013, pp. 401-406.

who had wanted to establish civic initiatives to promote cooperation between the two countries before the rapprochement process began could not be much influential. Nevertheless, with the Cem-Papandreou talks and twin earthquakes those civic initiatives had multiplied and became more apparent.[97] On the other hand, it should be considered that some determined initiatives had been faced obstacles due to the bilateral tensions between two countries. In this manner, the case of Greek-Turkish Business Council was important to be mentioned. Although Greek-Turkish Business Council was established in 1988 by business people from two countries, no major initiative could be taken to push for economic cooperation due to political instabilities between two countries until late 1990's.[98] For example Greek-Turkish Business council organized a meeting at Thessaloniki in 1997 that the environment was highly tense due to the Imia/Kardak crisis and a group of Greek fanatics protested the meeting and attacked to the businessmen by throwing stones. Moreover, right after the Öcalan crisis in 1999, Turkish businessman Rahmi Koç resigned from his position of President of Greek-Turkish the Business Council and declared to freeze cooperation initiatives.[99] As Grigoriadis indicates, at the economic level, business opportunities created with the rapprochement process, business elites of both sides finally realized that decades of bilateral diplomatic confrontation had a cost.[100] As mentioned in the previous sections, afterwards of the 1999, civil society initiatives and NGO activities had doubled. They have brought the people of both countries closer to each other. Friendship groups and other multilateral contact routes were established through the support of civil society organizations. Local governments in two countries have cooperated increasingly. NGOs, universities, various think

97 James Ker Lindsay, *Crisis and Conciliation: A Year of Rapprochement Between Greece and Turkey*, p. 72.

98 Leonidas Karakatsanis, *Turkish-Greek Relations: Rapprochement, Civil Society and the Politics of Friendship*, p. 234.

99 "Rahmi Koç'un Anlamlı İstifası", Hürriyet, 28 February 1999, <http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/haber.aspx?id=-65452>, (Date Accessed: 7 March 2015); "Koç, Gerginlik Olmasaydı Yunan Adalarına Ramstore Açıyordu", Hürriyet, 25 February 1999, <http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/haber.aspx?id=-64981>, (Date Accessed: 7 March 2015).

100 Ioannis N. Grigoriadis, "Unripe Fruits of Rapprochement: Greek-Turkish Relations in the Post-Helsinki Era", p. 124. See more on "'Tara'dan Yunanlı siyasilere çağrı", Hürriyet, 13 October 1999, <http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/haber.aspx?id=-107355>, (Date Accessed: 7 March 2015); "Ticaret Hacmini 2 Yılda 2 Milyar Dolara Çıkartırız", Hürriyet, 13 October 1999, <http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/haber.aspx?id=-107275>, (Date Accessed: 7 March 2015). For further information please refer to: Dimitris Tsarouhas, "The Political Economy of Greek–Turkish Relations", pp. 39-57.

tanks and academics from both countries collaborated with each other which also contributed to the post-1999 period. Both intergovernmental talks and the earthquake cooperation were important driving factors for the push of activism in civil society. That is, increasing civil society activism had fostered the rapprochement process.

Research Findings

The current study found that the triad of leadership, earthquake diplomacy and civil society efforts are connected with one another and played a vital role in bringing about new perceptions between two countries.

Thus far this paper has focused on the domestic determinants of the rapprochement process which had taken place simultaneously in these two nations. Firstly, the role of leadership analyzed in this paper and the findings support the idea of the crucial role played by the two Foreign Ministers to foster the actual beginning of the rapprochement process. In other words, the Cem-Papandreou process was able foster the recognition of mutual interests of both countries through cooperation and collaboration. Similarities in their vision of politics and the world helped the development of their dialogue which they had striven for through stable and peaceful bilateral relations in the region and in the European context. There were however, asymmetries between two leaders to approach their external world during the 1999 process. Cem and Papandreou as being faces of the process had been highly influential for fueling the process. The two leaders were awarded the Abdi İpekçi Award[101] and they also shared the Statesman of the Year prize given by the US NGO "East-West Institute".[102]

Overall, the role of leadership constitutes the state-level, domestic factor of this triadic explanation of the rapprochement process. Secondly, the role of disaster diplomacy examined and it is found that the earthquakes were not the actual cause of the rapprochement process, but they catalyzed the rapprochement process that had already been started. To put it more precisely, the earthquakes in both countries followed with post-disaster

101 Abdi İpekçi Peace and Friendship Prize was given years between 1979 and 2001 to number of intellectuals, politicians, artists, journalists, retired diplomats and/or organizations who had contributed to Greek -Turkish friendship and peace. For further information please refer to: <http://www.turkishgreekfriendship.info/online-supplement-content/30-abdi/77-peace-prize-juries.html>, (Date Accessed: 20 April 2015).

102 James Ker Lindsay, *Crisis and Conciliation: A Year of Rapprochement Between Greece and Turkey*, p. 102.

cooperation in both state and society level. In this way, mutual empathy was generated which helped break away from stereotypic perceptions with assisting each other. With the help of the positive media coverage in both countries it touched the humanistic emotions of societies and the spirit of goodwill was developed. Therefore, earthquakes provided an opportunity for the rapprochement process by demolishing the rigid perceptions of 'other' for the first time those governments were able to legitimize the process in the eyes of the people. Thirdly, the role of civil society efforts was examined as being non-governmental, societal trigger of the rapprochement process. The findings may help us understand the role played by the civil society actors in the rapprochement process. Civil society efforts in and between two countries had started to develop in 1980's. Before the actual rapprochement process, civic initiatives had been taken to enhance Turkish-Greek collaboration. However, with the beginning of the process, civic efforts had strengthened. By contributing the started rapprochement process, civic initiatives had become more apparent and had grown day by day. For instance, those efforts concentrated on fund raising for the victims of the disasters in the aftermath of the earthquakes. Therefore, civic efforts had been determinant in paving the way for increasing communication between two countries. Comparing the findings, it can be claimed that all three domestic determinants had an impact on one another by nurturing each other during the process.

Conclusion

Since the main focus of this study is domestic determinants that have enabled the rapprochement process, it aimed to examine the bottom up, inter-governmental and societal level and their contributions to it. This research provides that the 1999 rapprochement between the two countries was achieved by the active leadership of the two foreign ministers making ardent diplomatic efforts, twin earthquakes in both sides of the Aegean had helped to legitimize the started rapprochement process and had multiplied it with influencing and changing societal perceptions positively in both countries, civil society actors who were supporting cooperation between two countries, finally found room and were involved in the process with catalyzing the fresh atmosphere. All of these suggest that the triad of leadership, earthquake diplomacy and civil Society are connected with one another and played a vital role in bringing about new perceptions for bilateral relations of Greece and Turkey, but more importantly towards the 'other'.

By combining domestic determinants outlined above, this research can be useful to understand how rational thinking could be realized in both countries that were historically considered as arch enemies. Taken together, these results suggest that the multilevel rapprochement process was highly fragmented and the proposed three domestic determinants had strengthened each other during the process. Although the Turkish-Greek rapprochement has been successful in the sense that it has contributed the social, political and economic relations of two countries and peoples, this has not led to the resolution of high politics issues. Thus there has been no institutionalized cooperation between two countries as is the case with Franco-German rapprochement.[103] The reasons why can be analyzed for in another research. This paper does not suggest that, domestic factors are the only determinants of this Turkish-Greek rapprochement instead what it aims at is to contribute to the literature of Turkish-Greek relations by focusing on domestic factors that have been less problematized in the state-centric literature throughout the years. As asserted by Robert D. Putnam, "domestic and international relations are entangled".[104] Thus the Turkish-Greek rapprochement is a convincing case that demonstrates the complexities in the foreign policy making.

103 For further information on Franco-German rapprochement, please refer to: Alice Ackermann. "Reconciliation as a Peace-Building Process in Postwar Europe", *Peace & Change*, Vol. 19, No. 3, 1994, pp. 229-250.

104 Robert D. Putnam, "Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-level Games", p. 427.

APPENDIX

Table 1: Timeline of the 1999 Turkish-Greek Rapprochement

February 1999	Öcalan Crisis
18 February1999	Foreign minister Pangalos resigns
18 February1999	Papandreou appointed as Foreign minister
24 May 1999	Letter of Ismail Cem to George Papandreou
25 June 1999	Letter of George Papandreou to Ismail Cem
30 June 1999	Cem and Papandreou met at Friends of Kosovo Meeting in New York
26-27 July 1999	First round of official talks in Ankara
29-30 July 1999	First round of official talks in Athens
17 August 1999	Izmit Earthquake
7 September 1999	Athens Earthquake
12 September 1999	Cem and Papandreou met at EU meeting in Brussels
15 September 1999	Second round of official talks in Ankara
24 September 1999	Cem and Papandreou met at opening of UN General Assembly in New York
3 October 1999	Papandreou unofficially visits Turkey
21-22 October 1999	Third round of official talks in Ankara
25-26 October 1999	Third round of official talks in Athens
18 November 1999	Prime Ministers Ecevit and Simitis met ot OSCE meeting in Istanbul
10 December 1999	Helsinki Summit of EU starts
12 December 1999	Greece lifts veto of Turkey's EU candidacy

Table 2: Four dominant strands in the literature regarding the 1999 Turkish-Greek rapprochement

Argument 1	2	3	4
Rapprochement caused by:	Rapprochement caused by:	Rapprochement caused by:	Rapprochement caused by:
Post-Cold war structure and insecurities (Kosovo crisis)	Europeanization of Greek and Turkish foreign policies	Leadership of the foreign ministers in both countries (Papandreou and Cem)	Earthquake Diplomacy (twin earthquakes of İstanbul and Athens)
External factor	External Factor	Domestic Factor	Domestic Factor

Table 3: Basic display of the research results

Role of Leadership	**Role of Earthquake Diplomacy**	**Role of Civil Society Efforts**
Both moderate and have Social Democrat backgrounds	17 August 1999: Turkish earthquake 7 September 1999: Greek earthquake	Civil society has been weak in both countries due to various reasons
Letter exchange on May and June 1999 to cooperate on low politics	Both countries assisted each other on search, rescue and aid issues (AKUT/EMAK)	Since 1980s, limited cooperation between Greek and Turkish civil society spheres due to bilateral problems
Three rounds of official talks and unofficial visits	Challenged stereotypical perceptions of both sides/ Positive coverage of media/Positive public reaction	With initial start of the rapprochement at state level, CSOs found room to express their motives, contributed the process
State Level	State and Societal Level	Societal Level

Table 4: Pre-1999 period Turkish-Greek Civil Society Initiatives

Greek-Turkish Union	1938, Greece
Turkish-Hellenic Friendship Association	1949, Turkey
Greek Committee for International Détente and Peace	1955, Greece
Organization for Peace	1979, Turkey
Abdi İpekçi Peace and Friendship Prize	1979, Greece and Turkey
Greek-Turkish Friendship Committee	1986, Greece
Turkish-Greek Friendship Association	1987, Turkey
Turkish-Greek Business Council and Greek-Turkish Business Council	1988, Greece and Turkey
Journalists for Peace in the Aegean and Thrace	1996, Greece and Turkey
Helsinki Citizens Assembly	1996, Greece and Turkey
AEGEE Greek-Turkish Cooperation	1996, Greece and Turkey
WINPEACE (Women's Initiative for Peace)	1997, Greece and Turkey
ICOMOS (International Council of Monuments and Sites)	1997, Greece and Turkey
Greek-Turkish Forum	1998, Greece and Turkey

Table 5

Years	Pre-1999 in total	2000-2001	2002-2003	2004-2005	2006-2007	2008-2011	2012-2014	Post-1999 in total
Number of agreements signed between Greece and Turkey	**19**	16	7	6	4	22	25	**80**

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