

The Theory That Never Turned Into Practice: Case Study from Eastern Mediterranean

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Abstract

Current theory and practice have proven inadequate to bring genuine change in Greek-Turkish relations and adequately respond to their security dilemma, which – measuring it as progress concerning their bilateral differences - has been at a deadlock for almost fifty years. The failure to solve the security dilemma derives from the foreign policy followed by the two countries, which is based on material connotations rather than taking into account social factors. This paper is focused on one side of the story, namely the Greek one, emphasizing these factors and arguing that national identity accounts greatly for the foreign policy followed towards Turkey. Greek national identity is basically shaped on the dichotomy of the Greek Self and the Turkish Other, a hostile and aggressive one. This image is used to justify and explain her behavior and policy and is reproduced through national narratives, public education from the early grades of primary school to higher level, literature and public discourse. The paper examines the main focus area of the Greek foreign policy, the Aegean dispute with Turkey, ultimately arguing that the system in which Greece and Turkey operate is greatly defined by their national identities and no genuine rapprochement could be achieved unless the images forming national identity are utterly reconsidered.

Introduction

There is really nothing exciting about having a Greek writing about Greek-Turkish relations; it can be a very tedious task whose result, especially for an outside observer, can be of little or no interest, taking into account the broadness of the issue, the vast amount of literature and the reproduction of the same ideas over and over again with no new substantial contribution. Then why bother in the first place? Strangely enough because despite the amount of ink poured there is still a poor understanding of the core of Greek-Turkish relations, which seem, the least to say, peculiar and, with some level of exaggeration, schizophrenic given that these two countries are – from the point of view of conventional wisdom – both allies and enemies. A simple example suffices to indicate this strange interaction: how can two member states of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) come to the brink of war at least three times since they both entered the alliance? Neighboring countries have very often in the international scene differences between them, of territorial or other nature, but they have managed to surpass them. The example of France and Germany is indeed very pertinent.

What is then puzzling about Greece and Turkey is why not a similar outcome has characterized their relation. Why have the two countries failed so miserably to solve their differences and establish a cooperative rather than hostile relation?

The purpose of this paper is, therefore, to try and hopefully succeed in making the conflictual relationship between Greece and Turkey more comprehensible not only to the perplexed independent observer but also to Greeks and Turks alike, by offering an alternative explanation regarding the elements influencing the foreign policy pursued by each country towards the other, shifting the balance from material to social factors and more particularly to the role of national identity.

The Greek National Identity, A Constructivist Approach

Greeks are indeed very lucky. They are perhaps among few peoples that have little difficulty in defining themselves. What is a Greek? Language and religion can very easily answer the question, since they constitute two distinct features that have been following the building of the modern Greek nation since its nascent; not to mention

the glorious ancient past with which historical continuity up to the nineteenth century is still largely claimed (see for instance in Millas, 2001: 289-93).¹

But is it really so? Identity is neither fixed nor ‘given by God’, to borrow David Cambell’s pertinent phrase (1992: 9), despite His (compulsory) omnipresence in Greeks’ lives.² Instead, identity is a social construction produced by the state and both language and religion should be seen as features of an identity discourse that aims to discern the Self from the Other. To this Self and Other we will now turn.

Made in Greece I: The Representation of the Turkish Other in Greek National Identity

Greek national identity has been constructed in opposition to a very specific Other and has been engulfed by it to such a large extent that it would be no exaggeration to say that the denial of this Other has come to be considered synonymous to what this identity is all about. With some risk of oversimplification, the Greek Self has been almost exclusively defined in contrast to what the Turkish Other is (not).

How did this identity emerge and what are its salient features? A satisfactory response can not be provided unless a short reference to the shared historical past of the two countries is made. At this point it should be noted that the ‘historical argument’, i.e. attributing (read blaming) history for the cacophony of Greek-Turkish relations is very commonly evoked in the literature (e.g. Kramer, 1991; in Pridham, 1991; in Rumelili, 2003). However, what is not commonly evoked is the *reading* and the *understanding* of history, in other words, the meaning and interpretation of the historical events that can be very different from what we usually take for granted.

Greece and Turkey are bound by centuries of common turbulent historical experience where periods of both enmity and friendship have been recorded, although the former tends to be remembered much more often than the latter. The relations

¹ The issue of the historical continuity of the Greek nation remains largely a taboo. The question of ‘how old is the Greek nation’ is easily overlooked and is instead replaced with ‘when *some kind of Greek national consciousness appeared*’. Differently put, it is not the continuity of the nation that it is challenged but only when it became conscious (Millas, 2001: 293, emphasis added).

² Church and state are not separated under the Greek Constitution. Writing one’s religion, on the identity card had been compulsory prior to the governmental decision for the introduction of new identity cards (with no reference to religion). The issue caused an enormous upheaval in the Church which in 2001 initiated a campaign of gathering signatures for organization of a referendum on the optional reference of religion on the new identity cards. The Church claimed to have gathered, approximately three million signatures, representing almost one-third of the Greek population.

between the two countries have also been marked by war and peace and since the end of the Second World War by belonging to the same defense alliance (NATO).

Their common past goes as far back as the fifteen century, when the Greeks, as subjects of the East Roman Empire fell under Ottoman occupation for virtually four hundred years since 1453, when Constantinople, the capital of the Empire, was lost to the Sultan Mohammed II. The fall of Constantinople, the cultural and religious centre of the Greeks, was (viewed as) a truly traumatic experience for the whole of the Greek nation, from which it could barely recover. During the Ottoman occupation and even after the war of independence in the nineteenth century and the establishment of the modern Greek state, the desire to regain Constantinople remained strong and was expressed in folkloric songs upon which – literally – generations of Greeks have grown up. The most popular lines of a folkloric song that every Greek can cite read – with reference to Constantinople – *‘anew, after years and times have passed, anew it will be ours’*. Since we have mentioned linguistic concerns, we can not help but notice that even the use of the name itself reveals the nostalgia and the value that the city has had for the Greeks, who refer to it as ‘Constantinople’ and not as ‘Istanbul’. Constantinople is the indirect connotation of what the city used to be and it is now not. Named after the Emperor Constantine who imposed Christianity as the Empire’s religion, Constantinople is seen as the symbol of the Byzantine Empire – itself considered part of what constitutes the Greek identity that largely bridges the gap between the ancient and the modern Greek past – and the centre of Christianity (at least for the Orthodox Christians). Renouncing the use of term ‘Constantinople’ and replacing it with ‘Istanbul’ is like admitting that there is nothing ‘ours’ left there.³ Simply put, Constantinople means a lot to the Greeks whereas Istanbul does not.

So the process of Otherness had already been put into effect since the fall of Constantinople. Such terrible loss for the Greeks of the East Roman Empire suffices to start viewing the Ottomans and hence the Turks, as the legitimate successors of the Ottoman Empire, as the Other.

³ Constantinople remained the capital of the Ottoman Empire until 1923 when the capital of the newborn Turkish state was transferred to Ankara. In 1930 its name changed to Istanbul. Despite this late change of name, however, the meaning of the name itself for the Greeks and in turn the use of term up to our days has been strong and can not but reveal what the name represents to the Greeks. Here, the use of the names Constantinople and Istanbul when referred to the city will follow the chronological change of the city’s name.

During the period of the Ottoman occupation this perception was further reinforced by multiple narratives, songs and poems which on the one hand expressed the craving for the reinstatement of the Byzantine Empire and on the other depicted the victimization of the Greek nation and its barbarian treatment under the Ottoman yoke. One of the most enduring narratives (taught also in public schools) which has fostered the Greek national imaginary and was incarnated in art, thus becoming real and existent, is the one of the Secret School.

The story of the Secret School concerns the alleged suppression and in some cases the total prohibition of education among the subjects of the Ottoman Empire. According to the story, the Greeks, due to this suppression, set up underground schools, mainly convened in churches and monasteries. The teacher was usually a priest. The importance and value of the story lies in the fact that because of these schools the Greek language managed to survive four centuries of occupation. However, there is no substantial historical evidence certifying the existence of these schools (see Angelou in Danos, 2002). The story should be understood as a construction of the Orthodox Church who wanted to establish for itself a role of guardian of the Greek nation and thus downplay or conceal its privileged status under the Ottoman Empire and its anti-revolutionary stand when the war of independence erupted in 1821. The passage from myth to reality was highly marked by one of the most famous paintings in Greek modern art, *The Secret School* by Nicolaos Gyzis (circa 1880) which depicts a priest and five children around him, listening to the old man's words with holy attention in a dark room, while a sixth person is sitting in the back with a rifle between his legs. What better proof for the existence of the Secret School? It was there, before everyone's eyes. The narrative of the Secret School has been so strong that it is deeply embedded in the national consciousness and was articulated in history textbooks and child songs which every Greek youngster has sung.⁴

⁴ See Danos (2002), at http://www.19thc-artworldwide.org/autumn_02/articles/dano.html, accessed on 15 July 2004.

The lyrics of the song go like this:

My little bright moon
shine on my footsteps
so that I can go to school
to learn to read and write
to learn God's teachings.

Further, the image of the Other was more eloquently depicted in the writings of what we could call the theoreticians of the Greek Revolution and the representatives of the Greek version of Enlightenment. Needless to say, the texts constitute part of the modern Greek literature which is part of the public schools' curriculum. Hercules Millas, who has studied both Turkish and Greek history and literature books as well as textbooks, in his book *Images of Greeks and Turks* (2001)⁵ finds himself faced with a paradox when referring to the representation of the Turkish Other in such texts. Although this representation is necessarily negative, is neither too little nor too much. This is the reason why: *'when [in the texts of the Ottoman occupation period] the image of the Other is positive or at least tolerable, then the general perception of the long-lasting resistance of the nation against the Other is weakened and when the image of the Other is shown as extremely negative [in later texts] then the image of the nation for is traumatized: a people with no prejudice and hatred, with clear judgment, understanding and the sense of limit'* (293). His comment could not make the link between these images and national identity any clearer: *'the negative image of the "ethnic other" is directly proportional to our developing "national consciousness". The national identity and the image of the Other are interlinked configurations'* (ibid).

Some examples can better illustrate what has been stated so far. In the texts of Adamantios Koraes (1790s), one of the most prominent pre-revolution scholars, terms like 'Ottoman yoke', 'Turkish tyranny', 'Turkish miserliness', 'lecher Turks', 'barbarians' and so on are often repeated (Millas, 2001: 298). Moreover, even the friend of a Turk is considered as having identical interests with the tyrant, therefore is seen as an enemy of the nation. In a nutshell, in Koraes's narrative, the Turk is the source of all evils.

What needs to be pointed out here is that the pre-revolution scholarship appears divided concerning the representation of the Other, that is to say that the Turks are not always represented with negative connotations. Millas attributes this to the existence of, what could be called, two camps, the national and the philomonarchical one, as he names them. The former refers to the forces that were preparing (either intellectually or materially) the Greeks for their war of independence

⁵ The representation of Self and Other is central in Millas's narrative. Yet, his interest and incentive in exploring these images is sociological and anthropological rather than political, although there is a necessary and inevitable correlation.

against the Ottoman Empire, hence the ‘necessity’ of presenting the enemy as evil as possible. The latter includes members of the community of Phanariotes (privileged nobility) in Constantinople and sects of the Church. According to personal diaries of some of the leading members of Phanariotes, such as Alexandros Mavrokordatos dated in the seventeenth century, the Other – usually Ottoman officials – is depicted with rather positive characteristics, such as sensible, good, quiet, serious, thoughtful and so forth (Millas, 2001: 297). Yet, this image begins to change in more recent diaries, i.e. dated towards the end of the eighteenth century, where the negative representations of the Other have begun to multiply.

An additional reason for the diversity of images of the Other in the pre-revolutionary period is the different views and visions of some scholars with regards to the future of the Greek people. The most representative example is the one of Rigas Velestinlis, who deeply influenced and inspired by the French Revolution calls upon the subjects of the Ottoman Empire to revolt against the tyrant; in the creation of the new state there is no discrimination of religion or language (Millas, 2001: 295-96). In Rigas’s texts (end of eighteenth century) the idea of national consciousness as it was understood later on is not yet developed. Even the notion of Turk itself is perceived much differently and means rather the Muslim than the Turk as we understand it today (ibid).

Nevertheless, the Other was depicted in more and more negative terms after the prevalence of the revolutionary forces and the war of independence, when it became an ‘indispensable part of the ideology of the modern Greek nation-state’ (Millas, 2001: 298). Such an image of the Turks was vital for the very survival of the revolution, as it was its source of legitimation.

After the die was cast, the Selfness and Otherness needed to be refueled and reproduced for the narrative to stay alive. So, all the way through the period following the establishment of the Greek state (1832), culminating in the First World War, the negative image of the Other was crystallized and became the core element around which Selfness was built. A major vehicle for this construction is the school textbooks where the Turks are represented as the eternal and ever-present enemy. As Christina Coulouri points out, *‘there is a conscious transmission [of a hostile image of the Other] through the schooling mechanism. The transmission is based and facilitated by a symbolic discourse, a theatrical language, which implements the principle that an image is engraved much more deeply and permanently in the child memory’* (in

Millas, 2001: 304). The Turks have nothing but negative characteristics: they are barbarians, bellicose, with wild instincts, arrogant, maniacs, they commit despicable crimes, they are a race incompatible with Europe's humanism, they are ethnically and religiously fanaticized, especially against the Greeks, they try to exterminate Hellenism with every possible means, they are the source of the misfortunes of the Greek people, they are aggressive and expansionist, they violate international and bilateral agreements, they are devious, dishonest, repressive, autarchic and so on.

In extreme contrast to the image of the Other, the Self disposes nothing but positive characteristics and virtues. The Greeks are honest, hard working, trustworthy, freedom fighters, respectful of the international law and their commitments to other states, friendly, merciful, heroic, understanding, thoughtful, dispose a high culture and civilization, are part of Europe, they are peaceful, kind and so forth. In addition to the identity/difference duality, what is perhaps worse, is that one can hardly find in school books any indication that friendship or cooperation with Greece's neighbor countries is feasible. Instead, the predominant picture is one of mistrust and suspicion which in turn engenders fear. This is particularly true for the narrative accompanying Greece's Eastern neighbor.

The narrative of the Ottoman occupation and the Greek war of independence cover a substantial part of the history school books, where images as the ones described above are very dominant (Coullapis in Millas, 2001: 309). Schooling, is needless to say, a major vehicle of socialization, in other words one of the primary means through which the idea of the nation is produced, reproduced and ultimately eternalized and one of the major mechanisms through which identification and matching of the individual's identity with the state identity occurs (Bloom).

Since 1990, following criticism from both internal and external authorities (the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, UNESCO, being one of them) on the content and quality of the Greek and Turkish textbooks alike, there has been some improvement in the way that the Other is represented (Millas, 2001: 307). This does not mean any radical change, however. As Millas puts it '*the image of the Turk, even though it is not sketched differently than before, at least it is not sketched as it was used to for decades*' (ibid: 308, emphasis in the original).

Despite the positive steps, however, it should be underlined that changing a textbook alone is far from sufficient if the aim is to ultimately change the hostile perception that the Self holds for the Other. This is so firstly because the teaching of

history depends less on the textbook and more on *how* the teaching occurs; and there, the very often uncontrollable human factor (i.e. the instructor) intervenes. Secondly, the hostile image of the Turkish Other is so profoundly embedded in the Greek national consciousness that changing the representation of the Turkish Otherness in the Greek national narrative presupposes a step much more radical and thus difficult to take, if not for anything else but for the political cost that such a decision entails; changing the enemy image of the Turk means reconceptualizing and producing anew a very large part of Greek history (Coullapis in Millas, 2001: 309). In other words, it means changing what a Greek is all about.

Besides school manuals, a negative image of the Other is also constructed through literature, in novels and poetry. A review of this literature reveals a greatly similar picture to the one presented above (Millas, 2001: 327ff). Further hostilities between Greece and Turkey fueled such images: the 1897 war, the Balkan wars of 1912-13 and the birth of modern Turkey in 1922 following the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire and another Greek-Turkish war. This last point deserves further development.

It is indeed interesting to observe that both the Greek and Turkish modern states were founded after wars that were fought between Greece and Turkey against each other. For many scholars this accounts partly for the enemy images of the Other. However, the author of this paper feels rather uncomfortable with this idea. The 1922 war is etched on the Greek memory as the ‘Destruction of Asia Minor’ (*Mikrasiatiki Katastrofi*) which led to the permanent ‘rootlessness’ of the Hellenism of Asia Minor; the memories of this war are accompanied by vivid images of a burning Izmir (Smyrna) and one to one and a half million refugees in Greece. The Greek perception of the outcome of the war is that Hellenism suffered a heavy loss, culminating in the final abandonment of the Great Idea⁶ with regards to regaining ‘the lost homelands’ of

⁶ After the creation of the Greek nation-state in the 1830s, the Great Idea (Megali Idea) was the national aspiration of regaining territories that belonged to the Ottoman Empire and which were considered ‘Greek’, because of their Greek population and the fact that the Greek element had lived and flourished there (such as Asia Minor). The Greek state of 1832 was composed only of a small part of what Greece is today, leaving a considerable part of the Greek population under Ottoman rule. The Great Idea symbolized the vision of incorporating these territories into the Greek state and went so far as to aspire after the reinstatement of the Byzantine Empire. For many years the Great Idea was the *raison d’être* of the Greeks. Heraclides writes that ‘*the Great Idea “electrified” the Greeks, it constituted the “reason of existence of the Kingdom”, was Greeks’ obsession for the following eighty years, giving to humble Greece a bright vision*’ (2001: 63). After independence the Greek state expanded at the expense of Ottoman territory; the Greek national question was

Asia Minor. More importantly, and what is in our concern here, when the ashes died away what stayed in the Greek memory was what was there all along: the image of the Turk as the aggressor, the hostile, violent, the enemy. What better proof than the image of a burning city? The discourse around and the linguistic articulation of the war reiterated and further fostered the hostile image of the Other: not for a minute was the war seen as the birth engine of a new state (Turkey) and the last nail in the coffin of the Ottoman Empire. It was rather perceived and since then reproduced as a ‘destruction’. Or, put differently, it was interpreted based on what Asia Minor represented for Greece and not necessarily for what the war really was.

In a nutshell, respective national narratives created at least two ‘histories’. Following the Greek one, the historical fact is that what happened in 1922 was the Asia Minor Destruction (and only secondarily the birth of modern Turkey), whereas according to the Turkish narrative the war of 1922 was their war of independence (successor state to the Ottoman Empire). Therefore, the argument that history accounts for the bad record in Greek-Turkish relations – with regards to the creation of the respective states – is inherently flawed because it takes the respective narratives for granted, i.e. as *the* absolute truth of how the events occurred. However, it is less the event itself and more its interpretation that makes it what it is. In the Greek case, the war of 1821 has been conceptualized as the ‘Greek Revolution’ and revolt against the Ottoman ‘yoke’ and the war of 1922 has been articulated as national ‘destruction’. Therefore, we end up considering these two events as historical proof of what the Other is.

This constitutes only one example of how events during the course of Greek-Turkish relations have been interpreted and incorporated in the discourse of national identity. Every time a similar event occurred (war, low intensity crises, tensions or even hostile discourses) the mechanisms of national identity construction worked twofold: on the one hand the event in question was perceived and explained precisely in terms of how the Other had come to be understood, i.e. hostile, aggressive, repressive, provocative etc. On the other hand, each individual event was further used to foster the already formed national identity and keep alive the image of the Other’s hostility towards the Self. What is particularly important concerning Turkish Otherness, however, is the very element of hostility as distinctive in the identity of the

completed with the restoration of the Dodecanese from Italy to Greece in 1947, after the end of the Second World War.

Other. Put it differently, Turkey is not represented simply with negative characteristics but its very existence is viewed as a *threat* to the existence of the Greek Self. Turkey is the ‘danger from the East’, the threat that ends up acquiring metaphysic connotations of an ever-lasting presence which menaces the survival of Greece. In fact, the interesting paradox about the Turkish threat is that it ‘threatens’ Greece even when it does not exist. When the Turkish threat ‘is there’, the Greeks feel physically threatened. If however the threat disappears, i.e. one major element of the Otherness ceases to exist, then the ‘conceptual’ survival of the Self is threatened too, since it loses the core element of its identity which has been defined on what the Other is (not) with regards to the Self. As Heraclides eloquently puts it *‘the collision in all fields is considered inevitable and necessary. Otherwise Greece and Greeks will not exist or their existence will worth nothing’* (2001: 41).

Specifically, the threat is embodied in one major characteristic of the Turkish Other: its revisionism. Turkey is considered a revisionist state, i.e. a state that wishes to change the status quo in its neighbor region and particularly of its western borders. In other words, Turkey has territorial claims against Greece, wishes to alter the status quo in the Aegean, as it was established by the Treaty of Lausanne (1923), which ended the 1922 war between Greece and Turkey and by later treaties, namely the Montreaux Treaty in 1936 and the Treaty of Paris, between Italy and Greece (1947). This trait is so fixedly implanted in the Greek mind that Turkey’s revisionism is considered natural, it is simply the way the Turks are.

What is more, the ‘threat from the East’, has been officially institutionalized; as we will see further on, Greece’s foreign policy has been structured on the basis of the risk of a Turkish aggression and the deterrence of the Turkish threat. In different terms, the Turkish threat has taken on *societal salience*. The concept of societal salience aims to capture things that *‘in a given time and place, are widely seen as the most important and topical issues’* (Eriksson, 2002: 4). This ‘given time and place’ has been lasting for almost fifty years in Greek-Turkish relations. The institutionalization of the Turkish threat can be further conceptualized using what Buzan, Waever and de Wilde have called ‘securitization’ (1998: 29). Indeed, not much effort was required to securiticize the Turkish threat and hence call upon all the necessary measures to deal with this danger.

Made in Greece II: The Representation of the Greek Self in Greek National Identity

The Turkish Other, Again

The construction of the Greek national identity passes through both difference and similarity; difference with regards to the Turkish Other and similarity with regards to the European Self.

Undoubtedly, it is quite striking the extent to which the image of the Greek Self has been constructed in opposition to the Turkish Other. Actually, naming the characteristics of the Self is not even necessary, since they derive ‘naturally’ from the Turkish Other’s identity. As long as Greeks know what a Turk is, they automatically know what they are. Nevertheless, identifying and elaborating on the features that compose the Greek Self it is considered necessary for our purposes here.

Since, as it has been mentioned above, the main characteristic on which the perception of Turkey is currently concentrated is its revisionism, it follows that the main characteristic of Greece is, what is called, a status quo country. In other words, it respects international and bilateral agreements, it complies with international law and finally it does not wish to upset the state of affairs as it has been formed between the two countries on the bases of international treaties.

For Greece the *ensemble* of the issues that for Turkey constitute a matter of dispute do not exist, i.e. they have been settled by international treaties in which Turkey was or was not part of. These issues will be also examined later on, albeit under a different spectrum, namely how national identity is manifested through the pursuit of the Greek foreign policy with regards to the dispute over the Aegean. At this point it suffices to shortly identify and describe them only for the purpose of reference. Moreover, the aim of this paper is not to take positions over the Greek-Turkish dispute and give rightness to any of the two, nor to examine the legal basis of their arguments. Instead, our intention is to show that the way that these arguments have been constructed and thereafter reproduced is a result of the perception of the Self and the Other and the discourse around this perception.

Firstly, the Treaty of Lausanne (1923) demarcated the sea boundaries in the Eastern Aegean, i.e. between the two countries. According to the Treaty, the territorial waters in the Aegean are set to three nautical miles. Greece extended its territorial

waters to six miles after the Montreaux Treaty in 1936 without any objection from the Turkish side, which followed suit in 1964 extending its own territorial waters to six miles. The dispute emerges from the possibility of the extension of the Greek territorial waters to twelve nautical miles. Such a right is given to Greece by the Convention on the Law of the Sea, signed in 1982 and entered into force in 1994. The relevant Article (3) of the Convention reads that '*every State has the right to establish the breadth of its territorial sea up to a limit not exceeding 12 nautical miles*'.⁷ Turkey, in contrast to Greece, is not a state party to the Convention. The former considers the extension of the Greek territorial sea to twelve miles as a *casus belli*, in other words Turkey threatens Greece with war.

The Lausanne Treaty establishes also in Article 12 the Greek sovereignty over the islands of the Eastern Aegean (Lemnos, Samothrace, Mytilene, Chios, Samos and Nikaria), whereas in Article 15 Turkey renounces in favor of Italy 'all rights and title' over the following islands: Stampalia, Rhodes, Calki, Scarpanto, Casos, Piscopis, Misiros (Nisyros), Calimnos, Leros, Patmos, Lipsos, Simi, and Cos, and the islets dependent thereon, and also over the island of Castellorizzo.⁸

Another issue of dispute between the two countries is the partial and total demilitarization of some of the islands of the Eastern Aegean, for the purpose of maintaining peace. According to the same treaty, Lemnos and Samothrace would be demilitarized, whereas Article 13 imposed restrictions on the militarization of Mytilene, Chios, Samos and Nikaria. According to the Greek point of view, remilitarization of Lemnos and Samothrace (islands situated in proximity to the Straits), became possible with the Treaty of Montreaux in 1936 regarding the status of the Straits, which replaced the Treaty of Lausanne and allowed Turkey to renew their militarization, as well as of the subsequent islands. However, the Treaty of Montreaux refers explicitly to the islands under Turkish sovereignty and does not name the Greek islands in question. Hence, Turkey argues that Greece has no right to remilitarize Lemnos and Samothrace (see for instance Heraclides, 2001: 218). Although Turkey seems to have agreed upon (through exchange of oral and written communication with Greece) the disengagement of the obligation of demilitarization for both hers and

⁷ See Article 3, *United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea* (10 December 1982), at http://www.un.org/Depts/los/convention_agreements/texts/unclos/unclos_e.pdf, accessed on 9 August 2004.

⁸ See the *Treaty of Lausanne* (24 July 1923), at <http://www.lib.byu.edu/~rdh/wwi/1918p/lausanne.html>, accessed on 9 August 2004.

Greece's islands, from 1969 onwards she supported the view that since the two Greek islands are not mentioned in the Treaty of Montreaux, their status is still determined by the Treaty of Lausanne. Greece refuses to demilitarize Eastern Aegean for one additional reason, namely the presence of the so called 'Aegean army' in the Turkish coast. Turkey maintains military forces and fortifications opposite the Greek Aegean islands that are kept on higher alert compared to its forces elsewhere, with 80-100 percent of readiness, unlike the usual 50 percent (Nachmani, 2001: 73). Greece, therefore, claims her right to legitimate defense and protection of its territory against the 'invasion forces' deployed opposite its borders. Meanwhile, the presence of these very same 'invasion forces' is justified in the Turkish discourse by the presence of Greek military forces opposite the Turkish coast, a perceived threat to Turkey's security.

The third element of dispute refers to the Greek airspace claimed to have been fixed to ten nautical miles, after its extension from the original three determined by the Treaty of Lausanne. In 1931 Greece extended its airspace by law, which was not disputed nor challenged by Turkey in an era of very good Greek-Turkish relations. Nonetheless, since 1975 Turkey has been challenging the Greek airspace both verbally and practically with violations of the Greek airspace by its aircrafts. In fact, the violation takes place in the four miles of airspace that Turkey does not recognize since they do not coincide with the limits of the territorial waters. Indeed, such a status is quite unconventional. According to the Chicago Convention of 1944 on international civil aviation, a state has '*complete and exclusive sovereignty over the airspace above its territory*' (Article 1), the latter meaning '*the land areas and territorial waters adjacent thereto, under the sovereignty, suzerainty, protection or mandate of [the] state*' (Article 2).⁹ In other words, since Greece's territorial waters are demarcated to six nautical miles there is no legal ground to support an airspace of ten nautical miles.

Last but not least, a major Greek-Turkish dispute is over the delimitation of the continental shelf, the latter defined in the first paragraph of the Article 76 of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea as '*the seabed and subsoil of the submarine areas that extend beyond its territorial sea throughout the natural prolongation of its land territory to the outer edge of the continental margin, or to a distance of 200*

⁹ *Convention on International Civil Aviation* (7 December 1944), at <http://www.luftrecht-online.de/regelwerke/pdf/ICAO-E.pdf>, accessed on 9 August 2004.

nautical miles from the baselines from which the breadth of the territorial sea is measured where the outer edge of the continental margin does not extend up to that distance'.¹⁰ In fact, the delimitation of the continental shelf is the sole issue according to Greece that needs to be regulated between the two countries. One of Turkey's objections is that the islands of the Eastern Aegean do not dispose their own continental shelf because they constitute a natural geological extension of Anatolia. Greece, on the other hand, claims that the islands do have continental shelf which should be delimited on the basis of a middle line between the Greek islands and Turkish coast. Turkey objects to such demarcation on the grounds that the Eastern Aegean islands are so close to the Turkish coast that a middle line would result in Turkey having practically no continental shelf. She further considers the Aegean an enclosed sea, therefore the delimitation of the continental shelf should not follow general provisions but be admitted to specific regulations.

The reason that the disputes over the Aegean were described here is because the way that Greece perceives them reveals one major element of its identity, namely her being a status quo country with respect to international law and respective treaties. A legalistic perception of the disputes is highly embedded in the Greek point of view, which sees them almost exclusively as a legal disagreement that should in turn be regulated through legal means. It is thus not by chance that Greece has called upon Turkey to refer their difference on the continental shelf (as mentioned before the only one recognized by Greece) to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Hague. What is more, preference for legal adjudication allows Greece to construct for itself the image of a state respectful of the international agreements establishing the status quo with its neighbor states, which in turn means that she respects her neighbors. On the contrary, Turkey is disrespectful of her neighbors since she aims at upsetting and ultimately altering the existing status quo. Further, Turkey's inclination for political means – bilateral negotiations – as a way of settling the disputes is nothing but another clear indication of the nature of the Other: political negotiations, as opposed to legal adjudication, leave space for deceit and manipulation and this is exactly what Turkey aims to achieve if Greece enters into negotiations. Not to mention that it will jump at the opportunity to present further claims against Greece.

¹⁰ *United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea* (10 December 1982), at http://www.un.org/Depts/los/convention_agreements/texts/unclos/unclos_e.pdf, accessed on 9 August 2004.

The European Self in the Greek National Identity

When the Greek Prime Minister, Constantine Karamanlis Sr. stated after the fall of the military dictatorship in 1974 and the restoration of democracy that ‘Greece belongs to the West’, what he actually did was give Greece an identity orientation. His intention was to break any connection with the recent turbulent political past and make crystal clear that in the Cold War era Greece had chosen camps. That further meant that Greece intended to build its political and economic system on the model of western democracy, namely fostering a free market economy, protecting human rights, respecting the rule of law and so on. For the purpose of consolidating the newly established democracy, Karamanlis pursued the admission of the country to the European Communities (EC), which was eventually realized in 1981 and it was practically the landmark event that institutionalized Karamanlis’s choice for Greece’s western orientation. As Coufoudakis puts it *‘Greece affirmed its European commitment by joining in the process of European integration and by becoming the tenth member of the European Community. Greece today must take advantage of new international conditions to continue on the road of stabilization and consolidation of its democratic institutions and to fully adapt to the European challenge’* (1993: 399). Of course, with regards to Greece’s western choice, it should be noted that Greece had been a NATO member since 1952, but it withdrew from the military branch of the Alliance as a way of protest for NATO’s inactiveness to the Turkish invasion of Cyprus in 1974. Greece returned to the military branch later on (1980) but the accession of the country to the EC aptly illustrated that Greece did not belong to any West but to the European West. After more than twenty years of EC membership Greece has come to perceive itself not only as part of Europe but as Europe.

Situated geographically at the edge of the European continent with close proximity to Asia and Africa, the question on the ‘easterness’ or ‘westernness’ of Greece (Fatouros, 1993: 23ff) has regularly gained its own societal salience, causing an identity problem to the Greeks. Nevertheless, the accession of the country to the EC resolved this dilemma (Ioakimidis, 1993: 411). Frequent advocacy of the glorious ancient past, which placed such profound import on western civilization, facilitated Greece’s westernization. On this issue Chouliaras makes an interesting point when he

states that there *'[is] nothing surprising in Greece trying to be European. The surprise [is] that Europe was presumed to be Greek'* (1993: 80). In other words, admitting Greece officially in the western community was perceived virtually as a duty or obligation from Europe's part, precisely because of Greece's cultural past. In fact, this argument goes as far back to the war of independence; it was Europe's duty to assist the descendants of the ancient Greeks to regain their liberty.¹¹

The effect of EC (and later EU) membership on national identity was twofold: on the one hand it reaffirmed the democratic character of the Greek state, which – despite a short eruption – remained intrinsically a democracy; after all, it was its birthplace. The Self enhanced its own image by appropriating and incorporating into its identity many values and principles viewed as representative of the European democracy, such as respect for human rights and the rule of law, economic liberalization and political stability expressed with free and fair elections, strengthening of political institutions and state structures and reforms in public administration. In Featherstone's words: *'the impact of EU membership in economic and social policy is a strong modernizing and liberalizing force, revising state-economy and state-society relations. "Europe" represents a progressive momentum, setting standards and raising new aspirations'* (1996: 15).

What is more, such an identity fostered the differentiation from the Turkish Other, who was not viewed as European in contrast to the Self. In turn, such reproduction of a non-European image for Turkey meant that non-European behavior was expected from her (Rumeliti, 2003: 226). Hence, the violations of the rights of the Kurdish minority, the interventions of the military in Turkey's political life and of course its disrespect for international law.

On the other hand, and in juxtaposition to what has been developed just above, being part of the 'European family' has resulted in the emergence of a parallel and co-constitutive identity for the Greek Self, which derives from the ongoing and not always intentional process of the creation of a European collective identity. As has been explained previously, some features of this collective identity can already be identified. Yet, the European collective identity is much more than protection of

¹¹ Of course, the degree to which the Greek war of independence was actually Greek is highly contested, given the tolerance of the Great Powers and the assistance gained from Russia as well as other countries, without which there would have been probably no war at all. One of the ending battles of the war, at Navarino Bay, was fought between a British, French and Russian fleet and an allied Turkish-Egyptian one.

human rights or economic cooperation. It is the *sui generis* character of the EU, it is its anthem and flag, the monetary union, the European law, its new-born Constitution (with all its flaws) and its common foreign and security policy. As stated in Article B of the Maastricht Treaty which established the EU, one of the objectives of the Union is ‘to assert its identity on the international scene’.¹²

Despite the indubitable impact of the European Self in the formation of the Greek national identity, the predominance of the Greek Self remains equally undisputable. A public opinion study of the European Commission among the fifteen EU members, prior to the latest enlargement, on how Europeans see themselves, revealed that in sixty percent of the Greeks national identity is very strong, whereas a thirty-eight percent responded that it felt ‘national and European’ (European Commission, 2001: 11). At the same time, however, the Greeks were the highest ranked among the EU-15 believing that there is a commonly shared European cultural identity (forty-nine percent). Certainly, such percentages are subject to change depending on the varying definitions of identity or culture. Beyond numbers, however, the link between the European and the Greek Self as articulated in the Greek national identity remains and will continue to remain very strong.

What has been attempted so far is to present the Greek national identity as conceptualized and constructed through two main channels, namely the discourse on the Turkish Other and the perception of the European Self. It has also been shown that the former does not operate independently from the latter but the two are entangled in one mixture, interchangeably nourishing each other and respectively nourishing Greek national identity.

In a nutshell, three main conclusions can be drawn from the analysis made thus far. Firstly, Greek perception of Turkey is pronounced via a very specific discourse in which the Other is presented almost exclusively with negative characteristics; in turn, the hostile discourse reinforces and reproduces this hostile perception. Secondly, the issues through which the threat image is manifested (Aegean dispute and EU membership) are directly related to state security concerns and have thus taken on societal salience. Thirdly, the securitization of these issues constitutes the cornerstone of Greece’s foreign policy towards Turkey. As will be

¹² *Treaty on European Union*, Article B (7 February 1992), at http://www.europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/treaties/dat/EU_treaty.html, accessed on 10 August 2004.

shown in the next part, the need to securitize these issues stems from the image that Greece holds of Turkey, in other words from its national identity.

Greek National Identity, National Interest and Foreign Policy towards Turkey

Hitherto, we have examined the *how* and the *what* of the Greek national identity; put differently, its construction through national discourse and its components. As, however, explained in the Introduction, our purpose is to show that the Greek national identity influences significantly Greece's foreign policy towards Turkey and that it indeed accounts for what foreign policy is in the first place.

Notwithstanding the influence of national identity on foreign policy, the link between them is not obvious at first sight. Actually, national identity is not directly translated into foreign policy decision making. It is rather articulated in national interest, which in turn determines the policy to be followed. In other words, national interest constitutes the bridge between the independent (identity) and the dependent (foreign policy) variable, i.e. the actual means through which national identity is embodied in foreign policy actions. As Weldes further argues, national interest provides policy makers with the needed legitimacy to justify the decisions they take in the name of the state (1999: 4). As she notes, policy makers need to make sense of the world and of the situation it concerns them before acting. Therefore '*they engage in a process of interpretation*', which in turn '*presupposes a language shared, at least, by those state officials involved in determining state action and by the audience for whom state action must be legitimate [...] This shared language is that of the national interest*' (ibid).

So the language of national interest can legitimize a state's actions. But even if a foreign policy decision is made in the name of national interest, what guarantees that the discourse used in the national interest would be successful in providing this legitimacy? The response is given by national identity. National interest discourse, in order to legitimize foreign policy, draws from national identity. Since national identity is deeply embedded in the population, any action taken for its protection can be easily justified, otherwise the people would lose their sense of security and would feel their existence threatened.

An example can better illustrate the link between identity, interest and foreign policy. Keeping the Eastern Aegean islands militarized (foreign policy decision) is justified by Greece's right to protect its territory and its security from Turkish aggression (national interest) which in turn stems from the hostile and threat image instilled among the Greeks (national identity). The argument is further fostered if we develop it counterfactually: had national identity been different, i.e. if Turkey were perceived in positive terms, then Greece would not have given societal salience to the issue and incorporate it in its national interest discourse, since it would feel safe and therefore it would have been less eager to take the foreign policy decision of fortifying the islands.

National Identity and Foreign Policy in Practice: Examination of Case Studies

If not for anything else, the Greek-Turkish relations have been characterized by the disputes over the status of the Aegean Sea. The divergence of opinions has so profoundly influenced the state of affairs between the two countries that talking about Greece and Turkey has come to be identified with talking about the issues over the Aegean. Briefly put, thinking about the Aegean follows ‘naturally’ and inescapably when any discussion takes place about the two countries. The second issue that can arguably hold a similar place in the bilateral discourse is Cyprus.

The Aegean Dispute

Since the logic behind the way Greece chooses to handle the Aegean issues is the same in all four cases (continental shelf, territorial waters, airspace, demilitarization of the islands) we will follow an overall approach.

The dispute over the Aegean has dominated Greek foreign policy for at least forty years, although its status – as already mentioned – was determined much earlier, with the Treaty of Lausanne (1923) and to a lesser extent with the Treaty of Montreaux (1936). These two treaties have, therefore, set the framework within which Greek-Turkish relations have been developed ever since. What is more, by setting such a framework, the treaties actually partly established the system within which Greece and Turkey operate. In this system, Turkey and Greece have to adjust their behavior, in other words their foreign policy.

As neorealists would argue, the system has formed national interest and determines the state’s behavior. Inasmuch as our focus is Greek foreign policy, the system shaped by the treaties has designated specific foreign policy decisions that are justified through national interest discourse. Succinctly, the policy of no dialogue over the Aegean issues followed by successive Greek governments is a foreign policy decision defended by serving the national interest, namely preserve the status quo in the Aegean as set in the two treaties.

Furthermore, such a policy is considered necessary to deter the Turkish threat and restrain Turkish hostility that ultimately aims to redraw the Aegean map.

Preserving the Aegean status quo is Greece's national interest because her dominance in the Sea is viewed vital for the maintenance of balance between herself and Turkey. Greek security cannot afford a redistribution of the Aegean pie.

As far as the means for solving the dispute is concerned, Greece, which views the issues raised as purely legal, insists upon international adjudication via the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Hague. Such a choice is once more interpreted within the context of national interest: it is in Greece's interest to pursue settlement via legal methods and not get engaged in political negotiations that – in every likelihood – would lead Greece to capitulation in certain areas, which is of course undesirable. In all areas linked to the Aegean dispute, Greece must preserve the status quo, otherwise its national security, territorial integrity and sovereignty could be put in jeopardy.

The sole difference that according to Greece requires resolution is the one of the delimitation of the Aegean continental shelf, since there is no treaty between Greece and Turkey that clearly sets its limits. The 1958 Geneva Convention on the Continental Shelf states in Article 6 that the boundaries of the continental shelf between two or more states whose coasts are opposite each other 'shall be determined by agreement between them', before any other way of settlement is considered (e.g. because of special circumstances or absence of agreement).¹³ According to the Greek view, for the delimitation of the continental shelf, the ICJ should be authorized to decide. Despite the choice of legal means, there is an obvious political and security consideration behind the resort to international adjudication: the latter will minimize possible relative loss, which would in any case be greater if delimitation was put on an agenda of negotiation. The Court would decide only on the continental shelf, whereas if the latter were put under negotiation, the danger of raising further issues which could be used as bargaining chips increases, which is, needless to say, undesirable. Therefore, such an approach serves national interest in the best possible way.

Except for the delimitation of the Aegean continental shelf Greece does not recognize any other pending issue with Turkey. All other questions raised exist only in Turkey's mind and as far as Greece is concerned, they have been settled in the Lausanne and Montreaux Treaties. Negotiating on the breadth of the territorial waters,

¹³ Article 6, *Geneva Convention on the Continental Shelf* (24 April 1958), at <http://www.oceanlaw.net/texts/genevacs.htm>, accessed on 11 September 2004.

the limits of the airspace or, worse, the demilitarization of the islands in the Eastern Aegean has to be avoided at all costs, since that would constitute ultimately a threat to national security by risking a redefinition of the status quo. In short, maintenance of the present state of affairs between the two countries with regards to the status quo in the Aegean is seen as better serving the national interest than risking to enter into negotiations over the Aegean, although their outcome may be proved more favorable.

The no negotiation policy has been a continuous and unbroken policy throughout successive Greek governments, the ultimate aim being the preservation of the status quo and avoidance of any negotiations with Turkey over the Aegean. However, this policy has led to a dead-end and its theoretical mentor, neorealism, cannot sufficiently explain this failure nor why no policy change has been adopted since this policy has been proved fruitless. Even if we accept the neorealist argument that no change in foreign policy is to Greece's interest, it does not truly explain why we expect negotiations not to yield beneficial results for Greece after all.

If neorealism has failed to provide a satisfactory explanation of why Greece has chosen the policy of no negotiation with Turkey with regards to the status quo in the Aegean, constructivism offers better tools to understand why this foreign policy decision has survived for so long and why it was adopted in the first place. The reasons generating the policy of no negotiation need to be sought to the fear of the way that the other party (Turkey) will use the negotiations. There is no trust in Turkey whatsoever that negotiations would be a means of rapprochement and that they would eventually solve the bilateral disputes in the most favorable way for both parties. Instead, what is expected is that Turkey will take advantage of the negotiations to put on the agenda as many issues as possible and driven by a win-lose logic will use all available means to gain as much as possible over the Aegean, disregarding Greece's national interest and security considerations. The belief that Turkey will actually act in such a way, the fact that it does not deserve even the benefit of the doubt about her intentions to enter into negotiations, derives ultimately from the perception that Greece has of Turkey, in other words from the Greek national identity in which the Turkish Other is represented with the darkest colors. The image of a hostile, manipulative and revisionist Turkey primarily accounts for Greece's wish to settle her differences with Turkey via legal means and not through political negotiations.

The Continental Shelf

To begin with, Greece recognizes only one dispute over the Aegean, that of the delimitation of the continental shelf between herself and Turkey. In the words of the former Prime Minister, *'for Greece there is only one dispute with Turkey, the continental shelf. Nothing else. Turkey may have different views [...]*' (Simitis, [1999], 2002: 160).¹⁴ Apart from this she refuses to raise any other issue or *'make any concessions at all'* (ibid, [2000], 2002: 44-45), arguing that there is simply nothing else to talk about. Everything has been settled in the past via international treaties which determined Greece's sovereign rights over the Aegean. The only problem that exists is that Turkey does not respect these commitments, but continuously challenges them. But even concerning the Aegean continental shelf, Greece does not really prefer to 'talk about' it, but rather leave the solution to third parties and particularly the ICJ in The Hague. Appealing to international adjudication has been an unchanging Greek position since 1974 (ibid, [1996], 2002: 29).

The foreign policy decision concerning the choice of means to address the dispute, along with the decision of 'no talks' on issues other than the demarcation of the continental shelf reflect two main characteristics of the Greek national identity: on the one hand its own perception as a democratic state with respect towards international law, peace and security and on the other the infused hostile image of Turkey that perpetually aims at undermining Greece's position and achieving gains against it. The hostile image of a villainous Turkey engenders mistrust and suspicion, which leads Greece to the avoidance of bilateral negotiations as a means to solve the difference, for it fears that in case of bilateral talks it will be exposed to Turkish opportunism and might be obliged to make concessions on sovereignty issues (Wilkinson, 1999: 163-64), which of course is out of the question, due to Greece's 'rightness' concerning the Aegean dispute, as well as because of the tremendous political cost at home that such an outcome would entail. Even the perception of the dispute(s) as legal and not political – as it is Turkey's claim – underlines the image of the Greek Self as a lawful state that does not seek to create problems out of nowhere or take advantages of situations by naming the dispute 'political' and thus leaving

¹⁴ See also the website of the Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs at http://www.mfa.gr/english/foreign_policy/europe_southeastern/turkey/turkeys_claims.html, accessed on 12 August 2004.

space for negotiation, which inherently encloses the possibility of concessions, interpreted in the Greek discourse as loss.

The Breadth of the Territorial Sea

However, whether Greece likes it or not, delimitation of the Aegean continental shelf is not the sole element of discord between Turkey and herself. As Heraclides notes, '*a disagreement arises if one of the two parties regards, justifiably or not, that there is a dispute and seeks altering the existing situation which considers unacceptable or unfair*' (2001: 204). He continues, questioning whether it is really worth adhering to such a firm position when it poisons the relations between the two countries (ibid).

So, one of these issues is Greece's right to extend its territorial waters from six, which is the current status, to twelve nautical miles, a right given, as it was explained by the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea. Based on this Convention, Greece sees no issue with Turkey, since it possesses a legitimate right to extend its territorial sea up to twelve miles. Turkey's *casus belli* in case of extension of the Greek territorial waters has restrained Greece from exercising the right thus far. Such a foreign policy decision aptly illustrates once again the influence of national identity. Greece, as a peaceful country that does not endanger regional peace and stability and aspires only to good neighborly relations, could never proceed to the exercise of this right, if such a deed would upset its relationship with neighbor states. Such is the behavior 'we expect from her'. The latter immediately implies that if found in a similar situation, Turkey would have no restraint in exercising such a right, simply because it does not respect the concerns of her neighbors and always acts provocatively. The point of not exercising the right of the extension of the breadth of the territorial sea is precisely to show that 'we are not like them'.

Yet here an interesting paradox arises. Although Greece has cultivated her Self image as a country that respects the status quo and has no revisionist aspirations, with regards to the territorial waters dispute she actually contradicts herself. The obvious question to ask is 'won't an extension of the breadth of the territorial sea alter the status quo in the Aegean?' The answer is more obvious than the question. However, in the Greek perception an extension is not a change of the status quo, for 'we have the right to do so'.

Concerning the issue of territorial waters, however, much rhetoric has been spent on Greece's 'right' to extend it and much less on the actual *need* of expansion. As Theodoropoulos –former Ambassador – admits, '*concerning our territorial waters, we complacently repeat that "we have the right" to extend our borders to twelve nautical miles even if, in reality, we would never undertake the risks (and rightly so) of such an expansion*' (2001: xiii). Also, Keridis comments that traditional political discourse in Greece emphasizes 'rights' instead of 'interests', which '*make negotiations and a bilateral give and take with Ankara almost impossible and, certainly, more difficult to sell to the wider public*' (2001: 13). Although better conceptualized in Keridis's terms, the use of the national interest cannot wholly capture our understanding of needs, since needs and interest do not always coincide. It is possible for instance, that a need to expand the territorial waters exists but might not be in Greece's interest, because of Turkey's *casus belli*; or there might be no need to expand the territorial waters but such expansion may be in Greece's interest.

Therefore the question that arises is whether Greece needs to expand its territorial sea. Currently, Greece's territorial waters cover 35 percent of the Aegean compared to Turkey's 8.8 percent. Upon expansion, Greek territorial sea would practically double and reach 63.9 percent, whereas Turkey would benefit of only a 1.2 percent increase, thus arriving to 10 percent (Bölükbaşı, 1992: 38; Heraclides, 2001: 211). At the same time, high seas would decrease from 56 percent to 26.1 (Heraclides, *ibid*). In other words, the Aegean would be transformed into a closed Greek sea (which by the way is one of Turkey's main arguments against expansion). A view of the map¹⁵ suffices to understand that in the case of such an expansion Turkey would be practically encircled and its free navigation would be upset, as it would be obliged, almost in all cases, to enter into Greek territorial waters through innocent passage in order to arrive to open sea (*ibid*: 212). Moreover, international navigation would be hindered as well. Does Greece really need and want this? As a state with extended shipping activity in global scale and herself interested in navigating freely in the seas around the world she certainly understands the problems such a decision entails.

The purpose of this short parenthesis was to illustrate that the way we understand things and respond to them is highly a matter of perception for ourselves, our aims and others. Greece's intrinsic perception of her rightness concerning the

¹⁵ See Appendix, Map of Greece.

Aegean issues articulated in national interest discourse (it is in our interest to expand our territorial waters, as this would immediately solve other issues, such as the breadth of the airspace) leads her to the foreign policy decision of adhering to and for the time being reserving her right to the expansion.

The Airspace

Likewise, as far as delimitation of the airspace is concerned, the element of rightness is prominent and the basis of Greek argumentation. As mentioned, Greece claims that it legitimately disposes a ten-mile airspace – expanded in 1931 from an original three-mile one – despite its non-correspondence with her territorial waters (six miles), which is actually the international custom. It should be also noted that the six-mile airspace is taken as a basis for NATO exercises, the only exception being an exercise that took place in October 1991 (Gürel, 1993: 171). Given that Greece considers herself a state that respects international law – in contrast to Turkey – it might seem controversial that she insists upon a ten-mile airspace that is incompatible with international law, to which she so vigorously turns on other occasions. Nevertheless, in Greece's view, Greece is not unlawful, since she *legally* expanded her airspace by national law, and was not at time disputed by Turkey for almost forty years. Instead, Greece points the finger at Turkey, who after so long a time started questioning the status quo with which she had previously been in accordance. Again, this merely illustrates the revisionist character of the Turkish Other and its ultimate objective to alter the state of affairs between the two countries to its favor.

Linked to the airspace dispute is the issue of the Flight Information Region (FIR), a technical division of the airspace worldwide introduced by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) for the purpose of flight security and control of international airspace by one country without this constituting an exercise of sovereignty or of any other right that can be exercised within the state's national airspace (Heraclides, 2001: 223). Athens FIR meets the Italian in the west, the Libyan, Egyptian and Cypriot in the south and the Turkish in the east. Since 1952 that ICAO assigned the control over the FIRs and up until 1974, Turkey had not raised any objections. However, since August of that year she started questioning the established status, trying to set up a middle line in the Aegean between the Ankara and Athens

FIRs (ibid). Although she has not succeeded in revising this status, the issue is still pending, because she has not withdrawn her relevant demand from ICAO. Once more, Greece perceives Turkey's behavior as hostile and provocative with the eventual goal being the renegotiation of the status of Aegean in its whole. This perception is reinforced by the embedded enemy image of the Other.

The Demilitarization of the Islands in the Eastern Aegean

National identity is very aptly manifested in foreign policy decision making with regards to the issue of the (de)militarization of the islands in the Eastern Aegean. The core reason for fortifying the islands is the fear of a Turkish aggression, which will create new *faits accomplis* in the Aegean. The 'old' ones refer to the division of Cyprus. It is indeed amazing (even for a Greek) the extent to which Cyprus haunts Greece and its foreign policy. Of course, there is nothing wrong in wanting to assist a fellow country to solve its existential problem. But Greece makes this existential problem *her* own, and adopts, to put it mildly, an unhealthy and sterile position concerning Cyprus. The 'Cyprus syndrome' is so deeply fixed in the Greek national identity that it has been incorporated in the language deployed regarding bilateral relations with Turkey, in –the least to say – a perverse way. Thus, Greece needs to stay alert in the Aegean and be aware of the 'real Turkish threat' (Theodoropoulos, 1995: 62) so that it prevents promptly 'a second Attila'¹⁶ (ibid). Needless to say, such discourse serves nothing more than to reproduce the enemy image of the Other, which is born and reborn from its ashes each time more and more demonized.

So, militarization of the islands is absolutely vital for Greek national security and for avoiding any 'traps' (Couloumbis, 2001: 152) in the Aegean. Or as Theodoropoulos elsewhere notes, '*there is not much place for concessions to any Turkish pressure with regards to the defense of the islands*' (1995: 68). Of course, there is no need to elaborate further on the origins of fear of entrapment of the Greek islands by Turkey and hence on the need for their military reinforcement. Let the words speak for themselves: '*The problems that we face with Turkey are created by the unacceptable claims and pressures from Ankara*' (Simitis, [1998], 2002: 204),

¹⁶ Attila the Hun, King of the Huns (5th century AD) was notorious for his brutality. The comparison is drawn to indicate the brutality (even barbarism) of the Turks.

who ‘constitutes an element of disorder in the region that puts peace and stability in jeopardy’ (Kranidiotis, [1999], 2000: 182), so ‘if we commit an error concerning the funding of our national security, then we risk losing our country’ (Kyriazis, 1997: 139).

The Treaty of Lausanne set a framework within which the Greek-Turkish relations would operate. It did not determine the nature of these relations. The nature of these relations was determined by what the parties wanted to make of the Treaty; how they chose to use it and interpret it and why. In itself the Treaty is nothing but a dead letter. This is precisely the reason why the Treaty set *a* and not *the* framework of the Greek-Turkish relations. Although it would be extremely interesting to examine the Turkish views and compare the Turkish arguments with regards to the Aegean dispute (or for any of the rest of the cases studies for that matter) to the Greek ones, such a task is beyond the scope of this paper. However, in order to make our argument about the role of national identity clearer and emphasize the fact that at the end of the day it is the meaning and representation of things that make them what they are, it suffices here to cite the Turkish view on the Aegean issues as expressed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs: ‘Greece has been tilting the Lausanne balance through unilateral acts to the detriment of Turkey’s vital interests since 1930s [...] The fundamental source of the tension between Turkey and Greece in the Aegean is the Greek perception to regard the entire Aegean as a Greek sea in total disregard of Turkey’s legitimate rights and vital interests and the Greek attempts to change the status quo established by the Lausanne Peace Treaty of 1923’.¹⁷ Needless to say, the resemblance to the Greek argument is striking. It practically suffices to switch the names and with slight changes one can see Greece accusing Turkey of revisionism. And frankly, to any Turk such an argument would seem as plausible and real as its Greek version would seem to any Greek. It is therefore less a question of whether the Lausanne Treaty was crystal clear about e.g. which islands and islets are attributed to Greece and more a question of whether we think it did or not. When there is a divergence of opinions then the matter has to be opened to debate.

¹⁷ ‘Turkish-Greek Relations Aegean Problems’, *Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, at <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/grupa/ad/ade/adea/default.htm>, accessed on 30 August 2004.

Conclusions

Through an examination of different cases studies, our aim was to show a clear causal correlation between national identity and foreign policy. It is *the* specific national identity that generates *the* specific foreign policy decisions. Had this identity been different, Greek foreign policy would have been structured on an entirely different basis. The discourse of enmity reinforces such identity which in turn is translated into foreign policy action through the language of national interest. With regards to Greek identity and foreign policy towards Turkey a few concluding remarks could be made.

Firstly, Greek-Turkish relations – and more importantly the Greek-Turkish dispute – are highly emotional. The language used to describe these relations has played a fundamental role in the construction of this relationship and in making it what it is. For instance, during the course of Greek-Turkish relations there are ‘periods of friendship’ (as opposed to the usual tense state of affairs), or Greece and Turkey are ‘condemned’ to live next to each other. Or we usually talk about ‘the Aegean dispute’ and not ‘the Aegean issues’. This immediately creates a reality, with which one has to live.

Furthermore, as a few analysts have pointed out (e.g. Athanasopoulos, 2001; Nachmani, 2001), despite the common perception indicating the contrary, both countries have kept their differences largely rhetorical. As Athanasopoulos remarks, ‘with the exception of the Turkish military invasion of Cyprus in 1974, it should be agreed that Turkey has not taken so far any aggressive action harmful to Greece’s national interests and sovereignty in the Aegean’ (2001: 84). Indeed, what is worth noticing is that Athanasopoulos wrote that in 2001, i.e. after the Imia crisis which was so widely received in Greece as another, in fact the most serious, proof of Turkish intentions in the Aegean.

Thirdly, Greece has been entrapped by its own national identity, as reflected on its foreign policy. The choice for a specific national image is neither irrelevant nor independent from political considerations. More particularly, Greece considers and has named its differences with Turkey as ‘legal’ and refuses their political nature, which is the Turkish position. Such a view allows Greece to insist upon its ‘rightness’, taken for granted, and to easily downplay the flaws of its arguments which derive from the political dimension of the issue, namely that Turkey’s concerns should also

be taken into account. Moreover, adopting a legalistic view is convenient for another reason: it can save any government from the political cost of shouldering the responsibility for entering into political negotiations with Turkey over the Aegean, which in turn would mean making concessions provided a solution is to be found. Negotiations are seen as a means used by Turkey to force Greece to 'make concessions', interpreted within Greek national discourse as renouncing, not to say betraying, sovereignty rights. Whatever the possible outcome of such negotiations, it would largely be perceived in Greece as a loss.

It is more that evident, however, that both Greece and Turkey have interests and rights in the Aegean. And both are overwhelmed with fear of the other's intentions. This is why a substantial endeavor to put forward recommendations for a Greek-Turkish rapprochement should take place through genuine dialogue and first address the formation of these socially constructed images, starting with a self-criticism by both sides. So far, and despite the recent rapprochement since 1999, Greece and Turkey have difficulty not only with talking to each other, but '*even with understanding why the other party thinks the way it does*' (Bölükbaşı, 1992: 49). Improving the state of affairs between them can only pass through a radical redefinition of their relation that would abandon respective positions and would rather concentrate on the needs of both. Thus they would realize that they share more things than they initially thought. Both countries need security and both consider the other as a threat. Both should learn how to incorporate the other's concerns, which, at the end of the day, do not differ so much from the self's. Such rapprochement would reach the very bottom of their relation and would in the long-run alter the current structural setting between them, thus leading to a change of behavior as well, in other words, foreign policy.

Instead, what we are witnessing is recommendations that would enhance Greece's relative position *vis-à-vis* Turkey, including enforcement of its military capabilities and its positions in regional and international institutions (e.g. Platias, 1994; Couloumbis and Veremis, 1997; Lazaridis, 1997; Athanassopoulos, 2001) that would be used as a leverage to control the Turkish treat. Needless to say, such approaches change nothing in the Greek-Turkish relations, let alone improve them. On the contrary, they exacerbate tensions, reproduce and perpetuate respective hostile images.

Yet, does the change in Greek foreign policy, for instance the Greek-Turkish rapprochement since September 1999 suggest a change in national identity as well? Such a change, it is more a regulative than a constitutive one. Greece changed the means of her behavior towards but not her perception of the Other. Therefore, the driving concept behind its foreign policy has not changed. It is still a hostile Turkey that seeks to gain relatively against Greece. The only difference is that Greece has chosen to deal with this threat by using inclusive rather than exclusive means, for instance agreeing that Turkey should become a member of the European Union.

Greek foreign policy needs a profound re-conceptualization of its goals and priorities, which will ultimately change the way we think about our foreign policy. Before that, however, we need to change the way we think about ourselves, i.e. our national identity. To remember Bloom again, the identification of the individual identity with the national identity remains very strong. In other words, hostile images of the Other continue to drive our individual behavior and everyday reaction to matters related to our Eastern neighbor. There have been some encouraging signs, though.¹⁸ Still, realizing that change is needed, working to achieve that change and producing a result are three totally different things. This is why despite any recent rapprochement, such a change cannot come overnight. Simply because it is a constitutive change, that will reconstruct a system from its foundations. For such a thing to happen two things are needed: time and political will. The first one certainly exists but the second one is much harder to find. A good start, however, could be to cease taking particular things for granted, and give, for a change, the benefit of the doubt.

¹⁸ On 28 May 2004, at a conference held in Oxford, United Kingdom on Greek-Turkish relations, images of Self and Other were one of the central issues addressed, especially in unofficial discussions in which young students took place, from Greece, Turkey and Cyprus, expressing their own personal experiences about how they have 'lived' the Other through school narratives and social relations. Everyone realized the role that such images have played in shaping the view they have for the other party. In 'Dealing with Memory: Shared History Re-visited', Informal lunch discussion, *The Continued Rapprochement Between Greece and Turkey: Still Genuine?*, Oxford, UK (28 May 2004), recorded by the author.

Appendix

Map of Greece



Source: <http://arcadia.ceid.upatras.gr/arkadia/photos/maps/greece.gif>

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