

**THE IMPACT OF THE AUGUST-SEPTEMBER 1999  
EARTHQUAKES ON GRECO-TURKISH RELATIONS: AN  
EXPLORATORY STUDY**

**by**

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***Note:** The present paper was presented at the 5<sup>th</sup> Conference of the European Sociological Association held in Helsinki, Finland, 28 August-1 September 2001, during a session organized by the Disaster and Social Crisis Research Network. Undoubtedly, some of the indicators (especially those pertaining to economics, tourist movements and violations of Greek air space) used in the present study to gauge change after the 1999 “twin” earthquakes in Turkey and Greece will have undergone change. It is posted on the website as a base study with the hope that it can stimulate follow-up studies that would assess more systematically the longer-term impacts of “natural disasters” on Greco-Turkish relations, whether the changes were permanent or ephemeral and whether natural disasters are causes of social change or just catalysts of ongoing changes. N.P.*

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## I. Introduction: Review of the Literature

It has been a common practice among social science researchers to use a stages model in their studies of natural disasters, the most common stages being the emergencies-time stage, the restoration phase, the recovery phase, the reconstruction and the mitigation phases. During the emergency-time phase, community studies of disasters have observed status leveling, moratoria on conflict, infrequent looting and high levels of community solidarity (See Drabek, 1986, pp. 179-188 for a review of the relevant literature). Conflicts of interest, discontent with state and local authorities, the attribution of blame for the management of the disaster, opportunities for innovations and the institution of new mitigation institutions are an integral part of the recovery and the reconstruction phase. However, Quarantelli (1989) has pointed out that the focus of disaster researchers on the recovery/reconstruction phase is usually very narrow; the exploitation of the recovery phase as an opportunity for change and innovation with regard to the adoption of new mitigation measures –especially in the less developed countries –has often been overlooked.

Perhaps it would not be an understatement to assert that the perspective of on disasters as collective phenomena that generate stress and conflict in the social system and can theoretically lead to all kinds of changes (not only those pertaining to future mitigation) has not been very prevalent, despite some early empirical studies in that direction (See below). No doubt, one reason may be the pre-eminence of a structural-functional approach that views natural disasters as external happenings rather than social processes integral to the social structure and considers that the main task of social systems is the restoration of normal status quo ante (Schorr, 1987). Looking at disasters as social processes, Dombrowsky (cf. Schorr, 1987) says that “ It is not that an earthquake devastates an area, but that the available knowledge and existing cultural protections of the area were not sufficiently developed to withstand it”. Along the same vein, he adds: “Disasters can be seen as important steps toward learning about the inadequacies of our cultural protections and toward asking the proper questions to improve such parts. In this way, disasters may be called the ‘necessary errors’ in our cultural process of trial and error”. And the more we learn about the social bases of disasters, the more we do to prevent them. This perspective, essentially based on the W.I. Thomas theorem (“definition of the situation”) constitutes the cornerstone of symbolic interaction theory, and has become a very common perspective

regardless of borders. Assuming that the causes of disaster and their impact are part of the social structure constitutes an important step to recognizing that if one wants to avert the negative impacts, he/she must change the social and culture structure.

The role of disasters and “adversity” as sources of social and cultural change has also been pointed out by other social researchers. Dror (1988, p. 267), in his study of Decision-making under Disaster Conditions (DDC) makes the following statement: “Can or should one utilize the adversity in order to achieve various disaster-unrelated goals, impossible to realize under ordinary conditions? Underlying this query is the desire to make various changes in reality, such as cleaning slum areas for example. Under ordinary conditions such changes may be infeasible, because of the strength of the status quo variables and the costs of slum clearance. But disasters loosen up reality and may permit quite a number of interventions, which may not really be necessary for handling the particular disaster but can be done under its umbrella. The utilization of disaster for desired changes, with nature providing the ‘destruction’ part of what Joseph A. Schumpeter called ‘constructive destruction’, constitutes a challenge for DDC. The issue is ignored in the relevant literature as well as practice. The point is all the more important because of its prescriptive implications.”

As implied above, as sources of collective stress for social systems and also as sources of potential changes, disasters can lead generally to two kinds of social and cultural changes. The first involves those changes, both “structural” (e.g. strengthening buildings) and “non-structural” (e.g. new building codes, education etc.) which are “disaster-related” and which purport to increase community resilience and mitigate the impact of future disasters. Quarantelli’s (1989) observations with regard to the narrow focus on the recovery phase notwithstanding, there has been a number of studies with a futuristic perspective and a broader focus on the recovery/reconstruction phases and a look at natural disasters as “windows of opportunities” for the institution of measures to prevent and mitigate the impact of future disasters (See for example Scanlon, 1976; Wolensky, 1984; Berke & Beatly, 1992). It should be mentioned here that the ecology movement and the IDNDR with their emphasis on “sustainable development”, probably have had an impact on the adoption of a broader re-orientation with regard to the recovery and reconstruction phases of disasters.

The second type of changes are “disaster-non-related” and pertain to changes in the social and cultural structure of a social system which are

not directly, apparently, or immediately related to disaster mitigation or civil protection. They may involve changes in the political, economic, and cultural systems, including new ways of interpreting the natural world, new ways of relating to the public administration, new manners of organizing the economy, new ways of relating to other people or even to other communities and nations. Without wanting to minimize the vital importance of the first category of changes, the present paper focuses on the second category, which in the long-run may also have a positive impact upon disaster prevention.

There have been few systematic empirical studies on the impact of disasters on general social system changes. Moreover, the results of these studies are conflictive.

Several of them report no impact or cannot conclude that there was a clear impact (Drabek, 1986, pp. 284, 294 ). Douty (1977), studying the impact of the 1964 Alaska earthquake on the organization of the labour market, could not attribute unequivocally the split of the City Front Federation or the demise of the Carmen's Union to the earthquake. Wright et al (1979), assessing the impact of floods, tornadoes and hurricanes in the U.S. during the 1960-70 decade on county social systems, found no discernible or consistent effects of the disasters on populations or housing stocks and on more specific characteristics such as housing values, rents, age composition, educational level and family income. Finally, in a review of the relevant literature, Perry & Hirose (1983) have noted that alterations in the power structure or significant changes in social institutions do not usually occur following disasters, although technological changes (in developing countries as part of recovery aid), changes in the man-made community (e.g. renovated structures) and the local economies due to the infusion of funds and resources may be more feasible.

On the other hand, several studies have observed sociocultural and community changes following disasters. Cattarinusi & Telia (1978) report that following the Friuli earthquake, mayors and entire councils were forced to resign, majorities shifted and the commissioners from the prefectures took over (Cf. Drabek, 1986, p. 293). Miller (1973), studying the impact of the Aberfan mine disaster in England, reported that "the people themselves say that they are different, that 'the community has been reborn', that there is a new tolerance, a new pride in the place and that the community association has been a 'lifeline of sorts'"(cf. Drabek, 1986, p. 296). Wolensky (1984), in his comparative community study of the impact of hurricanes, tornadoes and tidal waves on communities in

Wilkes-Barre Pennsylvania, Dayton, Ohio, and Galveston Texas, noted that mitigation types of changes (e.g. raising of the levees, floodproofing legislation) occurred in Wilkes-Barre but that the 1900 tidal wave in Galveston, that had caused 6.000 deaths, “triggered charter reform” and brought into existence a new local government institution--the “commission” (Drabek, 1986, p. 296). Perry & Hirose (1983), studying the social impact of two volcanic eruptions in the US (Mount St. Helen) and Japan (Mt. Usu) on the local tourist economies, noted comparable outcomes; “the tourist business became largely a day-time or day trip affair, requiring local business to increase reliance upon selling souvenirs and catering to the needs of short-term visitors.”

Aside from these empirical studies, there are also references to the generalized impacts of disasters. Rosenthal (1988, p. 277), for example, said that one of the latent functions of the 1953 flood disaster in Holland was to accelerate social and political change: “In some towns and villages the old social and political structure was ‘flooded’ by the water. In other places, predisaster cracks in the social system burst open. Here the disaster actually helped to settle the latent tension that had been building up in the preceding ten to fifteen years.” And finally, Mileti (1999, p. 94), in assessing the social impact of nuclear reactor disasters observed that a “notable ramification of Chernobyl was its role in the dismantling of the Soviet Union. Some commentators believe that the seeming inability of the central government to prevent the disaster, or to cope with the problems it caused for millions of people afterward, demonstrated to the Soviet people the “flaws of the system” (see Medvedev, 1990)...”

In studying the general impacts of disasters on social systems, several questions might be asked. First, what constitutes social or cultural change? Are changes in levels of employment per se social or cultural changes? Are changes in population composition or re-distribution changes? Are changes in displacement of power-holders or the occupation of position of power changes? The answer to all of these is probably “No”, unless it can be demonstrated that these changes are accompanied by changes in social and/or cultural organization or value systems. Second, do disasters constitute agents/causes of general social and cultural changes or are they catalysts, triggers or accelerators of nascent changes as the literature suggests (Drabek, 1986, p. 296; Mileti, 1999,p. 94; Rosenthal, 1988, p. 277). Third, and related to the second question, if disasters are not the main or only causes, what are the other sources of socio-cultural change and how can the comparative impact of the disaster and other factors can be assessed? Fourth, are there certain

characteristics of the disaster agent (e.g. “natural”, “technological”, scope and scale of destruction etc.) which are more likely to generate general social and cultural changes in a social system? Finally, a question may be raised as to the permanence of social and cultural changes resulting from disasters.

In regard to the last question, Perry and Hirose (1983) are of the opinion that social scientists need to better understand the moderate-term changes (three to seven years) before they try to examine the long-term effects (decade or more). With regard to the long-term effects, they make some interesting recommendations: “To develop any comprehensive view of the long-term consequences of disasters, social scientists appear to need to move in three directions: (1) we must use a framework for analysis which involves a social organization approach in the tradition of human ecology studies... (2) studies must be conducted on a great variety of disasters agents, particularly those involving fast periods of onset and multiple impacts and (3) we must conduct longitudinal studies covering the full span of a decade rather than correlational studies which simply collect and analyze data ten years after the impact.”

The present study, while not exactly fitting the ideal theoretical and methodological conditions recommended by Perry and Hirose (1983), represents an attempt to assess the impact of the 17 August 1999 and the 7 September 1999 Earthquakes on Greco-Turkish relations. The Turkish EQ had Imit as an epicenter, was 7.4 magnitude on the Richter scale, caused 17,255 deaths according to official estimates and about 44,000 injured and left between 400,000 and 600,000 homeless (Jalali & Gologlu, 2000)<sup>1</sup>. The Greek earthquake had as an epicenter the northern suburbs of Athens (Parnitha), was of lesser magnitude than the Turkish EQ (5.9 Richter), caused 143 deaths, about 2000 injured persons and left over 60,000 homeless.

Two things common in the two earthquakes besides the temporal proximity are: (1) the fact that these earthquakes struck urban areas where the power and elite structures of the two countries are concentrated and (2) the outpouring of help (rescue teams, seismologists, telegrams of support, medical and other supplies, blood donations, opening of bank accounts etc.) exchanged between Greece and Turkey during the emergency-time period on all levels of social organization (European Union, governmental, regional, local government, NGOs etc.) (See

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<sup>1</sup> A Council of Europe report (1999) puts the number of deaths at 17,000 and the number of homeless at 100,000, although some independent estimates (Mitchell, 2000) suggest that the number of deaths may be much higher since an estimated 30,000 people were unaccounted for.

Mitchell, 2001; “Ta Nea”, 20.8.1999, 23.8.1999, 9.9.1999). In fact, there seemed to be a lot of spontaneous exchanges, many of them emanating from the grass-roots level and overlooking reservations and expressions of pseudo-pride on higher levels of government, leading the Greek Minister of Foreign affairs to state: “The peoples in their wisdom are sending a message to the political elites of our two countries. They are telling us that we should not only help each other, but be friends.”<sup>2</sup>

We should say that this expression of solidarity toward the Turkish EQ victims was not the first one; the Greek government had sent rescue teams to previous Turkish EQ several times. However, this incident was unprecedented in terms of mass collective and reciprocal reactions. Perhaps it has to do with the almost temporal concurrence of the two earthquakes. Perhaps it has to do with the fact that these two EQs struck the urban elite centers. Perhaps it has to do with the fact that the North Anatolia fault which starts from eastern Turkey and culminates in the Sporades Islands of Greece, had a practical prognostic value for the Greeks. All these factors perhaps increased the common perception of danger and common fate and may have accounted for the greater mass mobilization, despite the historical animosities and polarization between the two nations.

## **II. Questions and Methodologies of Data Collection and Inference**

The question raised in the present analysis is the extent to which the expressions of solidarity between the two nations and peoples have attained a permanence beyond the emergency-time situation and have also impacted upon other domains of social organization, foreign relations, movements of people between the two countries, economic relations, the stereotypes held by the two peoples for the other and the handling of minority issues relevant to the other country. The question, of course, is a challenging one since these processes happened across countries, not within the classical community, unless one can view them in the context of the formation of a supra-community like the European Union.

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<sup>2</sup> According to an article in *Le Monde* (Kadritzke, 2000), “both sides are now encouraging relations at the level of the civil society, which was previously restricted. Almost 130 Greek and Turkish non-governmental organizations are involved in this new cooperation...” See also Jalali and Gologlu (2000) for whom the relations of civil society and the state following the Turkish 17.8.1999 Earthquake constitute a central theme of their presentation at the ASA meeting.

In order to answer these questions, we thought of a number of methods (analysis of domestic and foreign press, archival data, comparative study etc.) However, our original intention to use newspapers and a content analysis of relevant articles three months before (June-August 1999), three months immediately after (October-December 1999), and three months the following year (October-December 2000) did not materialize for the lack of time and economic resources. Instead, we decided at this stage, to rely more on the archival methodologies. We decided to explore (1) the bilateral agreements signed between the two countries following the EQs, (2) the Turkish tourist movements to Greece before and after the earthquakes, (3) the capital movements between the two countries before and after the two earthquakes (4) the violations of Greek airspace and the Flight Information Region (FIR) of Athens by the Turkish military planes before and after the EQs, (5) the developments with respect to the property rights of the Greek minority of Istanbul and (6) Gallup polls, done in Greece and Turkey, on the perceptions of the other (Turks or Greeks).

The simple working hypothesis is that in some of these domains (e.g. bilateral agreements, human and capital movements), we expect an increase. In others (e.g. violations of Greek airspace and the FIR of Athens), we expect a reduction in the number of incidents. In the case of the management of the property rights of the Greek minority of Istanbul we anticipated some signs of a resolution. Finally, in the case of Gallup polls, we anticipated a reduction of mistrust and social distance and the development of more positive images.

Since, as already indicated, sociocultural change has multiple causes, it would be instructive to briefly describe the social climate existent between Greece and Turkey during the last 25 years and before the occurrence of the EQ and also mention some events which could provide alternative explanations to changes in the above domains. First, one can mention the long-standing (over 25 years) Cyprus issue and the failure to reach a settlement. Second, one can also mention Turkey's refusal to recognize the legal rights of Greece in the Aegean, with regard to air space (10 miles), international waters (12 miles)<sup>3</sup> and the Flight Information Region (FIR of Athens). Third, and related to the above, are the almost daily violations of Greek air space and Athens FIR before the two earthquakes. Fourth, one can mention the claims by Turkey (during January 1996) over rock islands belonging to Greece which almost

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<sup>3</sup> Although by Law of the Seas Greece has the right to extend its international waters and has ratified it in its parliament, it has not in practice extended it. From her part, Turkey has threatened that such an extension would constitute *causis belli* for Turkey.

brought the two countries to the brink of war (Hickok, nd). Five, one can also refer to the abduction of Ocalan whom the Turks identified as a terrorist and most of the Greeks as a leader of the Kurdish liberation movement. Finally, one should mention the different orientations between the two countries with regard to settlement of their differences, with Turkey asking for bilateral talks on all issues that divide the two countries and Greece calling for multilateral talks and not accepting that there are any bilateral differences (Kadritzke, 2000) except for the settlement of the continental shelf issue in the International Court of Justice in Hague. These above six factors could be said to be sources of continuing tension between the two countries.

On the other hand, a number of developments which preceded the EQs could be mentioned which would be expected to lead to rapprochement and over-turn the cold-war climate existent between the two countries. First, one should mention the decision by the two Ministers of Foreign Affairs (G. Papandreou and I. Cem) made on 30 June 1999 in New York to start talks in order to “explore the possibilities of promoting cooperation between the two countries in “non-problematic” sectors or in sectors of “low-polarization” (e.g. tourism, the environment, economic-commercial relations, multilateral cooperation and security of citizens). This low-key politics meant that the two countries would maintain their positions in the “problematic” and “high-polarization” areas, but would attempt a rapprochement in low polarization areas, with the hope that, eventually, a solution could be accomplished in the more “problematic”, “high-polarization” areas. A second group of measures, which no doubt are in accord with this low-key politics, involve certain new measures taken by the Greek government for the benefit of the Moslem minority: abolishment of an anachronistic citizenship provision (Law 3370/1955) whereby Moslems in Thrace would lose their Greek citizenship if they emigrated permanently abroad and the instituting of quota admissions in Greek higher education for Moslem and Turkish descent children in an attempt to elevate their social status. Third, the enunciation of a platform by Foreign Minister Papandreou whereby the Moslem minority in Thrace (which is constituted by Turks, Pomachs, and Roma) could determine for themselves their ethnic identification. The last initiative was an unpopular position but sociologically, psychologically and pedagogically necessary for the minorities.

Two other events or processes which are crucial and which should be kept in mind as possible alternative explanations for the data are (1) the candidacy of Turkey in the EU and (2) the economic situation in Turkey. The first of these occurred during the EU Summit Conference in Helsinki

(December 1999). The decision to admit Turkey as a regular candidate was unanimous; Greece did not exercise its veto for the first time or attach any strings to Turkey's entrance beyond those which apply for all candidates (the Copenhagen criteria-1993 EU Summit Conference) and her usual statements regarding the need for progress in Cyprus and stability in the Aegean. It constitutes an historical question whether the decision of Greece not to use its veto power was affected by the euphoria following the EQs or was the result of other considerations and political pressures. In any case, changes in the indicators under study, following the two EQs, could also be attributed to the new rapprochement following the accession of Turkey to the EU.

In regard to the second factor, the Turkish economy, it is necessary to refer to the depressed state of the Turkish economy during the last three years with high annual rates of inflation (48% during April 2001), relatively high rates of unemployment (8,6%), the high debt of the social insurance system (\$3.4 billion in 1998), the bankruptcies of banks due to reduction of interest rates, etc. (Greek-Turkish Business Council, 2001) It has also been estimated that the Turkish EQ destroyed almost half of the country's productive capacity. The state of the Turkish economy also had its repercussions in our session, as two of the participants did not attend for economic reasons. Nonetheless, according to OECD, the Turkish economy is on the road to recovery with an expected annual rate of growth of 4.9% for 2001 and an expected decrease of inflation to a single digit number by 2003.

### **III. Results: Changes in the Selected Sectors**

We shall start with a presentation of the new bilateral agreements which is inclusive in terms of sectors. Then we shall look at the changes in Turkish tourist movements to Greece. This will be followed by an analysis of changes in capital flows between the two countries and the violations of Greek airspace by Turkish military planes. Next, we shall deal with the question regarding Greek minority property rights in Turkey. Finally, we shall analyze the results of the Gallup polls.

**A. Bilateral Agreements between Greece and Turkey.** Following a series of high-level meetings between the officials of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the two countries during the period, July-October 1999, the countries decided to sign nine bilateral agreements. These agreements involve cooperation and mutual assistance between the two countries with regard to (1) customs (2) tourism (3) science and

technology (4) maritime affairs (5) protection of the environment (6) the protection of investments (7) economic relations (8) science, education, culture and arts, sports, youth and mass media and (9) combating of crime, especially terrorism, organized crime, illicit drug trafficking and illegal immigration. The nine bilateral agreements have been ratified by the two parliaments. As of 18 July 2001, all of the bilateral agreements had been published in the Greek Government Gazette within a three month period (30 March-27 June 2001) and all but three had been published in the Turkish Government Gazette. Five of the bilateral agreements (tourism, science and technology, customs, protection of the environment and combating of crime) are already in the stage of implementation. Also, a number of these contain provisions for monitoring mechanisms such as the setting-up of joint committees (e.g. for tourism, science & technology, protection of the environment, cultural cooperation and combating of crime) which meet on a rotational basis in the two countries. Except for these inbuilt mechanisms, there is also a Coordinating Committee which monitors the work of the original six Working Groups that had been mandated to formulate the bilateral agreements and which meets at least once a year.

Two bilateral agreements which are of especial relevance to our D&SCRN are the one involving the protection of the environment and the other regarding cooperation on science and technology. The first also includes earthquakes (e.g. damage assessment, studies of the anti-seismic code, proposals for its modification) among the sectors for cooperation. Although its scope is restricted to technical aspects, it is possible to broaden the notion of “damage assessment” to also include “psycho-social costs”.<sup>4</sup> The second provides for joint research and development projects between scientists of the two countries, without restricting the scope, and specifies the necessary procedures. Members of the Network, from the respective countries, should explore the possibilities of joint comparative research on the long-term impact of the two earthquakes.

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<sup>4</sup> From the communication submitted to ERC by the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs (18.7.2001), it becomes evident that the cooperation between Greece and Turkey in regard to disasters and crises extends beyond the technical aspects of Earthquakes and involves cooperation on all matters of civil protection. During May of this year, a joint meeting of the civil protection authorities of the two countries took place in Ankara under the auspices of the UN/OCHA. It was decided to form a joint civil protection team and two centers, one in Ankara and one in Athens, which will be in direct communication around the clock. Also, during a meeting of the two Ministers of Foreign Affairs (24.6.2001), the decision was made to broaden the cooperation between the two countries beyond the concern with Eqs to also include cooperation with respect to protection from floods, landslides and desertification. Finally, it is significant to note that during a meeting of the Greek Minister of Foreign Affairs in Ankara (April 2001), it was decided that two countries should enter (Turkey) and ratify (Greece) the Ottawa Agreement in regard to clearance of the Greek-Turkish borders from land mines. The latter, besides constituting a good preventive measure, also carries much symbolic significance in that another symbol of war, animosity and polarization is being demolished.

In trying to isolate the impact of the earthquakes on this upsurge of bilateral activity between the two countries, we asked the informant from the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs about the number of bilateral agreements before the earthquakes. His response was that there had only been one, the one involving cultural-educational issues, which had been in existence since the decade of the 1950s. He also added that the bilateral agreements, recently signed with Turkey, have been signed with most of the other countries for many years. Simply, this had not been done with Turkey, for obvious reasons. The communication from the MFA concludes that the destructive EQs which struck both of the countries provided the opportunity for the development of a climate of solidarity between the two peoples which gave a new impetus to the ongoing bilateral talks. In conclusion, then, the two earthquakes became an important catalyst for the bilateral agreements and whatever impacts these agreements will have on Greco-Turkish relations.

**B. Turkish Tourism to Greece, 1998-2000.** The research design calls for statistics for both kinds of tourist flow, of Turks to Greece and of Greeks to Turkey. Unfortunately, we only have inflow statistics from Turkey to Greece. Greek outflow statistics to Turkey were not available. I addressed myself to Turkish colleagues for assistance regarding inflow statistics of Greek tourists into Turkey, but was not able to obtain them before the writing. In addition, I think it would have been methodologically proper to have had Turkish outflow statistics to another country, somewhat comparable to Greece (e.g. Italy) in order to better assess the impact of the earthquake factor. Instead, we use total foreign arrivals as a “comparison group”.

If we compare the last five months of 1998 (Table 1, bold), with the corresponding months in 1999, following the EQs, we see that except for the month of September, which was the first month after the disaster, there were increases in the Turkish arrivals for all the other three months. Increases were also noted for all foreign arrivals, although the magnitude of the increases were in all cases greater for the Turkish arrivals to Greece. Comparing the first six-month periods for the years 1999 and 2000 (data were available only up to June 2000), we also note substantial increases for all the six months for the Turkish tourists and minor increases for the total foreign arrivals. The total relative increase for the first six month of 1999-2000 for the Turkish tourists was 103.5%, while the corresponding figure for the total foreign arrivals was 4.52%. And these increases took place, despite the economic crisis in the last three years.

**Table 1. Tourist Arrivals to Greece from Turkey and other Sources, by Month, 1998-2000.**

Months	Turkish Arrivals			Total Foreign Arrivals		
	1998	1999	Change %	1998	1999	Change %
January	2,792	3,605	32.34	157,472	186,082	11.11
February	2,399	2,438	1.63	145,333	178,837	22.97
March	2,246	3,649	62.47	244,782	351,971	43.79
April	8,895	3,197	-64.46	610,610	671,240	9.93
May	6,544	4,330	-33.83	1,254,597	1,401,887	11.74
June	4,741	4,873	2.78	1,564,735	1,723,688	10.16
July	7,856	13,120	67.01	2,148,132	2,327,547	8.35
August	12,530	18,894	50.79	2,133,322	2,357,677	10.52
September	9,028	8,303	<b>-8.03</b>	1,649,923	1,771,736	<b>7.38</b>
October	6,663	8,442	<b>26.70</b>	987,977	1,098,322	<b>11.17</b>
November	3,380	5,109	<b>51.15</b>	255,519	291,166	<b>13.95</b>
December	2,701	4,452	<b>64.83</b>	201,320	245,775	<b>22.08</b>
Total	69,875	80,502	<b>15.21</b>	11,363,822	12,605,928	<b>10.93</b>
Month	1999	2000	Change %	1999	2000	Change %
January	3,695	4,114	<b>11.34</b>	186,082	201,778	<b>8.43</b>
February	2,438	4,291	<b>76.00</b>	178,837	187,569	<b>4.88</b>
March	3,649	10,006	<b>174.21</b>	351,971	345,223	<b>-1.92</b>
April	3,197	8,002	<b>150.30</b>	671,240	740,886	<b>10.38</b>
May	4,330	9,718	<b>124.43</b>	1,401,887	1,416,965	<b>1.08</b>
June	4,873	9,020	<b>85.10</b>	1,723,688	1,825,412	<b>5.90</b>
Total	22,182	45,151	<b>103.5</b>	4,513,705	4,717,833	<b>4.52</b>

Source: National Statistical Service of Greece, National Tourist Organization, Ministry of Development, August 2001.

Can we attribute these increases to the solidarity behavior worked up during the emergency time on the part of the two countries? Or could we attribute it to Greece's and Turkey's common decision (June 1999) to launch the "low profile" politics policy? Or could it be due to Greece's subsequent decision (December 1999) not to use its veto power and thus facilitate the integration of Turkey into the European Union? The latter cannot account for the increases in tourist flows during the October-December period, though the "low profile" politics could possibly account for it. In any case, it is possible that all these factors contributed their part to the tourist increases. Nonetheless, these questions could have been more efficiently answered if we had another comparison host country for Turkish arrivals and if we conducted sample surveys among tourists to gauge their travel motivations. Future research should also take

into account exchange and cost of living differences between sending and receiving countries since these also determine tourist movements.

The signing of a bilateral agreement on tourism is anticipated to further expand tourism between these two countries which are also competitors in the Mediterranean tourist market. Already, there have been three bilateral tourist *fora* (October 1999 in Bodrum, June 2000 in Rhodes and May 2001 in Marmarida) in which took part representatives from both public and private agencies (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2001).

**C. The Flow of Capital and Goods Between the Two Countries: Imports/Exports and Investments.** Focusing first on **trade** between the two countries, and specifically the volume of trade, we see that in terms of absolute figures, the volume for the year 2000 is the highest for the last five years. In terms of relative figures, and compared to 1999, there is a 33.3% increase. It is the highest increase in trade volume for the five year period. The largest increase in trade volume is accounted for by the large rate of increase (62.6%) of Greek exports toward Turkey—a situation which may undergo some change due to the devaluation of the Turkish lira, but which can be in part minimized by the transfer of Greek businesses to Turkey. According to the Greek-Turkish Business Council (Communication, 29.5.2001) the trade volume between the two countries is expected to reach \$3 billion in the immediate future.

**Table 2. Imports and Export Between Greece and Turkey, 1996-2000 (Million \$USA)**

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000*
Imports	231.2	290.3	369.2	384.4	388.4
Exports	354.0	431.3	345.1	334.4	543.9
Trade balance	122.8	141.0	-24.1	-30.0	155.5
Trade Volume	585.5	721.6	714.3	698.8	932.3
Change in imports (%)		25.58	27.18	-1.30	6.6
Change in exports (%)		21.84	-20.00	-3.10	62.6
Change in volume (%)		23.25	-1.01	-2.17	33.3

Source: National Statistical Service of Greece (NSSG), 2001 (Ministry of National Economy, Directorate of Developed Economies, 11 May, 2001.

\*provisional statistics of the NSSG

In regard to **investments**, statistics from the Turkish Ministry of Trade and Development show an increase in the number of Greek companies (from 4 to 13) investing in Turkey since 1998. Investment areas include construction companies, information technology, cement production, the

plastic and steel industries and banking.<sup>5</sup> Although in 1997 there was a significant number of Greek investors operating in Turkey, the value of their investment was very low. Since 1998, the value of Greek investments has increased geometrically.

The focus on Greek investments in Turkey does not give a complete picture of bilateral activity for the two countries. Unfortunately, however, we do not as yet have any systematic data with regard to Turkish investments in Greece. Information from the Greek Ministry of National Economy (11.5.2001) refers to four joint business ventures between Greek and Turkish business people in the areas of plastics, stock funds, information technology and banking. In addition, the same source mentions that “Turkish businesses, mainly in the area of the mass media, have expressed strong interests in joint ventures with Greek businessmen in the context of EU programs.” Finally, the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs (18.7.2001) points to the expressed interest, on part of Turkish construction companies, to participate in lowest bidding contests for public works in view of the 2004 Olympic Games. Joint ventures are possibly of greater theoretical interest for our Research Network than lone ventures, either by Greek or Turkish business people. In any case, future research should determine the statistical gaps and also record all these types of business ventures.

**Table 3. Establishment Permits Granted to Greek Investment Companies by Turkish Government, Number and Value (\$US Millions), January-September, 1997-2000.**

Year	Number	Value
1997	12	2.00
1998	4	0.20
1999	8	2.60
2000	13	18.30

**Source: Turkish Ministry of Trade and Development /Greek-Turkish Business Council (Communication, 29.5.2001)**

In assessing the relevance of the increased business activity to the earthquake activity, there is a need to look at the chronology of events regarding the cooperation between Greek and Turkish business people.

<sup>5</sup> The data refer to direct investment companies and not to commercial trade companies. According to information from the Greek Ministry of National Economy (11.5.2001) about 30 commercial companies were operating in Turkey, promoting exports or imports.

In order to promote business cooperation, the two Business Councils (the Turkish-Greek Business Council and Greek-Turkish Business Council) were established in the two countries (1988). Following the Ocalan abduction (February 1999), however, the president of the Turkish-Greek Business Council resigned and unilaterally dissolved the organization. Attempts at a rapprochement and restoration of relations between the two Councils were made at the meeting of the Organization of Economic Cooperation of Euxinos Pontos, held in Georgia which had the presidency during the first six months of 1999. Then came the twin EQs, in August and September 1999, that gave the Greek business community an opportunity to express its solidarity toward the Turkish people and specifically toward the hard-hit business community. According to the memorandum from the Greek-Turkish Business Council (29.5.2001), “with successive telegrams we put at the disposal of Turkish businessmen the productive units of our country in order to help them meet the export mainly obligations of the Turkish industry.” Such a gesture struck a responsive chord on the part of the Turkish businesspeople who took the initiative to re-instate the Turkish-Greek Business Council. Then followed historical meetings in Athens (October 1999) and in Istanbul (February 2000), where 9 Working Groups were set up (e.g. maritime affairs, commerce, monetary/economic services, environment, insurance, banks, tourism, development and mass media) and where a Turkish parliamentarian proposed that the presidents of the two Councils (S. Tara and P. Koutsikos) be awarded a prize for their contribution to the improvement of Greco-Turkish relations. According to the President of the Greek-Turkish Business Council who is in “continuous contact with the corresponding business council”, the ‘historical’ page in Greek-Turkish relations has definitely been turned.” An essential role, in this page-turning, continues, the President, played Greece’s decision to recognize Turkey as a candidate for integration to EU country.

In the business sector, there is no doubt that the pre-existent relations in the context of the Euxinos Pontos Cooperation Network helped in the restoration of relations between the two business communities. There is also no doubt that Greece’s position with regard to the Turkish candidacy was decisive as the President of the Greek-Turkish Business Council recognizes. However, it seems that a crucial catalyst in the turning of the page were the EQs and especially the expressions of solidarity to the Turkish business community following the Marmara earthquake. This is especially documented since the Turkish-Greek Business Council was reactivated after the EQs and before Greece’s decision not to block the candidacy of Turkey. However, as in the case of the tourists, surveys of

Greek and Turkish businesspeople could throw more light on the specific motivations for economic cooperation.

**D. Violations of Greek Airspace and Athens FIR by Turkish Military Airplanes.** Violations of Greek air space and the Athens FIR by Turkey is undoubtedly one of those “problematic” areas, which the two countries have decided not to confront at this time, since they have different conceptions of international law obligations. For Greece, this is a non-issue since she believes that her policy is backed by international law. Turkey, on the other hand, as well as a number of other countries (including the US) does not recognize Greece’s claims in regard to the extension of air space from six miles to ten miles (State Department Briefing, 1998). So, from Turkey’s point of view, her over flights between six and ten miles, from the Greek islands, do not constitute violations.

The BBC correspondent, Jonathan Marcus, commenting on Greek reports of mass violations of Greek air space and the FIR of Athens by Turkey says that there is a “political aspect to the crisis: Turkey feels rebuffed in its attempts to join the European Union of which Greece is already a part. NATO sources feared that given Turkey’s feelings of isolation, it might use these exercises to demonstrate a more assertive stance in the Aegean.” (Marcus, 1998).

Before the earthquakes, the violation of Greek airspace and FIR by Turkish air planes, and the dogfights between Turkish and Greek pilots over the Aegean, were almost a daily phenomenon reported in the Greek newspapers. A look into the web (Violations of Greek Air Space and FIR by Turkish Military Planes) also revealed frequent reports of mass violations of both Greek airspace and Athens FIR by Turkish military flights during the period 1996-1998, especially at times of Greek military exercises. In one of these celebrated violations<sup>6</sup>, Turkish air planes harassed a transport plane carrying the Greek Minister of Defense to Cyprus in order to participate in a joint military exercise with Cyprus, leading the EU Commissioner Van den Broek to conclude that Turkey does not meet the preconditions (Agenda 2000) for accession, which among other things presupposes an improvement of good-neighbor relations between the two countries. Following the earthquakes, we noted very few journalistic reports to Turkish violations, at least not until the

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<sup>6</sup> Van den Broek; The Turkish provocation is unacceptable, 22 October 1998 (See “Dog fights over Cyprus” in bibliography for webpage address).

first six months of 2001 (See Dimakas, 2001; Flash Radio Program Webpage, 2001)

Not being satisfied with journalistic sources, and considering that the general euphoric atmosphere may suppress publicity regarding violations, we sought more reliable information from the Greek Ministry of National Defense. We requested information for violations by month or quarter in the above two categories and for the period between 1 January 1997 and 31 March 2001. We also asked them to bring to our attention any Gallup polls, if available, regarding the arms race between the two countries. Unfortunately, the analytical statistical information was not granted to us because it was “classified.”

The refusal by the Ministry of Defense to provide us with information that we were almost certain would show a de-escalation of violations really introduced cognitive dissonance and raised all kinds of questions in my mind. I was wondering why the Ministry of Defense would not want to show a reduction of tensions between the two countries, especially when the new atmosphere was created mainly as a result of Greek initiatives following the earthquakes and during the Helsinki Summit Conference. Perhaps it has to do with common military bureaucratic practice and a reluctance to give information that would divulge operational military capabilities. Perhaps it has to do with the ongoing debate between the Minister of National Economy and the Minister of National Defense on the allocation of funds for “social welfare” or “national defense”.

Anyway, as things turned out, I am afraid I will disappoint you since I cannot demonstrate to you with nice statistical curves the potential overall reduction of Turkish violations. However, I have some aggregate data from journalistic sources which I presume used the Ministry of Defense or the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as a source (Dimakas, 2001; Flash Radio Program Webpage, 2001). Using these aggregate statistics for 1999 and 2000, we noted that the violations of Greek Air Space were reduced from 1111 to 447 (-59.8%), while the violations of the Athens FIR were reduced from 634 to 484 (-23.7%), for a total reduction of 46.6%.<sup>7</sup> In addition, a reduction of 75% was reported in the engagements and dog fights between Greek and Turkish pilots (Dimakas, 2001), leading the Press Information Officer of the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs to attribute this reduction to “new atmosphere” and the

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<sup>7</sup> The webpage source (<http://flashfiles.flash.gr/greece/Rid11/>) also reveals that 226 of these (does not specify from which category) involved air violations less than six miles from Greek territory, which is recognized by all countries, including Turkey, as Greek air space.

“new climate” which prevails in the bilateral relations of the two countries (Dimakas, 2001).

Thus, based at least on the aggregate data, we observed a substantial reduction in Turkish violations of Greek air space and the Athens FIR. Was this reduction due to the solidarity shown between the two peoples during the emergency periods? Again, it is difficult to answer without qualitative information, although the Greek military was also involved in solidarity efforts ( transport of relief supplies, etc). We also cannot preclude the positive impact on the “western-oriented” Turkish military of Greece’s decision not to block Turkey’s candidacy the European Union. On the other hand, one cannot exclude the impact of the economic recession given the high costs of these flights and the alleged pressures of the International Monetary Fund to cut costs (Karaoglan, 2001).

Of course, there may be other indicators of tension reduction in the military domain. The Greek Ministry of Defense, for instance, has taken several steps to reduce the length of active military service. In addition, the Greek government has decided to unilaterally cut military expenditures and has made analogous proposals to Ankara. While the economic crisis in Turkey is putting pressures on Turkey to cut expenditures, a diplomat from the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs reportedly said that the basic cause for military expenditures is not Greece and that Turkey’s geopolitical position differs from that of Greece (Karanasopoulou, 2001)

**E. Property Rights of the Greek Minority in Istanbul.** According to estimates (Alexandris, 1983; Bahcheli, 1990), the population of Greeks who were living in Turkey (mainly Istanbul) in the early 1920s was about 250,000. About 200,000 of these were Turkish citizens and 45,000 were Greek nationals. Following the signing of the Treaty of Lausanne (1923) and the exchange of populations between the two countries, it is estimated that about 150,000 of the Greek population in Istanbul left during the exchange, while between 100,000 and 110,000 remained in the city. According to Greek government estimates (Helsinki Watch, 1992, p. 6) the right to remain was officially granted to 111,000 Greeks in Turkey (mainly Istanbul) and to 106,000 Moslems in Western Thrace. It is estimated that among the Greeks remaining in Turkey (Istanbul), about 70,000 were Turkish subjects and 30,000 were Greek nationals.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> A convention signed between Turkey and Greece in 1923 provided for the compulsory exchange of populations. Thus, about a million and a quarter Greeks left Turkey for Greece and about half a million Turks left Greece for Turkey. The Patriarchate and the Greeks who had been living in Istanbul

Today, following a series of mass persecutions (e.g. 1955 riots in Istanbul and 1964 expulsions of Greek nationals), there are less than 2,000 Greeks living in Istanbul (Helsinki Watch, 1992, pp. 5-9)<sup>9</sup> According to official Turkish interpretations, the Greeks left Istanbul for “economic” reasons, i.e. were emigrants (Athens Society of Constantinopolites, 2000A). History, and independent evidence, however, shows otherwise.<sup>10</sup> Social science might view the persecution of Greeks, in terms of ethno-class dynamics, and as an intervention by the then Turkish state on behalf of the indigenous Turkish middle class. International law, on the other hand, would see it as a clear-cut violation of human rights leading to the status of political refugees.

During their long stay in Turkey, the Greeks had accumulated a lot of property either as individuals or as a community through the donations of Greeks to Greek charitable institutions. Although it is not the aim of this paper to do an assessment of total individual and community property of Greeks in Turkey, it has been reported that at the time of the Helsinki Watch Report (1992), the Greek community owned about 600 buildings, located in the “best sections of Istanbul”( p. 23). According to Greek community by-laws, the Greek community in Istanbul was divided into 62 districts, each having a council which was supposed to run the charitable institutions and the schools in its jurisdiction. The record, however, shows that the Greeks of Istanbul, either as individuals or as a collective community, have had no right to the management of their properties.

Aside from the mass persecutions which forced many Greeks from Turkey to flee and abandon their properties,<sup>11</sup> the successive Turkish governments used various “legal” mechanisms to deprive Greeks (Greek nationals, Turkish citizens and the community) of their property rights (rights to ownership, inheritance and management). For the sake of

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since 1918 and about an equivalent number of Moslems (106,000) living then in Western Thrace were exempted from the population exchange (See Helsinki Watch,1992,p. 6).

<sup>9</sup> According to Athens Society of Constantinopolites (2000B) some “48,000 Christians were forced to leave Turkey within just a few months” during the period 1963-64.

<sup>10</sup> Even Turkish Court history documents this. The 1955 riots were purportedly a response to the September 5, 1955 bombing attack on the Turkish Consulate in Thessaloniki, during which attack, the nearby birthplace of Kemal Ataturk, the founder of modern Turkey, was also damaged. Six years later, the Turkish Court, found, among other things, that the Thessaloniki bombing had been ordered by Prime Minister Menderes and others in his government in order to incite and justify anti-Greek violence in Turkey (Helsinki Watch, 1992, p. 8).

<sup>11</sup> During an investigation by the European Parliament Committee and a press conference that followed, Ms. Elpida Frangopoulou, a Greek lawyer working on the property of Turkish Greeks for over 30 years reported that “just in one night in 1964, 8,000 Greeks left Istanbul with just 50 drachmas in their pockets, leaving behind property of considerable value.( See [www.ruph.cornell.edu/costas/greekissues/TR-incidents.html](http://www.ruph.cornell.edu/costas/greekissues/TR-incidents.html)).

brevity, we mention (1) A 1935 law (2007) which forbade, henceforth, the donation of property to the churches or to charitable institutions (2) a 1964 secret decree (No. 6/3801) which deprived Greek nationals of their rights to property and inheritance and blocked their accounts in Turkish credit institutions and banks (3) a 1967 Charitable Foundation Law (No. 903) which decreed that “communal property found by a group and aimed at the ‘enforcement of a certain race or minority’ (sic) would no longer be recognized as a charitable foundation and (4) a 1971 Turkish Supreme Court Decision which decreed that minorities no longer had a right to acquire new properties (*vakuf*) (See Helsinki Watch, 1992, 22-23; Documents of Athens Society of Constantinopolites (ASC) to OSCE, 1998A, 1998B, 1999). According to the ASC (1998B), between 1974 and 1998, these various laws and decrees were used as a basis to confiscate 132 Greek properties.

After various interventions and pressures by the United States and NATO (General Rogers), President Kenan Evren issued a classified document (Decree 57779/3.11.1981) that was to rectify the seizures of estates from Greeks by rescinding previous arbitrary court acts. The Decree, however, according to the Athens Society of Constantinopolites (ASC) (1999) was a void text and was never implemented. This notwithstanding, Prime Minister Turgut Ozal lifted, in 1989, the ban on Greeks (Turkish citizens?) selling their properties (Helsinki Watch, 1992, p. 9), although it is said (ASC, 1998) that Greek property was valued at one-tenth its normal value.

To justify the harsh Turkish policy –open and secret –with regard to the properties of the Greeks, the Turkish government has often invoked the principle of “reciprocity” and the failure of Greece to observe it for the Moslems in Western Thrace in view of the existence of a law (1892/1990) which imposes certain restrictions on the sale or purchase of property on all border regions of Greece for reasons of national security (ASC, 2000B). Communicating with the Minister of Foreign affairs, we learned that the restrictions involve sales to foreigners, and do not include those (Moslems, Turks or Greeks) who are Greek citizens. Moreover, despite the emigrations and the anachronistic Greek law (3370/1955) which was rescinded, there are still over 100,000 Moslems who are living in Thrace, an increase compared to the initial populations. Finally, the ASC claims that the Turkish government cannot invoke the Treaty of Lausanne since through various mechanisms it has systematically violated its provisions and has managed to reduce the Greek population in Istanbul from 120,000 to less than 2,000.

The issue of the property rights of Greeks of Turkey, which are covered not only by the Treaty of Lausanne but also by the 1991 Geneva Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), the EU-Turkey Accession Agreements, the 1993 Copenhagen criteria for admission and other international documents, constitutes possibly one of those “problematic,” ‘high-polarization’ issues, not a candidate for bilateral agreements between Greece and Turkey in the immediate future. It essentially remains unresolved despite the occurrence of the two earthquakes (with the Turkish epicenter close to Istanbul) and the favorable position of Greece in regard to the admission of Turkey to the EU.<sup>12</sup> An interview with the President of the ASC revealed that no changes whatsoever have taken place in this domain. In fact, they passed on to us two documents pertaining to their post-EQ interventions to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE); based on a report in the Turkish magazine (“Aktuel, May 2000), the documents reveal the continuing (since 1972) operation of a Secret Committee on Minorities (Azinlik Tali Komisyonu) whose purpose is “to guide and influence the Judicial Authorities with regard to decisions taken on issues concerning, among other things, minority properties (ASC, 2000A). They cite several recent examples of charitable institution property confiscation as a result of the intervention of this “Minorities Committee”(e.g. properties of Greek Orphanage Foundation, a building housing a Greek Orphanage in Buyukada etc.).

It seems that such laws and actions, whether publicized or secret, which have the backing of authorities usually encourage extremist and nationalist elements in any country. The history of racial relations in the US South, as well as the history of minorities (whether racial, religious or political) in any country, is full of such examples and processes. It is incumbent upon social scientists to study and expose these intergroup dynamics in order to improve intergroup relations.

**F. Gallup Polls and Perceptions of the Turks/Greeks.** Again, the intention was to locate Gallup polls on the perceptions of the “other” done in the two countries, before and after the two earthquakes. Prof. N. Sarris, a Tourkologist, Panteios Univeristy Professor, from Turkey is participating in a doctoral committee of a student who has conducted

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<sup>12</sup> Apropos is a recent Istanbul Court Decision (TA NEA, 24.4.2001) which denied the rights to an inheritance worth 25 billion drachmas to two brothers –relatives of the deceased (Polykseni Foka) on the basis of the 1964 law which denies transfers to Greek nationals. One of the brothers (John Fokas) is said to have remarked following the negative decision: “I was expecting a more favorable decision due to the improvement of Greco-Turkish relations, but they were immovable” (*ametakinitoi*). The brothers and their Greek and Turkish lawyers are expected to appeal to the European Court.

under Prof. Muscovici a study of the perceptions of Turkish students. Her study was conducted before the EQs but was also repeated afterwards. Unfortunately, the results will become available in the near future. We also explored the internet for information. I was pleasantly surprised to discover the existence of a ‘Greek-Turkish Friendship Page’ where Prof. Serdar M. Degirmencioglu has also contributed a brief article (12.4.1998), following the desecration of 50 Greek graves in an Istanbul cemetery and where he blames the “brainwashing to hate” on both sides for such incidents (Degirmencioglu, 1998). That this webpage initiative occurred before the EQs is indeed interesting from the viewpoint of our theoretical arguments. However, in cyberspace, I was not able to locate any before-after comparisons. On the other hand, I was able to locate two somewhat comparable Gallup polls, one in Turkey and one in Greece, which were done after the two earthquakes.

The first of these was conducted during the period February-March 2001, by Prof. Ali Tsarkoglu of the University of Bosphorus, using “a representative sample from the urban centers of Turkey”. The results of the study (published in “Radikal”) revealed that 29% of the respondents considered Greece as their principal enemy (followed by 12% for the U.S., 11% for France, and 4% for Iran, Russia or Syria). Second, 48% of the sample declared that Turkey should implement an uncompromising policy toward Greece, while 51% favored mutual compromises and a rapprochement. Finally, 54% of the Turkish respondents believed that Turkey is not in danger from an attack by a foreign country, while 46% believed the opposite; among the latter, 37% believe that the aggressor would be Greece, 10% Iraq or Russia, 7% the U.S. and 6% Iran (Karaoglan,2001). I present this data with reservation, since I do not have in my possession the whole study. My conjecture is that the percentages would swing toward the conservative side if rural samples were also included in the survey.<sup>13</sup> Perhaps, the Turkish colleagues have had access to the entire study and/or other studies and can illuminate our discussion on these points.

The second study, commissioned by the Greek Armed Forces, was conducted by Opinion Research during the first two weeks of May 2001 on a national sample of 1600 adults Greeks over 18 years of age

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<sup>13</sup> A study that was done, 7-14 April, 2001, on a national Turkish sample of 1,247 citizens by Strategy Mori revealed that 79% thought a war with Greece was impossible. The percentages were 90% for university trained Turks and below the average (63%) for the clerical workers. While no specific percentages are reported for other occupational categories, the newspaper (TO VIMA, 13.5.2001) reports that “the small and middle tradesmen, businessmen, the students and the farmers demonstrate a certainty higher than the average”. However, it needs to be clarified, by locating the original study, if the “certainty” refers to the non-occurrence or to the occurrence of a war between the two nations.

(Lakopoulos, 2001) An analysis of the data revealed that 56% of the respondents believed that Greece was threatened by another country and that among them, 85% considered that Turkey would be the aggressor. Second, very few of the respondents (less than 7%) believed that relations between the two countries have deteriorated during the last two years, while 51% believed that they have remained the same and 42% that they have undergone a change for the better. Finally, the overwhelming majority of the respondents (59%) believed that the problems with neighboring countries should be solved with dialogue, while 34% said either with dialogue or by force depending on the neighboring country and only 6% said by force.

Although the two studies are not strictly comparable (since the Greek one is national and the Turkish one is only urban), the data suggest that the Greeks are more threatened by an external attack than the Turks (56% vs. 46%). If the rural response is taken into consideration, and the results are in the anticipated direction, we may have a case of polarized mirror images—the stuff which makes arms producers and distributors happy. Nonetheless, I have a hunch that the polarized images were worse before the two earthquakes and before the integration of Turkey in EU as a regular candidate country, but this calls for further empirical demonstration.

#### **IV. Summary, Conclusions and Proposals for Collaborative Research between Greek and Turkish Social Scientists.**

Using basically an archival approach and secondary sources of information, we observed changes in Greek-Turkish relations in most sectors, following the two earthquakes of 17 August 1999 (in Turkey) and 7 September 1999 (in Greece). First, we observed increases in the signing of bilateral agreements, Turkish tourist movements to Greece, the volume of trade and the number of Greek investments in Turkey and reductions in the number of Greek air-space and FIR violations by Turkish military aircraft. Second, we observed no changes in the handling of the property rights of the Greek minority in Turkey. Finally, no definite conclusions could be made with regard to the impact of the EQs on the conceptions and beliefs of Turks or Greeks toward the “other”, in view of the fact that we were able to locate only two somewhat comparable Gallup polls and since both of them were conducted after the two EQs. The results of these two polls suggest that the Greeks feel more threatened than the Turks, though the differences

may disappear with greater comparability in samples with respect to the urban-rural dimension.

The discovery of before-after differences should not necessarily mean that these differences were due to the impact of the earthquakes and the attendant solidarity and reciprocity during the emergency-time period. In many sectors (e.g. bilateral agreements, trade relations etc.) there were signs of a rapprochement before the occurrence of the earthquakes. In addition, we cannot also exclude other significant historical and economic processes, such as the decision by Greece (December 1999) not to block the accession of Turkey to the European Union and the economic recession in Turkey. The historical decision by Greece not to block Turkey's admission may have impacted on all indicators but especially the improvement in trade and investment relations between the two countries. The economic recession which has affected Turkey during the last two years and which was undoubtedly aggravated by the earthquakes may have also impacted on the reduction of the Turkish violations of Greek airspace and the flight information region (FIR). These other influences notwithstanding, the data suggest that the "twin earthquakes" and their social impacts during emergency time (solidarity and reciprocity behavior between the two peoples) served as an important catalyst to these changes, as the comparative literature on non-disaster related impacts of disasters also indicates.

For more definite conclusions on the impact of "natural disasters" on unrelated to disaster social changes, we definitely need both more quantitative and qualitative studies. The quantitative studies in order to control and take into account the impact of alternative explanations (e.g. economic indicators in case of tourism) and the qualitative (interviews of tourists, businesspeople, investors, NGO members etc) in order to gauge specific motivations for rapprochement behaviors. In addition, we need more longitudinal studies as recommended by Perry and Hirose (1983) to assess the permanence of changes, especially when they are attributed to "natural catastrophes".

Finally, the new atmosphere that exists between the two countries (especially on a civic level) and the new bilateral agreements on science and technology –regardless of the factors leading to this emergent situation –provide a more favorable environment for Greek and Turkish social scientists to work on joint research projects on the social impact of disasters and other social crises. The present work could be seen as a pilot study for a more systematic joint and comparative study on the impact of the earthquakes on Greek-Turkish relations. Social scientists, using their

methodologies and insights as their tools and the “twin” earthquakes as “windows of opportunity”, could make a significant contribution to the further understanding of the dynamics of enmity between the two peoples and eventually to the management of the more “problematic” and “high-polarization” issues. In this sense, they can become vital catalysts to a social reconstruction of Greek-Turkish relations.

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