

**NATIONAL INTEREST AS A DETERMINANT OF STABILITY IN THE EASTERN  
MEDITERRANEAN SUB-REGIONAL SECURITY COMPLEX**

By

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study explores the question of if and how the protection and promotion of the national interests of two states in a regional security subcomplex affects the stability of the subcomplex itself. The specific case this study utilises is Greek and Turkish relations in the Eastern Mediterranean regional security subcomplex, where both states make up a security complex within the larger RSC of the Eastern Mediterranean. This study considers their relationship by providing historical context to their current political dynamic, coupled with a catalysing element of conflict in the race towards finding hydrocarbon reserves in the region between 2011 and 2021.

To answer the research question, this study utilises three primary theoretical frameworks; firstly, Nuechterlein's National Interests framework in tandem with Bengtsson's Logic of Interfaces, aid in identifying identify the national interests of both states and the ways in which each state protects and pursues them. Secondly, this study utilises recognition theory in the Logic of Interface to determine the patterns of amity and enmity between the states, alongside the institutions established to mitigate and de-escalate conflict, in order to frame the sub-RSC on the amity/enmity spectrum, as defined by Oskanian. Lastly, this study considers how changes in behaviours of states could potentially affect the stability of the sub-RSC by identifying how much escalation is tolerated before shifting more towards revisionist conflict formations on the amity/enmity spectrum.

In the context of this case study, it is determined that this RSC falls between status-quo conflict formations and thin security regimes on the amity-enmity spectrum. In this regard, the risk appetite for conflict in this RSC is broad, due to persistently fluctuating patterns of amity and enmity. However, this RSC has managed to effectively utilise conflict mitigating strategies and security-normalising institutions in order to maintain its position on the amity/enmity spectrum and avoid the collapse of security regimes, altogether ensuring some semblance of stability.

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## **DEDICATION**

This dissertation is dedicated to the academics and policymakers who work tirelessly to build and strengthen bridges between Greece and Türkiye in an effort to fortify a relationship that surpasses all other elements between the two; a brethren.

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# 1 CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Introduction to Research Theme

### 1.1.1 Introduction

In the wake of the Cold War, bipolar global power dynamics between the USA and the USSR gave way to a broader spectrum of power relations in the world today, which are characterised by an ever-increasing number of regional groups, communities, forums, and organisations. As a whole, the advent of regionalism has transformed the way in which security is perceived and pursued, with regional security now being characterised, not by ideological loyalty to traditional Liberalist or Socialist paradigms, but rather through more intimate power relationships between states within regions.

Based on this notion, the following study critically analyses how conflicting states' unbridled pursuit of their national interests affect the stability of a regional security complex by enacting changes in the amity/enmity spectrum in the Eastern Mediterranean regional security subcomplex<sup>1</sup>. Specifically, the study considers the national interests of Greece and Türkiye, and how the pursuit of their respective national interests in the last decade has altered existing patterns of amity and enmity (friendliness and hostility) within this regional security subcomplex, thereby potentially precipitating instability in the sub-RSC (Stivachtis 2018: 55).

### 1.1.2 Research Background

The Eastern Mediterranean region is a thalasso-centric region<sup>2</sup> that has been characterised by both latent and manifest conflict for the most part of half a century. Particularly, two influential states in the region, Greece, and Türkiye, have been at loggerheads over territorial disputes, cultural differences, and a long history of enmity for much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and certainly into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, with both states claiming sovereignty over parts of the Aegean Sea (Dalay 2021: 1). These historical disputes and inconsistent willingness on both parts to find an

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<sup>1</sup> This is considered a regional security subcomplex, as it only comprises the relationship between Greece, Türkiye, and Cyprus within the broader Eastern Mediterranean regional security complex, that also includes North Africa and the Middle East. This classification will be discussed further in chapter 2.

<sup>2</sup> A region whose international relations are largely based on dynamics surrounding the sea or ocean.

amicable, middle-ground solution has led to multiple instances of increased militarisation<sup>3</sup>, increased political posturing, and potentially provocative political behaviour<sup>4</sup>. Although this conflict is, for the most part, latent, the developing security dilemma that occurs from mutual military escalation among both states increases the possibility for manifest conflict.

In addition, this traditional relationship of enmity was further exacerbated in 2011 by the discovery of natural hydrocarbon reserves in the region (CSS Zurich 2013), specifically in disputed sea territories between Türkiye, and Greece and Cyprus. In a broader sense, the protection of national interests, and the economic security implications of owning the rights to these hydrocarbon reserves in the region, are crucial for the national security of these states (Adamides & Christou 2015: 3).

Consequently, this newly increased dynamic of enmity in the region has once again opened the space for expanded economic and military efforts to mitigate against the threats perceived by Türkiye and Greece, with the aim of protecting their respective national interests. These efforts also include developing economic and defence ties between other actors in the region and beyond, as is evident in Greece's Eastern Mediterranean pipeline agreement with Israel, Egypt, and Cyprus (Tziampiris 2015: 242), as well as Türkiye's expanding relations with Russia (Barrinha 2014: 9).

This context of Greco-Turkish enmity follows Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT), as conceptualised by Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver. In this regard, the national interests of Greece and Türkiye in this regional context are characterised, or at least are heavily influenced, by the others' security perceptions, posturing, and actions in the region. RSCT denotes that stability between actors in a region is characterised by 'patterns of amity and enmity', which could potentially change depending on new developments. As such, it is important to look at these how these patterns of amity and enmity in the eastern Mediterranean are driven by the national interests of these two actors, ultimately affecting the stability of the sub-RSC.

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<sup>3</sup> For instance, Türkiye's rapid expansion of its naval capacity, such as the implementation of the TGC Anadolu Assault Ship project aimed for the Aegean and Eastern Mediterranean seas, and the MIGLEM Project, which will increase Turkish Navy surface combatants, and a fleet of automated missile boats (Bhaskar 2021:1).

<sup>4</sup> Such as Greece's alliance with Cyprus, Egypt, Israel, France, Italy, Jordan, and Palestine in the Eastern Mediterranean Gas Forum, which excluded Türkiye as a member (Dursun-Özkanca 2020; EMGF 2021).

## 1.2 Theoretical and Conceptual Overview

Based on the above, this study determines in Chapter two the theoretical and conceptual frameworks for Regional Security Complex Theory, national interests, the amity/enmity spectrum, as well as stability. Firstly, this is done to determine whether the Eastern Mediterranean sub-region can, indeed, be characterised as a security complex. Secondly, the theoretical overview provides a framework to discuss the stability of the Eastern Mediterranean RSC.

### 1.2.1 *Regional Security Complex Theory*

Conceptualised by Barry Buzan in 1983 and expanded by Buzan and Wæver in 1998 and 2003, Regional Security Complexes are defined as a “set of units whose major processes of securitisation, desecuritisation, or both are so interlinked that their security problems cannot reasonably be analysed or resolved apart from one another” (Buzan & Wæver 2003: 201). Buzan (1983: 106) notes that there is an inevitable element of history between actors in the complex itself, which characterise interrelations between the actors in patterns of amity and enmity, and consequential stability.

This definition allows for a constructivist view of regionalism, as there is an emphasis on the role that perception plays in the formation of, and relations within, an RSC. This dynamic is something that this study wishes to explore, as the constructivist nature of the perception of threat to the national interests of a state, based on the actions of another, could lead to the escalation of militarisation and economic volatility in the region, resulting in a security dilemma and a resultant change in the amity/enmity paradigm, causing instability.

### 1.2.2 *National Interests Conceptual Framework*

To further investigate these dynamics, it is also important to consider the fact that, where the perception of threat is concerned, the conceptualisation of national interests also needs to be explored, as, according to Nuechterlein (1976: 247), “the national interest is the perceived needs and desires of one sovereign state in relation to other sovereign states comprising the external environment”. In this regard, national interests are the constructivist culmination of the perceptions that lawmakers and politicians have of external threats and domestic realities towards achieving national security (Wolfers 1952: 481; Ferguson 2019: 62). Chapter two

establishes a framework from which the national interests of both states can be derived based on two primary elements – firstly, this chapter analyses Nuechterlein’s (1976) framework of national interests based on the types of threats perceived by the state.

Secondly, this chapter analyses Bengtsson’s Logic of Interfaces (2010), which determines the relationship between two states in a security complex based on how a state views itself (both from intrastate drivers, such as ideological underpinnings, as well as external drivers, such as its soft power within a region), compared to how the state is viewed by the other. Whether the *image of self* is congruent or incongruent with the *image of other*, as perceived by the other state, will determine how both states interact. Therefore, the national interests as presented by Nuechterlein will also encompass the *image of self* as an analytical tool to get a more holistic view on the determining factors of each state’s national interests. The remaining elements of the Logic of Interfaces theory will be further used to establish how these national interests affect patterns of amity and enmity.

### 1.2.3 Regional Stability in Terms of Patterns of Amity and Enmity

According to Arnold Wolfers (1962: 25), amity and enmity describe the diplomatic relationships between states, which should be conducted in a dispassionate manner in fulfilment of a state’s national interests. Specifically for this study, enmity “reflects the existence of a conflict of interests” where stability in the region is affected by physical violence by one or both actors (Wolfers 1962: 25), causing a shift in the amity/enmity spectrum towards perpetual relationships of conflict and mistrust (Oskanian 2013: 33).

Drawing on Morton Kaplan’s definition of stability as “the propensity of a system to preserve its constituent members against destruction or elimination, not merely by resisting or precluding change, but by adjusting to it through rearrangement”, Ayson (2005: 192), defines regional stability as the homeostatic condition wherein an “equilibrium position”, is formed by way of the maintenance of “some sort of balance, ... (or) pattern of behaviour”. In this regard, equilibrium is achieved when patterns of amity and enmity remain stable. Dowding and Kimber (1983: 230), assert that, stability is not the absence of violence entirely, but rather, whether a region is able to cope with patterns of violence (or increases and accelerations in enmity patterns). Therefore, drawing on this definition of regional stability, one is able to link the “maintenance and

persistence of equilibrium” (Ayson 2015: 192) and the stability in the amity/enmity spectrum as the primary driver of this equilibrium.

### **1.3 Literature Overview**

In order to understand the relationship between Greece and Türkiye in this Eastern Mediterranean regional security subcomplex, it is necessary to understand how each state envisions its own position in the regional space, as well as how each state perceives its national interests in relation to the other. In this regard, the literature overview discusses the historical relationship between both states to frame the context of the current situation (namely, the context of the pursuit of and control over hydrocarbon reserves in the Eastern Mediterranean). This framing is used in tandem with Nuechterlein and Bengtsson’s theories to determine the national interests of both states – within the parameters of this study – and the actions taken to protect and promote them.

Beyond this background of national interests, and the actions taken to defend them, the link between national interests and stability is explored through the identification of patterns of amity and enmity that emerge from these actions within the security subcomplex. To do this, chapter four of this study further uses Bengtsson’s Logic of Interfaces as a lens to consider how each state perceives the other compared to its image of self as determined in chapter three. Doing so will determine whether the relationship between both states is characterised by positive or negative recognition, which ultimately impact how patterns of amity and enmity occur and change in the sub-RSC. Finally, chapter four determines how these changes shift the sub-RSC’s position on the amity/enmity spectrum, affecting the stability of the sub-RSC.

#### *1.3.1 The Relationship Between Türkiye and Greece*

Firstly, within this RSC, Greece and Türkiye have experienced a long history of security interdependence, where each state’s national security has been intimately tied to and affected by the other’s actions. A major line of historical conflict between both states has been the claim over maritime as well as island territory in the Aegean Sea. Where Greece has legal and internationally recognised claim over its territory, Türkiye maintains that the stipulations through which that claim is recognised are no longer being followed and therefore, the territory should

be ceded back to Türkiye in line with its Mavi Vatan ‘Blue Homeland’ doctrine<sup>5</sup>. This historical relationship of latent conflict was escalated in 2011 with the first discoveries of hydrocarbon reserves below Cyprus in 2011, catalysing a wave of posturing and military escalations in the region where both states are convinced of their jurisdiction in the region. Nevertheless, although the relationship has been consistently characterised by these patterns of enmity, both states have continued to aim for the creation of a security regime, which would aid normalising peaceful and stable relations in the sub-RSC.

### *1.3.2 Turkish and Greek National Interests*

Regarding the discovery of hydrocarbons in the Aegean Sea in 2011, the Turkish Foreign Ministry acknowledges the strategic importance of the Eastern Mediterranean thalasso-centric region (specifically, the Aegean Sea) as a vital component of achieving Turkish national interests, but notes Greece as an antagonising force in what should be shared territory in the region (Republic of Türkiye [n.d.]a).

Additionally, according to its Mavi Vatan doctrine, Türkiye aims to be a regional maritime power (Jager & Norris 2021), to counter global Western influence (Denizeau 2021: 11). Türkiye’s national interests require control over resources as well as trade routes in the eastern Mediterranean and it will assert its dominance in the region without inhibition to this end (Denizeau 2021: 1). However, the Mavi Vatan is a distinctly nationalist policy, which threatens Greek territory as determined by several international treaties and international law.

On the other hand, whilst Türkiye’s national interests are characterised by a desire to legitimise its claim over substantial portions of additional territory, Greek national interests are defined in a more defensive manner in response to the perception that Türkiye’s increasing militarised efforts impede the sovereignty of Greece’s territory (Hellenic Republic [n.d.]). This dynamic has been significantly accelerated since the aforementioned hydrocarbon reserve discoveries in 2011, as now both states are seeking to maintain claim and control over both potential hydrocarbon reserves, as well as the inevitable infrastructure that will be needed to transport natural gas into southern Europe. Another major factor in Greece’s national interests is its need to relieve its significant debts owed to the EU Bank, following more than a decade of slow

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<sup>5</sup> The Mavi Vatan is a controversial geopolitical doctrine, which lays claim over a vast maritime domain, encompassing over half of Greece’s islands and maritime territory.

recovery from its bail-out after the 2008 economic crash, which saw Greece in substantial financial turmoil with record-high unemployment.

The successful mitigation of Greece's financial problems would not only allow the country to gain a sense of economic independence, but also, its pursuit of its own agreements with Israel and Egypt in bringing gas to Southern Europe through the Eastern Mediterranean (EastMed) Pipeline Project would allow the country to hold its own as a regional linchpin of energy infrastructure in the Eastern Mediterranean, able to rival Türkiye's own position as a powerful state between Europe and the Middle East. In some respects, Greece's national interests firmly lie in its ability to use its claim to hydrocarbon resources in the Eastern Mediterranean to alter its external perception from an economically volatile member of the EU to being a vital European actor, capable of seeing out EU interests in the eastern regions of the continent.

#### **1.4 Research Problem and Question**

Therefore, to understand the current dynamics of the Eastern Mediterranean regional security subcomplex, this study wishes to identify the national interests of Greece and Türkiye with the aim of analysing how the respective attempts to protect and pursue the interests of both states, creates instability in the sub-RSC as a result of the changing equilibrium of amity and enmity between them. To do so, this dissertation aims to answer the following research question:

*To what extent has the pursuit of the national interests of Greece and Türkiye affected the stability of the Eastern Mediterranean Regional Security subcomplex between 2011 and 2021?*

Sub-questions:

- What actions did Greece and Türkiye take to protect and pursue their national interests in the parameters of this study?
- How did these actions affect the stability of the sub-RSC?

##### *1.4.1 Geographical and Temporal Demarcation of the Study*

This study proposes the timeline of 2011-2021, as 2011 saw the first discoveries of hydrocarbon reserves in the Mediterranean Sea, which has acted as a catalyst for the contemporary situation. Additionally, this ten-year period is long enough to allow for the observance of trends

in the behaviours of both states and the overall stability of the subcomplex. 2021 is the proposed limitation date, as the situation is still ongoing, and any potential changes in circumstance may alter the course of the study.

## **1.5 Methodological Overview**

### *1.5.1 Type of Analysis*

This study utilises the sub-RSC Theory as a framework to analyse the relations between Greece and Türkiye and their effects on stability in the Eastern Mediterranean subcomplex. To do this, the study qualitatively analyses and compare the national interests of Greece and Türkiye according to Nuechterlein's work on national interests and Bengtsson's Logic of Interfaces and deductively apply them to Buzan's RSCT to critically analyse if and how the pursuit of national interests affects the stability of this regional security subcomplex. This is done through a literature-based study utilising primary and secondary sources. Conceptual parameters are established in the conceptual analysis and will be utilised as a framework to determine the effects of the pursuit and promotion of national interests on the stability of the sub-regional security. Changes in the amity/enmity spectrum are used as determinants of stability within an RSC.

### *1.5.2 Ethical Considerations*

There are no fieldwork studies or human interviews in this study; therefore, no ethical clearance is required for human interviews. Additionally, this study only uses source material that is available in the public domain; therefore, no ethical clearance is required for the use of classified documents.

### *1.5.3 Limitations*

This study is aimed at providing analysis of a single determining factor of stability within this particular regional security subcomplex. As such, it is not an exhaustive study on all the factors of stability but is focused on amity and enmity as a determinant. Moreover, this study is focused on the Eastern Mediterranean regional security subcomplex as its geographic demarcation; as such this study does not assume to be transferrable to all regional security complexes.

## 1.6 Structure of Study

### 1.6.1 Chapter One

This chapter provides a general overview of the research issue, and a literature overview of the analyses and research conclusions the research explores in chapters three and four. From this, the chapter outlines the research problem, the research question, and the methodology of the intended research.

### 1.6.2 Chapter Two

Chapter two introduces the theoretical and conceptual frameworks on which this study is baselined. The overarching theoretical framework uses national security and power as a basis for discussions around RSCs, national interests, and stability. Regarding national interests, this chapter considers Nuechterlein's more traditional theories and extends the theoretical framework by utilising Bengtsson's Logic of Interfaces. In doing so, this study not only analyses how a state defines the intensity of a perceived threat – as posited by Nuechterlein – but also analyses that these perceived threats are borne of the relationship and interactions these actors have historically maintained, based on the image of self and image of other within an RSC.

Enmity and amity, therefore, is the culmination of how these patterns form either mutual or incongruent recognition of the other, resulting in certain actions in response to a potential perception of threat from the other. In order to analyse these patterns, this chapter utilises Oskanian's amity/enmity spectrum and defines stability as an equilibrium position, where the RSC is able to maintain its relative position within the spectrum.

As a level of analysis, this chapter delineates the study's theoretical parameters within regionalism, introducing Buzan and Wæver's Regional Security Complex Theory as the overarching theoretical framework of the study, as the power dynamics within both states can be better understood intra-regionally, as opposed to being defined by global systems of power. Additionally, the study further focuses on Greece and Türkiye's relationship as a sub-region within the broader RSC under the premise that sub-complexes are defined by their individual patterns of amity and enmity within the greater security patterns of the region.

### *1.6.3 Chapter Three*

Chapter three draws from the frameworks established in chapter two by positing that the national interests of a country are determined by both intrinsic and extrinsic factors of national interests, which ultimately defines how these interests are pursued and protected. To do this, the chapter firstly establishes the current drivers of tension between both states by outlining the historical geopolitical conflict, ideological differences, as well as bids for international support by both states. This ultimately frames their national security contexts, as well as the image of self within the context of the RSC.

This chapter uses this framing to understand how the current perceived threats to national security result in the framing of national interests in the context of the race toward hydrocarbon discoveries in the area. Utilising Bengtsson's framework, the chapter examines the threats to these national interests and the actions taken to protect and promote them, based on each country's image of self. Ultimately, this contextualises a dynamic of amity and enmity between both states. Importantly, this chapter not only looks at conflict dynamics, but also bids to form positive relations as well, as amity and enmity do not form a binary dynamic, but rather, a multi-faceted view on inter-state relations.

### *1.6.4 Chapter Four*

Chapter four further explores Bengtsson's interface dyad to examine how the image of other interplays with the image of self. This interplay ultimately forms patterns of recognition between both states, depending on whether the image of self is congruent with the image of other between both states. Drawing from chapter two, amity-driven relationships occur when there is positive recognition, based on mutually-congruent images of self and other. On the other hand, enmity-driven relationships occur when there is negative recognition, based on mutually incongruent images of self and other, ultimately causing disequilibrium. In this case, chapter four situates the RSC into Oskanian's amity/enmity spectrum and determines if the current conflict caused by the race towards discovering hydrocarbons has resulted in a major and enduring shift 'leftward' in the spectrum towards revisionist conflict formations. The result of this determines the stability of a region itself in the context of emerging regional conflicts.

### *1.6.5 Chapter Five*

This chapter concludes the study by reiterating the line of reasoning throughout the study to answer to the research question. In doing so, it provides a full summary of the theoretical throughline, and summarises the findings of chapters three and four. Specifically, this chapter analyses how Greece and Türkiye's are framed, as well as the actions taken to protect and promote them. From this, the chapter summarises the use of Bengtsson's logic of interface to determine how patterns of amity and enmity are enacted, based on recognition between both states. Thirdly, the chapter utilises this framing of amity and enmity to position the RSC on the amity/enmity spectrum and determine the effect the current race towards hydrocarbons has had on its position. This ultimately answers the research question on how national interests affects the stability of an RSC. Lastly, this chapter discusses several considerations and limitations to the study, which could not be discussed in this mini-dissertation.

## **1.7 Conclusion**

Based on the above chapter, which highlights the components used to establish a research problem and question, the following chapters aim to systematically explicate each component to eventually establish a logical conclusion to answer the research question. Chapter two establishes a theoretical baseline for the study by providing working definitions for concepts, and developing a theoretical and conceptual framework from which the research question can be answered.

## **2 CHAPTER TWO: THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

This chapter defines the relevant concepts and theories to this study in order to clarify and contextualise the analytical framework used. Firstly, national security is defined, as the entirety of this study is baselined on national security, which frames RSCs, national interests, and stability. Secondly, the concept of power is discussed – this goes hand-in-hand with national security and the ability to ensure it. Thirdly the concept of national interests, as defined by Nuechterlein’s and Bengtsson’s frameworks, is discussed. Fourthly, RSC theory is explored as the primary theoretical underpinning of this study. Lastly, this chapter analyses amity and enmity as a determinant of stability.

Within the context of this study, it is imperative to underpin the national interests framework from which these two states act in order to better understand the patterns of amity and enmity that arise from their actions. As such, national security is the primary foundation on which this study bases its analysis. However, considering the breadth that comprises national security as a topic, it is necessary to delve into more specific issue areas which doubtlessly impact the strategic output of the state.

### **2.1 National Security**

In his book, *People, States and Fear* (1983:3), Barry Buzan acknowledges that, in the broad sense of use in international relations literature and practice, the concept of national security is widely used, but yet, does not come with a coherent school of thought. The UN echoes this sentiment but offers a general definition as “the ability of a state to cater for the protection and defence of its citizenry” (Osisanya [n.d.]). Within the broader study of national security, however, Buzan (1983:13-15) presents two facets of national security – the referent object of security<sup>6</sup> and the necessary conditions for security – which act as a mapping of national security from the individual level to the state level, and ultimately to the international level. For the purposes of this study, the focus area of national security is the state as the referent object, which Buzan (1983: 40) posits, has three components that could potentially face threat in their own rights – “the idea of the state, the physical base of the state, and the institutional expression of the

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<sup>6</sup> The referent object of security is an element or object that is under threat and in need of protection.

state". The idea of the state is the notion that the nation itself is the referent object of security insofar as it represents a particular idea of culture and/or race. The institutions of the state represent the bodies, laws, and norms which are institutionalized in the state. The physical base of the state is the state's population and territory, including all the resources found within the claimed and established boundaries of the state. (Buzan 1983)

Considering these three elements of national security, it is clear that the realm of national security is broad enough to prevent a single holistic view at national security as a concept in its entirety – a potential solution for this is to further identify facets of national security to act as lenses through which national security can be measured. Dr R Blake (Bester 2019: 12) identifies and consolidates five facets of national security into a *National Security Quintet* (national interests, national values, national identity, national will, and national power), wherein, each facet acts as an instrument playing in harmony with the others to achieve a collective goal. Of the five – national interests – is the branch of national security that this study focuses on, with a conceptual analysis below.

## **2.2 Understanding the Dynamics of Power**

It is imperative that 'power' be defined as a term that will guide this study and more specifically, the arguments surrounding regional security complexes. According to Barnett and Duval (2005: 39), "power is the production, in and through social relations, of effects that shape the capacities of actors to determine their circumstances and fate". The following section extrapolates several elements of power, which should be acknowledged when considering this study.

### *2.2.1 Defining Power*

The analysis of power can be characterised by two dimensions, namely social interaction, and interaction specificity (Barnett & Duval 2005: 45). The social interaction dimension speaks to how power between actors is actually expressed. In this regard, expressions of power between actors can be characterised either by behavioural interactions between actors, or a more structural notion of "social relations of constitution", wherein, relations between actors are defined by existing social structures (Barnett & Duval 2005: 46). In essence, social interactions can be structural or constructive, depending on the circumstances of the setting itself.

This is particularly salient in the discussion of RSCT, as although it is easily assumed that power relations between units in an RSC are characterised by social relations of constitution, as previously defined, these dimensions are not mutually exclusive, and it must be acknowledged that patterns of amity and enmity change due to the decisions of figures within the units themselves.

In discussing how states utilise power, the concept of instruments of power must also be understood. A common paradigm for the instruments of state power is the DIME model, which posits that in conflict, a state cannot only rely on the use of force to advance its interests and 'win' against an enemy. Rather, a state's best tactic is to also include "diplomacy, information, military, and economics (DIME)" (Krenson 2012: 3)

### *2.2.2 Taxonomy: 4 Types of Power*

Another dynamic of power, as presented by Barnett and Duval, is the taxonomy of four types of power. These exist in order to understand to what extent actors are to determine their own fate, and equally, how this ability is "limited or enhanced though social relations with others" (Barnett & Duval 2005: 43). The first two types of power are defined by the notion of "power of and power over" (Souza 2021: 87), wherein, 'compulsory power' defines an actor's ability to directly control another actor within a specific setting, and 'institutional powers' that determine the same thing through the means of a mediating body.

Regarding the second two types of power – 'structural' and 'productive' power – 'structural power' refers to the internal relation which delineates the actor's structural position in a specific setting as existing solely "by virtue of its relation to [the] structural position" of the other actor (Barnett & Duval 2005: 53). Importantly, Barnett and Duval (2005: 53) assert that this "Social Structure not only constitutes actors and their capacities, but also shapes their self-understanding and subjective interests". In this regard, national identity and national interests, as is discussed in this chapter, are directly proportional to the social structure power dynamics of specific relations between actors.

'Productive power' takes a more constructivist role in power relations by "looking beyond structures" by affording meaning to existing structures and occupying power spaces based on social force networks and structures of meaning (Barnett & Duval 2005: 55). In this regard,

power is defined by discourse between actors, which has the potential to alter perceptions both within the power dynamic itself and from external observers.

### 2.2.3 *Soft and Hard Power*

Another crucial element of power is the way a state is able to utilise means other than military capability to achieve its goals. The 20<sup>th</sup> century saw a shift in the traditional power paradigm, where the “test of a great power was its strength in war” (Nye 1990: 154), however, there has since been a decrease in the effectiveness of this traditional power where cooperation is of greater value than might and, in many cases, countries are not directly pitted against each other.

Conceptualised by Joseph Nye, power can be seen in two distinguishable capacities to reflect this shift – soft power (co-optive power) and hard power (command power). Traditional hard power dynamics of international relations are characterised by “the goal of security and the instrument of military force to be linked by a strategy of balancing power” (Nye 1990: 158). However, this has shown to not be consistently effective in the changing environment of global politics, where countries are not necessarily in direct military conflict with another, but rather, the elements of economics, culture, multilateralism, and regional security, among others, play a significant role in how a state is able to thrive. Therefore, it is useful for a state to also possess soft power in an international setting, as it utilises the legitimacy of a state, its institution-building prowess, culture, and communication to enact politics towards which other states are willing to act in favour (Nye 1990: 157). In this respect, soft power can be just as effective as hard power, as if a state is able to successfully portray its power as legitimate, other states are more likely to act constructively to its goals.

### 2.2.4 *The Security Dilemma*

One of the ways in which the constructivism of power is manifested in international security structures is through security dilemmas. Ken Booth and Nicholas Wheeler define security dilemmas as a “two-level security predicament” between states and other international actors (2008: 3). The first level, a *dilemma of interpretation* is where a state is forced to interpret whether the actions of another state – including increased military capabilities – are for self-defence purposes, or for offensive purposes. This dilemma causes unresolvable uncertainty,

as the motives and capabilities of the other state are unknown and, thus, may or may not be considered a real threat to national security.

The second level, *dilemma of response* (Booth & Wheeler 2008: 3), where the state has to choose how best to respond to this interpretation. If the state incorrectly interprets the action of another state as hostile or offensive and responds with military force, this could cause unnecessary tensions in the relationship between the state. On the other hand, if a softer approach is taken while the other state intended hostility, this could put the responding state at a distinct disadvantage.

Where power is concerned in the security dilemma is how capable a state is at responding in kind to potential threats that it perceives from the other. If a less militarily powerful state perceived the posturing and military expansion of a more powerful state as directly hostile to its national security, it will not be in the state's best interest to posture a direct attack – rather, a deterrence method should be considered. A common solution for this type of deterrence is for the responding state to passively posture itself militarily as a deterrence measure when there is a perceived threat from the other state, but no act of aggression has been outwardly committed. However, this oftentimes results in mutual military expansion and posturing from the first state, thereby resulting in a security paradox, where both states mutually increase their military capabilities and posturing to the point that neither state is actually secure (Booth & Wheeler 2008: 5).

### **2.3 National Interests**

Based on the above analysis of power as a constructivist concept, as defined by how the interactions between states are perceived and thus responded to, the national interest of a state is directly tied to how perceptions of power interact with the idea of national security, and how able a state is to ensure its national security. Through constructivism, national interests are not based on any empirical or static reality, but are rather the culmination of the perceptions that lawmakers and politicians have of external threats and domestic realities to national security (Ferguson 2019: 62). However, in this study, although the domestic component of national interests is acknowledged, emphasis is placed on the external perceptions of the regional security complex in the conceptualisation of national interests.

This study focuses on two primary sources of literature to form the framework of national interests. The first is Nuechterlein (1976), who defines national interests in terms of the scale of impact to various elements of the state, thereby framing threats in a more traditional manner. Beyond this, however, this study will also utilise Bengtsson's (2010) Logic of Interfaces, a framework that defines the relationship between two states in terms of how a state views itself – aiding in the identification of how a state perceives its national interests – as well as how the state views the other – aiding in the identification of how the state measures its power and ability to protect its national interest.

### 2.3.1 *Rationale Behind Using Both Theories in Tandem*

Firstly, as mentioned above, the understanding of how a state prioritises their national interests within Nuechterlein's National Interests Matrix can be determined through the value of factors which affect the ways in which governments imagine the state within its global or regional context (Nuechterlein 1976: 253). In this respect, how a state prioritises its national interests may also dictate how it reacts to its environment and perceived external threats to the national interest.

However, whilst Nuechterlein's framework on determining the state's position in regard to its geographical, historical, and resource-focused context is distinctly useful in determining the perception of overt threat, the theory may be limited in its assumption that the national interest framework responds well to more subtle cues which precede threat to the national interest, and may not fall squarely into delineations of intensity when threats are more systemic in nature. For example, while the threat of an imminent invasion is simple to define (and consequently securitise) as a *survival defence* threat, as it is, for the most part, preceded by a myriad of indicators beforehand, the same cannot be said for all threats. This is especially true within the context of continuous patterns of enmity that rarely result in manifest conflict, but rather remain in a perpetual latent state of conflict akin to a cold war. To answer this question, one might benefit more from the Logic of Interfaces and the constant cycle of recognition patterns between two states.

Secondly, the issue area that is being assessed in this study is not only geopolitical in nature, but also deals with the matter of contesting ideology between both states. Although Nuechterlein's literature does, indeed, address ideology as an issue area when referring to

threats to the state, where the literature may not capture the precipitating details, is that both states in this study are not experiencing a direct threat to their ideology, but instead, utilise their ideology to frame the national identity. In addition to this, the political ideologies adopted by Türkiye have not remained stagnant but have altered several times in the past few decades in line with its global and regional positioning. In this respect, conflict based on the national interest of ideology is not as clear-cut as is perhaps necessary in determining the threat to national interest on a self-perceived scale of threat, which can be derived from Nuechterlein's theory.

Based on these two factors of analysis in this study, namely, geopolitical and ideological factors to national interest, the rationale behind using Bengtsson's Logic of Interfaces (2010) in tandem with Nuechterlein's literature on National Interests is to provide greater depth on the dichotomy between intrinsic factors on national interests, based on Bengtsson's theory on the *image of self* and *recognition by the other*, as well as extrinsic factors on national interest, based on Nuechterlein's framework of types, levels of intensity, and value factors of national interests.

### 2.3.2 Nuechterlein's Frameworks for National Interests

According to Nuechterlein, the national interests of a state can be divided into four distinct categories, namely, "defence, economic, world order, and ideological" (Nuechterlein 1976: 248). Defence interests refer to the protection of the state, and importantly, the citizens within the state, from outside threat. Economic interests are concerned with the growth and maintenance of a strong and robust economy that is not susceptible to instability and is resilient in relation to other states. World Order interests are those which adhere to the maintenance of a secure social, political, and economic global system. Lastly, Ideological interests refer to the protection of the values which the state upholds internally.

In addition to these four categories of national interests, Nuechterlein further asserts that it is crucial to any kind of analysis of national interests that these categories be delineated into levels of intensity in order to establish how a state prioritises these interests (Nuechterlein 1976: 249). The first, and highest level of intensity is 'survival', which characterises those issues that threaten the very existence of the state itself in a manner that is imminent and credible. The second level is 'vital' intensity, which is an issue that is certainly harmful to the state and may eventually threaten its survival. However, unlike survival threats, vital threats can be mitigated by taking alternative action to prevent or deter them. The third level of intensity comprises

'major' issues, which, although they are not yet a direct threat to the existence or wellbeing of the state, they are serious enough that a state may deploy measures to prevent escalation into an issue in future. Lastly, 'peripheral' issues are those which do not adversely affect the state itself, but rather, the citizens and assets of the state outside its borders.

The understanding of how a state prioritises their national interests within Nuechterlein's National Interests Matrix can be determined through the value factors which affect the ways in which governments imagine the state in its global or regional context (Nuechterlein 1976: 253). These values are "proximity of the danger, nature of the threat, economic stake, sentimental attachment, type of government, effect on balance of power, national prestige, attitude of allies and friends, economic costs of conflict, number of troops needed, probable duration of hostilities, risk of enlarged conflict, likelihood of success, domestic opinion, world reaction, and lastly, the impact on internal politics".

The prioritisation of these interests is imperative, as it also indicates what kinds of measures a state will take to defend and promote them. For example, military resources are less likely to be deployed if a state's ideological interests are categorised as a survival issue, as opposed to the state's defence interests.

### *2.3.3 Bengtsson's Logic of Interfaces*

Having established Nuechterlein's framework, this study goes deeper into the constructivist nature of national interests by leaning on Rikard Bengtsson's Logic of Interfaces (2010), which outlines the relationship and interactions between two actors in a security complex (defined below) based on an image of the self and an image of the other within the context of developments in a regional security complex. Bengtsson's research identifies the constructivist nature of security complexes by reasoning that any political order "consists of a set of interfaces which reflect the mutual recognition of the actors involved", wherein 'recognition' is defined as a process by which actors "establish their disposition towards each other" and follows mutual perceptions of each other's identity and power (Bengtsson 2010: 18). Figure 1 below illustrates Bengtsson's framework.

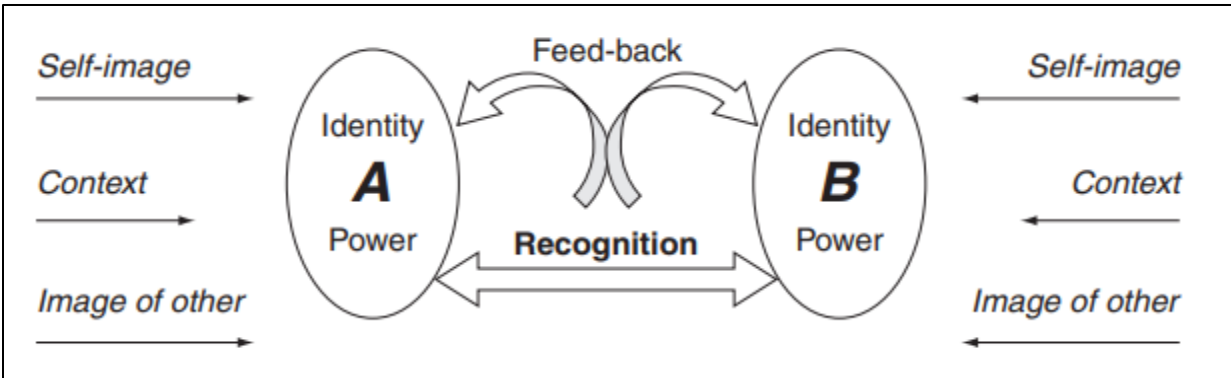


Figure 1: *The Logic of Interfaces* (Bengtsson 2010: 27)

### 2.3.3.1 *National Identity and Self-Image as a Precursor to National Interests*

As mentioned above, Blake identifies national interests as an element that is intrinsically tethered to the matrix of national security. However, within the paradigm of national interests, it is also important to note that another two facets of the National Security Quintet, namely, national values and identity, act as a backbone to determining how national interests are framed inherently. The image of the self is a necessary tool to determine the interests of the state, and therefore, the threat to those interests in the form of the ‘other’. This is reflected in Bengtsson’s work, as he states that “identities are assumed to precede interests”. He also reflects refers to Ringmar’s (2002: 116) notion that ““states not only pursue their “national interests”, but also – and before anything else – they seek to establish identities for themselves. In fact, questions regarding a state’s identity must always be more fundamental than questions regarding its interests”” (Bengtsson 2010: 31). For the purposes of this study, it is also important to note that Bengtsson uses the terms ‘image’ and ‘identity’ in a similar manner.

### 2.3.4 *The Logic of Interfaces and Nuechterlein’ National Interests as a Theoretical Framework*

Bengtsson’s Logic of Interfaces fundamentally describes the relationship between two actors as formed by recognitions of one another, building on the idea that actors within a security complex are generally constructed through their actions and the perception of self, versus the perception of the effect the other actor might have on the self. In this regard, Bengtsson notes that “for each actor, both the self-identity and the image of the other contribute to the interface – who ‘we’ are is of importance when determining who ‘they’ are, so to speak” (2010: 27).

Recognition is defined by Bengtsson as the political process wherein actors acknowledge their dispositions towards one another based on, among others, their relative perceptions of worldview, self-identity and image, and hard and soft power positions in specific contexts. Within the context of regional security and RSCs, Bengtsson states that “recognition is based on the perceived actorness of others”, where ‘actorness’ is defined by an actor’s power to pursue a desired outcome, as well as the image and identity of the actor in the eyes of other actors in that space (Bengtsson 2010: 29-30). Perceived actorness by the other is a fundamental step in the logic interface of an RSC, as the internal and self-perceived image and developments of a state can only be congruent with the regional presence of the actor if it is externally perceived as such.

In his typology, Bengtsson identifies two primary interface types which indicate the level of recognition between both actors. The first type comprises relationships where all actors have a mutual recognition of what positions they hold in a particular security complex (Bengtsson 2010: 28). This creates a sense of harmony, so to speak, as the recognition of the other’s position as not being inherently opposed to the security of the self, allows for a homeostatic relationship with set boundaries and limits to action. In this regard, one may ascribe the positive recognition of another actor in a security complex as being fundamentally tied to patterns of amity or neutrality.

Conversely, if two actors in a security complex disagree fundamentally on “expectations and identity, legitimate claims and long-term outcomes, right to resources and agenda-setting”, this results in an enmity-driven disequilibrium and “will presumably change as a result of the concrete behaviour of actors” (Bengtsson 2010: 28).

## **2.4 Regional Security Complexes**

As established above, this study considers national interests as a primary lens through which the relations between two states can be viewed. Further than this, however, this study focuses on the national interests of two states within a regional security complex, as defined below, as this particular case study is situated within a regional security subcomplex, and as such, the actors within it are directly driven by the dynamics of the sub-RSC itself.

### 2.4.1 *Defining RSCs*

Initially conceptualised by Barry Buzan in *People, States, and Fear* (1983), Regional Security Complexes were defined as “a group of states whose primary security concerns link together sufficiently closely that their national securities cannot realistically be considered apart from one another” (Buzan 1983: 106). Whilst this definition is still widely used in International Security Theory today, in Buzan’s later works with Ole Wæver, *Regions and Powers* (2003), the authors also make provisions for the inclusion of non-state actors, defining existing actors as “units”, which may equally impact the dynamics of the regional security complex. In this regard, Buzan’s and Wæver reworked and updated definition of Regional Security Complex as a “set of units whose major processes of securitisation, desecuritisation, or both are so interlinked that their security problems cannot reasonably be analysed or resolved apart from one another” (Buzan & Wæver 2003: 201). This study utilises the newer definition, as it allows for a broader understanding of the various factors that impact regional security from more than simply state-based political conflict.

### 2.4.2 *Regionalism and the Growth of Regions in the Contemporary Era*

Regionalism as a level of analysis rose in the wake of the Cold War as a result of a changing global power system. Prior to this, the levels of security analysis within the Realism paradigm were characterised by individual state actors acting within the broader global system; within this, these individual state power dynamics were observed in relation to global superpowers. However, since the end of the Cold War, Buzan asserts that the field of Security Studies can be more accurately analysed and patterns of security can be better understood through a “middle area”, wherein, relations between states within a certain geographical space are not defined by the more rigid global characteristic of global power dynamics, but are rather able to express more nuanced dynamics of power within the regions in which they operate (Buzan 1983: 105).

### 2.4.3 *Regional Security Complex Theory*

Based on this, Buzan and Wæver note that the more intimate groupings which form regionally tend to exhibit patterns of power that may be different to their global position, and posits Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT), which characterises the actions and motivations of

international security as inherently regional in nature (Buzan and Wæver 2003: 40). In addition to this, he notes that due to the nature of RSCs being defined by their geographical proximity, there is an inevitable element of history between actors in the complex itself, which characterise interactions between the actors in patterns of amity and enmity (Buzan 1983). As such, the conceptualisation of national security for the actors in a complex are not only defined by geographical proximity, but are also characterised by the historical relationships between actors in an anarchic structure, and in this regard, RSCT brings constructivism and neorealism together as an effective analytical paradigm. More specifically, RSCs are more commonly characterised by negative historical relationships between actors, which perpetuate patterns of enmity in the region. Referring to the previous discussion on 'power', one may determine a link to the "social relations of constitution" (Barnett & Duval 2005: 46), where the complex itself may act as the existing social structure that dictates power relations between units in a complex.

According to Stivachtis (2021: 421) RSCs can be framed both from a state level, as well as a system level. At a state level, RSCs result from the way in which individual states in a region interact – specifically, RSCs can be defined by the way in which "the sphere of concern that any state has about its environment interacts with the linkage between the intensity of military and political threats, and the shortness of the range in which they are perceived". At a system level, an RSC is defined by anarchy within the region, as well as security interdependence based on a lattice of power and geopolitics. However, when it comes to defining characteristics, RSCs are identifiable by the individual dynamics of amity and enmity between states more than they are by a firm acknowledgement of the regional context of the RSC itself. In this respect, security interdependence can be observed through how "states' fears shape their foreign policy and military behaviour" (Stivachtis 2021: 422). Stivachtis makes specific reference to the fact that Greece is more concerned about Turkey's military actions than those of its other neighbours. Therefore, when Turkey enacts military activities in the region, Greece is highly likely to respond to this as a threat.

Therefore, the assumption that the Greco-Turkish dynamic constitutes a security complex can be determined using three parameters. The first is the arrangement of units, or actors, within a region – in this case, Greece and Turkey are both active participants in the thalasso-centric Aegean region and engage in military activity within the region (although Turkey's actorship is

discussed further below). The second is patterns of amity and enmity – as is discussed in chapter three, the nature of the relationship between Greece and Turkey is largely defined by patterns of enmity, based on historical relations, as well as contemporary drivers of tension. The third is the distribution of power – within this complex, power is distributed fairly evenly when considering the dichotomy of hard and soft power. As is discussed in chapter 3, although Turkey's military and financial power outweighs that of Greece, Greece's international standing and soft power plays distinctly to its advantage in this context (although these dynamics are by no means static).

Further than the framing of an RSC, however, this study is specifically acknowledging the relationship between Greece and Türkiye as a subcomplex within the broader RSC of the Eastern Mediterranean, Middle East, and the Levant (the phrase sub-regional security complex can also be used synonymously, but for the purposes of applying the theory, the study will use the term subcomplex or sub-RSC). According to Buzan and Wæver (2003: 51), "Subcomplexes represent distinctive patterns of security interdependence that are nonetheless caught up in a wider pattern that defines the RSC as a whole". In some respects, this draws on the levels of an RSC in RSC Theory, which posits that higher-level RSCs contain great-power actors and are defined by the far-reaching impact of their actions – oftentimes influencing several different regions. A low-level complex, by contrast, is more inward-facing, wherein the power dynamics and conflict formations rarely extend past the region itself (Stivachtis 2021: 423). These high and low-level complexes can also be seen intra-regionally, where the broader RSC of the Eastern Mediterranean, Middle East, and the Levant presents characteristics of a high-level RSC, but the sub-RSC between Greece and Turkey presents more directly as a low-level RSC.

It is also important to demarcate this sub-regional aspect of RSC theory, as Greece and Türkiye comprise one of three subcomplexes in the Eastern Mediterranean region – the other two being characterised by the Syrian conflict and the Israeli/Arab conflict (Stivachtis 2021: 416). These subcomplexes are defined by their individual patterns of amity and enmity within the greater security patterns of the region. This is important in the discussion, as dynamics and actions between the states of the wider RSC are not necessarily congruent with the dynamics and actions between states in subcomplexes – as the historical and geographical contexts between

actors change so, too, do the power dynamics in the complex and the role each state plays within the complex.

#### *2.4.4 Insulator States in RSC Theory*

An insulator state is one that “sits at the intersection of different security complexes without truly being part of any of them” (Barrinha 2014: 1). Insulator states “absorb the energies of an RSC’s periphery” but should not be significant enough to sway the direction of the complexes. (McLean 2011: 19). Some authors consider Türkiye to be an insulator state, as it often intervenes in surrounding security subcomplexes in the region – specifically in Eastern Europe and the Middle East – but these interventions do not necessarily constitute relationships of security interdependence within these surrounding RSCs (Barrinha 2014: 2). However, this study defines Türkiye as an actor, rather than an insulator, in the Eastern Mediterranean subcomplex, as it takes an active role in the power dynamics of the subcomplex and exhibits traits of security interdependence with Greece where the sub-region is concerned. This is further discussed in chapter three.

#### *2.4.5 National Interests in RSC Theory*

Buzan and Wæver’s definition of RSCs allows for a more constructivist view of RSC dynamics, as the delineation of “security concerns” in the first definition are broadly altered to include “processes of securitisation, desecuritisation, or both” (Buzan & Wæver 2003: 201). In this regard, there is certainly an emphasis on the role that perception plays in the formation of and relations within an RSC, as the nature of historical patterns of enmity are such that perceptions of threat by actors in the region could lead to an escalation of tensions within the complex. This particular dynamic is something that this dissertation wishes to explore, as the constructivist nature of the perception of threat to the national interests of a state based on posturing and perceptions in the region could lead to the escalation of securitisation in the area, leading to a security dilemma between actors in the region.

As previously mentioned, a defining characteristic of regional security complexes are the historical relationships between actors that shape ongoing patterns of amity and enmity in the RSC. However, to delve into these dynamics, it is also important to consider the fact that, where the perception of threat is concerned, the conceptualisation of national interests is also

concerned, as, according to Nuechterlein (1976: 247), “the national interest is the perceived needs and desires of one sovereign state in relation to other sovereign states comprising the external environment”.

In the interest of determining threat, it must be noted that the correlation of likelihood versus impact of a threat is not always mutually dependent in the context of actors within an RSC when the RSC itself is defined by long-standing patterns of enmity. As Robert Jervis (1982a: 5) posits, “judging what constitutes harm is generally easier than estimating whether threats will be carried out”; in this respect, the perception of threat has little to do with the likelihood of the threat, but rather, the potential impact of conflict is a heavier determining factor of how a state forms its national interests, and thus, responds to threats to those interests.

## **2.5 Amity and Enmity**

Amity and enmity are two elements integral to the relationship between two states in an RSC, however, it is important to define the concept in itself before delving into its relevance in RSCT, and thus, its relevance in this study. According to Arnold Wolfers (1962: 25), amity and enmity describe the diplomatic relationships between states, which should be conducted in a dispassionate manner in fulfilment of a state’s national interests. Specifically for this study, enmity “reflects the existence of a conflict of interests” where stability in the region is affected by latent or manifest conflict between two units in a security complex (Wolfers 1962: 25, Oskanian 2013: 33). It is important to note that relations of amity and enmity are not mutually exclusive, and rarely act as a binary in most international relations. Rather, the amity/enmity spectrum ebbs and flows, with real and implicit forms of amicable relations often overlapping with contradicting power tensions and actions of enmity. Relationships between two states in an RSC are rarely uncomplicated, especially where there is more latent conflict than manifest – this is a result of the amity/enmity spectrum allowing the space for diplomacy and peace where needed.

### *2.5.1 The Amity/Enmity Spectrum*

According to Oskanian (2013: 25), patterns of amity and enmity are characterised by “sets of implicit or explicit principles, norms, rules and decision-making procedures around which actors’ expectations converge regarding security interaction”. Accordingly, the norms that define

patterns of amity and enmity form part of the social structure power type, which defines the security interdependence between units in the complex (Sultan 2017). In his research Oskanian (2013: 21-29) identifies the amity/enmity spectrum as a range from conflict formations (derived from a dynamic of power and enmity), to security regimes (conflict-minimising norms in situations of enmity), to security committees (derived from a dynamic of amity). He also denotes three units that delineate the amity/enmity typology matrix.

#### *2.5.1.1 Conflict Formations*

Conflict formations are defined when the relationship between actors in an anarchical structure is characterised by dynamics of power. Regarding the normalisation of power, any norms established within conflict formations do not include a systematic effort against armed conflict, but rather utilise the base principles of realism, where power is a zero-sum game (Oskanian 2013: 23).

In Oskanian's typology, conflict formation RSCs in the amity/enmity spectrum can be characterised either as revisionist or status quo, where the former is based on a lack of "mutual recognition" that results in a fluid dynamic not underpinned by normalisation of a status quo, no matter if it is a positive or negative one. The latter is still constituted by lack of trust despite mutual recognition, which results in frequent security dilemmas.

#### *2.5.1.2 Security Regimes*

A security regime is an established set of rules and norms which are founded on the restraint of a state in its behaviour, due to the promise of reciprocation (Jervis 1982b: 357). Security regimes can result in both a positive and negative relationship between both states, depending on how states perceive the intentions of another state – in this regard, a security dilemma may arise out of the negative perception of a states' actions by another. On the contrary, consistent positive interactions between states may lead to the further establishment of conflict-mitigating institutions.

In Oskanian's typology, security regime RSCs can be characterised either as thick or thin, where thin regimes consist of agreements and treaties that are ad-hoc in nature and serve only to deescalate existing conflict, rather than normalising ties of trust between states. Thick

regimes, on the other hand, are normalised relationships with formal systems for cooperation in the spirit of mutual trust (Oskanian 2013: 25).

### 2.5.1.3 Security Communities

Security communities are those where the mutual security dependencies of two states are so interlinked that the prospect of conflict becomes non-existent. Importantly, security communities function under the assumption that “the members of that community will not fight each other physically, but will settle their disputes in some other way” (Deutch et al. 1957). The states in a community are still legally separate entities, but share common institutions based on shared values and a sense of “we-ness”. In the event of a difference in position, open communication is key in establishing “dependable expectations of peaceful change” (Deutch et al. 1957: 7). Bound on this principle of self-restraint, the relationships between both states are completely de-securitised and a collective identity allows for the mutual identification and action against mutually-perceived threats.

In Oskanian’s typology, security community RSCs can be characterised as loose and tight, where the positive security interdependency between states allows for the building of institutionalised mechanisms of security communities, either loosely tied by integrated institutions, or tightly tied by integrated institutions that have transcended into the very identity of all states involved (Oskanian 2013: 27).



Figure 2: The Amity/Enmity Spectrum (Oskanian 2010: 29)

### 2.5.2 Amity and Enmity in Regional Security Complex Theory

Perhaps the most important dynamic within regionalism, and specifically regional security complexes, is the presence of an anarchical power structure, as is defined by Neorealist Theory (Souza 2021: 88). Within this theory, a balance of power within a ‘self-help’ anarchic system,

especially within a 'realm' (or, in this case, a region), is characterised by a unit's freedom to pursue its own national interests, and preserve their national security without concern for other units (Waltz 1979: 104). This pursuit of national interests within an anarchic region forms the foundation of patterns of amity and enmity within RSC. As such, the following section defines national interests in this context with the goal of determining how patterns of amity and enmity shape the stability of an RSC.

Buzan and Wæver (2003: 49) contend that power relations within RSCs are defined more broadly than the traditional notion of power of and power over (Souza 2021: 87), or in other words, the fear one unit has for whomever wields greater power. Rather, RSCs can be characterised by durable patterns of behaviour which constitute a "social reality, which is more than the sum of its parts" (Buzan and Wæver 2003: 50) and as such, units are able to constructively utilise the RSC to form intentions and outcomes of relations with other units in the RSC. In this regard, the social interaction dimension of structural power, as defined above by Barnett and Duval (2005) may be normative as much as they are structural. This constructivist interpretation of power relations in an RSC provides for a complex dynamic, where patterns of amity and enmity are not considered part of the structure of an RSC (Wendt 1999: 99), but rather, the structure, in itself, constructively comprises ideas which give meaning to unit power, interests, and strategies to pursue those interests (Souza 2005: 89).

## **2.6 Stability**

Drawing on Morton Kaplan's (1957: 7) definition of stability as "the propensity of a system to preserve its constituent members against destruction or elimination, not merely by resisting or precluding change, but by adjusting to it through rearrangement", Ayson (2005: 192), defines regional stability as the homeostatic condition wherein an "equilibrium position", is formed by way of the maintenance of "some sort of balance, ... (or) pattern of behaviour". Therefore, equilibrium is achieved when patterns of amity and enmity remain stable. Dowding and Kimber (1983: 230), assert that, stability is not the absence of violence entirely, but rather, whether a region is able to cope with patterns of violence (or enmity).

The literature around stability in regions, and specifically in RSCs is limited in scope, with most definitions offering little in the way of establishing a universal framework for measuring how

stable an RSC actually is outside of the binary between conflict and peace. By nature, RSCs are as dynamic as the patterns of amity and enmity, and the interrelations of conflict, power and anarchy that inform them, so the subject of stability is, understandably, difficult to extrapolate further than a case-by-case basis. As such, the following framework is a proposition in lieu of an established framework, which holistically utilises the various theoretical aspects presented in this study, and presents three elements of consideration.

The first element has to do with the establishment of an equilibrium point around which stable relations are able to pivot – this is used as the baseline for stability in this study. Brecher and Yehuda (1985:34) define an equilibrium point as the “continuance of the essential variables of an international system”. The three variables in this study are military stability, international political stability, and patterns of amity and enmity. Through these primary considerations, one is able to place a state within the amity/enmity spectrum by identifying established modus operandi of conflict escalation and de-escalation.

The second element is the establishment of a risk appetite for conflict escalations – how much oscillation from the equilibrium point is possible before disequilibrium occurs will define where the threshold lies for instability. With regard to this case study and RSCT, the risk appetite is the amount of escalation each state is willing to enact before a security paradox forms and the RSC is, as a result, insecure. Specifically, this ties in with escalations in patterns of enmity within a catalysing event. In this regard, one is able to link the logic of ‘agreement interfaces’ and ‘disagreement interfaces’ to patterns of amity and enmity in RSCT, as the disequilibrium caused by ‘disagreement interfaces’ is reflected in the change of behaviour of actors accordingly.

The third element is the likelihood of return to a stable state in the wake of a shift in equilibrium or a pivot outside of the risk appetite. This refers directly to Oskanian’s framework, which denotes normalisation and institutionalisation of positive security relations within RSCs as a key element in defining the fluctuation between conflict formations, security regimes, and security communities. A disequilibrium, that the RSCs established position within the amity/enmity spectrum is drastically shifted towards the direction of conflict formations. This would result in some semblance of chaos undefined by means to structuralise and normalise relations, precipitating the potential for manifest conflict, and hypersecuritisation.

From this, chapter four extrapolates these elements of RSCT to establish how the stability of the RSC itself is affected by the actions take to protect and pursue the national interests of both states, by provoking the other side based on how those actions are perceived. From this, patterns of amity and enmity can be drawn, placing the RSC in a specific position on the amity/enmity spectrum, from which stability can be derived overtime.

## **2.7 Additional Concepts**

In addition to the theoretical frameworks that have been established in this chapter, the following elements are defined below, as they provide context within the study. These concepts are not necessarily related, but are presented at various points in the next two chapters.

### *2.7.1 The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.*

Adopted in 1982, the UNCLOS established a globally recognised set of rules and regulations regarding the use of the world's oceans and seas, as well as their resources (UN IMO 1982). The treaty defines the maritime territorial boundary of a state at 12 nautical miles from the low waterline along the coast. Beyond this, however, states have jurisdiction over an exclusive economic zone (EEZ) up until 200 nautical miles from the coastline. The EEZ is the zone in which a state has the right to "explore and exploit, and the responsibility to conserve and manage, both living and non-living resources" (WTO [n.d.]). The UNCLOS' primary objective is to maintain law and order regarding claim that states stake over maritime territory, allowing, in principle, for a fair and equitable distribution of control.

### *2.7.2 Collective Security*

At its core, collective security is an international relations principle, which posits that "each state in (a) system accepts that the security of one is the concern of all, and agrees to join in a collective response to threats to, and breaches of, the peace" (de Wet & Wood 2013: 2). This principle is one that is used broadly by the United Nations to refer to the collective global goal of eradicating social and economic threats, such as "poverty, infectious disease, and environmental degradation" (de Wet & Wood 2013: 2), as well as traditional military threats to national security, including inter-state conflict.

The traditional military approach to collective security is referred to as *collective defence*, wherein, a military attack on one state is seen as an attack to all states in a collective defence alliance, thereby prompting a collective response to the threat by all alliance states (NATO [n.d.]). Relevant for this study is the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), which was founded in 1949, and enshrines the principle of collective defence as defined above. Based on the concept of collective defence, the organisation outlines three core missions; “deterrence and defence” (where military intervention is required to mitigate or deter conflict), “crisis prevention and management” (where political, economic, and military capabilities are utilised to mitigate crises that occur as a result of conflict), and cooperative security” (which is utilised to “build relationships, solidify partnerships, encourage dialogue, reduce tensions, and promote stability and security in Europe and beyond” (Deni 2017: 13)) (NATO [n.d.]). However, notably, while Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty speaks to a non-NATO member attacking a NATO member, there is no clarity on what would transpire if a NATO member were to attack another.

### 2.7.3 *Neo-Ottomanism*

Neo-Ottomanism, according to Wastnidge (2019: 3-7), refers to a “paternalistic sense of nationhood” intrinsically tied to two national goals of the Ottoman empire; the first is to consolidate a sense of national culture, and the second is to increase its influence in international (or universal) culture (Aditya 2020). This culture includes the promotion of “Islamic solidarity [thus creating] an alternative paradigm to the Western-centric world order”. It must be noted, however, that the cultural expansion of neo-Ottomanism deviates from traditional Ottomanist expansion through invasion, and instead uses this doctrine as “a tool for asserting Türkiye’s rightful place as a cultural, political and economic hegemon in the region” (Wastnidge 2019: 5).

## 2.8 Conclusion

Based on the above chapter, a theoretical framework has now been established. The following chapters utilise the Logic of Interfaces, as well as Nuechterlein’s National Interest theory as a baseline to establish the national interests of Greece and Türkiye in the context of RSCT and their collective security dynamic. Specifically, the element that is primarily considered from Logic of Interface theory in this chapter is the image of self as a determinant of national interests.

Chapter four considers the other element of the Logic of Interfaces, image of other, as a baseline for how each state reacts to the other. This element is crucial in understanding the actions taken to protect and promote each states' national interests, which largely underpin patterns of amity and enmity. Beyond this, chapter four also analyses the sub-RSC's position on the amity/enmity spectrum and draws a conclusion on how changes in this spectrum may influence stability.

### **3 CHAPTER THREE: IDENTIFYING TURKISH AND GREEK NATIONAL INTERESTS**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

Understanding the relationship between intrinsic and extrinsic factors of national interests plays a significant role in how national interests are pursued and protected, and frames how a state deals with its own security, economic and political context, both in the region and in the global order. As such, to understand national interests and the response to any threats to those national interests, it is imperative to understand state context, the image of self, and the perception of other. Based on this framework, the following chapter contextualises the relationship between Greece and Türkiye, specifically within the context of an historic geopolitical conflict, as well as the context of ideology and the battle for support from the international community. This establishes the drivers of contemporary tension between both states in the subcomplex. Secondly, the chapter identifies the national interests of Greece and Türkiye in the context of their current national security issue areas, as well as the perception of self within this context. Chapter four further analyses the image of other on both sides in order to establish how this relationship has determined patterns of amity and enmity.

#### **3.2 Current Geopolitical Situation**

The following section provides an historical context to the current relationship between Greece and Türkiye based on RSCT, which posits that the relationship between two actors in an RSC are characterised by their geographical proximity, as well as their shared historical context. Once this is established, this section contextualises the current events, which frame the current view of Greece and Türkiye's national interests.

##### *3.2.1 Brief Geopolitical History on Greco-Turkish Relations*

Greece and Türkiye have had a long-standing relationship driven primarily by patterns of enmity, with comparatively fewer attempts at normalised amity, since Greece's independence from the Ottoman Empire and establishment as an independent state in 1830. Following myriad conflicts in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, during which Greece gained significant territory, which it subsequently lost once again to Türkiye in the Greco-Turkish War of 1919-1922, the two states initiated their first attempt at systematic interstate relations in 1923 (Pizzo 2011:4). Until the end

of WWII, Greece and Türkiye (then, the Ottoman Empire) engaged in several initiatives to improve relations, which included the Treaty of Lausanne and the Treaty of Paris.

The Treaty of Lausanne, signed and ratified in 1923 by the Allied Powers (including Greece) and the then-Ottoman Empire, led to the international establishment and recognition of the Republic of Türkiye as a state and was intended to act as a punitive measure to restrict the power of the Ottoman Empire, following its alliance with Germany in WWI (Masud 2022). Amongst other stipulations, such as a citizen exchange, the treaty recognised a final demarcation of state borders between Greece, Türkiye, and Bulgaria.

The Treaty of Paris, expanded on the territorial dispute between the two states in 1947, wherein Italy ceded its claim over the Dodecanese islands to Greece, which had been previously claimed by Türkiye, but relinquished under the Lausanne Treaty (Masud 2022). Crucially, a major stipulation to both of these treaties was the pledge to not militarise these islands, so as to avoid an escalated securitisation of the region.

However, although the treaty was intended as a measure to improve relations between the two countries, the stipulations of a clear concession by Türkiye in favour of expanding Greece's territorial claim over the Dodecanese islands and Cyprus were the source of recurring tensions between both states.

This was manifested in 1950 with the decolonisation of Cyprus, which resulted in the ratification of the Treaty of Alliance (signed and ratified in Paris), an independence agreement that stipulated the military presence of 950 Greek soldiers, and 650 Turkish soldiers as a joint effort to cooperate in defence matters on Cyprus and train an independent and unified Cypriot army (Lindley 2007: 230). Importantly, the treaty also acted as a pledge to prevent the partition of the island state, as well as the union of the state with another. In doing so, the treaty aimed to create a self-sufficient and independent state that transcended the claims of both Greece and Türkiye. However, this was short-lived, as Cyprus became the backdrop of an inevitable conflict between Greece and Türkiye in the years following – competing forces within the island state resulted in civil conflict between Greek-Cypriots and Turkish-Cypriots (Lindley 2007: 231). In 1974, these conflicts reached a crescendo, when an attempted Turkish invasion of Cyprus prompted a Greece-backed coup d'état. However, to protect its own population, Türkiye invaded northern Cyprus and within this conflict, the coup d'état only lasted 8 days (Lindley

2007: 231). Crucially for Türkiye, this provided the opportunity to expand its hold in Cyprus to 37% of the Island, which it still claims to this day as the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (recognised as a state only by Türkiye).

The Cyprus issue, specifically, is essential in understanding the current state of affairs between the two countries, and despite it being an independent state, its use as a proxy in the fight between the two more powerful and influential countries allows for the analysis. As the Cypriot issue continues to be a source of contention against Türkiye, with Cyprus maintaining full political backing from Greece today, it can be said that Cyprus is at once a microcosm of the relationship between Greece and Türkiye, as well as a key actor in determining the power balance within the sub-RSC.

However, although Cyprus is perhaps the strongest variable in the territorial disputes between the two countries, it is by no means the only one. Other than the Cyprus situation, Greece and Türkiye have also had several territorial disputes over other parts of the Eastern Mediterranean; specifically in the Dodecanese islands, as well as Lesbos, Chios, Samos, and Ikaria – a series of islands in the Eastern Aegean between the east-coast of Greece and the west-coast of Türkiye. When Greece took claim over these islands after the ratification of the Treaty of Lausanne, the islands were ceded under condition that they were to be demilitarised (Psaropoulos 2022). However, as of late, and to much Turkish ire (EIIR 2022), the Greek government has justified military presence on the islands as a means of defence against a perceived threat from Türkiye, who is said to have been conducting military overflights over the islands and positioning landing boats on its own west coast, which lies in close proximity to Greece's east-most islands (Hasselbach 2022).

These recurring territorial disputes over the last half-century (Hellenic Republic 2022) have recently flared up once again, with Türkiye officially disputing Greece's claims over the Eastern Aegean islands by sending a letter to the UN Secretary General in September 2021 (Psaropoulos 2022), citing the conditionality of Greece's sovereignty over the islands being dependent on the demilitarisation of the islands. However, Greece has rejected this notion, citing Türkiye's illegal invasion of Syria and Iraq, as well as its illegal occupation of Northern Cyprus, and stating “[We] have a revisionist neighbour who's invaded every adjacent state. ...

I don't think Türkiye's record suggests we can drop all concern that it can do the same [in the Aegean] if it thinks it can get away with it" (Psaropoulos 2022).

The partition of Cyprus, as well as the passive dispute of the sovereignty over the Dodecanese and other Greek islands is perhaps one of the most important factors in understanding the current dynamic between the two countries today, as maritime territory in the Eastern Mediterranean is a major factor in determining financial and political prosperity within each respective state, as well as political leverage in regard to each state's relationship with the European Union (EU).

Specifically for Greece, the recurring territorial disputes between what it considers legitimate claim to its islands and maritime territory, frame a recurring theme of perceived threat to the physical base of the state and therefore, a direct threat to Greece's national security. Based on this perceived threat to national security, Greece has a vested national interest in trying to maintain legitimate claim on its territory, while also remaining steadfast against the Turkish military threat. This has resulted in the expansion of military bases in several of its islands, which is heavily contested by Türkiye (the sections below analyse this in more detail).

On the other hand, Turkish claim over Greece's territory may also read as the pursuit to reclaim land being illegitimately handled by Greece in accordance with stipulations in the Lausanne Treaty, however, Türkiye's claim is not recognised by any other state or international body. The section below delves more deeply into the topic by assessing the implementation of the UN Convention of the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) within the region, and the conflicts arising from the non-mutual ratification of maritime principles and laws.

### *3.2.2 Exclusive economic Zones (EEZ): Greece and Türkiye in the Context of The UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).*

A crucial element of the dispute of territory between Greece Türkiye is the UNCLOS. Whilst Greece is a signatory and has ratified the relevant territory-focused clauses within the treaty, Türkiye is not a signatory, and actively disputes areas assigned to both Greece and Cyprus within the UNCLOS. According to Dubbelboer (2020), "the country applies its very own and controversial interpretation of the law of the sea", which has been the cause of major tensions, escalations, and securitisation patterns in the sub-region.

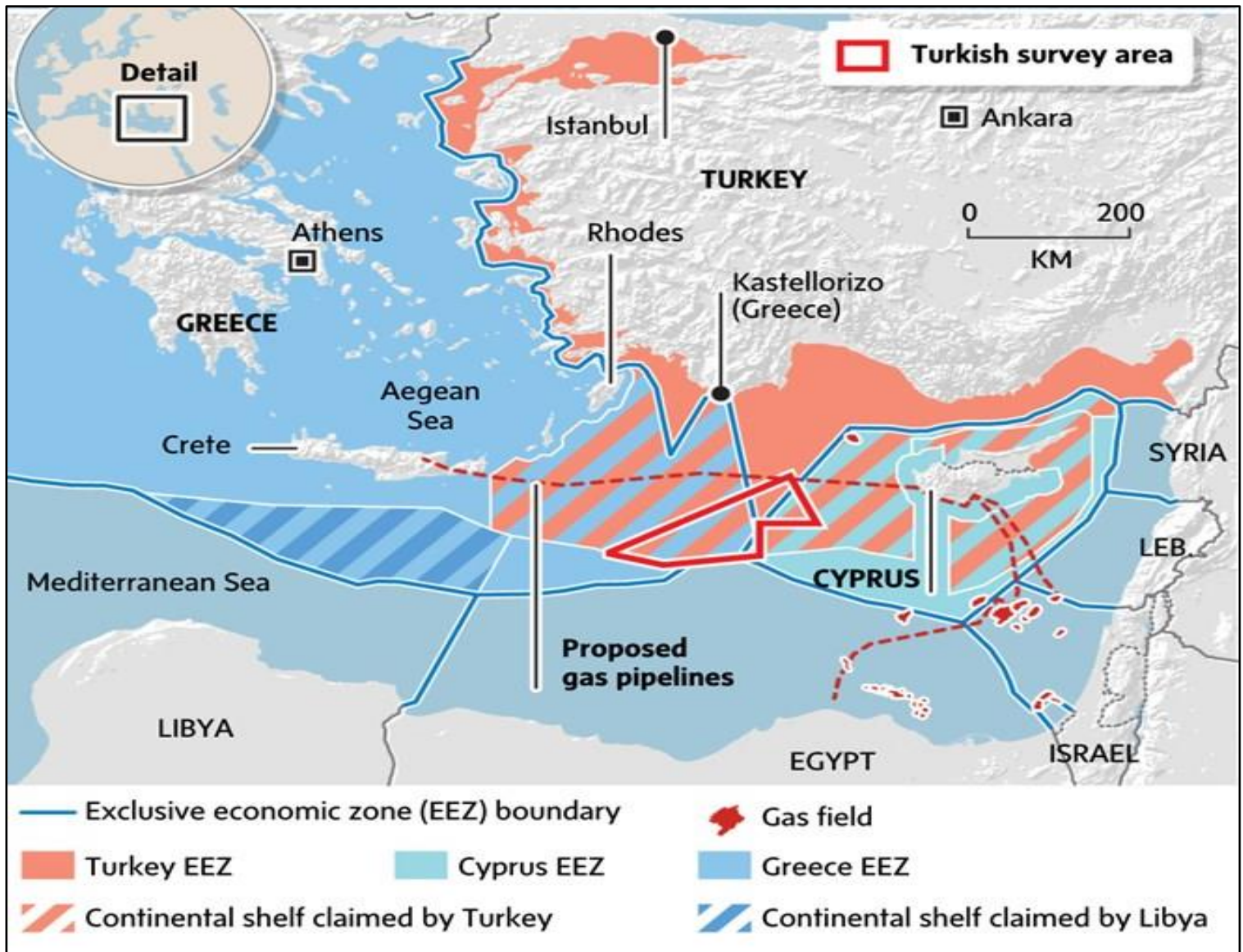


Figure 3: Map Showing Disputed Territories in the Eastern Mediterranean (Reguly 2020).

As can be seen in Fig.3 above, the Turkish maritime territorial claim encroaches heavily on Greece's official EEZ, and almost completely encircles the entirety of Cyprus, despite the fact that it only claims 30% of the Cypriot land mass. This claim to large swathes of internationally-established Greek and Cypriot territory has been disputed by the EU and member states of the UNCLOS, with a general sentiment that Türkiye cannot assume it is under no obligation to follow UNCLOS simply because it is not a signatory, as many of the conventions are based in customary laws, most of which Türkiye abides by (Kouparanis 2020).

Until recently, both countries have only claimed six nautical miles (nm) of territorial boundaries within the Aegean Sea in order to allow for fair distribution of territory in the region, benefitting a bilateral view towards cooperation, despite Türkiye's criticism of the UNCLOS EEZ in the first place (Antonopoulos 2020). However, since 2020, Greek PM Mitsotakis announced an intent to increase Greece's 6nm to 12nm in response to the opening of a trade corridor between Türkiye and Libya, which passes directly through the islands of Crete and Rhodes, amongst others (Kouparanis 2020) – The context of this agreement is discussed in the section below on hydrocarbon discoveries in the area. However, it has yet to enact this policy in its entirety. In August 2020, at the height of a dispute between the two states, Greece extended its territorial waters off of the Ionian Sea, with the view to extending Crete's next.

The impact of the UNCLOS has been significant in the context of the dispute between Greece and Türkiye. Firstly, Türkiye's refusal to sign and ratify the treaty is perceived by Greece as an act of defiance with respect to the adherence of established maritime boundaries, creating significant tension regarding the claim Greece has over its own resources. With the threat of Turkish claim over larger maritime territory in the region, the potential for hydrocarbon discovery becomes a tenuous subject (discussed below), as the right to claim resources found within disputed territory, will inherently be disputed. Additionally, the refusal to ratify the treaty could be perceived by Greece as a form of posturing, as Turkish military presence within disputed territory may be perceived as an offensive threat to national security, thereby creating a security dilemma to which Greece needs to respond. Both of these elements are useful in forming the Greek national interest, which is primarily based on securing and protecting its claimed state territory.

### *3.2.3 Greek and Turkish Military Capabilities*

In order to understand the current dynamic between Greece and Türkiye and to contextualise the security needs of both states, it is also important to recognise the military disparity between both states. As of 2023, Türkiye outweighs Greece's military capabilities in every aspect including manpower, airpower, naval power, and financials (Global Firepower 2023). While Greece spends \$6.6 billion on its defence budget, Türkiye spends \$25.2 billion. Although, it can be argued that Türkiye's defence budget is broadly spread to its interests in the Middle East and surrounding areas in addition to the Mediterranean, whereas Greece's military budget is

concentrated on its Turkish border and within the Mediterranean Sea. Therefore, it is a challenge to judge the comparison of military budget in this specific context. Importantly in the context of this study, however, is naval power – Türkiye has a naval fleet strength of 154 warship types, including submarines, frigates, and amphibious assault vessels, whereas Greece has 120; Türkiye has 20 corvette ships, whereas Greece has none.

This disparity in military capacity is crucial to understand, as it provides some context to the geopolitical situation discussed below and also aids in understanding the approach that Greece aims to take in the use of soft power to bolster international partnerships to leverage over Türkiye.

### **3.3 The Geopolitics of Energy**

The previous section contextualised Greece and Türkiye's relationship as it is in the current era. The following section analyses a current prevalent catalyst for conflict, on which this study is based. This is done in order to understand how a change in the current situation could provide a change in the framing of a threat to national security, thereby framing current national interests. This section also contextualises how each state protects and promoted its national interests through military activities, securitisation, and posturing.

#### *3.3.1 The Discovery of Hydrocarbons in the Eastern Mediterranean Sea*

The territorial dispute between Greece and Türkiye has been an ongoing issue for decades, however, the patterns of amity and enmity that existed between them were galvanised once again from December of 2011, when a natural gas reserve off the southern coast of Cyprus was discovered. The reserve, named Aphrodite, measures 128 billion cubic meters, and is now run by U.S.-based energy company, Chevron (Portala & Hummel 2022). Initially, there was hope that gas discoveries within the region would provide an opportunity for Greece, Cyprus, and Türkiye to begin building political bridges and cooperating in an effort to mobilise gas distribution into Europe (Dubbelboer 2020). However, that expectation was short-lived, as the situation has only increased tensions in the region and worsened the relationship between Türkiye, and Greece and Cyprus; specifically, exploratory drilling for gas reserves has been the cause of several confrontations, edging the states closer to open conflict.

Between 2011 and 2021, three gas reserves had been found off the coast of Cyprus (Portala & Hummel 2022), all of which lie squarely outside any claim Türkiye has sought around Cyprus (as can be seen in Fig.3). In total, the three Cypriot gas fields house an estimated 550 billion cubic meters. Although Greece has not yet confirmed the discovery of natural gas, preliminary estimations indicate a potential volume of over 600 billion cubic meters of hydrocarbons (over 4 times that of the Aphrodite well), 85% of which is estimated to be natural gas (Kokkinidis 2022). Türkiye has also not yet tapped hydrocarbon reserves in its prospecting but has been conducting accelerated surveying campaigns in the region, much to Greece's ire (DW 2020).

As seen above, with the illustration of Fig.3, Türkiye has claimed most of the region around Cyprus, leading to several military-charged stand-offs since 2011. A notable example of this was in 2018, when Turkish military vessels chased away an Italian drilling boat off the eastern coast of Cyprus, as it was conducting research on behalf of Cyprus (Dubbelboer 2020). Additionally, Türkiye has been drilling within the legally-established EEZ of Greece, with the most egregious provocation being the deployment of a Turkish survey boat off the south coast of Crete in 2019. Escorted by Turkish naval vessels, Türkiye based a survey ship well within Greece's EEZ. It was monitored by a Greek frigate for 24 hours before it left. When the incident was reported to the European Parliament, Vice President Borrell, on behalf of the European Commission reiterated that good-faith actions are necessary in maintaining an environment of trust, and admonished Türkiye's actions, stating:

On 11 November 2019, the Council adopted a framework for restrictive measures in response to Türkiye's unauthorised drilling activities in the Eastern Mediterranean.

...

On 12 December 2019, the European Council underlined that the Türkiye-Libya memorandum of understanding on the delimitation of maritime jurisdictions in the Mediterranean Sea infringes upon the sovereign rights of third States, does not comply with the law of the sea and cannot produce any legal consequences for third States. The European Council also reaffirmed its solidarity with Greece.

The EU has deplored that Türkiye has not yet responded to the EU's repeated calls to cease these activities. Türkiye should avoid making threats and taking actions that damage good neighbourly relations. It should instead respect international law,

including the law of the sea and in particular the sovereignty of all EU Member States over their territorial sea and their sovereign rights in their maritime zones, including those generated by islands. (European Parliament 2020)

The discovery of hydrocarbons in Cypriot, Egyptian, and Israeli territory (visible in Fig.5 below) has given rise to a race for further discovery by Greece and Türkiye. However, the conflict arising is primarily due to the fact that Türkiye's prospecting in the region has oftentimes been within Greece's maritime territory, once again threatening Greece's national security on the physical base of the state. Furthermore, Türkiye's military presence accompanying prospecting ships can be perceived as a form of military posturing, where Greece may feel threatened by the possibility of armed conflict if it were to respond to what it views as an invasion into its own territory. In this respect, two elements can be analysed; one is the mutual pursuit of hydrocarbons being within both Greece's and Türkiye's national economic interests, and the second is the national security threat perceived by Greece on the physical base of the state, thereby further prompting a security dilemma to which Greece needs to respond.

On the other hand, Türkiye has cited the UN's *Handbook on the Delimitation of Maritime Boundaries*, which states that "a maritime boundary delimitation agreement between the two states should not violate the rights and interests of a 3rd state" (Republic of Türkiye 2019) In this regard, although Türkiye maintains a large portion of Mediterranean coastline, Greece's many islands greatly restrict Türkiye's portion of the sea, regardless of the fact that most Greek islands are not crucial economic hubs. As such, Turkish defiance of Greece's EEZ is justified in its aim for equity.

### 3.3.2 *The Eastern Mediterranean (EastMed) Pipeline Project*

Perhaps the most incendiary event to take place within the context of this conflict between Greece and Türkiye has been the signing of the Eastern Mediterranean Agreement, ratified by Greece, Cyprus, and Israel (Tziampiris 2021). As seen in Fig.4 and Fig.5 below, the EastMed Pipeline Project is a proposed project that aims to connect hydrocarbon reserves found within the Zohr, Aphrodite, and Leviathan and Tamar reserves that are found within the maritime boundaries of Egypt, Cyprus, and Israel, respectively. The pipeline would connect the offshore hydrocarbon fields from these three countries and create an infrastructure that would transport the gas through Cyprus and Greece to eventually reach Italy (with a diversion

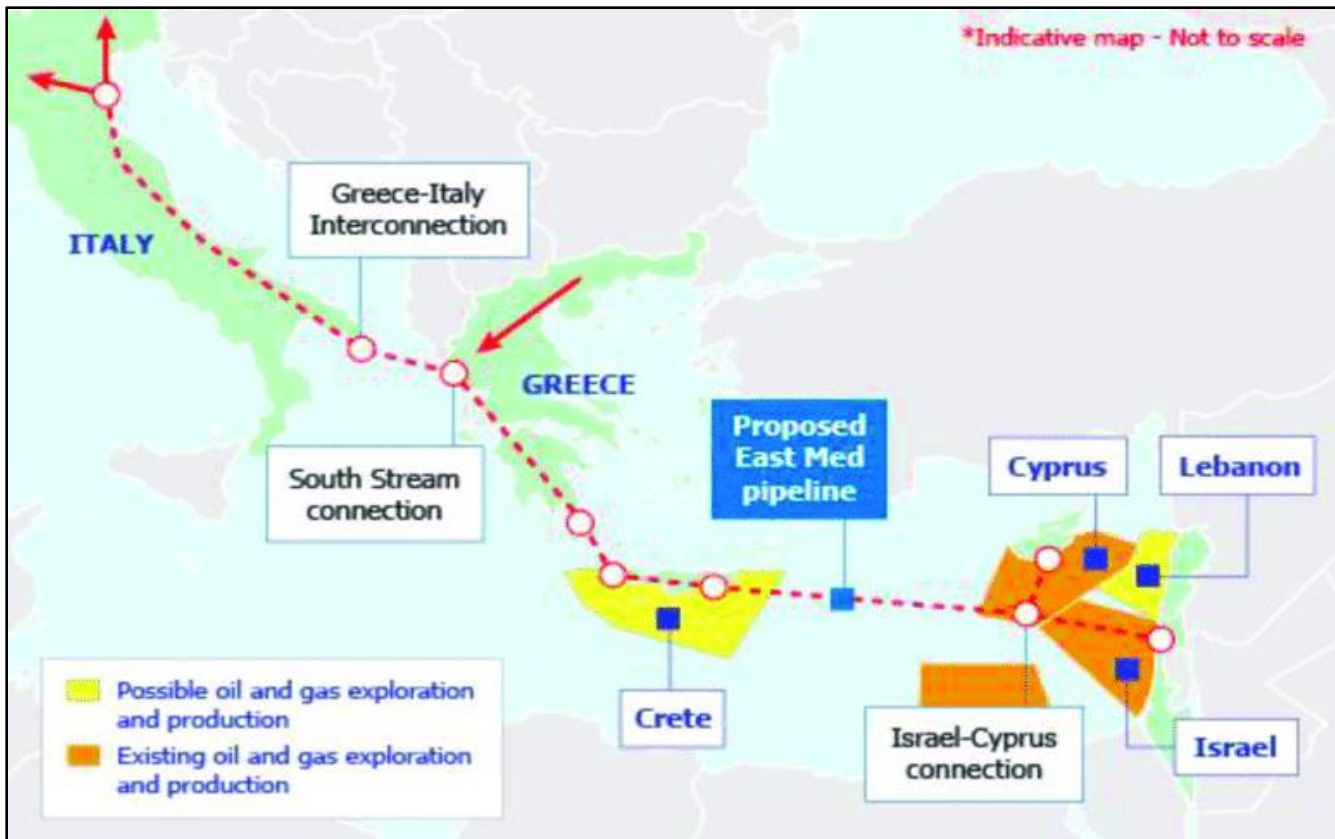


Figure 4: The EastMed Pipeline Route (Tagliapietra 2013: 21).

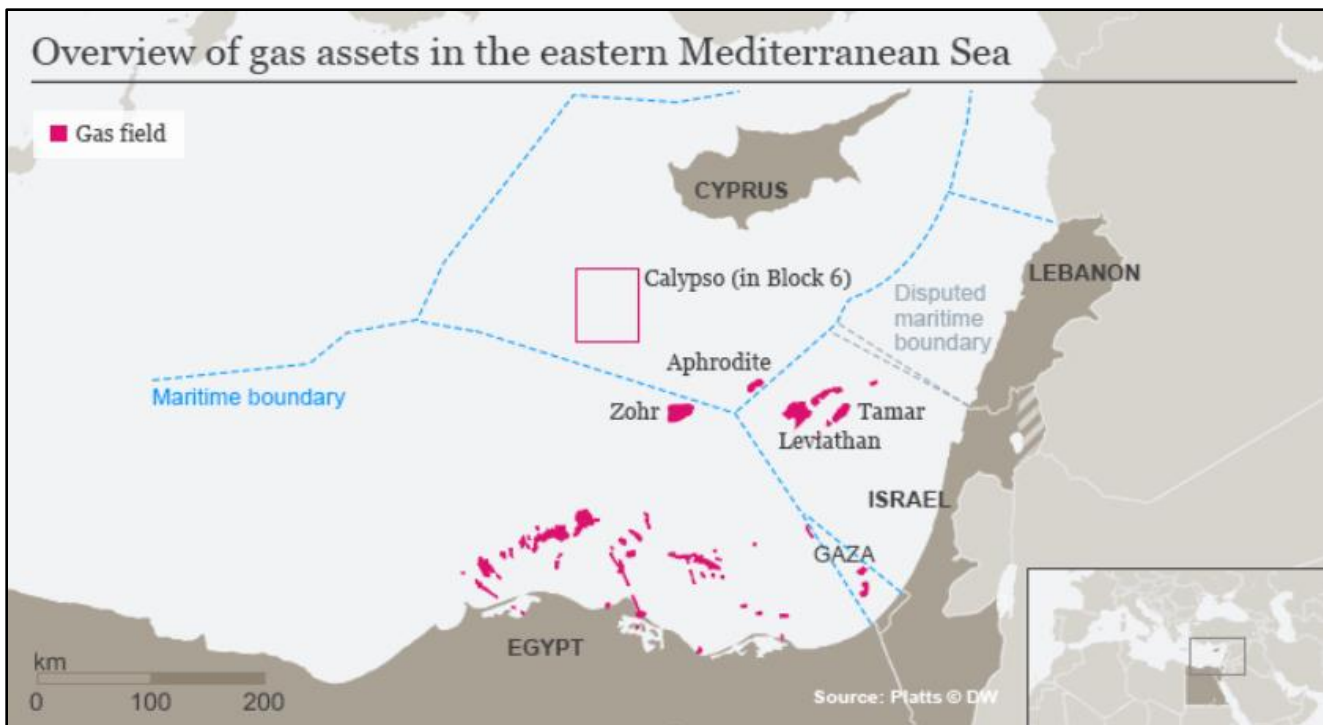


Figure 5: Overview of Gas Assets in the Eastern Mediterranean Sea (Matalucci 2019).

to Bulgaria as well) (Edison 2022); an endeavour that is rather reminiscent of the Southern Gas Corridor, however, notably, without the presence of Türkiye.

This agreement provides the opportunity for the EU to diversify its energy resources on the continent, thereby mitigating dependency on Türkiye and Russia, and increasing energy security in Europe (Troulis 2019: 154). Although the project has been criticised for its ambition in the face of the geopolitically tense situation between Türkiye and Greece, the EU's desire for energy diversity could provide impetus for the project in the future (Matalucci 2019).

Although the EastMed pipeline has not yet reached fruition – and perhaps never will, due to international stakeholder hesitation as a result of the project's expense and the political volatility of the Greece-Türkiye dynamic (European Parliament 2022) – the prospect of the agreement itself has, in several ways, worsened the current situation between the Greece and Türkiye. From the Greek side, playing a principal role in this venture could secure it as a key actor in EU energy relations if the project comes to fruition (European Parliament 2022). On the other hand, the negation of Türkiye has escalated tensions, forcing the state to establish trade and offshore prospecting agreements with Libya. Fig.6 below shows the controversial nature of these agreements, as the channel between both states directly passes through the Greek EEZ and in some cases, comes concerningly close to several islands in Greece, including two major islands, Crete, and Rhodes.

### *3.3.3 European Energy Diversity: Contextualising the Race for Hydrocarbon Discovery in the Eastern Mediterranean*

The ongoing territorial conflict between Greece and Türkiye on claims over islands and EEZs is also significant in the context of the European pursuit of energy diversity. Currently, the EU is greatly dependent on external suppliers to meet its annual energy demands, with around 54 percent of gas supply being imported primarily from Russia (European Commission [n.d.]). This lack of energy diversity is of concern to the EU, as it creates significant vulnerability in cases where the supply is halted, as was the case with Russia-supplied gas during the invasion of Ukraine. In 2021, 53.8% of its natural gas from Russia (European Council 2022). However, due to sanctions imposed on Russia in the wake of the invasion, this figure drastically dropped, with only 12.4% of the EU's natural gas supply coming from Russia (Eurostat 2023). Currently, the

main suppliers of gas in the continent are US, Qatar, Nigeria, Norway, and Algeria (European Council 2022).

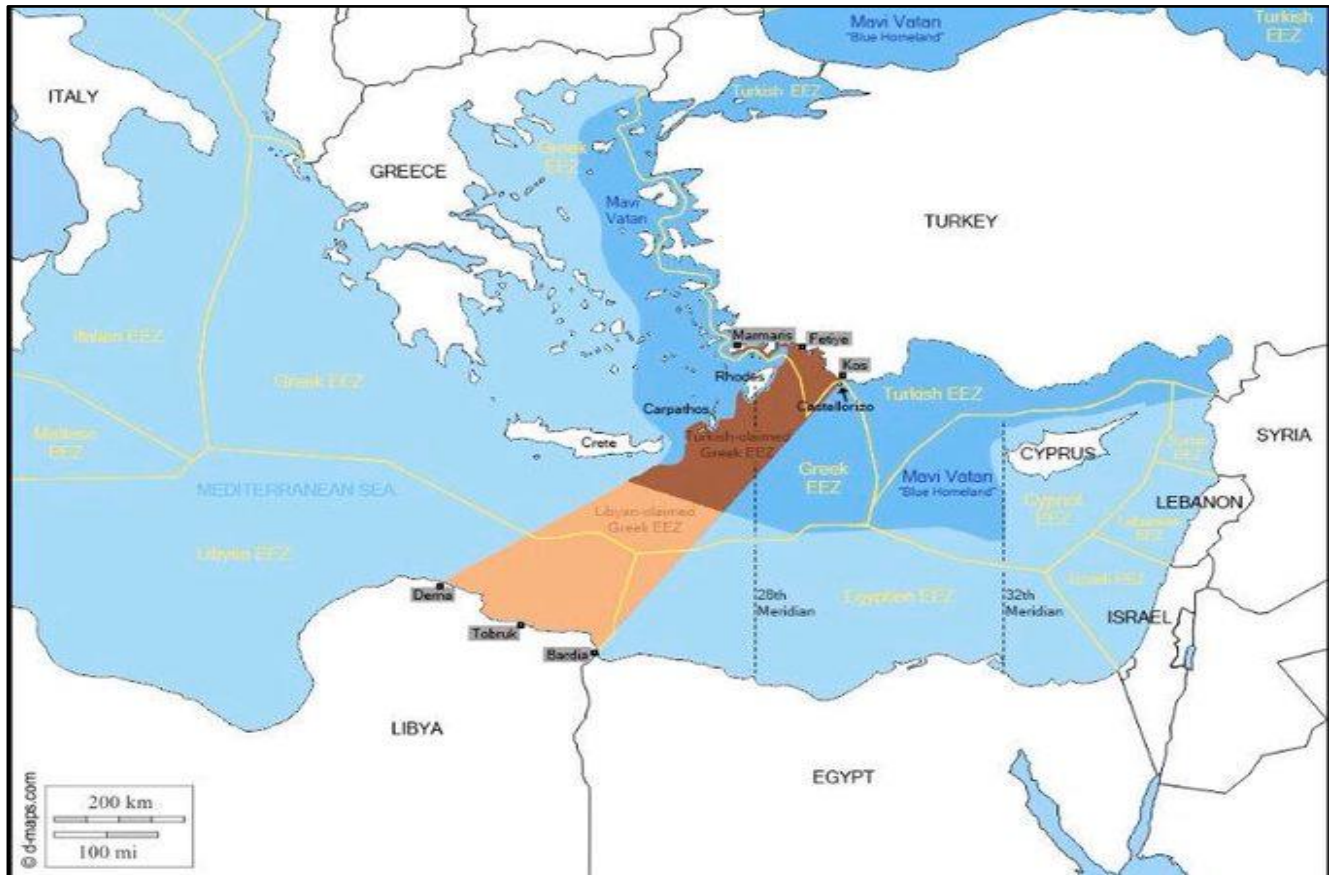


Figure 6: Turkish-Libyan Sea Corridor (Analisi Difesa 2020).

The diversification of energy in Europe has created strategic potential for both Greece and Türkiye regarding the discovery of hydrocarbon reserves in the Eastern Mediterranean. For Türkiye, the Southern Corridor gas project is an existing infrastructure that carries gas through Türkiye to Southern Europe. If Türkiye were able to claim hydrocarbon discoveries in the Eastern Mediterranean, it would greatly supplement an already robust gas infrastructure into Europe. Whilst Türkiye already controls gas infrastructure through the Southern Corridor, having its own gas supply would make Türkiye an indispensable trading partner with the EU.

On the other hand, the discovery of hydrocarbons in Greece's exclusive economic zone (EEZ) waters in the region would greatly reduce the EU's dependency on Türkiye and other external sources of energy (European Parliament 2022). There is additional potential here that, in

addition to alleviating the EU's energy diversity issue, Greece could use the financial benefits of controlling hydrocarbon fields and the energy infrastructure to bolster its economy and alleviate the burden of austerity measures and dependency on the EU.

Ultimately, claim over maritime territory, and the resultant potential ownership over any discovered hydrocarbon reserves in that territory has the potential to shape how the EU energy complex is framed and on whom it relies. Türkiye would ultimately benefit from an increase in financial and resource leverage over the EU, while Greece would financially and politically gain from securing energy resources for the EU. These conflicting interests form the basis for this study, as both countries have an already existing historical conflict surrounding territory, the added weight of a 'resource race' within the context of conflict of ownership in contested territories has significantly raised tensions between both states. The resultant securitisation of the issue by both governments, as well as military posturing in the area – with both states increasing military and naval presence in the region – has the potential for manifest conflict, and even war to break out between the two states. In this case, the collective security aspect of NATO becomes an object for analysis, as both states are bound by the principle of assumption that no attack will come from within the collective (NATO [n.d.]).

#### *3.3.4 Conflict and NATO*

The conflict between Greece and Türkiye is particularly concerning for the EU, as it has a vested interest in the hydrocarbon race in the Eastern Mediterranean. Both states are members of NATO, and thus, if war were to break out between them NATO allies are bound by the principles of the treaty defend the attacked state against the aggressor state – it must be noted, however, that military defence is not the only solution; the more immediate responses would include political and economic intervention.

As things stand, a Turkish invasion of Greece seems unlikely in light of Russia's unsuccessful attempt to invade Ukraine, which showcased an example of how negatively the economic and political ramifications can impact an aggressor state by the international community, notwithstanding the collective defence element. However, as this study is examining the effects of the perception of threat as a framework for national interests, it cannot be discounted entirely.

Additionally, there have been contradictory approaches with regard to EU countries selling arms to both states within the context of this conflict. Greece has admonished several EU countries for selling arms to Türkiye<sup>7</sup>, which it has expressed concern over, stating that “the move would upset the existing power balance and enable Ankara to destabilize the Eastern Mediterranean” (Kokkinidis 2020). This dual dynamic could also be explained by Türkiye’s influence in the EU. Regarding military intervention and the invocation of Article 5, if Türkiye were to invade Greece, there may, in fact, be some hesitation on the part of NATO allies to get involved, as Türkiye holds a distinctly crucial geographic position between Europe and the Middle East, which it has not been afraid to exploit before in an effort to leverage its position regarding the migration crisis, and war on terror that plagued Europe over the last decade. An example of this shift in response was Germany’s response to a conflict escalation between both states in the Aegean in 2020, where the situation almost resulted in armed conflict after a collision between a Greek and Turkish warship during a standoff within the Greek EEZ in the Aegean. Although according to international maritime law, Türkiye was imposing on Greek territory, the NATO response, was tepid in its approach towards Türkiye, aiming to approach the matter through EU mediation, rather than stepping in on military grounds or even sanctions (Chondrogiannos 2022). Although this was the most peaceful response to the conflict, the lack of pressure placed on Türkiye by the international community was cause for concern for Greece.

In this respect, there is less certainty that, should armed conflict escalate into war over territory between both states, NATO would immediately utilise military measures to invoke Article 5 to defend Greece despite its internationally recognised claim over its territories. Therefore, while it is unlikely that Türkiye will risk the threat of collective security and sanctions were it to initiate war with Greece, the Greek perspective is less assured, based on past experience – hence its persistent attempts to create buy-in from the international community to establish soft power in the region and establish itself as a key player in the push towards EU energy diversity.

This is not to say, however, that military defence is the only manner in which collective defence can be invoked. An alternative to the traditional response can also be seen in Europe’s

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<sup>7</sup> According to a document released by the German Press Agency, Türkiye is the top recipient of German arms exports, with over one third of its exports going to Türkiye (Kokkinidis 2020). Additionally, Spain supplies weapons exclusively to Türkiye (Chondrogiannos 2022).

encouragement to utilise the third core mission of collective defence through building relationships, encouraging dialogue, and utilising diplomacy to promote stability and security (Deni 2017: 17). While the lack of immediate action from the EU in 2020 could be seen as a lack of dedication to the core principle of NATO, on the other hand, the more diplomatic approach ultimately resulted in a peaceful de-escalation of the situation. This is crucial in the long run of relations between Greece and Türkiye, as positive diplomatic efforts amongst political tensions have aided in building a way forward to more stable outcomes of conflicts.

### **3.4 Diplomacy Between Greece and Türkiye**

Although it can be said that patterns of enmity have certainly been more prevalent between both states since 2011 with the escalated competition for territory and potential hydrocarbon discovery, to label the relationship as purely enmity-driven would be reductionist at best, and misrepresenting reality at worst. In fact, Greece and Türkiye have had to cooperate on various matters to ensure the collective benefit of both states, as well as the states surrounding them. A significant example of these is the Southern Gas Corridor infrastructure that transports natural gas from the Black Sea through Türkiye and Greece into Southern Europe.

Moreover, and perhaps most importantly, despite their historically tense relationship, Greece and Türkiye have consistently made efforts on both fronts to improve bilateral relations and mitigate conflict when tensions have escalated. This was certainly a recurring element in the relationship between both states between 2011 and 2021, where, aside from the conflict and escalating tensions between both states exacerbated by the competition for resources and territory in the Eastern Mediterranean, both states have sought to develop bilateral ties and normalise their relationship with each other.<sup>8</sup> For example, President Erdogan's visit to Greece as president in 2017 was the first time a president had visited the country since 1952. Although the diplomatic proceedings were tense, with Erdogan calling the Lausanne treaty into question, this was a significant step towards developing positive ties between both states. This positive trajectory was significantly hindered with a military escalation in the Aegean over territorial disputes in 2020, but as significantly improved since. An example of this that is worth mentioning, although it falls beyond the time scope of this study, is Greece's swift aid after the

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<sup>8</sup> In 2010, a High-Level Cooperation Council (HLCC) was created for this purpose.

2023 Turkish earthquakes has accelerated a positive outlook on diplomatic relations in what has been called ‘earthquake diplomacy’ (Doulgkeri 2023).

Bearing this in mind, the next section aims to identify the national interests of both states, which are driven by the perception of threat to national security. While positive reflections of amity patterns are not necessarily noted here, the acknowledgement of them will be valuable in chapter four, when situating the pursuit of these national interests in the amity/enmity spectrum.

### **3.5 National Interests**

Having contextualised and discussed the current relationship between Greece and Türkiye, this section uses that context to frame the national interests of both states, and the actions taken to protect and promote them. To do so, this chapter uses the theoretical frameworks of Nuechterlein and Bengtsson, as defined in chapter two, to identify the intrinsic and extrinsic elements which underlie both states’ national interests. This section does take into account the officially expressed national interests of both states, but also utilises context and actions to delve deeper into some of the unspoken interests presented in the case study.

#### *3.5.1 Türkiye*

The following section defines the national interests of Türkiye, paying specific attention to the regional position of the state, its complex relationship with power, as well as its changing approach to its ideology. This section considers these interests within the context of the race for hydrocarbons against Greece and conflict over territory in the region.

##### *3.5.1.1 A Gateway Between East and West*

Given its geographic position in the middle of several political regions, Türkiye presents a distinctly complex case of geopolitics in several different contexts. Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu describes Türkiye’s unique regional position as “at the same time a Middle East and Caucasus country ... This geographical depth places Türkiye right at the centre of many geographical areas of influence” (Murinson 2006: 952).

This self-perception of Türkiye as a central point to several regions places it in the perfect position to act as an insulator state to many security complexes surrounding it. Specifically, towards the Middle East, as well as Russia and Europe, Türkiye has remained largely on the

fringes of these interfaces between actors in these complexes, in the sense that it rarely directly involves itself in their political and security processes (Vural 2010: 92). However, whilst this may be the case for the Middle East and Balkan regions, the Eastern Mediterranean subcomplex sees Türkiye very much involved as an actor in the traditional Buzanian context of RSC theory. In fact, Türkiye's geographical centrality and insulator influence may even be the driving force behind its – oftentimes – aggressive action in the subcomplex, as its self-perceived significance as a central bridge between regions offers Türkiye a unique leverage point in the Eastern Mediterranean region.

It comes as no surprise, then, that Türkiye, given its geographic position on the Eastern front of Europe, its membership in NATO, and the fact that it has maintained a strong and steadily increasing economy over the last few decades, has sought to expand its position as a regional power. It is surrounded by smaller, and in some cases, less stable states, which plays a significant role in its position as an insulator state in several surrounding regional security complexes (Barrinha 2013: 165). However, an increasingly aggressive posturing towards surrounding states, such as Armenia, and Greece (Dalay 2022a: 4), the invasion of Syria, as well as its recent position to go against NATO-supported international conflict positions as part of a growing 'anti-Western' sentiment, has resulted in an alienation of Türkiye from the West and a weakening of its international standing as a bridge between 'two worlds' (Crowley & Erlanger 2022).

### *3.5.1.2 Extrinsic Factors: Türkiye as a Regional Power*

From the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Türkiye has managed to develop an international reputation for being a mediator state between East and West. During the Cold War, Türkiye's secularism, as well as its accession as a member of NATO established its orientation as a pro-western state (Kutlay & Öniş 2021: 1093). However, the rapidly growing relationship between Türkiye and Russia in the last two decades has expanded Türkiye's self-identified position as an influential figure and established it as a key figure in regional dispute resolution between Russia and the West (Dalay 2022b). For example, in the wake of the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022, Türkiye condemned Russia's actions, but refused to engage in most restrictive EU sanctions placed on Russia, choosing to rather engage politically and diplomatically than to alienate the country altogether (European Commission 2023). In doing so, Türkiye opened and

maintained diplomatic channels both ways, acting as a mediator in the conflict with a goal to deescalate, whilst also further strengthening its relationship with Russia.

This is also true in the context of the migrant crisis from 2015-2020, where Türkiye has positioned itself as an indispensable asset in the organisation of migration from the Middle East throughout the rest of Europe (Republic of Türkiye [n.d.]b). In this regard, Türkiye has largely framed itself as a regional power, acting as an insulator state on the periphery of conflicts (McLean 2011: 7). Other examples of this include the Armenian-Azerbaijani war in Nagorno-Karabakh, internal conflicts in Syria and Lebanon, and, most recently, the conflict between Israel and Palestine, in which Türkiye has taken a strong stance against Israel. In the wake of the Hamas attacks on Israel in October 2023, Türkiye initially called for restraint on both sides, but has since taken a far more pro-Palestine position (and specifically a pro-Hamas position, much to the ire of its NATO allies), condemning the USA's support of Israel and supporting a two-state solution to the conflict (Reuters 2023a). However, in doing so, Türkiye has severed recent attempts at normalising relations with Israel, which had a positive outlook until this conflict escalated (Reuters 2023b). The impact of this may be detrimental to Türkiye's regional interests, as further alienation of Israel may perpetuate further alienation from agreements, such as the EastMed Pipeline.

Additionally, one of the primary ways in which Türkiye's power can be observed as of late is through the EU's dependence on Türkiye for energy resources and energy resource infrastructure. The Southern Gas Corridor spans six countries and maintains a budget of approximately US\$40 billion, with an ultimate goal of reducing the EU's reliance on Russian-supplied energy sources (Trans Adriatic Pipeline [n.d.]). The project includes three pipelines, transporting gas from the Caspian Sea through Azerbaijan and Georgia (South Caucasus pipeline), creating a corridor through Türkiye (Trans Anatolian Pipeline), and finally distributing gas throughout South-Eastern and South-Central Europe, with main entry points in Greece, Albania, and Italy (Trans Adriatic Pipeline [n.d.]). This significantly benefits Türkiye as the primary conduit for the infrastructure, resulting in an EU dependency on Türkiye in a similar fashion to its reliance on Russian energy resources prior to the invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

Considering these aspects, Turkish power is a key element in the framing of its image of self. The power to exploit its regional position as an insulator state in surrounding conflicts allows it

to exert influence in several RSCs without being directly affected. Additionally, its strategic power in the European energy nexus has allowed it to economically benefit in the wake of Russian sanctions in 2022. However, the exercising of its power has the potential to backfire in the face of the EU and NATO regarding its expansion into the Eastern Mediterranean and conflict with Greece, as will be discussed below.

### 3.5.1.3 *Intrinsic Factors: Türkiye's Ideology*

A Major factor in framing Türkiye's national interests in the context of becoming a regional power on the international stage is its approach to political and social ideology. As mentioned above, during the Cold War, Türkiye's NATO membership established the state as a Western-postured, secular state. In some ways, this was a direct continuation of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's drive to create a modern, democratic, and secular country after Türkiye's establishment as a state in 1923. Within this ideology, Türkiye established itself as a useful barrier state<sup>9</sup> between East and West (Dalay 2022b), a position that has somewhat altered in focus between the Cold War and the 21<sup>st</sup> century, with the focus being less as a barrier between the Cold War bloc and Europe, and more as a barrier between the Middle East and the EU in the context of widespread political unease regarding migration and Islamophobia within Europe (while still maintaining its position between Russia and Europe).

However, this steadfast adherence to Western ideals has significantly dwindled in the last decade. One of the major changes has been the trend towards neo-Ottomanism, as explained earlier in the chapter. The trend is distinctly noteworthy, as the expansion of Türkiye to 'take back' the land that was once occupied as part of the Ottoman Empire is a major concern regarding international law. This particular brand of expansionism under neo-Ottomanism is reflected in the *Mavi Vatan*, or 'Blue Homeland', a controversial nationalist geopolitical doctrine, which lays claim over a vast maritime domain, encompassing over half of Greece's islands and maritime territory (Dubbelboer 2020) as shown in Fig.7 below.

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<sup>9</sup> Türkiye as a barrier state, in this context, refers to the fact that, ideologically and geographically, Türkiye is seen as the gateway between East and West. It has utilized this position to conduct diplomacy between the US and Russia, as well as acted as a physical barrier in the migration crisis in 2016, slowing mass free-migration into Europe (Dalay 2022b).

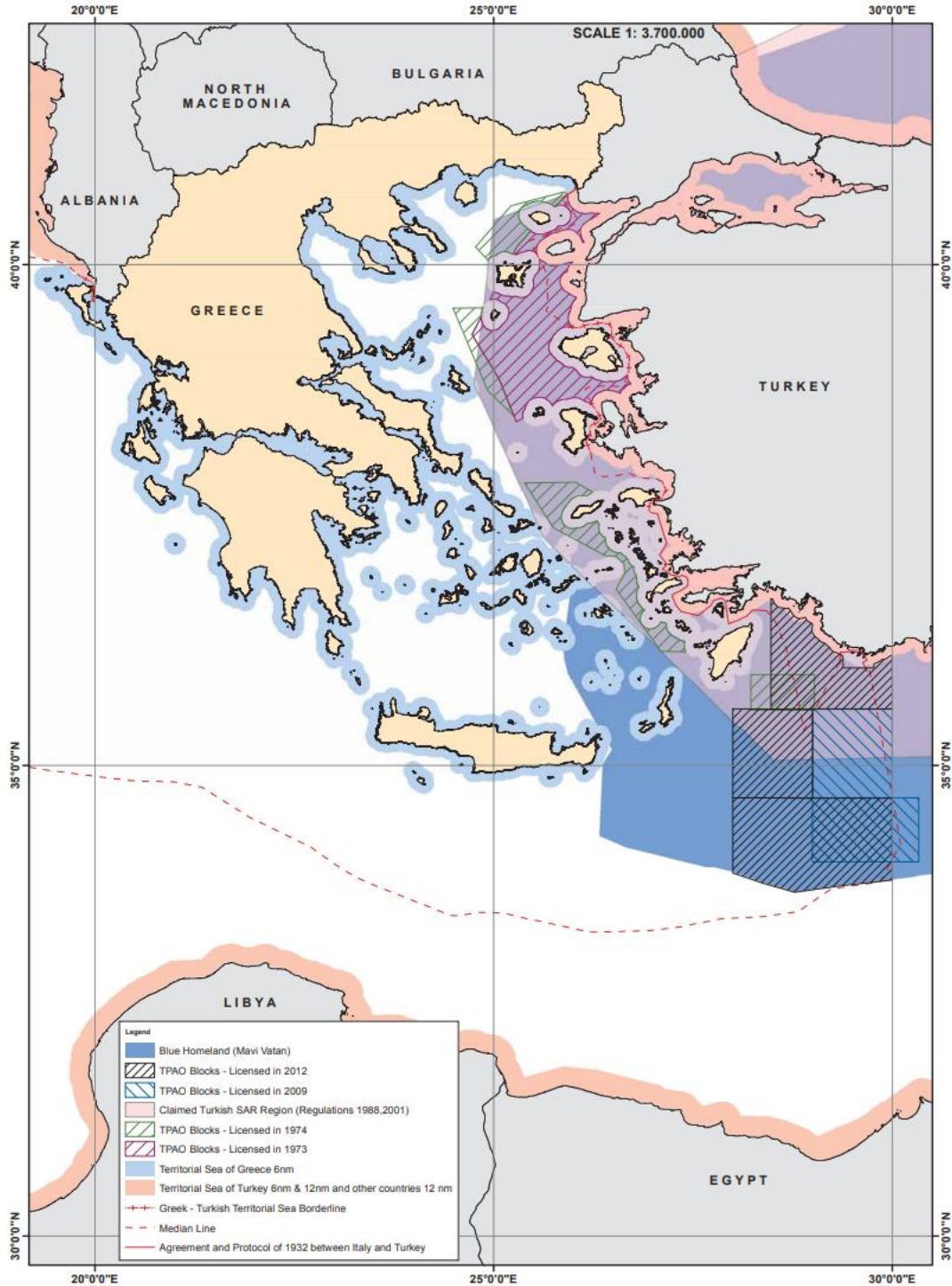


Figure 7: The Mavi Vatan's claim over a significant number of Greek islands and vast territory in the Eastern Mediterranean (Hellenic Republic 2019)<sup>10</sup>.

<sup>10</sup> As of the writing of this dissertation, there is no detailed map of the Mavi Vatan published by Turkish governmental sources. In the official *Blue Homeland* book, the established map does not provide much detail, but rather utilizes visuals without distinct territorial lines (Yaycı 2022).

This is perhaps the most controversial policy stance Türkiye has chosen to take in the context of the Eastern Mediterranean, as it undermines international laws on invasion, as well as maritime principles, even with the consideration that Türkiye is not a signatory of the UNCLOS. This expansion would see Türkiye becoming an aggressor state in its attempt to become a regional hegemon and pursue the *Mavi Vatan* (Yavuz 2020: 179).

Another change related to the embrace of neo-Ottomanism has been a shift from a fully democratic system to a distinctly authoritarian one, where the power of the state deliberately sabotages opportunity for accountability, and overtly exercises power over its citizens in a manner that quashes dissent (Glasius 2018: 527). This shift was publicly demonstrated in the wake of an attempted coup d'état in 2016 (Gramer 2020), where President Erdogan systematically purged any political opposition (Koontz 2020: 4) and changed Türkiye's parliamentary system to an executive presidential system, entrenching him as a more authoritarian ruler than was allowed under the previous system.

In this respect, Türkiye has ideologically shifted away from being a liberal secular nation akin to its Western allies in Europe and the US, and has approached an identity more akin to its Eastern neighbours with whom it has been normalising and strengthening ties – this is especially evident in its relationship with Russia and Islamic states in the Middle East. While this shift has certainly more acutely positioned Türkiye as the gateway state between East and West, as it self-identifies, this has also alienated Türkiye from the West, who have long supported Türkiye's previous liberal secular ideological approach to politics. The following section approaches this in more detail.

#### *3.5.1.4 Key National Security Issues: Uneven Approach to NATO and the EU*

The above examples of the geopolitical positioning of Türkiye, as well as the ideological shift that has occurred in the last decade have established Türkiye in a distinctly precarious international position. In its attempt to become a regional hegemon, Türkiye seems to be acting in opposition to its Western counterparts, increasingly alienating itself from the West, and shoring up relationships with China and Russia in the process.

One example of this is Türkiye's support for Azerbaijan in its ongoing war with Armenia over territory in Nagorno-Karabakh (Gramer 2020). Whilst NATO openly supports Armenia in this

conflict, Türkiye's difficult history with Armenia and its very solid relationship with Azerbaijan has resulted in open support for Azerbaijan in the conflict (Yesevi & Tiftikcigil 2015: 28). To this end, while NATO has called for Türkiye to act as a stabilising power to diffuse tensions, Türkiye has consistently ignored this request and continued to allow the conflict to unfold, leading to an Azerbaijani victory in 2020.

Perhaps a more acute example of this uneven approach is Türkiye's willingness to defy the collective NATO position regarding Russia between 2011 and 2021. Over the last two decades, Türkiye cultivated a relationship with Russia in what appeared to be a framing of its position as a neutral middle-ground between Russia and the West (Dalay 2022a: 2). However, this has become an increasingly tenuous balance, especially since Türkiye was sanctioned by NATO for purchasing a Russian S-400 short-range missile air-defence system and the continued suggestion that further building of a defence relationship with Russia is possible (Reuters 2022a) in direct contravention of the NATO collective defence agreement. However, Türkiye did, in fact, play a key role in negotiations between Russia and the NATO states during the 2022 invasion of Ukraine.

Regarding its potential accession to the EU, it is certainly in Türkiye's interest to become an EU member, as this would open major trade opportunities, expand its defence relationship within Europe, and would certainly legitimise Türkiye as an influential state in the region. With Türkiye acting as an valuable interlocutor in the European migrant and refugee crisis of the last half-decade<sup>11</sup>, remaining a significant trading partner to the EU (Müftüler-Baç 2018: 120), and being instrumental in Sweden's 2023 accession to NATO (Reuters 2023c), Türkiye's candidate status and bid to join the organisation would seem secure in principle.

However, Türkiye's acts of defiance of the collective NATO position, as mentioned above, its current political structure, as well as its foreign policy decisions, including its aggressive stance towards Greece in the context of the Eastern Mediterranean have thwarted its interest to become an EU member. It has also been argued that Türkiye would no longer fit into the EU's

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<sup>11</sup> The state holds a particularly unique position geographically, as mentioned above, wherein, it has been a crucial actor the European refugee and migrant crisis. Türkiye, acting as the buffer between Europe and a conflict-ridden Middle East, has assisted in controlling migrant dispersion throughout Europe, as well as capturing a significant number of suspected and confirmed extremists and terrorist coming through to Europe under the guise of refugee-status.

Copenhagen Criteria (Wesslau 2017; Duffy 2021), which ultimately determine a state's eligibility to join the EU. This mainly comprises the following three conditions:

“Political criteria: stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities; Economic criteria: a functioning market economy and the capacity to cope with competition and market forces; Administrative and institutional capacity to effectively implement the *acquis* and ability to take on the obligations of membership.” (European Commission 1993)

Based on these criteria, it is uncertain whether Türkiye would be considered eligible to join the EU beyond its current candidate status. Firstly, Türkiye's political stability may be doubted, following the political shift after the 2016 attempted coup d'état as mentioned above. Secondly, Türkiye has been implicated in widespread human rights abuses, especially since the political purge following the attempted coup d'état, with the internal displacement of over 400 000 Kurds between 2015 and 2021, the arbitrary persecution of civilians, intellectuals, and members of the media who are suspected of being anti-AKP, and the systematic removal of approximately 20 percent of Türkiye's judiciary (Girdap 2020: 72-73; Caman 2021: 181-190).

Lastly, Türkiye has lately experienced a period of high inflation, rising domestic costs, and a resultant economic crisis since 2020. The country has long been considered a riskier market among the emerging nations of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, due to its radical economic policies of “running large current-account deficits and relying on external financing to fuel unorthodox pro-growth policies” (Reuters 2022b). These economic circumstances do little in the way of convincing the EU that Türkiye, although potentially a strong economic partner, is a stable enough one. Ultimately, Türkiye's lack of a demonstrably democratic political system, its various human rights violations, its economic volatility, as well as its aggressiveness in the Eastern Mediterranean have greatly reduced the confidence the EU previously held for Türkiye, and have, in the short to medium-term, halted Türkiye's EU succession attempts (European Commission 2021).

Moreover, Türkiye's errant approach to NATO and its ideological and political position has resulted in a bifurcation of its image. On one hand, its position as a regional hegemon is certainly strengthened by its steadfastness to act on its own agency, rather than acting uncritically on

behalf of the 'Western agenda' (Dalay 2022a: 2). This has allowed Türkiye to explore a new relationship with Russia and other potential links in the Middle East. On the other hand, however, Türkiye's current change in disposition in the international space has greatly hindered its relationship with the EU and NATO. It must be noted that this hindrance will not likely lead to an expulsion from NATO (notwithstanding the fact that NATO does not have any frameworks for the expulsion of members), as Türkiye would prove to be a far more valuable ally than an enemy, due to its strategic geopolitical position in the Middle East and Eastern Mediterranean, especially considering its growing relationship with Russia (Dalay 2022a: 3). Furthermore, whilst Türkiye's bid to join the EU may be thwarted, the possibility of its eventual resumption of accession talks cannot be discounted.

The above section has illustrated the extrinsic and intrinsic factors that determine Türkiye's national interests in the context of this study. Türkiye's intrinsic image of self is espoused by its ties to both the ideological liberalism that is attributed to the West, as well as a growing orientation towards Neo-Ottomanism, as reflected by reduced democracy, increased tendencies towards autocracy, and a desire for expansion. Extrinsically, Türkiye's image of self as an emerging regional power is espoused by its posturing in the Middle East and Eastern Mediterranean, as well as its growing relationship with Russia. However, Türkiye's approach to power, while in line with its Neo-Ottomanist ideology, has the potential to isolate Türkiye from the EU and NATO, thereby hindering its legitimate ability to frame itself as a regional hegemon able to espouse the values of both East and West. This complex dynamic has the potential to affect how Türkiye approaches its national interests.

### *3.5.1.5 Three Key National Interests*

Having established Türkiye's intrinsic and extrinsic factors in framing its image of self within the Logic of Interfaces, this section establishes the primary national interests of Türkiye within the context of this study. When considering Türkiye's official position on its national interests, the narrative that is presented is fairly vague and even contradictory. The official political objective of Türkiye is to achieve "peace at home (and) peace in the world" (Republic of Türkiye [n.d.]). This position is in stark contrast to Türkiye's military escapades in all of the RSCs in which it exercises its military capabilities. Türkiye's other official interests include being a significant actor in global energy security, as well as political relations between Europe and the Middle

East (Republic of Türkiye [n.d.]c). While these interests are echoed in this study, the following section delves deeper into Türkiye's context to establish three higher-order national interests.

With the establishment of Türkiye's image of self, one is able to determine the driving factors behind a state's national interests, and thus determine the threat to those national interests in line with Nuechterlein's framework. Therefore, based on Türkiye's desire to establish itself as a regional hegemon in the face of a tumultuous relationship with the West, Türkiye's national interests in the Eastern Mediterranean regional security subcomplex under the context of hydrocarbon discoveries in the region can be seen in three primary areas.

Firstly, since Türkiye's efforts to become an EU member are waning, and its increased tendency towards aggressive expansionism have somewhat isolated it from NATO as an organisation, it is in Türkiye's interest to fashion itself as a regional hegemon in order secure power in the region and establish financial security as a dependable international trading partner. To do this, it is crucial that Türkiye create and maintain relationships with other powerful states within the various regions surrounding it and develop a sense of soft-power and legitimacy within those relationships with an aim to establish long-term trade relationships with these states. This is a vital interest, as Türkiye stands to gain significantly from the economic prospects provided by the control over hydrocarbon infrastructure in the region. The threat of Greece's EastMed pipeline cutting Türkiye out greatly hinders Türkiye's leverage over the EU for energy supply and could lead to a decline in revenue.

Secondly, to achieve the competitive and comparative advantage necessary to bolster Türkiye as a regional power, it would be in Türkiye's best interests to claim greater rights to hydrocarbon reserves in the Mediterranean Sea, ultimately allowing for it to become significantly indispensable to the EU for energy. Türkiye has already solidified its importance as a primary actor regarding energy security through the Southern Gas Corridor in Southern Europe, but sovereignty over its own hydrocarbon reserves in the Aegean Sea and Mediterranean would allow Türkiye to be a primary provider of energy sources (Ackerman 2022), rather than simply serving as an infrastructural conduit. This is a major interest, as although there is no direct threat to the wellbeing of the state, being a linchpin in the EU's push towards energy diversification could aid Türkiye in its pursuit to join the EU and establish it further as a regional hegemon.

Thirdly, considering both its need to control maritime domain, as well as its trend towards expansionism as reflected in neo-Ottomanism, it would be in Türkiye's best interests to challenge Greece's claim over the Dodecanese islands, as well as further entrench and legitimise its claim over Northern Cyprus. This is a major interest, as although Greece's claim does not directly threaten the wellbeing of the state, Greece's EEZ encroaches on what Türkiye claims as its own territorial waters, thereby establishing a potential threat to claims over resources were Türkiye to tap into hydrocarbon reserves in these disputed territories.

In summation, Türkiye's three key national interests are as follows:

1. *Vital Economic Interest*: Legitimising its claim over disputed territory in the Eastern Mediterranean, so as to secure a claim over potentially significant hydrocarbon reserves and secure trade routes in the Eastern Mediterranean without threat from Greece.
2. *Major Ideological and World Order Interest*: Expanding territory in the Eastern Mediterranean by laying claim over Cyprus and the Dodecanese islands so as to fulfil Mavi Vatan and create a neo-Ottoman regional hegemony.
3. *Major Economic Interest*: Financially securing itself as a key actor in Europe's pursuit of energy diversity by establishing its claim over potential hydrocarbon reserves in its established, as well as disputed territory.

#### 3.5.1.6 *Protection and Pursuit of National Interests*

The actions Türkiye has taken to protect its national interests can be seen in the first section of this chapter, with the contextualisation of the current conflict between it and Greece. Therefore, the following section will summarise a few of the key actions taken by Türkiye within the context of the Eastern Mediterranean security subcomplex.

For the first national interest, Türkiye has become more vocal of late in disputing Greece's claim over Cyprus and the Dodecanese islands, with the most formal resistance to this claim being a letter to the UN Secretary General pleading for a reconsideration of this claim, citing Greece's increase of military presence on their islands. This dispute aids in Türkiye's economic interest, as by legitimising Turkish claim to those territories, Türkiye would have carte blanche over the EEZ in the region.

For the second interest, Türkiye has pursued its ideological neo-Ottomanist policy towards posturing and expansionism by conducting drilling missions securely within Cypriot and Greek EEZs, escorted by naval ships. Additionally, President Erdogan has made several public announcements legitimising the *Mavi Vatan* and alluding to taking back territory he claims belongs to Türkiye and has established trade routes with Libya that pass directly within Greece's EEZ.

For the third interest, Türkiye has been aggressively prospecting for Hydrocarbon reserves in the Eastern Mediterranean to bolster its already established energy infrastructure into Europe. This, coupled with its pursuit of legitimising its claim over greater territories in the Aegean to counter the Greek claim has been instrumental in the fight towards gaining an economic infrastructural stronghold in the region. This would also allow Türkiye more leveraging power in its relations with the EU where matters of middle eastern relations are concerned.

In conclusion, Türkiye has been actively pursuing its national interests within the subcomplex, but in the process, has perhaps hindered itself in its international legitimacy through its controversial methods, as reflected in its shift towards Neo-Ottomanism. Although Türkiye's military outweighs that of Greece, the cost of invading Greece and staking claim to its territory may be to the detriment of Türkiye, as can be seen by Russia's invasion of Ukraine, as the threat of economic sanctions by NATO and EU members may render the economic benefits of the ownership of hydrocarbon resources moot, as the EU would have been the primary customer. Additionally, the added military capacity needed to maintain hold of invaded territory may prove to be a challenge for Türkiye, notwithstanding the possibility of a collective defence approach by NATO.

### 3.5.2 Greece

The following section defines the national interests of Greece, paying specific attention to the regional position of the state, its financial dependence on the EU, as well as the leveraging of its liberal ideology. This section considers these interests within the context of the race for hydrocarbons against Türkiye and conflict over territory in the region.

### *3.5.2.1 Greek Positioning: Rebuilding Standing in the EU*

As opposed to the wide array of factors leading to Türkiye's geopolitical position, self-image, and resultant national interests, Greece portrays a far less complex – although no less meaningful – line of reasoning for its own self-image, global positioning, and national interests. Greece's membership in the EU has played a pivotal role in its interests in the Eastern Mediterranean and has certainly been used as leverage in its complicated relationship with Türkiye. However, Greece also faces a major challenge in the form of economic vulnerability, making its relationship to the EU distinctly one-sided in terms of Greece's dependence on the European Bank and other EU infrastructure. In this regard, Greece's national interests in the discovery of hydrocarbon reserves in the Eastern Mediterranean are crucial not only for the expansion of Greece's economy, but also to enable it to rebound from more than a decade of financial dependence on the EU, to emerge from a perpetual debt crisis, and establish a natural gas infrastructure for Southern Europe that is not entirely dependent on Türkiye.

In fact, not only will it reduce dependence on Türkiye, but if Greece is able to find and tap into hydrocarbon reserves in its territorial waters, it will ultimately be able to fashion itself as a linchpin in European energy diversity by diminishing Turkish influence in the Eastern Mediterranean energy infrastructure. To do so, however, is likely to present a challenge for Greece, as it needs the consistent support of the EU to maintain its legitimate claim over its territory, whilst navigating the power imbalance of Türkiye as a much larger and more formidable military and naval force.

This challenge is somewhat of a conundrum for Greece, however, as in order to ensure its economic power to leverage EU support, it needs EU support to be able to deter conflict with Türkiye. According to Triantaphyllou (2018: 108), deterrence is in Greece's best interests, as Greece has little chance in winning a war with Türkiye without intervention from other NATO states. However, if deterrence is not coupled with soft power and persuasive foreign policy movements, Greece stands little chance in the way of influencing Türkiye's behaviour in the sub-RSC, as Türkiye's hard power in military capability and strength far outweighs that of Greece. This also emphasises the need for Greece to nurture partnerships (security and otherwise) and leverage support within NATO and the European security community.

### *3.5.2.2 Extrinsic Factors: Greece's Financial Position and Dependence on the EU*

Within the last two decades, Greece has seen an unstable economic trajectory that has led to a tense relationship with the EU. In the 15 years leading up to the global financial crisis of 2008, the state exhibited some of the highest growth rates in the Eurozone, with stable GDP growth and a high employment rate (Pagoulatos & Triantopoulos 2009: 35). It also reflected an emerging European nation dealing with the rebuilding of its identity after several centuries of imperial and colonial rule, Greece's membership of NATO and the EU was as much about fitting into the European identity it once held, as it was about establishing itself as a trusted trade partner in the Balkans (Veremis 1998: 11) and providing a stable border between Europe and the Middle East (Lesser, et al. 2001: 9-10).

However, as a result of the 2008 global financial crisis, Greece's underlying structural issues accelerated and resulted in the collapse of Greek economic structures, precipitating a sovereign debt crisis from which the country is still trying to recover (Reinhart & Trebesch 2015: 307 ; OMFIF 2023). These structural issues comprised two main factors. Firstly, Greece was riddled with detrimental fiscal policy that included uncontrolled public expenditure and insufficient revenue generation in comparison with other EU states, primarily caused by Greece's own internal political instability, which was characterised by constantly changing ruling political ideologies and systemic corruption. Crucially, political parties would curry favour with their constituencies by reducing the burden of tax on citizens, thereby creating a system characterised by tax evasion and consequentially causing a deficit in government revenue (Monastiriotis 2011: 325).

The second factor was due to structural asymmetry within the Eurozone, which resulted in a failure of mercantilist practices and a consequential loss of economic competition in the Mediterranean. This led to a large consumption expansion within Greece and accelerated inflation, which ultimately put significant fiscal pressure on Greece, as it was unable to devalue its own currency according to EU policy (Monastiriotis 2011: 325).

This political and economic turmoil resulted in Greece's dependence on the European Bank and the EU, who have collectively bailed Greece out of these financial crises on several occasions, leading to a debt crisis in the country, and ensuring the limitation of national policy in the form of austerity measures and an aggressive stance on taxation (Pagoulatos &

Triantopoulos 2009; Monastiriotes 2011: 323). This dynamic, along with the geographic position of Greece as a flank state<sup>12</sup> on the outer edges of the Eurozone resulted in the political isolation of Greece from the EU, prompting a consideration to leave the EU altogether between 2010 and 2016 (Triantaphyllou 2018: 108; Gherghina & Tap 2022: 2).

When considering any EU state's national interests, the EU itself becomes integral in understanding position and identity (Triantaphyllou 2018: 108). This is no different for Greece, especially regarding its geostrategic position, which is situated in a critical position for Middle Eastern and Levant relations (Nopens 2013: 2). In this respect, a strong Greece would allow for the EU to be able to maintain a strong presence in the Eastern Mediterranean sea, ultimately providing an opportunity to maintain existing, and establish new energy trade routes directly between the EU, and the Middle-East and North Africa, with an added element of preventing Turkish expansionism (Dokos 2012: 7).

Additionally, it is worth noting that, although Türkiye is the main thoroughfare point in the Southern Gas Corridor project previously mentioned, Greece is also involved in the project and is a main contributor in the infrastructure that transports gas to Italy, Bulgaria, Albania, and North Macedonia (Trans Adriatic Pipeline [n.d.]), thereby, already playing a significant role in energy infrastructure in the EU, especially regarding the Southern Gas Corridor's goal of diversifying energy sources.

This is especially significant, considering the Eastern Mediterranean Pipeline (as previously described) and the opportunities it would provide Greece in becoming far more financially independent, and providing the potential for the state to become a linchpin in Eastern Mediterranean regional energy infrastructure for the EU. The energy-security nexus created by the normalisation of ties and energy cooperation between Greece, Israel, and Cyprus in the EastMed Agreement creates an opportunity for Greece to expand its foreign policy objectives, not only to protect its own claim over hydrocarbon reserves in its territory, but also to foster new relationships that would allow for the creation of a competing power presence to rival Türkiye's "grandiose ambitions in the region" (Karagiannis 2020). In this respect, Greece would greatly

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<sup>12</sup> In this context, a flank state refers to a state on the edge of a group of states, both geographically and politically.

benefit from this dynamic and would be able to leverage its position in the energy infrastructure within the EU.

### *3.5.2.3 Intrinsic Factors: Greek Ideology*

Unlike Türkiye, Greece's ideological positioning on an international level has been fairly consistent over the last two decades. Its membership in NATO and the EU was largely about fitting into a distinctly European identity in the wake of its independence from the Ottoman Empire. Outwardly, this identity is characterised by economic liberalism, liberal democracy, and cultural conservatism, and can be seen in five key areas; namely, its economy, its relationship with political institutions, its view on education and innovation, its response to migration and other human rights issues, and most significant to this study, Greece's image of self within Europe and the world (Moschonas 2016). This significance comes in Greece's pursuit to gain soft power in the Eastern Mediterranean so as to legitimise its bid to establish itself as a significant player in European energy diversity. Greece has managed to utilise this soft power, for example, in the EastMed Pipeline agreement, which relegated Türkiye altogether, even though, Türkiye has existing infrastructure that would benefit the agreement.

The section above described the economic turmoil that led to an over-dependency on the EU for stability. Prior to the economic crisis, Greece's economy was characterised by social democracy, but a 2015 survey determined that Greece has found an economic balance in economic liberalism with elements of social democracy<sup>13</sup> integrated into it (Moschonas 2016).

Regarding political institutions, the austerity measures put in place by the EU, as well as the political alienation from the EU as mentioned previously, resulted in speculation between 2010 and 2016 that Greece would leave the EU altogether. Although it chose to stay, the ideological reasoning behind the choice is notable for this study. While Greece was a distinctly pro-EU country in the early 2000s, this perception changed in the wake of Greece's tumultuous economic relationship with the EU in the last fifteen years. Thus, the choice to remain in the EU was not a reflection of an idealised political goal as espoused by EU doctrine, but rather, the

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<sup>13</sup> Economic liberalism is an economic ideology that supports a free market economy with little government intervention in choice of trade or trade partners. Social democracy allows for economic liberalism as a tool for growth and innovation, but also uses that economic prosperity to support principles of social, political, and economic equity in the state.

choice reflected a sense of “Eurorealism”<sup>14</sup>, where the benefits to the state outweighed those if Greece were to leave the union (Moschonas 2016).

However, while this Eurorealism characterised Greece’s economic choices, ideologically, Greece has remained consistent on the international stage. Regarding its self-identity, Greece holds itself in high regard when it comes to its impact on culture, lifestyle, and education. This perception highlights the importance it places on the past, with principles from thousands of years ago having transcended time and engrained into the psyche of the nation today, despite hundreds of years of imperial rule by a distinctly non-European culture. This perception of self as ideologically European has also enabled Greece to differentiate itself from Türkiye in the context of neo-Ottomanism, thereby framing Greece as a bastion of Western ideals on the frontier of the East. In this regard, the more Türkiye leans away from the West, the more Greece has been able to establish this identity.

#### *3.5.2.4 Key National Security Issues: Securing a Strong Position in the Eastern Mediterranean*

The first element of Greek national security is economic security. Rebounding from a significant economic recession that caused country-wide instability, job losses, and political turmoil, Greece has sought to sustainably and consistently repay its debt to the EU, so as to avoid additional fiscal instability in future and ensure economic security (IMF 2023). Additionally, relying on a mostly tourism and agriculture-based economic system, Greece does not have a significant manufacturing, or export economy to speak of that would allow for consistent and stable economic growth. As such, its economic security would greatly benefit from the establishment of an energy-based economy, where it would play a pivotal role, whether in providing the infrastructure to supply natural gas to southern Europe, or better still, to find and exploit its own hydrocarbon reserves in this energy infrastructure.

The second element to Greece’s national security hinges on the first, but in a far more potentially damaging manner. Specifically, while trying to establish itself as a key player in the Eastern Mediterranean energy infrastructure, Greece finds itself being threatened on a vital defence level, to refer to Nuechterlein’s framework. The ambition of Türkiye to fulfil its Mavi

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<sup>14</sup> Eurorealism is the movement towards “radical reform of the EU, and greater economic liberalization”, with some Eurorealist states calling for increased accountability and transparency in EU institutions and more “equitable position[s] in EU affairs” (Akbaba 2017: 219).

Vatan in the Eastern Mediterranean greatly threatens Greece's territorial sovereignty and security of its trade systems in the region. If Türkiye were to realise its ambitions in the region, not only would Greece's financial goals fail to be realised, but some parts of the country would be at risk of potential invasion.

Although, it must be acknowledged that, in the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the economic sanctions which followed, realistic prospects of a Turkish invasion are slim. Additionally, with the added pressure from the international community and the need to militarily hold onto invaded territory and politically control it, it is unlikely that Greece would face this threat in reality. However, when considering national security, chapter two emphasises the constructivist nature of threats, in that the perception of threat – and more specifically, what the impact of the threat would be – is what determines how a state acts upon its national interest (Jervis 1982a: 5). Therefore, while Turkish prospects for invasion may not be imminent, Turkish military posturing and political pursuit of the Mavi Vatan does little to diminish the Greek perception of threat when Türkiye's actions are so far to the contrary.

The threat of war on Greece has also presented a difficult situation, in that its capacity for securitisation and military capabilities are inferior to those of Türkiye's, as mentioned previously. If an invasion were to occur, and if there is little to no military assistance from other NATO states, given the complex relationship and leverage Türkiye has over the EU regarding the Middle East, Greece would likely be unable to win a war.

Therefore, it would be in Greece's best interests to avoid and deter war with Türkiye by responding strongly to posturing the region by militarising contested islands to prevent a possible invasion, and securing ties with other countries in the region, so as to bolster its position and maritime claim. Additionally, it would have to create credible deterrent capabilities by leveraging partnerships to its advantage in terms of hard power assistance, while at the same time soliciting soft power support (in the form of diplomatic mobilisation) to reinforce overall deterrence. In this respect, the EastMed Pipeline would be particularly salient to Greece's security interests, as it would be in all stakeholders' (recipients and distributing states) interests to protect the status quo and Greece's claim to its waters, lest a conflict compromise the infrastructure.

In conclusion, Greece's intrinsic image of self is espoused by its steadfastness to European economic liberalism, liberal democracy, and cultural conservatism, resulting in its positioning as a bastion for European culture in the context of Türkiye's political alienation from the West. Extrinsically, Greece's image of self is two-fold. Firstly, Greece's image of self in relation to the EU is characterised by economic instability and vulnerability with respect to the Turkish threat. On the other hand, Greece also aims to establish itself as the primary linchpin in the Eastern Mediterranean energy infrastructure. This bifurcated image of self as both a vulnerable state currently, and a potential political and economic linchpin in the EU energy complex, given the status of and control over potential energy infrastructure, is pivotal to how Greece leverages its position internationally in the context of the regional security subcomplex, and can be used to frame its national interests.

### *3.5.2.5 Three Key National Interests*

Having established Greece's intrinsic and extrinsic factors in framing its image of self within the Logic of Interfaces, this section establishes its primary national interests within the context of this study. Specifically, with the establishment of Greece's image of self, one is able to determine the driving factors behind the state's national interests, and thus determine the threat to those national interests in line with Nuechterlein's framework. Therefore, based on Greece's desire to secure itself financially and establish itself within the Eastern Mediterranean energy infrastructure, as well as its desire to deter a conflict with Türkiye, Greece's national interests can be seen in three primary areas.

Firstly, as Greece is emerging from its debt crisis and perpetual reliance on the EU for fiscal and political support, it is in Greece's best interests to invest into projects that will greatly enhance its economy, so as to allow Greece to find financial independence, and regain its international credibility as a stable and reliable international trading partner. In this regard, it is crucial for Greece to secure its maritime territory and begin aggressive exploration for potential hydrocarbon reserves, both within the Aegean, and further south in the Eastern Mediterranean. This is a vital interest, as prevention of the claim over resources in Greece's EEZ would greatly hinder Greece economically in repaying its debts to the EU.

Secondly, with Türkiye's increasing posturing in the region, and its claim over what Greece perceives to be its sovereign territory, it is important for Greece to secure alliances that will

assist Greece in strengthening its position in the region. Therefore, projects such as the EastMed pipeline are crucial in building a Natural Gas Hub in the region in which Greece is a primary actor. This will also aid in cementing Greece's image as a crucial element in the EU's agenda towards the Middle East and North Africa, rather than an economically volatile member of the EU in constant need of fiscal rescue.

In addition to economic support, Greece will need to also rely on the collective defence of NATO and support from the EU to deter Türkiye in a possible invasion or instigation of conflict, as Greece would not be able to withstand the Turkish military force alone. To this end, Greece has utilised its liberalism in order to uphold the ideological underpinnings of the EU in a bid to gain further support from the EU. Therefore, the national interest of ideology and world order is a peripheral interest for Greece, as it does not directly affect Greece, but rather affects the general interests of the EU, which Greece plays a role in defending.

Thirdly, as the threat of Turkish invasion in accordance with its *Mavi Vatan*, it is in Greece's best interests to deter any possibility of war or invasion by assertively responding to Turkish posturing, as well as securing its energy infrastructure as soon as possible to ensure a collective regional interest in Greece's stability. As mentioned previously, although the prospect of a realistic Turkish invasion is low, considering the ramifications Türkiye would have to face, this does not detract from the fact that Greece's national security is based on the perception of threat. In this regard, Turkish military and political posturing has done little in the way of assuaging perceptions of threat by Greece. As such, this remains a vital defence threat – it is a defence threat, as invasion of Greece would directly threaten the existence of the state as it stands now. However, it remains vital, rather than survival, as this threat is not imminent.

In summation, Greece's three key national interests presented for this study are as follows:

1. *Vital Defence Interest*: Preventing a Turkish invasion and war over Greek territory in the Eastern Mediterranean.
2. *Vital Economic Interest*: Establishing an energy infrastructure in the Eastern Mediterranean region that would allow for Greece to become a significant actor in Europe's pursuit for energy diversity, thereby bolstering and stabilising the Greek economy.

3. *Peripheral Ideological and World Order Interest:* Maintaining political and ideological stability as a European state on the frontier of the Middle East so as to counter an anti-Western Turkish agenda in the regions bordering Europe.

#### 3.5.2.6 *Protection and Pursuit of National Interests*

The following section summarises the key actions taken by Greece within the context of the Eastern Mediterranean security subcomplex.

For the first interest, Greece has consistently responded assertively to Turkish posturing within its EEZ by placing strategic military deployments on several of its islands. Additionally, in response to the perceived threat of Turkish expansionism into Greek territory, Greece has proactively responded by increasing its EEZ claim from six to the legal 12nm within the Aegean Sea, thereby actively reinforcing its claim over its territory and encroaching into Turkish claims.

In pursuit of the second interest, Greece has been active in building energy infrastructure in the Aegean, as well as establishing regional relationships with the EastMed agreement. It has also actively isolated Türkiye, thereby establishing its position as a key actor in the Eastern Mediterranean energy complex, which would financially strengthen Greece and aid in the European pursuit for energy diversity.

In pursuit of the third interest, Greece has not taken major steps to pursue its interest in defending its ideology but has used its liberal European ideology to leverage EU support by emphasising Turkish Neo-Ottomanist expansion regarding the first national interest.

In summation, Greece's national interests stem from the defence of its territory from the Turkish threat of invasion (regardless of the realistic likelihood of that occurring), as well as the need to ensure economic security by establishing itself in as a key actor in the Eastern Mediterranean energy infrastructure. Regarding its territorial defence, Greece's military capabilities are no match for Turkish military power, further precipitating the need for Greece to utilise its EU and NATO membership as an additional form of deterrence, as Türkiye is unlikely to enact its Mavi Vatan under the assurance that Greece has EU and NATO support. However, this position remains tenuous, as Greece has not actually managed to get the EastMed Pipeline project underway, and there is no guarantee of immediate military support from NATO. This adds to the Greece's perception that it may continue to be in a vulnerable position, which has led to

defensive military actions that have further contributed towards a security dilemma in the region and escalated tensions with Türkiye.

### **3.6 Conclusion**

In conclusion, this chapter has explored the current context of the conflict between Greece and Türkiye to lay the foundation for the establishment of both countries' national interests within the regional security subcomplex. The context of the current situation in the race towards hydrocarbon reserve claims within the Aegean Sea stems far deeper than a territorial dispute, but rather, is established from a centuries' long relationship of enmity between both states.

Regarding territory, Türkiye is seeking to claim territory it believes belongs rightfully under the Turkish flag, while Greece has perceived that pursuit as a direct threat to the survival of the state. Ideologically, Greece and Türkiye are competing for the legitimisation of their way of life, with Greece aiming to establish its soft power position as a bastion of Western ideals, while Türkiye has significantly withdrawn from its previously-held Western focus to pursue an anti-Western and neo-Ottoman ideology.

Ultimately, however, while both states have different reasons for their image of self and their national interests, what is clear is their mutual pursuit over the same goal: the control over claimed territory in the Aegean and the freedom to pursue and control potential hydrocarbon reserves in their claimed territory. Doing so would allow both states to establish themselves as a regional power within the Eastern Mediterranean region, as ownership over hydrocarbon resources in the region would allow both states to gain significant control over gas infrastructure from the Eastern Mediterranean region, including North Africa and the Levant, into Southern Europe.

Despite this dynamic, however, the positive examples of both countries working together cannot be discounted, as the patterns of enmity that exist in the sub-RSC are also offset by persistent attempts for both states to work together. As is further analysed in the next chapter, the amity/enmity spectrum in relation to both states relies on amity-driven actions in order to create and establish sustainable security regimes in the sub-RSC.

The next chapter also expands on the other element of Logic of Interfaces, the image of other, to further understand the relationship between Greece and Türkiye on the amity/enmity spectrum and ultimately determine if and how the pursuit of national interests as discussed in this chapter affects the stability of the sub-RSC.

## **4 CHAPTER FOUR: EXPLORING THE EFFECT THAT THE PROTECTION AND PROMOTION OF NATIONAL INTERESTS HAS ON THE STABILITY OF THE SUB-RSC**

### **4.1 Introduction**

Determining the national interests of both states lays the foundation for a critical examination of the patterns of amity and enmity between them that arise as a result of activities undertaken to protect and promote their respective national interests. Based on this, the first facet of Bengtsson's Logic of Interfaces was used to determine the image of self within the context of this regional security subcomplex.

This chapter further utilises these national interests and the resulting actions that have been taken from 2011 to 2021 to determine, firstly, the patterns of amity and enmity that have arisen from them using the second facet of Logic of Interfaces, recognition of and by the other. This is used to place the subcomplex within Oskanian's amity/enmity spectrum, which frames the equilibrium from which the stability of the sub-RSC is defined. Lastly, this chapter determines whether these patterns of amity and enmity have any effect on the stability of the sub-RSC, based shifts in the equilibrium as defined on the spectrum.

### **4.2 Greek and Turkish National Interests in Bengtsson's Logic of Interfaces**

The Logic of Interfaces posits that half of what determines the type of relationship between states in an RSC is the image of self, which informs the national interest through the self-conceptualisation of national identity and values. However, to truly establish the dynamic of the relationship between both states – or the recognition between them – this section considers the other side of the Logic of Interfaces dyad, the image of other (Bengtsson 2010: 27). As mentioned in chapter two, relationships of positive recognition occur when the image of self is mutually congruent with the image of other, thereby legitimising the actions of the other and perpetuating an amity-driven relationship. On the other hand, if this dichotomy is mutually incongruent, both actors will experience disequilibrium and as a result, actions will be far more enmity-driven where there are perceived threats.

Chapter three discussed the historical and current context which underlies the relationship between both states, paying specific attention to the ideological, political, and economic contexts that drive the self-perception of both states, and therefore, their national interests. However, these national interests do not form in isolation of the other; rather, recognition is two-fold. Firstly, the perception of self, versus the recognition of the other, allows a state to situate itself within the greater context of the region. Secondly, the perception of the other reinforces and legitimises the perception of threat to national security.

#### *4.2.1 Greek Recognition of Türkiye*

Ideologically, Türkiye's intrinsic image of self is espoused by its ties to both the ideological liberalism that is attributed to the West, as well as a growing orientation towards Neo-Ottomanism, as reflected by reduced democracy, increased tendencies towards autocracy, and a desire for expansion. Extrinsically, Türkiye's image of self is espoused by the pursuit towards establishing its legitimacy as a regional hegemon in the Eastern Mediterranean through means of challenging the existing status quo surrounding Greek claims over a substantial portion of territory Türkiye perceives as its own in terms of the Mavi Vatan. This involves official political challenges to international bodies, such as the UN, as well as more unofficial efforts to posture within the region by increasing military presence in disputed territories and surveying for hydrocarbon reserves within the Greek EEZ.

When considering the image of other, however, Greece's perception of Türkiye is uneven. On the intrinsic level, Greece has recognised Türkiye's shift away from Liberal political ideology, and has actually used that to bolster its own position as a bastion for European liberalism in the face of Türkiye's shift.<sup>15</sup> On the extrinsic level, however, Greece views Türkiye as an imposing actor that behaves as an antagonist towards Greece by challenging legally established Greek territory. As a result, this has forced Greece to increase military presence in the region, as well as attempt to forge new economic relations in the region outside the Turkish ambit, as has been evident with Greece's normalisations of ties with Israel and Egypt (alongside Cyprus) and the

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<sup>15</sup> It is important to note that recognition does not necessarily require both states to have these elements in common. Recognition simply occurs when one state perceives the other states' elements in the same manner that they are presented and intended (Bengtsson 2010: 28)

resultant EastMed Agreement that seeks to challenge Türkiye's stronghold on hydrocarbon infrastructure in Southern Europe.

#### *4.2.2 Turkish Recognition of Greece*

Greece's intrinsic image of self is espoused by its steadfast adherence to European economic liberalism, liberal democracy, and cultural conservatism, resulting in its positioning as a bastion for European culture on the frontier of the Middle East. This ideological positioning has consistently gained significance in the context of Türkiye's political alienation from the West. Extrinsically, Greece's image of self is two-fold. Firstly, its image of self in relation to the EU is characterised by economic instability and vulnerability within the EU. The Turkish threat has also established Greece as a vulnerable state that requires protection provided by a more powerful body, such as the EU. On the other hand, Greece also aims to establish itself as a linchpin in the Eastern Mediterranean energy infrastructure; an aim espoused by its maritime claim in the Eastern Mediterranean Sea, as well as its efforts in entrenching the EastMed Agreement, so as to secure its position as a key actor in Europe's pursuit of energy security.

When considering the image of other, Türkiye's perception of Greece is similarly both congruent and incongruent with the above. On the intrinsic level, Türkiye's own shift towards neo-Ottomanism has been in direct response to the very ideology that Greece espouses as a European state with Western values. It has leveraged this ideology to justify its own shift, and thus, positively recognises Greece's positioning here.

On the extrinsic level, however, one is able to recognise further incongruencies. Where Greece has cited international law, as well as the treaties of Lausanne and Paris in its claim over territory and resources in the Aegean Sea, Türkiye's perception of this legitimacy goes only as far as Greece's agreement not to militarise the islands in question. Additionally, although Greece has legally laid claims over the majority of the Aegean Sea, its inability to share the maritime territory fairly, even threatening to increase the area of its EEZ from 6nm to 12nm, has forced the Turkish hand in securitising the issue by legitimising the Mavi Vatan to ultimately claim territory it perceives should be Turkish. In doing so, aggressive Turkish posturing has further escalated tensions in the region.

#### 4.2.2.1 *Posturing and Collective Security*

Realistically, however, Türkiye's military posturing does little in the way of legitimising its claim to these disputed territories in the Eastern Mediterranean, considering its claims directly contradict international law that is acknowledged by all states except Türkiye regarding Greece's EEZ. In this case, one is hard pressed to find legitimate reason for this posturing, other than to antagonise Greece and incite political conflict by securitising the situation where there is no direct threat to Türkiye as a state. Similarly, Greece's posturing with its threat of EEZ expansion does little in the way of promoting a peaceful approach to this conflict. While both states can defend their positions – postures – by citing the others' assertive actions, the escalation of mutual security dilemmas on both sides may eventually lead directly to a security paradox, where the amity/enmity paradigm may shift further towards a conflict formation than a security regime (as is discussed below in this chapter).

However, the potential of a pure security regime emerging between these two states will always be caveated with the acknowledgment of the collective security to which both states must adhere regarding their NATO membership. In this respect, the chances that both states will be thrust into war, irrespective of who initiates the conflict, are slim, considering the deterrence aspect of collective defence and the realistic expectation that, as NATO members, no state will be attacked by another state within the collective. Additionally, as both states have a vested economic interest in the potential resources to be found in the region, there is also the added non-military deterrence of collective security with regard to sanctions against the aggressor state. In this respect, the potential to gain economic leverage by causing conflict is hindered by the potential of economic sanctions that would occur in tandem, as well as the added cost of militarily defending occupied territory, creating a further expense on potential Turkish expansion.

#### 4.2.3 *Underpinning Greco-Turkish Recognition in the Logic of Interface*

Based on Bengtsson's framework, it is clear that Greece and Türkiye fall into the category of *competition* in the context of the interface. However, it must also be noted that there also is positive recognition competition over ideological impact within and outside of the region (as evidenced in Türkiye's assertive shift away from Western ideals as a stand against European

liberalism), competition over finding and controlling potential hydrocarbon reserves in the area, as well as competition over legitimate claim of territory within the Aegean sea to assert their control over any gas infrastructure in the region. However, while the competitive dynamic rings true on a superficial level, it is important to note that the perceived threat to national security is what drives this competition in the first place. Through Nuechterlein's framework, chapter three recognised that both states are at relative risk of defence threats to their claimed national territory.

Therefore, this study posits that the dynamic of competition is simply a means to an end for the greater threat of territorial integrity and other elements of national security (economic and ideological) as discussed chapter three. As such, recognising that the dynamic of conflict and competition is a means to an end, it is now possible to distinguish where the sub-RSC falls on the amity/enmity spectrum. Patterns of amity and enmity can be recognised as the patterns through which their relationship is manifested. This manifestation is underpinned primarily through Oskanian's typology, where certain amity/enmity patterns, depending on how they are normalised and structured, can be labelled as conflict formations, security regimes, and security communities.

### **4.3 Greece and Türkiye on the Amity/Enmity Spectrum**

As stated in chapter two, relationships between actors in an RSC are defined by patterns of amity and enmity throughout their history. However, amity and enmity is not a binary, and unless the states are solely defined by war and mistrust, all relationships between the actors in an RSC rely on a balance of amicability and conflict, where power dynamics are present, but geographical proximity and a shared history necessitate diplomacy and good faith relations for the sake of economic opportunity and a relatively peaceful homeostasis.

This study has placed a large emphasis on the patterns of enmity between both states with a brief section in chapter three providing some insight into some of the amicable and diplomatic relations that have taken place in tandem, as is outlined in chapter three.

It is important to understand the nuances of actions that precipitate positive relations between both states without generating contradictions in this study. As mentioned in chapter two, amity and enmity are not a binary, but rather a spectrum, which ultimately frames the ways in which

states act in good or bad faith. In this respect, positive attempts at amity within the broader context of enmity, both historically, and within the time constraints of this study, are instrumental in framing how the relationship between both states affects stability and does not take away from the fact that the overarching narrative espoused by both states is not one based in friendship. This is not to say that peace is off the cards, as both states acknowledge a need to cooperate on several topics for the sake of regional prosperity.

#### *4.3.1 Greek and Turkish Framing within the Amity/Enmity Spectrum*

Therefore, when framing Greece and Türkiye within the amity/enmity spectrum of the sub-RSC, it is important to note that the interface between both states is not only the actions they have taken that are amity or enmity-driven, but further than that, the interface is also underpinned by the institutionalisation and normalisation of ties between both states in an attempt to mitigate conflict according to Oskanian's amity/enmity typology (2010) (outlined in chapter two and illustrated in Fig.1).

Regarding power and conflict formations, the relationship between both states is characterised by military competition with regard to military posturing, as both states are instrumental in a security dilemma espoused by increasing military presence in the region. Bearing in mind Oskanian's typology regarding conflict formations in the amity/enmity spectrum, Greece and Türkiye are more inclined towards status-quo conflict formations, as the pursuit of their conflicting national interests and incongruent recognitions of the others' national interests (while maintaining a compatibility of identities, as discussed in this study through the lens of ideological underpinnings) has resulted in accelerated militarisation in the region, approaching the brink of armed conflict at least four times since the 1970s<sup>16</sup>. Regarding the need for ad hoc security regimes, although there has been some attempt at institutionalising diplomatic relations between both states with the establishment of the HLCC, the nature of conflict between Greece and Türkiye consistently undermines those attempts by frequently securitising issues and escalating political conflict without first addressing issues vis-a-vis the established institutions, consistently forcing an ad hoc approach to de-escalation and diplomacy.

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<sup>16</sup> The most recent example of this was the case in 2020, where a collision of a Greek and a Turkish surveying frigate in contested waters sparked a weeks-long escalation of military and political tensions that fell just shy of a declaration of war before political intervention from the EU persuaded a de-escalation (International Crisis Group 2021).

However, while the status quo conflict formation categorisation of the amity/enmity spectrum may seem straightforward, this does not diminish the amity-driven attempts to normalise relations, not only through institutions such as the HLCC, but also through mutually beneficial economic agreements, such as the Southern Gas Corridor. To this end, it is important to not only consider conflict formations in the spectrum, but also security regimes insofar as there are consistently mutual attempts at drawing security-normalising amity-driven relations between both states in parallel to the reality of latent conflict in an attempt to frame their shared history in a more positive light. In that case, the establishment of ad hoc security regimes to mitigate and de-escalate conflict places this particular sub-RSC between status quo conflict formations, and thin security regimes.



Figure 8: Greek and Turkish Delineation within the Amity/Enmity Spectrum (Adapted from Oskanian 2010: 29)

#### 4.3.2 Stability in the Amity/Enmity Spectrum

In further answering the question of how this amity/enmity paradigm affects the stability of the sub-RSC, the following section utilises Ayson's (2005: 192) definition of regional stability as the homeostatic condition wherein an "equilibrium position", is formed by way of the maintenance of "some sort of balance, ... (or) pattern of behaviour". Therefore, equilibrium is achieved when patterns of amity and enmity remain stable. With the consideration that stability does not necessarily equate with a complete absence of violence, the question this study poses has to consider the three elements of stability as established in chapter two: the definition of an equilibrium point, the parameters of the risk appetite for conflict escalations, as well as the likelihood of return to a stable state in the wake of a pivot outside of the risk appetite.

Regarding the first element, the equilibrium point surrounding military stability, international political stability, and patterns of amity and enmity is defined above with the placement of the sub-RSC within the parameters of a status quo conflict formation and a thin security regime.

Regarding the second element, the risk appetite that has been established from the equilibrium point can be seen in two dynamics – firstly, through patterns of amity and enmity, and secondly, through the security dilemma. Patterns of amity and enmity have been the driving factor behind this study, as they indicate the risk appetite of conflict by establishing a pattern behind the behaviours of a state in the pursuit of its national interests. In the case of Greece and Türkiye, the catalysing event for this change in equilibrium was the race for hydrocarbon discoveries in disputed territories, causing significant military posturing and an escalation in political tensions. Türkiye's political pursuit of the Mavi Vatan and militarised survey expedition in Greece's EEZ, as well as Greece's militarisation on its eastern islands and the threat to increase its EEZ to 12nm were all escalated acts of enmity in this conflict, pushing the equilibrium boundaries to a point of brinkmanship in 2020 by causing a security dilemma. While those escalations may still be within the conflict risk appetite, as they are within the "normal" bounds of latent conflict as a result of negative recognition patterns that have been present for decades, they also acted as a catalyst in 2020, when both countries found themselves at the precipice of armed conflict. This conflict drew dangerously close to armed war between Greece and Türkiye, but the way this conflict de-escalated was with the consideration of the third element below.

The third element of likelihood of return to equilibrium is largely due to Oskanian's approach to the amity/enmity spectrum, which places a large emphasis on the institutions established to avoid a revisionist conflict formation. In this respect, the international institutions which influence the conflict dynamics between both states are relevant here. In the case of the 2020 incident, pressure from the EU was the biggest factor in persuading de-escalation on both sides. Additionally, NATO and its collective defence principle cannot be discounted as perhaps the most prominent means of deterrence from full conflict. However, while these international institutions aid in deterrence, the more organic move into establishing a security regime is the institutionalising of peace by Greece and Türkiye themselves. In addition to the HLCC, the amicable relations between both states, including amongst others, trade agreements and

earthquake diplomacy goes a longer way in establishing a relationship characterised by the sustainable ability to oscillate back to equilibrium in the wake of conflict.

Therefore, this study posits that, although patterns of amity and enmity have ebbed and flowed, with added tensions being catalysed by the race towards hydrocarbon discoveries in the region, the sub-RSC itself has remained stable. This conclusion can be drawn from the fact that, even in the face of increased tensions and brinkmanship, the added establishment of external institutions, as well as internal attempts at normalised relations, the sub-RSC has not experienced a complete breakdown in its shared political institutions, which are essential in de-escalating and mitigating conflict.

#### **4.4 Conclusion and Considerations**

Having considered this, the research question posited is a considerably complex question of stability in the sub-RSC, and even within the set parameters of this study, the answer is not necessarily clear-cut. When considering a risk appetite for conflict, recognition by both states may be incongruent with the nature of what constitutes a real and credible threat, where both states are held hostage by a security dilemma. This also needs to be considered in tandem with the acknowledgement that the threat of a Turkish invasion is fairly low, considering the possible ramifications it would face; however, this has not prevented a security dilemma from forming anyway, as posturing on both sides, as well as the constant securitisation of the issue mutually increase tensions.

Therefore, although it can be concluded that the sub-RSC has remained stable in the parameters of the amity/enmity spectrum, there is also little chance of a right-shift towards establishing a thicker security regime, as both states are unwilling to relent on their own national interests for the sake of peace and mutual economic prosperity – there is little chance of seeing the more traditional approach to stability in the avoidance of conflict altogether.

It is easy to point to Türkiye's expansionism and aggressive militarisation of the Eastern Mediterranean as a form of aggression towards Greece's territory backed by international law, but Greece's refusal to enact in a good-faith conversation to relent on some territory towards Türkiye also precipitates bad faith acts on Türkiye's side. Although there are certainly elements

of amity shared between both states, the reluctance to formalise a sustainable security regime is simply not a realistic prospect.

There is also the consideration that the local context informs how each state behaves in a regional context, regardless of the external efforts to forge peace and move further right in the amity/enmity spectrum. Although that element was not considered in this study, political unrest and economic instability within a state greatly impacts the approach to international security, as defending the state from an external enemy has long been the driver of more conducive politics within.

Ultimately, if this dynamic continues as it is currently, the sub-RSC has little chance in actually moving towards a more sustainable and stable form of peace between both states, and is bound to fluctuate between a status quo conflict formation and a thin security-regime, depending on the current catalyst for conflict. In this case, neither state will stand to gain as much as its potential in such a diverse and energy-rich region.

On the other hand, the added cultural and political context of both states is one characterised by hundreds of years of coexistence prior to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In many respects, the Greek people and Turkish people share culture, behaviour, history, and values other than religiously prescribed ones. This is a sentiment echoed in all amity-driven events between both states, and leads to the hope that, in time, the national interests of both states will be driven by mutual benefit, rather than individual.

## 5 CONCLUSION AND EVALUATION

### 5.1 Summary of the Study

Based on the above chapter's conclusion on stability within the sub-RSC, the final chapter summarises the line of reasoning drawn in this study to reach the final conclusion regarding how the protection and promotion of the national interests of Greece and Türkiye has affected the stability of the Eastern Mediterranean Regional Security Complex within the context of the race towards hydrocarbon and related territorial disputes that have taken place between 2011 and 2021. :

#### 5.1.1 *Theoretical Line of Reasoning*

The national interests of a state are formed through two factors; firstly, the threat to national security as defined by Nuechterlein, and the image of self as defined by Bengtsson. Where these two factors are concerned is how the states understands its own position in a regional context and the perceived threat to that position. Importantly, this approach to national interests is distinctly constructivist in nature, allowing for both states to have opposing perceptions of the same dynamic depending on their own image of self.

Following this, the study explored the interface between both states in the sub-RSC, or in other words, how the relationship between both states is manifested, based on the image of other compared to the relative image of self. According to the Logic of Interfaces, if the image of other is incongruent with the image of self, this results in a disagreement recognition that is manifested in patterns of conflict or enmity. On the other hand, if recognition is congruent, the relationship is manifested primarily through patterns of amity, where both states mutually recognise the other's national interests and intentions as congruent to, or compatible with, their own.

These patterns of amity and enmity can be further structured into a typology, wherein amity and enmity can be seen as a spectrum. Based on the delineation of recognition, as well as patterns of amity and enmity that arise from the protection and promotion of national interests, it is possible to establish a status quo of the sub-RSC on the amity/enmity spectrum that is assumed to be the benchmark for stable patterns within the sub-RSC.

Based on this hypothesis, the defining characteristic of stability within an RSC is the ability to maintain an equilibrium in the face of drastic change to a particular political and security-based order. If the equilibrium of an RSC is established as a particular position on the amity/enmity spectrum, any drastic deviation of this position caused by a catalysing event (more-so towards the enmity spectrum than the amity spectrum, which would create positive shifts in the sub-RSC dynamic) would, de facto, cause instability in the existing RSC dynamic. Particularly, a shift leftwards on the spectrum would result in a lower establishment of trust, the breakdown of existing security regimes, and most crucially, hypersecuritisation and war as a means to overcoming the threat to national interests.

### *5.1.2 Placing the Sub-RSC on the Amity/Enmity Spectrum*

Having explored the national interests of Greece and Türkiye, as well as the image of self, chapter three explored in depth the facets that have justified the formation of the image of self, as well as the national interests of both states. Chapter four above has summarised these national interests based on their images of self and has compared these images of self to the relative image of other in accordance with Bengtsson's Logic of Interfaces.

In essence, Greek versus Turkish recognition builds on three principal elements: ideological recognition, regional power recognition, and economic position recognition. Regarding ideological recognition, although the ideological approach of both countries cannot be said to be synonymous, Greece's recognition of Türkiye's divergence from traditional Western values and trend towards neo-Ottomanism is positively aligned with Türkiye's image of self in this regard. This is not a point of contention, as both states have used this ideological factor to uplift their own national interest. Where Türkiye uses it as a tool in the reframing of its regional position, Greece has equally used it in framing itself as an intermediary between East and West now that Türkiye has transitioned its ideological alignment more with the East.

Regarding power and economic recognition, however, both states' images of other meet distinct incongruences. Firstly, Türkiye's pursuit towards establishing its legitimacy as a regional hegemon in the Eastern Mediterranean by challenging Greek territorial claims directly threatens the physical base of Greece's national security, as the act of staking claim over internationally recognised territory would ultimately call for war between the states. In Greece's perception,

there is no way of Türkiye 'legitimately' expanding its territory to establish itself as a regional hegemon, as the legitimacy over claim lies squarely in Greece's bounds. Similarly, the competition for hydrocarbon discoveries for which both states are surveying in Greece's EEZ directly threatens Greece's state and its legitimate claim to resources. This has resulted in mutual negative recognition between both states, as the national interests of the one are in direct contravention to the national interests of the other. The result of this mutual negative interface has manifested itself in a series of patterns of enmity, with some occurrences of amity-driven events aimed at normalising the relationship between both states.

Based on the historical relationship regarding security between both states, the sub-RSC does not fall within one facet of the amity/enmity spectrum, but rather goes across two; namely, a loose security regime, where both states have been able to normalise relations based on mutual cooperation in economic, political, and humanitarian matters, as well as a status quo conflict formation where matters of defence security and conflict occur. As is reflective of their recognition interface, mutual recognition has occurred where non-military interests are mutually acknowledged by both states, resulting in the ability to form security regimes in these contexts, but recognition has not occurred where interests of one state directly threaten the interests of the other, resulting in a conflict formation in matters of vital and survival interests.

### *5.1.3 Linking Greek and Turkish National Interests to Stability within the Sub-RSC*

Finally, the question as to whether this dynamic has, in fact, caused instability within the region can be approached directly from here. As the sub-RSC's position on the amity/enmity spectrum lies consistently between a status quo conflict formation and a thin security regime, based on the hypothesis that instability occurs when a catalyst causes a shift in the spectrum (specifically to the left), it can be concluded that instability in this instance would be a shift from status quo conflict formation to revisionist conflict formation. The result of a shift towards a revisionist conflict formation would manifest in a breakdown of the existing structures that are present within the status quo conflict formation, and certainly within the security regime that has been built. Specifically, this would mean the dissolving of established normalisation measures and diplomatic structures, the escalation of a security dilemma to the point of manifest conflict, and ultimately, war between both states.

However, while the catalyst of hydrocarbon discoveries in the region certainly increased and escalated existing historical tensions between both states and resulted in both states exerting their power to legitimise claim over territory, the baseline relationship between both states has been maintained at worst within the status quo conflict formation. Even in 2020, when both states reached the brink of an armed conflict, existing diplomatic measures were utilised to ensure de-escalation. Additionally, although securitisation has been escalated due to various speech acts with regard to Türkiye's legitimisation of the Mavi Vatan, as well as Greece's threat to expand its EEZ despite established agreements to the contrary, the manifestation of these securitisation, as well as increased military posturing in the region has been maintained within the confines of a risk appetite defined by the existing amity/enmity positioning, without the breakdown of formal structures that allow for positive reinforcement of amicable relations between both states. Lastly, with the intervention of collective security institutions, as well as patterns of amity exacted on both sides, and the ability for the sub-RSC to de-escalate in the wake of increasing conflict, the sub-RSC is shown to stabilise itself on the amity/enmity spectrum.

Therefore, it can be concluded that the protection and promotion of national interests of both states between 2011 and 2021 ultimately had little bearing on the stability of the sub-RSC itself, as the structures established within the sub-RSC were (and continue to be) able to withstand the accelerated tensions and military escalations resulting from the catalysing element of hydrocarbon discoveries in the region.

However, this study also concludes that, regardless of the fact that the sub-RSC has maintained stability under the parameters of the amity/enmity spectrum, the consistent fluctuation between a status-quo conflict formation and a thin security regime, precipitated by constant bad-faith acts between both states, leaves little in the way of ensuring a more sustainable approach to stability in the sub-RSC, which is founded on the mutual interest of peace and economic prosperity. There is much effort needed to recognise that both states share a rich history of culture, behaviour, history, and values from hundreds of years of coexistence, and real endeavours should be made to political change the tone from national interests being a zero-sum game to national interests as a benefit to all.

## 5.2 Limitations and Avenues for Further Research

As mentioned in chapter one, the research question this study poses is extremely broad, as it leaves ample room for interpreting how to link national interests to stability in an RSC. In this regard the study has limited itself to the interpretation of the amity/enmity spectrum as a vessel for national interests to be linked to an idea of stability that is rooted in the equilibrium of the established position of the amity/enmity spectrum. However, there are many other factors that the study was not able to consider, given the limitations of a mini-dissertation.

Firstly, this study paid close attention to the external factors of national interests, without considering the significant impact that domestic factors have on how a state perceives itself and its interests. An example of this is how political parties utilise the idea of a 'national enemy' to unite a state under one cause in order to promote their political interests and leverage political power. Secondly, on the point of threats to national security and consequential national interests, there were limited considerations for other geopolitical factors than the race towards hydrocarbon discoveries in the region. A salient example of this would be the migrant crisis that took place from 2015-2020, where both states had to effectively coordinate the crisis together. Thirdly, the consideration to focus on the amity/enmity spectrum as a way to rationalise stability on a military and political basis also negates a host of other potential factors of regional stability, including regional economic stability and trade, populace stability and the tracking of mass movement or migration in the region, as well as the regional effects of domestic stability.

Therefore, to truly understand the effects of national interest on stability within regional security complexes, further study is needed to determine how Greece and Türkiye function holistically both within the region and within the state. Perhaps, in doing so, there is space to form an alternative conclusion based on factors other than military escalations and conflict. Additionally, perhaps treating the topic more holistically could provide greater clarity on the gaps both states are able to fill in order to work together towards creating national interests that are mutually congruent, and more importantly, mutually beneficial.

### 5.3 Conclusion

This study tackles the extremely vast and complex nature of stability in global politics and attempts to understand one of the avenues that may influence it. By zooming in on the regional approach to stability, one is able to better understand the nuances of interstate relations in a microcosm of the bigger context of world politics in a way that allows for greater understanding of some of the dynamics that precipitate instability and insecurity in the world. Although this particular case study is not a catch-all for regional stability, as it is greatly dependent on the specific parameters and contexts of the Eastern Mediterranean, one could potentially view the dynamic between both states as a viewpoint on the current global rift between east and west. This rift is no longer characterised by Cold War traditionalist capitalism versus communism, but is currently rooted in the ideological underpinnings of the global north versus the global south and the push for non-Occidental states to establish themselves as regional hegemons in a political space traditionally occupied by the West. In this respect, one is able to understand Türkiye's pivot to neo-Ottomanism and its increased ties and influence in the Middle East, while Greece has used this to leverage its own European liberal ideology to solicit soft power support.

Nevertheless, stability in the Eastern Mediterranean remains a tenuous subject and only time will tell if the two countries are able to carry out a concerted effort to truly overcome the seemingly perpetual tendency to escalate conflict and precipitate a security dilemma characterised by inherent mistrust and enmity. As the rhetoric behind patterns of amity between both states consistently references their common history, culture, and values, there is some hope that this rhetoric manifests itself in a sustainable shift rightward on the amity/enmity spectrum towards a possible security community and the recognition of stability in the traditional sense of the avoidance of conflict altogether. In doing so, national interest would no longer frame stability, but rather, the assumption of stability and peace will be able to frame national interests that are mutually congruent and mutually beneficial.

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