



**Europe and the Mediterranean
Convergence, Conflicts and Crisis
WORKING PAPER SERIES**

RAMSES²

**Beware the Turks are
Coming:
Reproducing Turkish
Nationalism(s) through
the Press Coverage of
Football Games**

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RAMSES Working Paper 7/06
October 2006

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About RAMSES2: RAMSES2 is a Network of Excellence on Mediterranean Studies funded by the European Commission under the 6th Framework Programme. Oxford's contribution to RAMSES2 is a collaborative endeavour of the European Studies Centre and the Middle East Centre, which is run by SEESOX. Launched and coordinated by the Maison Méditerranéenne de Sciences de l'Homme in Aix-en-Provence, RAMSES2 involves 36 academic institutions from Western Europe, the Balkans and the Middle East researching the history, societies and current politics of the wider Mediterranean area. Its ambition is to create a new field of Mediterranean studies by bringing together the hitherto disparate scholarship on the different littoral subregions and countries. Through its activities, the network seeks to supplement the efforts of the European Union to bolster cross-Mediterranean integration via the Barcelona Process, the newly-instituted Neighbourhood Policy as well as the enlargement framework covering now the Balkans and Turkey. RAMSES2 investigates the Mediterranean as a geo-historical space marked by various patterns of exchange and cross-fertilisation in order to transcend the socio-political, economic and cultural fractures characterising it at present.

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- The impact of imperial legacies and memories on border conflicts;
- The transformation and resolution of border conflicts.

The RAMSES2 sub-project run by St Antony's brings together a group of scholars from the European Studies Centre, the Middle East Centre, Maison Française and the Department of Politics and International Relations. The steering committee includes Kalypso Nicolaidis (Chair), Othon Anastasakis, Richard Caplan, Philip Robins and Michael Willis.

BEWARE THE TURKS ARE COMING!
REPRODUCING TURKISH NATIONALISM(S) THROUGH THE PRESS
COVERAGE OF FOOTBALL GAMES

Emre Gökalp

Summary

This paper examines the (re)production of Turkish nationalist discourse(s) between 1990 and 2002 through the representation of international matches of Turkish football clubs in the Turkish sport and mainstream press. The analysis demonstrates that the notion of national identity propagated by many press outlets is based on a conception of Turkish citizenship that is decidedly not multi-cultural. The notion of Turkish nationalism in these media representations is based on exclusive discourses, thus contributing to a reproduction of essentialist and ethnicist conceptions of Turkish national identity, distinguishing between the 'self' and a variety of 'others', and mobilizing old and more novel narratives of 'enmity'. It appears that these mechanisms of 'otherizing' play a central role in the maintenance of Turkish national identity under the stress of multiple pressures on established notions of what it means to be 'a Turk'.

Media, football and national identity; an uneasy relationship

If nationalism is conceptualized as a 'discourse' (Calhoun, 1997:3; Billig, 1995:10) and system of representation rather than a natural, given and fixed category, nationalism and national identity should be questioned as fluid categories that are constantly reproduced. Hence, the critical question is which discursive practices are mobilized to reproduce the nation and its ostensibly solid national identity, and how common sense perspectives of national belonging and nationalism are constructed. As I argue in this article, the role of cultural practices is central for understanding the reproduction of nationalism and national identities. This paper, therefore, focuses on the question of the nature and mode of reproduction of nationalist discourses in Turkey's sport press. Particular attention will be paid to the question of how the sport press constructs the nation as a natural and homogenous unity, and reinforces a hegemonic perception of national identity.

A growing number of studies have already emphasized the link between the press coverage of sport events and nationalist mobilization (Clarke and Clarke, 1985; Blain et al, 1993; Rowe, 1996, 1999; Duke and Crolley 1996; Giulinotti, 1999; Maguire et al, 1999a, 1999b; Crolley and Hand 2002 ; Bishop and Jaworski, 2003). Indeed, there is an obvious inter-penetration between sports, the reproduction of nationalist discourses, and the reaffirmation of inequalities based on class, gender and ethnicity. As Higson puts it, “[T]he culture of nationality” is developed and promoted by the media in sports pages in order “to win the consent of the people to a shared image of the nation and identity” (Higson, 1998: 354,356). This close relationship between sport and nationalism becomes even more obvious during international sporting events. The nation is reproduced and confirmed as a coherent and unproblematic unity. Thus, the press coverage of international tournaments, fulfils a pivotal role in imagining the nation as a community belonging to ‘us’, as opposed to ‘other(s)’.

In this article, I examine the reproduction of Turkish nationalist discourses through the representation of international matches involving the Turkish national team and the *Galatasaray* football club in two high-circulation daily newspapers, *Sabah* and *Hürriyet*, as well as two daily sport tabloids, *Fanatik* and *Fotomaç*, in the period 1990-2002.¹ I explore the discourses deployed by various newspapers and examine the resources mobilized for the reproduction of national identity – such as discourses of national unity, homogeneity, shared past, and glorious future. I also look into the discursive strategies that are employed to construct (Turkish) national uniqueness and forms of otherness, in order to demonstrate how the rival teams and their countries/nations are ‘otherized’ by the aforementioned newspapers.

The recent upsurge in Turkish nationalist fervor is not surprising. In the early 1990s, during a brief interlude of Turkish regional influence in the Central Asian Turkic-speaking Republics and the mounting separatist violence in the Kurdish regions, slogans such as ‘Turkey is the biggest’ and ‘There are no true friends to Turks other than Turks’ were often to be heard in stadiums and in the public debate. In the mid- and late 1990s, however, a series of internal and external events inflicted a damaging blow to Turkish popular self-confidence, if not of the nation as a whole: the economic crises in 1994 and 1999, the Marmara earthquake in 1999, and the increasingly lethal conflict between state security forces and the outlawed PKK (Kurdish Workers’ Party) in Southeast Turkey that had left around 37,000 dead by 1999. These crises and shocks damaged the popular self-image of Turkey as a regional leader in the Middle East, Central Asia and the Balkans

and further compromised the sense of pride attached to this image. However, a parallel process of ‘victories’ fuelled nationalist sentiment through media representations of popular cultural and sporting successes in the early 2000s, such as Sertap Erener’s winning contribution to the Eurovision song contests, Turkey’s success in the UEFA Cup (2000) and the 2002 World Football Championship. This coverage of sport successes by large segments of the Turkish media took on the function of an antidote for the crisis in self-confidence; it also legitimized a nationalist discourse, which ultimately sanctifies Turkishness and what is considered as the Turkish nation (Bora, 2003). As Rowe argues concisely ‘the more the national-political, economic, and military sovereignty is undermined the greater the need for states to construct a semiotically potent cultural nation’ (Rowe et al, 1998:133).

This cultural nation, or at least its popular representation in the stadiums, was rescued, to a great extent, by the successes of the Istanbul-based Galatasaray Football Club.ⁱⁱ The successes of Galatasaray and the national team in the 1990s coincided with the commercialization of football clubs in Turkey, which resulted in the emergence of a profitable and productive football industry. This was coupled with the rapid expansion of private TV and radio networks, the spectacular growth of the media industry, and the flourishing of sports media, in particular. The media is vital in generating public interest that makes football a profitable business. The sports media, in turn, fashions news that guarantee optimum profit, a high circulation, and high ratings. After all, from the vantage point of publishers and programme editors, sport is ‘a valuable consumer commodity which has to be packaged in an attractive and therefore marketable linguistic form’ (Crolley and Hand, 2002).

It is no coincidence that the sport media in the 1990s played a double game: first, it maximized the profit from the success stories of Galatasaray and the national team and secondly, it concealed what had befallen Turkish identity and its self-image. Hence, during the 1990’s, a quantitative increase in the sports coverage in the high-circulation dailies was complemented by a qualitative shift in the linguistic strategies emerging from the newsrooms. Metaphors of war and violence, foul language and extreme nationalist phrases came to dominate sports coverage, further accentuated by sexist and militarist phrases.

The Empirical Case: From the Pressroom to the Stadiums

Exploring the various articulations of the media discourse on Turkish national identity, I shall now differentiate the empirical evidence into a number of sub-categories. These are: 1) The representation of ‘Turkishness’ as an essential marker for prowess and superiority, 2) Turkish national identity and Europe as the ‘other’, 3) ‘Turning the opponent into an ‘enemy’ and, finally, 4) Fanatic violent nationalism and xenophobia.

1. The representation of ‘Turkishness’ as an essential marker for prowess and superiority

In the period under study, news headlines were laden with inciting metaphors suggesting Turkish prowess and the superiority of Turkishness against European teams in the most essentializing manner.

Turkish shock in Europe (**October 22, 1993-Hürriyet!**)
You are a Turk, so you crush them today! (**October 27, 1992-Fotomaç**)
We are the Turks, and we can never be defeated! (**September 9, 1994-Fotomaç**)
Turks can’t be beaten; martyrs don’t die! (**June 6, 1999-Star**)
The mere phrase of ‘Turk’ became a nightmare for Milan! (**March 8, 2001-Hürriyet**)
The slogan is clear: We are the Turks, We are right and we’re gonna succeed! (**September 5, 2001-Fanatik**)

The related headlines in that period suggestively imply that only being a Turk is sufficient enough to defeat the ‘rival’ team. It emphasizes that being a Turk is the key for having an ‘essence’ to guarantee their ‘success’. It is noteworthy that these headlines refer to ‘Turks’ rather than to ‘Turkish players’ or ‘Turkish spectators’. Another important point is that the primary recipient of the representations of ‘Turkish prowess’ is Europe, and not the world in general. As we will see later, one of the major dilemmas of Turkish nationalism, the dual opposite pair of admiration and rejection of Europe and the West in general is noticeable in the quoted headlines. Even in cases where European teams are not referred to, ethnicist and essentialist nationalist discursive structures are widely evident in the news text. Some examples include:

Happy he who calls himself a Turk! (October 11, 1998-Sabah)
The sound of the Turk’s Footsteps (May 17, 2000-Fanatik)
Beware, the Turks are coming! (June 14, 2002-Star)
Hard enough, but Turks like it hard (June 19, 2002-Sabah)
The Magnificent Turks (June 30, 2002-Hürriyet)
Turks, teach them a good lesson (June 30, 2002-Hürriyet)

This over-lexicalisation of the singular use of term ‘Turk’, not only in the headlines but also in leads and news reports, is striking. ‘Turk’ appears as an all-encompassing category that blurs the distinctions between the players, the spectators, and the Turkish communities in Turkey and Europe. As Fairclough argues, “discourse analysis is sensitive to absences as well as presences in texts – to representations, categories of participant, constructions of participant identity or participant relations which are not found in a text” (Fairclough, 1995: 58). The inflated and exclusionary use of the term ‘Turk’ is possible only because of the absence of alternative lexical choices. The lexical items of ‘Turkish citizens,’ ‘citizens of Turkey,’ ‘citizens of the Turkish Republic,’ ‘our citizens’ and ‘Turkish society’ remain largely absent from the language of the sport pages. Instead, the term ‘Turkish nation’ appears frequently, in addition to the over-lexicalization of the exclusive use of the term ‘Turk(s)’. Hence, an ethnic and essentialist conception of Turkish nationalism is manifested and solidified through the presence of ‘specific’ lexical choices representing the homogeneity of the Turkish nation and through the absence of lexical items that refer to multi-cultural forms of citizenship.

2. Turkish National Identity and Europe as the Other

One of the central tensions inherent to the creation of Turkish national identity is grounded in the paradox of emulation of the West and Europe as epitome of civilization, modernity, wealth and prosperity on the one side, and the hostility towards the same pair West/Europe that is considered to be the cultural/political ‘other’, and at times the ‘enemy’.ⁱⁱⁱ This tension/paradox is apparent in the headlines before European football matches as well as in the public debate. The following popular slogan of the 1990s, ‘*Europe Europe! Hear our voice, hear the uproar of the marching Turks*’, is the gnomic example of this paradox of emulation/admiration/need for affirmation versus otherizing/rejection.

Whether admiration or otherizing, the discourses of both popular football and the football press in Turkey are obsessed with Europe as the central point of reference, and longing for affirmation by the other seems to be the guiding principle. Hence, to beat European clubs is the most important success in the Turkish sports press, as it gives opportunity to be both in and outside Europe. The victories of Turkish teams against European football clubs make it conceivable to address Europe as a single, unified entity,

while they allow newspaper readers to feel European and pride themselves in being the ‘best’ in Europe.

Come on Cim Bom (term used by fans of Galatasaray), bring Europe to its knees! (November 25, 1992-Sabah)
We are the Kings of Europe (September 29, 1994-Hürriyet)
European Cim Bom! (October 1, 1998-Sabah)
Oi! Europe... have you seen?? (March 3, 2000-Star)
Cim Bom, the King of Europe! (August 26, 2000-Star)
Hit it, hit it, let it groan, let the whole of Europe listen! (November 20, 2001-Star)

Before moving on to discuss the construction of the ‘opponent’ team/country and Europe’s image as ‘enemy’, I would like to insert an additional level of analysis. The use of slang and foul language in sport headlines can be traced back to the mid-1970s, while it reached unprecedented forms in the 1990s. The sport press began to present international competitions in a syntactic and lexical order that stripped the ‘rival’ team and its players of their dignity by way of rude jargon, while glorifying the Turkish team.

We will screw Poland in Turkey (September 24, 1992-Fotomaç)
Our Galatasaray writes an epic by screwing Manchester (November 4, 1993-Fotomaç)
A father (male) Turkey mounted on the English (November 4, 1993-Hürriyet)
Come on my Turkey, tear the Dutch into pieces, show your strength (April 2, 1997-Sabah)
Kiss the Vikings, then come back (October 7, 2000-Star)
Let my Turkey strike, let the dogs go wild (June 22, 2002-Pas)

The use of slang, street jargon and derogatory language objectifies and genders the ‘opponent’ team and country, a strategy that is more common in the sports/football papers, with an “average, male, with primary school education” as target group (Quoted in Bora, 2001:565).

Moon and crescent toppled Holland with a single goal! (April 3, 1997-Sabah)
Our nationals are determined to vanquish Germany (October 10, 1998-Taraftar Fotomaç)
We toppled the three-time world champion Germans once more after 47 years (October 11, 1998-Hürriyet)
Come on boys, finish the Finns! (October 14, 1998-Fanatik)
We are proud, we are honored... We beat the home team Belgium (June 20, 2000-Hürriyet)

It is evident that it is not the ‘rival’ team but rather its country (Germany, Holland, Belgium, etc.) that is subjected to the aforementioned acts of ‘toppling’ or ‘vanquishing’. Moreover, the subject, ‘Turkish national team’, is taken out of these sentences and replaced by the first personal pronoun, thereby putting ‘Turks’ and ‘Turkey’ in place of the active subject. In this way, the national team’s victory over another team becomes the

Turks'/Turkey's victory over another nation/country described in pejorative terms. As mentioned earlier, slang and vulgar language are more frequently used in the sport press. However, some high circulation newspapers like Hurriyet also use sexually suggestive language that intends to emasculate the rival team/nation/country, while it reasserts Turkish prowess (cf. Bora and Canefe, 2002:659) As seen in the examples, 'laddish talk' as a sign of bravado, courage and righteousness is very common in the sports press. It is hence not surprising that sexism, masculinity, and nationalism are well articulated in this rhetoric.

Hence, I argue that the analysis of sexism in the nationalist representation of wars and battles is directly applicable to the analysis of news reports on international football matches. That is to say, the gendering of military actions and the gendering of football matches employ the same discursive strategies. As the 'otherized' nation is constructed with reference to a female body, so is the 'other' nation's team. The ultimate victory, therefore, is not achieved with the defeat of the 'opponent' on the football pitch. The final triumph and satisfaction comes with the opponents' symbolic fall from grace, and his sexual subjugation. Hence, the lexical choices of toppling and emasculating the opponent in order to undermine the opponent's dignity. This provides a symbolic satisfaction, rooted in a masculine fantasy over the emasculated/feminized 'opponent' team and country. This image of the rival team as an object of arousal and satisfaction achieved through sexual submission of the 'other' reminds us of the inherent 'pornographic' quality of both nationalist narratives and the press coverage of football.

3. Turning the opponent into an 'enemy'

The 1990s witnessed not only the reactivation of a 'division anxiety' within Turkish nationalist discourse, but also the othering of the West in general, and Europe in particular as the controlling force behind 'hostile plots against Turkey.' The popular nationalist narrative present in newspapers, public debates and on the streets codes Europe as the space which always excludes the Turks, supported the PKK and opposes Turkey's EU membership. Thus, a significant number of football matches were represented as an opportunity for retaliation. Therefore, competitions in these years were often described (and indeed, materialized) as confrontations between two sides, in which the European teams were depicted as the 'enemy'.

Europe is going to be bombed (**September 16, 1992-Fotomaç**)
Boys! Tear down this Europe (**October 26, 1988-Sabah**)
This team is a revenge battalion (**December 13, 1994-Fotomaç**)
This is a national war! (**September 29, 1992-Fotomaç**)
This is the time of revenge (**March 2, 2000-Star**)
The revenge samba (**June 23, 2002-Star**)

Violence and militarism in the sport press is not particular to Turkey. However, with the 1990s, the prevalent use of military metaphors and macho and chauvinist language has reached a critical level, making the Turkish football press as powerful and destructive as hooliganism.^{iv} Recurrent references to metaphors of war, violence, and sexual subjugation are a case in point.^v

They are ready for battle! (December 9, 1992-Fotomaç)
May God bless your war! (September 23, 1992-Sabah)
Fight until victory! (April 2, 1997-Hürriyet)
We have warrior souls! (March 22, 2001-Fanatik)
Terim's termination plan for Arsenal is ready. (May 7, 2000)
They've placed the bombs down the slope. (September 31, 1992-Fotomaç)
National team bombarded! (June 21, 2000-Hürriyet)
Siege... The battle hour: 21.30. Our footballers to appear on the field are demanded: 'Fight for 90 minutes' (November 10, 2001-Fanatik)

Turkish national identity, in these headlines, is above all militarized, thanks to the over-lexicalization of images of war and warriors, while the notion of a nation under threat is also reproduced. In the examined sample, the metaphors related to conquest, 'siege', 'invasion' and 'military occupation' are central. Often, this lexical preference is related to the siege of Vienna.

Lion, shoot the goal, besiege Vienna! (August 11, 1999-Fanatik)
This time, Vienna is conquered! (November 11, 2001-Sabah)
Vienna siege. 20,000 Turks in the match. (November 11, 2001-Hürriyet)
Turkish invasion of Vienna! (November 11, 2001-Sabah)
We've captured Vienna! Vienna, a Turkish city. (November 11, 2001-Fanatik)

Why does the sport press depict Vienna as a city to be conquered? The latter of the two sieges of Vienna in 1529 and 1683 marked the furthest expansion but also the decline of the Ottoman Empire in Europe. 'Vienna' has become a traumatic historical signifier in

the collective subconscious of Turkish national identity. The systematic conquest of Vienna in the Turkish sport press began in 1999, the same year the extreme rightwing Nationalist Action Party (MHP) came to power as a part of a coalition government. In this respect, the continuous and symbolic ‘conquest of Vienna’ in the examined sample is one of the key manifestations of nationalist narratives in the sport press. In effect, the continuous and symbolic ‘conquest of Vienna’ in the Turkish sports press represents the key point in the articulation of the Turkish nationalist discourse by the press. With the victories of Galatasaray or the national football team against Austrian teams, the ‘glorious past full of heroism and victory’ can be enacted and performed, and the conquest of Vienna realized retrospectively.

However, it should be noted that beyond the ‘Vienna obsession’ the Turkish sports press is also marked by an irredentist fantasy with a wider span.

<p>Going for invasion (November 17, 1992-Sabah) Copenhagen, the 82nd province! (May 18, 2000-Fanatik) The city of Arnhem invaded by Turkish supporters (June 12, 2000-Hürriyet) We conquered Copenhagen. The streets are filled with crescent-and-star flags; Copenhagen has nearly become a Turkish city. (May 18, 2000-Hürriyet) Turkish invasion 10,000 Turks were at Hardturm Stadium. Expatriates from Belgium, Austria and Germany invaded Zurich (August 10, 2000-Sabah); Mom, the Turks are coming! The nightmare of the Germans, Turkish supporters gained superiority in Hertha-GS and Germany-Turkey matches. Today, at least 30,000 Turks are expected in the 55,000-capacity stadium (March 2, 2000-Sabah) We have conquered Osaka. Turkish supporters raided to Osaka (June 23, 2002-Hürriyet) We have also conquered Seoul (June 14, 2002-Fotomaç)</p>

Apparently, only the competitors’ defeat in their own stadium is represented as a conquest of that city or country. Further, the sports press emphasizes the large number of supporters with Turkish origin in the stadiums; the ‘expatriate’ Turks, many of whom are in fact citizens of their host countries, are also referred to as ‘Turks’. Parts of the Turkish press, therefore, define Turkish national identity and being Turkish in terms of ethnicity and origin, rather than as a bond of citizenship.

Reconstructing the ethnic and chauvinist strands of national identity, the examined newspapers suggest a re-articulation of parochial nationalism with pan-Turkish and irredentist discourses. This relationship would have been quite understandable under the conditions of the early or mid 1990’s, when the image of a Turkish world from the Adriatic to the Chinese Wall was propagated by government agencies, popularizing pan-

Turkish vocabulary, albeit, ultimately to no avail. The pan-Turkish dream was abandoned as soon as it emerged, the vocabulary, however, seem to have struck a chord with the football correspondents.

The resilience of the irredentist thread is also a reminder that the sport press does not simply reflect dominant discourses. Rather, the Turkish sport press appears to have been reproducing an ardent nationalist discourse on different levels that mollifies the crises of national confidence and/or national identity. At the same time, and as a function of the political violence in the 1990s, it is fair to say that imaginations based on violence and war, have permeated the public sphere and entered daily life. Another underlying discursive *motif* is that of martyrdom and heroism. Thus, in the discourse of sports pages, the ‘rival’ team is ‘an enemy’ that must be ‘murdered’. During religious holidays such as the *Kurban Bayrami* (Feast of Sacrifice), the metaphors become even more belligerent.

Eye for Eye, Blood for Blood! (November 27, 1992-Fotomaç)
We beheaded them! (October 19, 1994-Hürriyet)
Cim bom slit their throats! (17 Mart 2000-Taraftar Fotomaç)
We played to death (October 13, 1994-Hürriyet)
We’ll slaughter Leeds! (April 6, 2000-Fanatik)
Today is the feast day, Mallorca is the *Kurban* (the sacrifice) (March 16, 2000-Fanatik)
Leeds is the new sacrificial victim! (March 25, 2000-Sabah); Milan is the *Kurban* (March 7, 2001-Sabah)
Turkey welcomes the Kurban Feast for cutting the English (February 27, 2002-Star)

These examples suggest the discourse of the popular sport press reinforce and reproduce sexist, racist and ethnocentric stereotypes. In addition, by using violence as an object of entertainment and of othering the opponent team, the football press arguably represents football matches through a language of ‘grotesque’ nationalism.

4. Fanatical/violent nationalism and xenophobia

The discourse of fanatic violent nationalism, blended with xenophobia and, at times, racism, has predominated football matches, and probably contributed to small-scale disturbances as well as to grave conflicts resulting in the death of supporters. In this respect it will be useful to investigate the representations of some ‘unfortunate’ and

‘unpleasant’ football matches, namely, the matches of Galatasaray vs. Leeds United, and Galatasaray vs. Paris Saint Germain.

The Galatasaray-Leeds United match in April 2000 was overshadowed by a case of murder. Two Leeds supporters, Kevin Speight and Christopher John Loftus were stabbed to death by a group of Galatasaray hooligans in Taksim Square in Istanbul.

The British provoke the Turks: 1 dead, 15 injured. (April 7, 2000-Star)

Unpleasant event in Taksim. When a group of 100 Leeds supporters, who got intoxicated at a bar in Beyoğlu went to Taksim and started to provoke the passers-by, a serious trouble occurred.

Murderer of hooligans arrested (April 7, 2000-Fotomaç)

Ali Demir, the murderer of three hooligans, who lost their lives in the events in Taksim, was arrested yesterday. Ali Demir pleaded guilty.

Our embarrassment (April 7, 2000-Hürriyet)

Stabbing and killing the British hooligans in the tumult at Taksim square, Ali Demir and Özkan Balcı have been arrested.

The other side of the coin (April 7, 2000 Hürriyet)

1-They attacked the passers-by physically and verbally.

2-They harassed the women in Taksim physically and verbally.

3-They wanted to take off the Turkish flag hung on a shop window. The hooligans have been found to be responsible for the events in Taksim, which have upset the football world deeply. It has been detected that a group of 100 hooligans have come to Taksim and caused a scandal, taking much alcohol and disturbing the people around.

Clear this filth (April 7, 2000-Sabah)

Football louts with murderer spirit have disgraced Turkey to the world. Galatasaray’s victory has been shadowed, our image contaminated. They have upset the success.

The British always do it! (April 7, 2000-Taraftar Fotomaç)

The British hooligans have interfered in 23 big events in the last 25 years; during this period 125 supporters have died. The Islanders have shadowed sports with their deeds.

After the events in Taksim, which have resulted in the death of two Leeds supporters the other night, the British hooligans have been located at the centre of agenda again.

The murder of the two British supporters is relayed in passive mode, hence the active agency and responsibility of the Turkish supporters are hidden within the syntactical structure of the paragraphs. Moreover, as regards the act of murder by the Turkish supporters, the semantic attempts to deny the position of the responsible subject are not restricted to passive sentences and nominalization. The expressions ‘*The British provoke*

the Turks, 'The British always do it', construct a deteriorating signification so as to suggest that the British fans are the active perpetrators of the crime and thus indirectly responsible for their own death. The strategy of the examined newspapers implies provocation, downplays the murder, and normalizes it.^{vi}

Calls for revenge by some hooligan groups primarily in England are used as a pretext for a counter-attack, evoking even a national mobilization for war.

They have cast a shadow over our victory (April 8, 2000-Hürriyet)

The British press brought the events to their headlines, rather than the success of Galatasaray. The newspapers of the Island gave secondary place to Galatasaray's success over Leeds in yesterday's news.

Tabloid Heads (April 9, 2000-Hürriyet)

Irresponsible British tabloid newspapers have turned the death of two Leeds supporters into a blood feud. Attacks to Turkish business have started.

The spirit of the Crusades has re-emerged (April 8, 2000-Fanatik)

The foul British who cannot take Cim Bom's victory have started a campaign against our country. We've watched this film before. The same scenario, the enemies are on duty again. The ones who cannot stand Turkey and our Galatasaray team have started tricky plans. The British who cannot accept Galatasaray's victory show their ugly faces instead of respecting.

After centuries the spirit of the Crusades haunting us again... Presenting the unpleasant events before the Leeds United match in Turkey as an excuse, the Dutch hooligans have called the British hooligans for cooperation via the Internet to attack the Turkish audience in the finals of European Football Championship.

Despite the fact that the initial victims of this event were British supporters, the reference to the crusades firmly restores the status of the victim to the Turks. By doing this, the examined newspapers resolve the crisis of national self-confidence and identity, while exploiting the 'national hysteria', they incited in the first place.

The following analysis of another unpleasant match demonstrates that much of the Turkish sports press resorts to more or less the same representational strategy. According to the newspapers,^{vii} in the match of Paris Saint Germain against Galatasaray, a fight broke out between a group of French and Turkish spectators, because of the initial attacks of French supporters. Following are the headlines related to this fight:

The ugly French (March 14, 2001-Sabah)

In the PSG-GS match, the French spectators attacked the Turkish supporters. The tense Turkish-French relationship, caused by allegations of the so-called Armenian genocide was reflected in the tribunes. The events that had begun before the match increased during the break with *the French' attacking to the Turks*, the Turkish spectators barely survived.

Genocide rehearsal! (March 14, 2001-Sabah)

The French police slept, the Turkish supporters hardly survived. The tense atmosphere before the match resulted in attacks during the break.

During the break, the atmosphere became rather tense. The Armenian flag in the tribunes drove the Turks crazy. Sticks, stones and bottles started to pour from the tribunes... The place turned into a battlefield.

Shame on you Paris (March, 14 2001-Hürriyet)

Foul events in the PSG-GS match

French supporters waving the Armenian flag and provoking the Turks attempted to lynch them.

The shameless (March 14, 2001-Hürriyet)

When French of Armenian origin annihilated the Turks, the outrage broke.

At the 55th minute of the match, a fight broke out between the Turkish supporters who reacted against the flag of Armenia and French supporters of Armenian origin.

They are French to humanity (March 14, 2001-Fotomaç) ('Being French' is an informal saying in Turkish which means being unaware of the situation)

Left without any claims, the French beat the Turkish supporters and threw them in the stadium.

The security forces merely watched the events; the match was suspended for 28 minutes.

Football terror in Paris (March, 14 2001-Fotomaç)

The French police invited trouble. The French revealed their real faces to the whole world.

The latest scandal in Paris (March 14, 2001-Fanatik)

The French, who had been considering giving a humanity lesson by constructing an Armenian monument at the centre of Paris, attacked our expatriates barbarously. The police watched them, after a 25-minute break, PSG won the match with a score 2-0.

Such barbarism is impossible (March 14, 2001-Fanatik)

... Supporting the so called Armenian proposal to construct an Armenian monument at the centre of Paris, the French came to Parc des Princes Stadium to spew out their barbarism.

The French, three monkeys (March 15, 2001-Hürriyet)

The racist French beat a handful of Turks to death in GS match, but the French media pretended not to see this event in the middle of Paris.

It should be stated that most of the newspapers report the event as the attack of the French on the Turks, while *Hürriyet* defines the event to be 'a fight between the Turkish audience and a group of French of Armenian origin' (14 Mart 2001-Hürriyet, p.29). Although there is some explanation that the event broke out because of mutual scuffles,

in certain texts – again – by means of generalization, the statement ‘the French attacked the Turks’ is clearly intentional. Hence, the whole French public is represented as ‘shameless,’ ‘inhumane,’ ‘the barbaric attackers of our expatriates,’ ‘the ones deprived of humanity,’ and finally as ‘racist’ because ‘the French audience’ ‘provoked’, ‘attacked’ and ‘attempted to lynch the Turks.’ In addition, by means of metonymy, the French public is reproved through immediate address in the expression ‘Shame on you Paris.’ Furthermore, the cited articles code these events by presenting it as a retaliation to ‘the genocide proposal’ which was put forward by the French government during that period.

Conclusion

As I have shown above, the hegemonic notion of national identity in the Turkish sport press, is bereft of civic concepts of identity. Terms such ‘the citizens of Turkey’, ‘citizens of the Turkish Republic’, ‘our citizens’ or ‘Turkish society’ appear rarely, if at all. The examined texts refer to the ‘Turkish nation’ in addition to the over-lexicalization of the exclusive use of the term ‘Turk(s)’. This, in my view, constitutes a reproduction of ethnic and banal nationalism. The sport press, in its headlines and columns, constructs the Turkish nation as a natural and homogenous unity, and consolidates essentialist conceptions of national identity. Furthermore, the conflict of admiration and resentment towards the West or Europe more specifically appears as one of the central paradoxes of Turkish national identity. It could be argued that this paradox or tension reproduced in the sports press discourse offer an almost schizophrenic characteristic.

There is no doubt that different strands of nationalist rhetoric have been at the centre of the Turkish discursive sphere since the 1990s. Hence, it shapes the larger framework of identity politics in large parts of the Turkish press and its usage of nationalist discourse. The majority of the Turkish print media employs vulgar representations of nationalism, what I called ‘nationalist hyperbolism,’ thereby playing its role in the hegemonization of nationalist patterns of cognition and behavior. The sport press, however, does not simply reproduce the mainstream nationalist discourse, but transcends it by disseminating a fanatical and belligerent discourse, that glorifies the suffering national self.

It might be argued that mainstream Turkish media, and especially the much more aggressive sport media, do not differ substantially from its counterparts in other

countries. Even if mentioned only implicitly, critical and humanistic voices exist within all Turkish newspapers, even in football tabloids such as *Fanatik* or *Fotomaç*.

In-depth comparative research, especially within South East Europe but also beyond, will help tackling the question of uniqueness versus comparability, and show to which extent the Turkish case is exceptional. Notwithstanding an answer, it could be suggested that the Turkish sport press plays a comparably prominent role in sustaining and reproducing national identity by 'otherising' and inciting, as do the tabloids in the United Kingdom.

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ⁱ The newspapers examined are the semi-tabloids *Sabah* (centre-right) and *Hurriyet* (centre-right), both with a circulation around 500,000, with an occasional reference to the tabloid *Star*. The sport tabloids under scrutiny are the leading two if its sort, *Fanatik* (Fanatic!) and *Fotomaç*, both with a circulation of 250,000 daily copies. The total daily circulation of newspapers in Turkey stands at about five million.

ⁱⁱ Out of 102 international matches against leading European football clubs between 1990 and 2002, Galatasaray won forty-six. The first time in Turkish football history, Galatasaray won the UEFA Cup in 2000. Thus, the club became a national signifier in Turkey. In addition to this, out of fifty-eight international matches in the Europe Championship and the World Cup between 1990 and 2002, the national football team won twenty-four.

ⁱⁱⁱ For a detailed discussion on the paradox of Turkish nationalism, see (Kadioğlu, 1996)

^{iv} As Dunning (1994:60) emphasizes, the sports press plays a critical role in the construction of football hooliganism as a social problem, by presenting the football matches sensationally and within the framework of military rhetoric.

^v Actions with undertones of sexual domination and violent assault are: 'knock over,' 'hollow,' 'bury,' 'hit,' 'pull down,' 'burn,' 'crush,' 'smash,' 'fight,' 'demolish,' 'conquer,' 'invade,' 'bump off,' 'destroy,' 'bombard,' 'stick' and 'sacrifice.'

^{vi} The newspaper *Star* went even further: ***Two Size! [Shame on you!]*** "We've pounded the hooligans' faces in the street and the stadium. We, the Turks welcome our European rivals with flowers and see

them off with applause. But we're sending you spitting on your faces. **Leeds supporters made to kiss the earth of the nation, by hitting their heads** (caption). **Leeds United supporters had blood bathing in Turkish bath!** (April 7, 2000-Star) (p. 28, headline). These headlines of the *Star* present a grave example of representing this event within a fascist and racist context.

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Let alone the historical/structural reasons for not accepting, the expressions such as 'the events that had started before the match' 'annihilated Turkish spectators' and 'a fight broke out between the Turkish spectators and the Armenian origin French' show that the fight was between two sides.