



Turkey and Greece as frenemies: discourse-historical approach to the leaders' foreign policy repertoires between 2019-2022

Turquía y Grecia como *aminemigos*, una aproximación histórico-discursiva a los repertorios de política exterior de sus líderes entre 2019-2022

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Abstract

This paper analyzes Turkish-Greek relations during the contentious period of July 2019-2022, when tensions between the two countries have risen due to domestic and conjunctural factors. The study employs a Discourse Historical Approach to reveal the processes of identity construction in Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Greece's Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis' political statements. The analysis suggests that the two leaders have developed discursive repertoires of frenemies, which represent interactive processes of logics and practices of amity and enmity between Turkey and Greece, in which they are competitive and mistrustful, but also convinced that collaboration advances their respective and often conflicting interests.

Keyword: Erdoğan, Mitsotakis, Contentious episode, Immigration, Eastern Mediterranean, Identity.

Resumen

Este artículo analiza las relaciones turco-griegas durante el polémico periodo de julio de 2019 a enero de 2022, momento en el que las tensiones entre ambos países aumentaron debido tanto a factores internos como coyunturales. El estudio emplea un Enfoque Histórico del Discurso para revelar los procesos de construcción de identidad que emergen de las declaraciones políticas del presidente de Turquía, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, y del primer ministro de Grecia, Kyriakos Mitsotakis. El análisis sugiere que los dos líderes han desarrollado repertorios de amienemigos, que representan procesos interactivos de lógicas y prácticas de amistad y enemistad entre Turquía y Grecia, en los que estos actores se muestran competitivos y desconfiados, pero en los que también se observa el convencimiento de que la colaboración hace avanzar sus respectivos y, a menudo, conflictivos intereses.

Palabras clave: Erdoğan, Mitsotakis, Episodio contencioso, Inmigración, Mediterráneo oriental, Identidad.

Introduction

The relationship between Turkey and Greece can be described through periods of closer cooperation followed by contentious episodes in which they move further away from each other, holding conflicting positions on many issues. Both declared their territorial integrity and sovereignty as nation-states after having fought with one another; then, they had a period of normalization of relations between 1930-1955. Following what can be considered as the first rapprochement, the contentious episode of rising tension between 1955-1999 brought the two neighbors to the brink of military conflict a few times. However, with the 1999 earthquake diplomacy, the improvement of bilateral relations gained momentum. The

second rapprochement period is widely categorized with the increasing cooperation, ease of tension, proliferating political, cultural, educational, and economic projects between the two, and adherence to multilateralism and Europeanisation. Nevertheless, despite the increasing cooperation in a diversity of areas, major issues of conflict such as the militarization of the Aegean islands, width of the territorial waters, the delimitation of the continental shelf, as well as the lingering dispute over Cyprus remained unresolved. That is, conflicts persisted during the rapprochement period. Starting with the second decade of rapprochement, the conflict areas started to resurface in line with the rising tension. Although the relations between the two countries have declined, communication and cooperation have not entirely vanished.

As Mango once put it, Turkish Greek relations are poisoned by many problems "whose persistence often surprises outside observers, given that the two neighboring peoples appear singularly alike. However, propinquity has its own peculiar problems" (1987: 144). It is in this context that he defined the relationship as one of "unfriendly alliance" back in 1987. More than thirty years later, the term is still relevant in understanding the relations between the two. Throughout the history of modern Turkish Greek relations, none of the episodes can be categorized as purely conflictual or cooperative. Instead, the relationship is better described as a complex blend of interactions that entails divergence, tension, threat, dislike, as well as common interests, shared activities, official visits, and long-term cooperation. That is, despite their long history of antagonism and territorial disputes, the two have also had periods of cooperation. Nonetheless, despite cooperation under the auspices of regional and international institutions, mistrust and threat perception persisted (Rumelili, 2003: 214). While cooperation and rivalry are two mutually exclusive categories, framing the relations as frenemies offers us a better understanding of the combination of two separate domains that can coexist in the relationship. The concept of frenemies then provides us with an analytical middle ground to avoid narrowing down the complex web of interaction to either one of the abstract concepts of "friendship" or "enemy." Hence, as a conceptual tool, frenemies can be used to analyze the relationship between Turkey and Greece as two political entities that have developed "positive tactical bonds despite a fundament[al] strategic dislike," while their relationship can be represented by a cycle with somewhat unpredictable ups and downs (Razaei, 2018: 189).

This article adopts the framework of frenemies to Turkey-Greece relations and analyzes the repertoires of contention available and regenerated by the political leaders since 2019. Wilson Rowe describes a repertoire "as a bundle of practices and cognitive commitments performed in a patterned fashion for a target audience" (Wilson Rowe, 2020: 1). Following Fairclough and Wodak's assertion, we approach political speeches as a form of "social practice" and therefore treat the political statements of Turkey on Greece and of Greece on Turkey as foreign policy repertoires vis-a-vis each other. Thus, the research employs a Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) as a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) method and

seeks to unveil the interactive processes of logics and practices of amity and enmity through a of the texts produced by the President of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Prime Minister of Greece Kyriakos Mitsotakis between July 2019 and 2022. The rationale for examining leaders' discursive repertoires during this time period is twofold: First, the analysis focuses on the leader's statements after 2019, as Mitsotakis became prime minister of Greece in July 2019 and Erdogan became the first president of the presidential system of government in July 2018. Second, 2019 marks the beginning of a contentious episode in which tensions between the two countries have risen as a result of domestic and conjunctural factors, providing an appropriate material for analyzing frenemies' repertoires.

In the social movement literature, the repertoires of contention are seen as means of mobilizing contentious collective action (McAdam et al., 2004: 41). As such, repertoires are also critical in international politics, given the state's need to promote collective mobilization for exercising its influence over the other actors (Goddard et al., 2019: 12). In the mobilization of support for a foreign policy position, identities play a significant role, particularly due to their potential security implications. From a critical constructivist perspective, the logic of identity is based on difference. That is, the identity of Self is constituted via the definition of what it is not and therefore requires discursive construction of Others. Then, the discursive foreign policy repertoires rely on a Self/Other nexus given that constituting Other within a discourse of threat and danger has a unique "capacity to stimulate people to contract into a political community" (Huysmans, 2000: 757). In this context, foreign policy is a boundary-producing performance while identities become outcomes "of exclusionary practices in which resistant elements to a secure identity on the 'inside' are linked through a discourse of "danger" with threats identified and located on the 'outside'" (Campbell, 1998: 68). Hence, focusing on the discursive practices of identity constitution in the leaders' statements can give us a better understanding of the repertoires at their disposal.

2019-2022 as a contentious episode in Turkish Greek relations

After a decade of increasing cooperation between Turkey and Greece, there were concrete signs of deteriorated relations between the two countries in the second decade of rapprochement (Türkeş-Kılıç, 2019). However, the year 2019 has been a significant turning point in Turkey-Greece relations. Since 2019, both domestic and conjunctural factors 2019 drawn the two countries into a downward spiral of deteriorating relations.

Kyriakos Mitsotakis, leader of the right-wing New Democracy (ND) Party, became prime minister in July 2019. Although the ND is portrayed as a liberal party under his leadership (Iordanidis, 2020) Mitsotakis closely works with people from the nationalist-identitarian background. As an indication, the people from the far-right background, such as Adonis Georgiadis and Makis Voridis, were appointed to significant positions within the party and the government (Kyriazi, 2019). The changes in Greek foreign policy also became apparent

with the new conservative government. Mitsotakis's leadership brought a new dynamism to Greek foreign policy by maintaining good relations with the US and engaging actively in regional partnerships. After he came to the office, Mitsotakis declared that Greece was "no longer the black sheep of Europe" (Kitsantonis, 2019). He succeeded in restoring Greece's position within the European Union (EU) and frequently instrumentalized the EU to obtain a competitive advantage over Turkey. Mitsotakis' instrumentalization of the EU can be characterized as a return to the policy of bringing bilateral problems with Turkey under the EU's umbrella. On the other hand, even though there was no government change to affect Turkey's foreign policy, the decline of the economy and the strengthening of the opposition drove Erdoğan to embrace more nationalist and populist discourse.

Apart from the domestic variables, the most significant conjunctural changes that led to the deterioration of Turkish- Greek relations were irregular immigration and the developments in the Eastern Mediterranean.

The maritime disputes between Turkey and Greece dating back to the 1970s still exist as unresolved ongoing security issues between these countries. Since 2019, the conflicts over sharing the sovereignty of the seas entangled with the enduring Cyprus dispute between Turkey and Greece. In other words, the traditional issues of conflict between Turkey, Greece, and Cyprus now coincide with another set of interconnected geopolitical tensions and energy problems in the Eastern Mediterranean between Turkey and a group of countries, including France, Egypt, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) (Dalay, 2021). Since 2019, the new natural gas discoveries in the Eastern Mediterranean have led Turkey to intensify its drilling activities in an area claimed as the EEZ and territorial waters of the Republic of Cyprus by Greece. Turkey's active involvement in the gas exploration has fueled the tension between Greece and Turkey. Apart from Turkey's drilling activities, Turkey's maritime agreement signed with Libya's Tripoli-based government in exchange for military support accelerated the tension. According to the agreement signed in November 2019, Libya and Turkey will share an Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) stretching from Turkey's southern shore to Libya's northeastern coast. The legitimacy of the agreement is denounced not only by Greece but by the Libyan opposition, France, Egypt, and Cyprus (Karagiannis 2020). Following the agreement, Mitsotakis stated that: *"It is important to stress that the agreement signed between Turkey and Libya violates Greece's sovereign rights. In fact, it is causing great anxiety and instability in an area that is already highly problematic"* (Mitsotakis, 2020a). Mitsotakis condemns Turkey at every opportunity by claiming its actions in the East Med. as illegal, provocative, and reckless.

Alioğlu Çakmak and Guner, in their study, focus on the conflict in the Eastern Mediterranean and the new challenges in Cyprus by analyzing the official statements of the Foreign Affairs of Turkey and Greece. The findings of their study reveal the impact of the developments in the Eastern Mediterranean on the decline of bilateral relations between two countries.

They argue that the year 2019 has been a significant turning point in Turkish- Greek relations. For instance, when the official statements of the Greek Foreign Ministry on Eastern Mediterranean were considered, Turkey was mentioned 18 times in 2018 where this number reached 334 in 2019 (Alioğlu Çakmak and Guner, 2021). The intensity of reference to Turkey shows that the year 2019 is a starting point of a contentious period in Turkish-Greek relations.

The second issue that accelerated the decline in bilateral relations is the irregular immigration flow from Turkey to the EU, mainly Greece. In February 2020, following the strike on Turkish troops in Idlib, Turkish authorities announced that they would not stop refugees who wanted to pass to Europe due to the expected arrival of new refugees. Thousands of people, ranging from 12.000 to 25.000, started gathering along the land border in Turkey (Ergin, 2020). Consequently, "the EU countries, first and foremost Greece, started facing thousands of migrants coming over Turkey to Greece" (Hüseyinoğlu and Eroğlu, 2021). The Greek government asked for immediate support of the EU to prevent the influx of thousands of refugees piling upon its borders. Mitsotakis declared Turkey's action as a blatant attempt to blackmail the EU and Greece, and called Turkey an "*official migrant smuggler*" (Mitsotakis, 2020b). On the other hand, "*describing Greece's treatment of refugees as barbarism in the exact sense of the word, President Erdoğan highlighted that Europe cannot tolerate even a few hundreds of refugees while Turkey is working to prevent a new migration wave of 1.5 million refugees from Idlib*" (Erdogan, 2020a). The use of accusatory and insulting statements at the leadership level in both countries shows how the immigration problem negatively affects bilateral relations.

Methodology: Discourse Historical Approach

The aim of the article is to uncover the discursive foreign policy repertoires of Turkey and Greece *vis-a-vis* each other over a contentious episode with a specific focus on identity formation processes. For this purpose, the political statements made by Erdoğan and Mitsotakis towards Greece and Turkey, respectively, between July 2019 and January 2022 are analyzed through CDA. Employing CDA is not only a methodological choice but also a reflection of a theoretical standpoint. Moving from the premise that "words are never neutral" (Fiske, 1994), CDA adopts a critical approach in line with the theoretical premise that "[a]ny social phenomenon lends itself to critical investigation, to be challenged and not taken for granted" (Wodak, 2018: 5).

Repertoires "are not neutral, continuous, or universally accessible; they constitute a resource that actors can use on behalf of their claims" (McAdam et al., 2004: 41). If repertoires are conjured up like a toolbox, the tools are not fixed, rigid, or uniform but instead are flexible, varying at degree, dynamic. This highlights the strategic and instrumental nature of repertoires. "when people make collective claims they innovate within limits set by the repertoire already established for their place, time, and pair"

(Charles Tilly, 2006: 35). In this respect, the leaders can draw from existent repertoires of discursive practices, and in doing so, they draw upon the history of interaction between the two states. Having said this, it is also important to highlight that repertoires evolve and vary throughout time. Thus, the analytical framework is built on the assumption that the leaders are fed by the inherited repertoires, and in return, they also take up the agency role in regenerating those repertoires.

The assertion is in line with the CDA's approach to "language as more than just a mirror of reality, by also accounting for non-discursive practices that help constitute social reality" (Aydın-Düzgüt, 2014: 357). Discourses are dynamic and regenerated in language every day, thereby providing a perfect medium to trace the dynamic tools of foreign policy repertoires. In this respect, the political statements made by the Turkish and Greek leaders since 2019 give us a collection of foreign policy constitution practices with a specific focus on the mechanisms of identity formation throughout a contentious episode.

The scope of the article fits the methodological agenda of the Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA). As one of the main approaches of CDA, DHA aims to account for the broader historical context of the discourses with a focal point on the representations of positive Self and negative Other. As such, DHA offers a refined analytical toolkit for tracing inclusion and exclusion processes in the discursive construction of identities (Aydın-Düzgüt, 2016: 48). Hence, it allows us to investigate the discursive foreign policy repertoires in Turkish Greek relations by analyzing the identity construction processes in the texts produced by Erdoğan and Mitsotakis. The data is gathered from the official websites of the presidency of Turkey and the prime ministry of Greece. The statements of the leaders are read and analyzed in their official languages, in accordance with the DHA's premises. However, references to English translations of the texts as they appear on the offices' official websites are provided in order to make the statements accessible to readers who do not read in Turkish and/or Greek. The search of the keyword 'Greece' (*Yunanistan*) among the news and statements on the Official website of the Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye² between July 2019-January 2022 turned out 69 texts. When Mitsotakis' speeches between July 2019 and January 2022 are examined, 60 of the 277 speeches in total are about Turkey (Τουρκία) with a high intensity in 2019 and 2020.

Hansen underlines the importance of text selection in discourse analysis and proposes three criteria. Accordingly, the texts should be 1- characterized by the clear articulation of identities and policies 2- widely read and attended to, 3- having the formal authority to define a political position (Hansen, 2006: 85). The statements of the president of the Republic of Turkey and the prime minister of the Republic of Greece meet all three criteria: First, the statements set out explicit constructions of self-other identities; second, they

² The official name as seen on the website.

reach a wide domestic and international audience at various instances; third, the president of Turkey and the prime minister of Greece have the formal authority in foreign policymaking.

DHA is an effective method for identifying the key features of discursive structures in texts (Aydın-Düzgüt and Rumelili, 2019: 296). Accordingly, the analytical structure of this research is built upon DHA's three dimensions (Reisigl and Wodak, 2009). It starts by outlining specific discourse topics in the statements. Then the analysis moves on to unpack the discursive strategies by focusing on how the leaders nominate the social actors. Finally, linguistic means are uncovered by focusing on the principal claims and argumentations that the leaders use to realize discursive topics and strategies. These dimensions are operationalized with the following questions:

- 1- What are the main discourse topics used by the leaders of Turkey and Greece towards each other? What does Erdoğan speak about in his statements on Greece? Around which issues does Erdoğan discursively constitute Turkey's foreign policy towards Greece? What is the equivalent of these questions in Mitsotakis' statements? Are there any significant differences in terms of which topics the leaders of Turkey and Greece choose to constitute their foreign policies vis-à-vis each other?
- 2- What characteristics, qualities, and features are attributed to Turkey and Greece? What are the reference points for the difference? Hence, how is the Other identity formulated in Turkish and Greek discourses in relation to Self-identity?
- 3- What validity claims of truth and normative rightness are made by the leaders of Turkey and Greece when they are justifying their positions? What do the leaders refer to when they want to argue for the legitimacy of their arguments?

Unpacking the discursive foreign policy repertoires

Content of the discourses: what is on the foreign policy agenda?

The DHA is applied to 69 statements on Greece by Erdoğan and 60 statements on Turkey by Mitsotakis. When the discourses of the two leaders are analyzed, even though the number of statements is close to each other, the asymmetrical situation in threat perceptions stands out. Although the number of statements is very close to each other, by looking into the ratio of texts among the overall number of statements made by Erdoğan it can be argued that Turkey's statements on Greece are significantly less intense. The total number of statements listed on the Presidency official website is 1336, indicating that Erdoğan makes an immense amount of statements on various issues. However, only 69 of them mention Greece, whereas the statements about Turkey constitute one-fifth of Mitsotakis's entire statements. Also, compared to Erdoğan, Mitsotakis' statements about Turkey are very

detailed and lengthy. The 60 statements made by Mitsotakis do not briefly mention Turkey but they elaborate in depth on the issues with Turkey.

Mitsotakis makes frequent mention of Turkey, particularly in 2019 and 2020. For example, he talks about Turkey during an official visit of a foreign statesman to Greece, a fair opening, or an official visit he made abroad, meetings, and events not related to Turkey. This situation is the same for Erdoğan's speeches as well. Erdoğan talks about Greece in places unrelated to the context, such as opening a highway, JDP parliamentary group meetings, Turkish Disaster and Emergency Management Authority Center, key handover ceremony of Kayseri Urban Transformation Project, or the International Migration Film Festival. While Mitsotakis directly addresses Turkey in his statements, Erdoğan occasionally chooses to convey his message to Greece through the EU. While doing this, he charges the EU with being "*a prisoner of the caprice of Greece and the Greek Cypriot side*" (Erdoğan, 2020b).

This finding can be explained by the fact that Greece perceives Turkey as a more significant threat than Turkey sees Greece, and it is also in line with the existing literature on the role of perceptions and identities in Turkish- Greek relations. As Heraclides states, "Greeks are obsessed with Turkey while Turks are not equally obsessed with Greeks. At times Greece seems more of an irritant than a real threat" (Heraclides, 2019:55) Aydın also emphasizes the asymmetry by his following statement: "given the disparity between the two countries' history, resources, and population, the fact that most of the Greeks consider Turkey as a 'threat,' and that in turn, most of the Turks do not attribute priority to a 'Greek threat'" (Aydın, 2005:21)

Both Erdoğan and Mitsotakis emphasize issues of conflict in their political statements on the Other. The Eastern Mediterranean issue, entangled with the traditional Cyprus dispute between Turkey and Greece, is the most frequently mentioned subject by Mitsotakis and Erdoğan. The Eastern Mediterranean stalemate functions as a complicating factor in the Cyprus question by reproducing conflicting claims on sovereignty and rights in Cyprus. While Erdoğan emphasizes the rights of Turkish Cypriots while talking about Cyprus, Mitsotakis stresses that Turkey violates the sovereignty rights of the Republic of Cyprus. The issue of refugees is also one of the priorities of Mitsotakis, and he argues that Turkey uses refugees to blackmail the EU and to realize its regional aspirations. The prevalence of conflict among the topics of discourse is indeed expectable given that the discourses proliferate in times of crisis in line with the "attempt to expel the "other," to make natural and unproblematic the boundaries between the inside and the outside" (Doty, 1996: 168).

Table 1: Discursive Topics: Turkey and Greece

	TURKEY	GREECE
DISCURSIVE TOPICS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - REFUGEES - EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN ISSUE AND CONFLICTING POSITIONS IN CYPRUS - GREECE'S REACTION TO TURKEY'S PURCHASE OF S-400 ANTI-MISSILE SYSTEM - HARBORING OF PUTSCHISTS IN GREECE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - REFUGEES - EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN ISSUE AND CONFLICTING POSITIONS IN CYPRUS - TURKEY'S PURCHASE OF S-400 ANTI-MISSILE SYSTEM - CONVERSION OF HAGIA SOPHIA INTO A MOSQUES - TURKEY'S POSITION IN SYRIAN CONFLICT - TURKEY'S INVOLVEMENT IN NAGORNO- KARABAKH ISSUE

Furthermore, although issues of conflict prevail in the two leaders' speeches, it is possible to come across discourses emphasizing cooperation. Both leaders present themselves as cooperating actors. However, the emphasis on cooperation and the call for collaboration is not unconditional. Both leaders stressed that cooperation is possible if the other party fulfills certain conditions. In other words, there is a conditionality regarding cooperation both for Mitsotakis and Erdoğan. In his speeches that emphasize cooperation, Erdoğan states the inclusion of Turkish Cypriots in the negotiation process on the Eastern Mediterranean question as a requirement. On the other hand, Mitsotakis states that they are ready for cooperation if Turkey fulfills several conditions such as controlling the influx of refugees from Turkey to Greece, acting in accordance with international law, and avoiding aggressive actions, especially in the Eastern Mediterranean. According to him, even though he extends the hand of friendship, "*Turkey has appeared less a partner and more like a provocateur*" (Mitsotakis, 2020c).

The issues of conflict mentioned by both leaders also resurface the historically consolidated differences related to these issues. To illustrate, since the Eastern Mediterranean issue is associated with the Cyprus issue in the discourses, the different theses of the two countries on the subject come to the fore again. The leaders discuss their standings within the Eastern Mediterranean issue over their Cyprus positions. In this respect, the leaders are reflecting their historical trajectories on recent issues. This means, the leaders tend to approach these issues with the inherited tools in their foreign policy repertoires.

The statements reproducing the cultural, political and social foundations of Turkey and Greece's present foreign policy positions bear the discursive traces of the Ottoman past, Turkish and Greek nationalism. A good example to this is Mitsotakis's harsh condemnations of the Erdoğan government for converting Hagia Sophia into a mosque.³ Mitsotakis argues

³ Having completed in the 6th century during the rule of the Byzantine Emperor Justinian I, it has been the largest cathedral in all of Christendom for almost a millennium after its construction. Ottoman Sultan Mehmed

that this decision is a decision that offends all those who recognize Hagia Sophia as an indispensable part of the world cultural heritage (Mitsotakis, 2020d). Although he does not stress his Orthodox identity while making these criticisms, his speech on this subject cannot be evaluated by ignoring the Orthodox identity and sensitivity of the issue in the Greek domestic sphere. The emphasis given to the Hagia Sophia issue is also an instance of the historical contention regenerated over identities.

1. Self and other representations

The critical constructivist understanding of identity is a relational discursive process that requires a "constitutive other." Both Turkey and Greece have long fulfilled this role in each other's community-building functions. In their nation-building processes, they constituted each other as the Other by using similar nationalist discourse drawing on similar symbolic repertoires as well as common strategies of expulsion, coercion, and assimilation, which Özkırmılı and Sofos define as 'parallel monologues' (2008: 192). This section analyzes the discursive repertoires by investigating the identity construction strategies at the disposal of the Turkish and Greek leaders between 2019 and 2022.

The identification of Self and Other is carried through referential or nomination and predicational strategies. The first two are about the linguistic tools by which actors are referred to. They serve a crucial function in constituting in-group and out-group identities by drawing boundaries between Turkey and Greece. The predicational strategies are about labeling the identities which have been constructed by referential and nomination strategies with "stereotypical, evaluative attributions of negative and positive traits" (Reisigl and Wodak, 2005: 43). This section will analyze how Erdoğan and Mitsotakis construct identities as different from and threatening to each other at two steps; firstly, by looking into referential/nomination strategies, secondly by unpacking the predicational strategies.

The use of personal "*I, we, you, they*" as well as possessive "*my, our, your and their*" pronouns are prevalent in referential/nomination strategies. They indicate leaders' collectivization efforts by differentiating Turkish and Greek identities over Self/Other nexus. As such, they enable "the creation of an in-group to strengthen the existing dichotomy between us/them" (Balkan-Sahin, 2020: 70).

It converted the building to a mosque after capturing Constantinople in 1453 and renamed it as "Ayasofya Camii". A decade after the founding of the modern state of Turkey, Hagia Sophia was converted into a museum in 1934. President Erdoğan controversially decided to convert the building into a mosque in 2020. Soon after the announcement, Muslim prayers were held while curtains partially hid the Christian images. See: Gülru Necipoğlu, "The Life of an Imperial Monument: Hagia Sophia after Byzantium," in Hagia Sophia from the Age of Justinian to the Present, edited by Robert Mark and Ahmed Ş. Çakmak (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 195–225.

“We will continue to give Greece and the Greek Cypriot side, which have failed to deliver on the promises they gave during the talks held at the European Union and NATO platforms, the answers they deserve on the ground” (Erdogan, 2020c).

“We have already started exploratory talks with Turkey. We've invited them for the second round. They haven't responded yet, but I do hope that they will respond so that we can discuss in good faith what is the main difference we have with Turkey, which is the delimitation of our maritime zones in the Aegean and in the Eastern Mediterranean” (Mitsotakis, 2021a).

“I have been public about acknowledging the fact that Turkey has also borne a big burden by hosting millions of refugees, and I have always been willing to support Turkey in this effort” (Mitsotakis, 2020e).

As exemplified in the excerpts above, one striking feature in the leaders' discourse is the way they use personal and possessive nominations when speaking on behalf of the state. Mitsotakis extensively uses "I" for Greece, whereas Erdoğan uses "we" to talk about himself. As such, both leaders personify the state, and the way they use the first-person references "forms a metonymic chain in which he stands for the people and the people stand for the nation" (Charteris-Black, 2011: 62). The personification of the collective, as related to the metaphor of "state as a person" (Twardzisz, 2013), serves Erdoğan and Mitsotakis to represent themselves as the symbols of their nations.

Another metaphor that is employed in the nomination strategies is family. The family metaphor is stressed by the leaders together with *the topoi of responsibility, threat, and right* (topoi's use in the argumentative strategies will be further discussed in the third section of analysis).

“[T]hose attacking our kinsmen, our brothers and sisters in Western Thrace should know that they will be held to account both through international law and other methods” (Erdoğan 2020d).

By using the family metaphor, Erdoğan aims to collectivize the Turkish nation beyond Turkish citizenship. Speaking of the Turkish-Muslim minority living the Western Thrace, Greece, Erdoğan constructs an in-group identity based on religion and ethnicity. Representation of Greece as a threat to this inborn collectivity facilitates the argument for a "natural" and clear-cut binary division between Turkish and Greek identities. The family metaphor is powerful because the understanding of a nation as a family allows the audience to normalize that "just as a parent functions to protect his or her children, so the government functions to protect its citizens" (Lakoff, 2002, 155). In this respect, Erdoğan can claim responsibility for the "family" against the danger posed by Greece. This establishes a ground for the topos of responsibility in Erdoğan's predicational strategies, which will be further analyzed below.

"Turkey must control illegal flows, whereas Europe has the opportunity to show that this problem, which concerns every member of the European family, requires fair burden-sharing amongst us all" (Mitsotakis, 2021b).

Mitsotakis, on the other hand, uses the family metaphor to stress Greece's 'natural' uniformity with Europe. In this respect, the European family is constructed as an inter-state collectivity. That is, the natural properties that bound the group reach beyond the nation-state and claim for homogeneity of the European states. This referential strategy constitutes Turkey as an outsider and Greece as a European group entity reinforcing its European identity. Mitsotakis repeatedly constructs Greece and the EU as a bounded community and constructs a threat to this community from Turkey:

"Greece's borders are the EU's borders and we will protect them" (Mitsotakis, 2020c).

"Europe needs to stand by two-member States whose sovereign rights are being violated by Turkey" (Mitsotakis, 2021c).

So far, the analysis has put forward the categorization devices and metaphors used by Erdoğan and Mitsotakis in referential/nomination strategies to represent the Self/Other nexus. Once actors are nominated and differentiated, the negative and stereotypical traits attributed to the Other are realized via predicational strategies. The study of predicational strategies by Turkey's President and Greece's Prime Minister reveals that both leaders employ the strategy of negative Other construction in a strikingly similar vein. That is, the Turkish and Greek identities are regenerated over an almost identical oppositional dichotomy between the provocative, aggressor, fallacious, inhumane Other and the peaceful, cooperative, rightful Self. For instance, in September 2020, when leaders were commenting on the Eastern Mediterranean dispute, they attributed the same negative predicational qualifications to one another:

"Despite the provocations by Greece and the Greek Cypriot Administration of Southern Cyprus, we have always been patient and calm in the Eastern Mediterranean issue" (Erdoğan 2020e).

"Since that first meeting, Turkey has appeared less like a partner and more like a provocateur. Late last year, President Erdogan signed an illegal maritime agreement with one side fighting Libya's bloody civil war" (Mitsotakis, 2020c).

By claiming that the Other is provocative and aggressor, both are constructing a Self-identity in the absence of these negative traits, so the Self is peaceful, open to cooperation and dialogue. A similar trend is observed in the statements on other crises. For instance, in

March-April 2020, when thousands of refugees in Turkey gathered at Pazarkule gate to enter Greece, the leaders again constructed a positive identity for themselves by duplicating the negative predicational qualifications of the Other:

“Greece’s treatment of refugees is barbarism in the exact sense of the word (...) The inhumane scenes we witnessed at the Turkish-Greece border last year are significant in laying bare the point of view towards migrants by certain western countries”(Erdoğan, 2020a).

“In the beginning of last month we had a very clear attempt by Turkey to use desperate people, refugees and migrants, and push them into Greece in a clear attempt to blackmail the European Union. This didn’t work. Greece protected its borders. And we’ll continue to protect our borders. But at the same time, I think we have a very good track record of dealing with this problem in a very humane manner” (Mitsotakis, 2020f).

As the excerpt above demonstrates, both actors predicate each other as inhumane and barbaric based on how they treat refugees. Mitsotakis further accuses Turkey of violating its March 2016 deal with the EU by threatening to allow passage to Greece. Hence, Erdoğan is criticized for using refugees as bargaining chips to increase Turkey’s influence in its relations with the EU, particularly over the diverging positions of the EU member states and Turkey in the Syrian conflict.

“Although Turkey has been characterised as a safe country, currently being the de facto home to many of those people, it still uses them as a geopolitical tool to serve its own purposes. This way, Turkey blatantly violates the EU-Turkey statement, according to which Turkey must retain refugees in its territory, while preventing illegal pathways to Greece” (Mitsotakis, 2020b).

Erdoğan, on the other hand, accuses Greece of violating the international norms, specifically the non-refoulement principle based on international covenants. In this way, both are excluding the Other as barbaric and inhumane and as violators of international law.

“Greece is working to stop and send back refugees by means of violence despite the fact that these people must be granted free passage to Greece and, from there, to other countries they wish as per the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Geneva Convention” (Erdoğan, 2020a).

The similarity in the negative predictions attributed to the Other and representation of Self-identity with positive traits is a part of a historically established foreign policy repertoire in Turkish Greek relations. Millas's study of historical texts in the nation-building processes of Turkey and Greece reveal that: “[i]n the era of nation-states, depictions of the 'Other' in Greek and Turkish texts were almost identical, but always as a mirror image of each other: the enemy, a source of political problems and a threat to 'our' freedom, was juxtaposed

with 'us' and the corresponding positive connotations" (Millas, 2009: 98). In this respect, both Erdoğan and Mitsotakis are drawing upon the existing tools of foreign policymaking and extending the century-long strategy of reproducing mirror images of each other.

At this point, it must be born in mind that repertoires also evolve. The dynamic nature of Turkish and Greek repertoires allows us to look beyond the historical reflex of excluding the Other. Focusing on the construction of identities along the oppositional dimensions may be seen in line with the mutually exclusive categories as the insider/outsider remind friend/enemy dichotomy. However, this is a continuous process in which identities are subject to change depending on the context, priorities, interests in foreign policy. In the statements of the leaders of Turkey and Greece, notwithstanding the preponderance of historically inherited binary dichotomies, mutual identity construction is also underway. In these discourses, the metaphors of neighbor and family are frequently employed.

"It is up to us to determine whether the energy resources in the East Mediterranean will lead to confrontation or cooperation. We are pleased with the momentum we have recently achieved with our neighbor Greece" (Erdoğan, 2021a).

"The Mediterranean is a sea which unites and brings us closer to one another and strengthens our cooperation rather than divides us; and so it must be, so it must remain. The Mediterranean is the roof and home of our large family with all of its countries and rights, from Algeria to Egypt, from Libya to Tunisia, from Palestine to Israel, from Turkey to Greece, from Italy to Spain" (Erdoğan, 2020f).

The two excerpts above demonstrate the referential strategies employed by Erdoğan to construct an in-group identity for the Eastern Mediterranean countries, including Greece. The relational identification established via the use of "neighbour" and "family" collectives makes cooperation between the two countries not only desirable but also essential. Cooperation between the two countries is kept on Greece's foreign policy agenda as well. Along with the discursive differentiation, a common identity constitution also occurs in Mitsotakis's statement. For instance, he openly states:

"we see Turkey as a partner" (Mitsotakis, 2021d).

However, for both leaders, the prospect for cooperation is conditional upon the Other's fulfillment of the positive qualifications of the shared identity. That is, cooperation can be possible if the Other acts in accordance with the neighbor, partner, Mediterranean, and/or European identity.

"Turkey if it deescalates tensions with its neighbors, Greece and Cyprus, and on the other hand leaves open the possibility of restrictive measures, so that our

neighbours can finally choose whether they want to take the european [sic] path“
(Mitsotakis, 2021e).

v

*“[L]et’s give a chance to diplomacy and display a positive approach in diplomacy;
let Greece meet this approach of ours in a positive direction as well and let’s take a
step accordingly“* (Erdoğan, 2020g).

Such discourse reveals that despite the reconstructed mistrust and reservations towards each other, a common identity building is also in progress, and there is still room for cooperation. As such, studying the discursive repertoires of the two leaders allows us to see "how different resources, competing logics and incommensurable political storylines may be nonetheless combined and performed" (Wilson Rowe, 2020: 75). Furthermore, the blend of partner/neighbor/family and threat metaphors substantiates the framing of relations as frenemies. In this respect, the coexistence of friendship and animosity reveal the complex nature of relations in which they "are able to straddle the grey area between adversity and alliance, and can concurrently castigate and embrace one another" (Tahiroglu and Ben Taleblu, 2015: 127).

2. Arguing for legitimacy: validity claims

Following the discussion on the contents of the discourse and the discursive strategies of referential/nomination and predication via the construction of Self/Other identities, the third level of analysis deals with the argumentative strategies employed by Erdoğan and Mitsotakis. DHA emphasizes the concept of *topoi* as essential tools in establishing the internal logic of arguments (Wodak, 2009: 43). Defined as "content-related warrants or conclusion rules" (Reisigl and Wodak, 2005: 75), *topoi* are parts of argumentation that strengthen arguments' validity with no further need for explanation (Van Dijk, 2005: 85). They are connected to widely accepted, obligatory premises and, in this way, act as a shortcut (Wodak, 2009: 43) which connects the argument to the conclusion. At this point, it should be underlined that *topoi* are not exclusive categories but mainly feed into each other.

A recurrent *topos* that occurs in the political statements between Turkey and Greece is related to right and justice. *Topos of right* is based on the condition that an action has been/should be taken because it is prescribed by international law or norm. In presenting their validity claims, Turkey and Greece refer to widely accepted norms and principles in the form of agreements, international law, and international organizations, namely, the United Nations, EU, NATO. In this respect, Erdoğan and Mitsotakis employ a very similar argumentative strategy claiming that the counterparty violates their rights, and that nevertheless, they continue to pursue a multilateral, peaceful approach in line with the higher-ranking law and standards.

"Our priority is to settle disputes in a sincere dialogue, based on international law and on an equitable basis" (Erdoğan, 2020g).

"There is only one rulebook, and that is adherence to international law" (Mitsotakis, 2021f).

When using the *topos of right*, Mitsotakis repeatedly refers to sovereignty. 'Sovereign rights,' derived from the international laws and reinforced by the EU membership, become a central concept through which he justifies his foreign policy objectives.

"Greece, of course, is doing what any sovereign State has the right to do: to protect its borders against any illegal crossing. This is what we have been doing and this is what we will continue to do" (Mitsotakis, 2020e).

Erdoğan also implies sovereignty when he claims non-interference with Turkey's supreme power over its territorial space. However, he does not give utterance to the concept as clearly as his Greek counterpart.

"We as Turkey have so far sought resolution to our issues with Greece in diplomacy and at the negotiation table. We have acted with a mentality that takes our neighborhood relations into consideration, although this at times has been left unreturned. I would hereby like to underline that we do not have an eye on anyone's rights, but we will also not allow any country to infringe our rights. Initiatives and agreements, which exclude Turkey or the Turkish Cypriots, and which violate justice, have no chance of success" (Erdoğan, 2020d).

The difference in the level of emphasis on sovereignty is in line with Greece's greater perception of threats from Turkey to its territorial integrity (Heraclides, 2019:55, Aydın, 2005:21). The implicit or explicit references to sovereignty connect *topos of right* with *topos of security*. Both leaders invoke *topos of security* to justify that the state is responsible for maintaining the security of what is constructed as an in-group. The actions of the out-group pose threats to the in-group's security. When leaders employ such argumentation schema, they legitimize their positions on the grounds that the Other is posing a significant danger to the Self; therefore the state has to take certain actions.

"Why do we spend so much on defence? Because our neighbour is Turkey, not Denmark. We need a strong deterrent. That's why we spend so much on military equipment. I would rather spend 1%. Unfortunately, Turkey is not Denmark" (Mitsotakis, 2020g).

Foreign policymakers very commonly use topos of security. It is "a self-evident and well-known topos, widely used even to legitimize war and aggression, and part of the overall strategy of positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation: We are peaceful and merely defending ourselves, whereas They are aggressive and warmongering" (Van Dijk, 2005: 78). In the case of Turkey-Greece relations, the almost exact boundary drawing process between the two actors enables them to argue for the exigence of getting prepared to act aggressively.

"Greece and some of the countries that support Greece have been preparing for a long time to make Turkey almost unable to step into the sea (...) They have such a grudge against Turkey and the Turkish nation that they would not only drive us out of Anatolia if they could. Thank God, our country now has the power, will and opportunity to protect its own rights, laws and interests against such intentions, such insidious or open attacks" (translated by the authors, Erdoğan, 2019a).

Erdoğan's quotation above securitizes Greece by referring to a historical point of contention over Anatolia, which can be traced back to the 11th century when Turks started to settle in Asia Minor, which at the time was under the control of the Orthodox Greek-speaking community. Recalling a threat perception dating back years, Erdoğan constructs Greece as arch-rival, and while doing this, he lays the groundwork for the legitimacy of his foreign policy position. The securitization thus enables Erdoğan to argue for an emergency and justify ordinarily unfavorable measures (Buzan et al., 1998).

Another topos that is interwoven with *topos of right* is *responsibility*. When international law accords the states rights, this also implies certain responsibilities. To start with, all states are obliged to protect their citizens and have a legal obligation not to violate international law. An argumentation strategy that Erdoğan extensively employs is built upon the premise that states are obliged to find a solution to the problems. Erdoğan draws upon the historical past and claims that Turkey holds responsibility for the areas that once were Ottoman territory, including today's Greece. Defined as Neo-Ottomanism, this discourse enables Erdoğan to argue for the legitimacy of Turkey's 'interventionist' approach towards the Turkish-Muslim minorities living in Greek borders.

"The legacy of our ancient civilization and rich history lends us a great reputation. However, it also comes with great responsibility. Today, there are hundreds of millions of people in our region and around the world who follow our actions in their hearts and with their eyes. Turkey must pay attention to the issues ailing not only its neighbors but also all of its brothers and friends with whom we share a common history and civilization, no matter how far away geographically" (Erdoğan, 2019b).

As discussed in the second section, the references of brothers are related to the metaphor of family, which facilitates Erdoğan to justify his position with an innate responsibility. This argumentative strategy is "persuasive because the family symbolises a source of security,

and the desire to protect the family is at the basis of moral systems and therefore contributes to the impression that a politician has the right intentions" (Charteris-Black, 2011: 29).

An alternative way of employing the *topos of responsibility* is by praising the Self for shouldering the collective responsibilities and blaming the Other for failing to do so. On the one hand, this argumentative strategy serves as a tool for Erdoğan and Mitsotakis to justify their actions by constructing a negative identity for the Other. On the other hand, leaders' depiction of the Self as the only party seeking to find a peaceful, humane solution to the problem aims to mobilize support for their positions.

"Is this country, which is an EU member, fulfilling its responsibility to protect the rights of the minorities as per the EU law? The EU administration should hold the Greek administration accountable for this. (...) We only seek justice and fairness. It is our duty to protect the rights of our kinsmen" (Erdoğan, 2020d).

"I should also point out that Greece is dealing with this problem basically on its own. We happen to be a border state in the European Union. We haven't gotten as much support from the European Union as we want. The environment today for any sort of relocations, unfortunately, in Europe is not conducive. So, we are also bearing a very big weight, when it comes to managing this problem. We are trying to do it in the best possible way, in the most humane possible way. (Mitsotakis, 2020f).

As the above quotes demonstrate, the EU becomes a focal point of reference in the validity claims of both parties. In the conflicting positions of Turkey and Greece, the EU is conceptualized as an out-group for Turkey and an in-group by Greece. For Turkey, the EU is on the wrong track because of its alliance with Greece. For Greece, the EU is a strong community to which it belongs and from which it expects support. However, both parties acknowledge the EU as a legitimate organization and call for its support.

Erdoğan confronts the EU about his perceived shortcomings in its relations with Greece. In several instances, the President of Turkey puts forward the claim that Greece is not fulfilling its obligations stemming from being an EU member -such as pursuing a foreign policy adhered to the international law, multilateralism, and peaceful settlement of conflicts- and the EU tolerates this.

"Those who stand against us on this issue, Greece in particular, know that we are right. Particularly, the European Union should see that it is once again betraying its own principles and undermining the values, which keep the bloc on its feet, due to

the double standard it displays by spoiling and unleashing Greece on us” (Erdoğan, 2020h).

In such discourses, Erdoğan uses a rhetoric of superiority by not directly addressing remarks to Greece but the EU. The implication is that the EU and Turkey are interlocutors, but Greece is a minor player leading the EU astray. In doing so, Erdoğan is also placing Turkey in a better position than the EU, implying that Turkey complies with the European norms and international law better than the EU. Such discourse reflects Erdoğan's self-perceived superiority.

“The European Union, which could not make use of the opportunities of diplomacy, bowed down to the spoilt acts of Greece and the Greek Cypriot side. International law was trampled on under the pretext of European solidarity” (Erdoğan, 2020f).

In accordance with the difference between Turkey and Greece in the EU context arising from the latter's member state status, Mitsotakis underlines Greece's unity with the EU and regenerates a Self-identity by drawing the boundaries between Europe - by all means including Greece- and Turkey. In doing so, similar to Erdoğan's strategy, Mitsotakis highlights Turkey's official status with the EU to put forward the argument that Turkey has moved away from acting in a manner befitting a candidate country.

“This is the language and behaviour of a candidate country threatening not just two members of the European Union, Greece and Cyprus, but the EU itself; something that's of grave concern to member States” (Mitsotakis, 2020c).

While both leaders seek to justify their positions against the Other, the source of legitimation they refer to is common; international law, international organizations, and particularly the EU. Furthermore, they employ the same topoi in formulating their validity claims. In this respect, both leaders are on the same ground with respect to what they consider legitimate.

Conclusion

This article has mapped out the contents of the official foreign policy discourses conveyed by Turkey's President and Greece's Prime Minister and analyzed the strategies of identity construction and means of linguistic realization. The three-level analysis has revealed that between 2019-2022, Erdoğan and Mitsotakis produce similar discursive and argumentative strategies on the same topics that reflect upon and reproduce a growing tension between the two countries. At this juncture, the correspondence in the opposition is noteworthy as it shows that two actors, despite the controversies, are indeed of a single mind about how they approach each other. This, in turn, keeps the window of opportunity for cooperation between Turkey and Greece open.

The analysis has highlighted the historical context of the altering weight of cooperation and rivalry between Turkey and Greece. It has put forward the argument that the discursive repertoires of the leaders draw upon the inherent tools from the past but at the same time regenerate cooperation and rivalry at the same time. In this respect, the periods of rapprochement or rivalry in the literature cannot be defined solely as periods of cooperation or periods of conflict. Even when high-level cooperation is sustained, tensions exist, and when there is competition, countries do not entirely slam the door for collaboration.

The study has further demonstrated that the negative representation of the Other predominates the Turkish and Greek discourses. However, the discursive process of Othering does not necessarily have behavioral implications (Rumelili, 2004: 29). In simple terms, referring to the Other as an out-group with negative traits does not mean that the relations are categorized with antagonism; the behavioral relationship between the Self and Other can also be cooperative. This is how the discourses of mutual exclusion can be accompanied by common identity construction. The juggling between the representation of the Other as a threat to the Self and references to the Other as a (potential) partner confirms that cooperation is the preferred form in the contentious episode of 2019-2022 despite the tension between the two countries of interaction. For example, in the midst of the Eastern Mediterranean crisis, President Erdoğan states unequivocally that Turkey prefers cooperation over conflict on energy issues:

"I call on all our neighboring countries in the Mediterranean, Greece in particular, to abandon seeing the Eastern Mediterranean issue as a zero-sum game. Let us all, together, turn the Mediterranean into a basin of peace. Let us not soil clean waters of the Mediterranean through new hostilities. Let us make energy a means for cooperation, not for conflict" (Erdoğan, 2020f)

Similarly, Prime Minister Mitsotakis expresses Greece's willingness to collaborate rather than engage in a dispute with Turkey:

"We will continue to protect our sovereignty and our sovereign rights across our territory, on land, at sea, and in our airspace. At the same time, I will spare no effort to continue reaching out to Turkey to explore avenues of cooperation I have a vision for the Eastern Mediterranean: instead of fighting last century's battles over hydrocarbons –a fading commodity– we can, we have to join forces and cooperate against new common enemies" (Mitsotakis, 2021g).

This is yet another example of how, from July 2019 to 2022, Turkey and Greece's leaders developed frenemies' repertoires: a portmanteau of friend and enemy, who are

competitive, mistrustful, and suspicious of each other's intentions, but are convinced that collaboration, however fragile or deceptive, advances their respective and often conflicting interests more than bitter enmity of previous decades (Tubilewicz, 2012: 701, 705).

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