POLITICS AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

'BEVERAGES' VERSUS 'FLAGS': A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE DISPUTES OVER HANS ISLAND AND THE IMIA/KARDAK ISLETS THROUGH CONFLICT THEORY

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Abstract: Referring to the constructive and destructive pillars of the conflict theory, the article aims to demonstrate that, despite the apparent similarities between the two land claim disputes, they are fundamentally different. In this regard, after analyzing the elements that define both conflicts, the paper presents the Hans Island dispute as a constructive antagonism and the Imia / Kardak Islets crisis as a destructive one. Although the replacement of symbolic drinks and flags characterizes both conflicts, the first case indicates the importance of geo-economic aspects, while the second clearly illustrates geopolitical competition. The authors see the Hans Island dispute as a means of maintaining the status quo and the Imia / Kardak Islands as a way of changing the state of affairs. By doing so, the paper tries to present how the circumstances in which the two conflicts evolved proved to be favourable or constructive in one case and unfavourable, respectively destructive in the other.

Keywords: Hans Island, Imia/Kardak Islets, Conflict theory, Constructive conflict, Destructive conflict.

Rezumat: „Băuturi" versus „steaguri": o analiză comparativă a disputelor asupra insulelor Hans și Imia/Kardak din perspectiva teoriei conflictului. Referindu-se la pilonii constructivi și distructivi ai teoriei conflictului, articolul își propune să demonstreze că, în ciuda aparentelor asemănări între cele două dispute revendicative de natură teritorială, acestea sunt fundamental diferite. Astfel, după analizarea elementelor care definesc ambele conflicte, lucrarea prezintă disputa legată de Insula Hans ca un antagonism constructiv, iar criza insulelor Imia / Kardak ca o disensiune distructivă. Deși utilizarea simbolică a „băuturilor" și „steagurilor" caracterizează ambele conflicte, primul

caz indică importanţa aspectelor geo-economice, în timp ce al doilea ilustrează clar o competiţie geopolitică. Autorul vede în disputa asupra insulei Hans un mijloc de menţinere a status quo-ului, iar în cea asupra insulelor Imia / Kardak o modalitate de schimbare a stării de fapt. Procedând astfel, lucrarea încearcă să prezinte cum circumstanţele în care au evoluat cele două conflicte s-au dovedit într-un caz favorabile sau constructive, iar în celălalt nefavorabile, respectiv distructive.

INTRODUCTION

Hans Island has been the only land claim dispute between Canada and Denmark for decades. Even though it was a "frozen dispute" before the 'Arctic Age',[1] the ongoing ambiguity of the island's sovereignty status has triggered both parties to claim ownership over the tiny, uninhabited island since 1973. Its potential oil and gas deposits and location at what may become a transition point along emerging polar trading routes in the climate change era have also enticed the two countries to pursue their sovereignty claims. To mark their claims, both Canada and Denmark have left bottles of famous national beverages – whiskey and schnapps, respectively – on the island. The struggle between the two countries has even been a subject of interest and interpretation in the media. Nevertheless, the conflict has not resulted in a classical territorial dispute. On the contrary, the two parties of the low-level conflict have indicated their desire to find a common solution thanks to the island's increasing geoeconomic value.

Unlike the Hans Island situation, the scramble for the Imia/Kardak Islets has been an example of a classical territorial dispute. It could even be identified as an international crisis because of the involvement of third parties in the conflict. As the two principal parties of the conflict, Greece and Turkey have come to the brink of war over the issue since the islets have been a key object of the geopolitical competition the two countries are pursuing in the Aegean Sea. Thus, even though there have been similarities between the Hans Island dispute and the Imia/Kardak crisis in terms of the parties involved, the objectives, and the means in the conflicts, each has its own, quite distinct characteristics. In terms of the elements of conflict, there are particularly notable differences in the issues, orientations, and environments of the disputes.

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[1] This popular term regarding the Arctic was used by Oran R. Young in 1986 to point the dramatic transformation of the Arctic and to reveal that the world was entering the age of the Arctic. See Oran R. Young, *The Age of the Arctic*, in "Foreign Policy", 1986, No. 61, p. 160, https://doi.org/10.2307/1148707

This paper attempts to clarify in which circumstances the disputes over Hans Island and the Imia/Kardak Islets could be differentiated. It aims to indicate that though there are many similarities between two land claim disputes, they are distinctive in terms of particular elements of conflict theory. Consequently, pulling from conflict theory, this paper asserts that whereas the Hans Island dispute is a *constructive conflict*, the Imia/Kardak crisis is a *destructive conflict*. To begin, I will present and analyze a literature review regarding conflict theory. Its actors, levels, components, and elements will be laid out to elucidate how they are essential for making a comparative analysis of the disputes over Hans Island and the Imia/Kardak Islets. Second, I will enumerate the reasons for the beginnings of both disputes in their respective historical contexts. Lastly, I will discuss the similarities and differences between both cases in light of the aforementioned elements of conflict theory. The paper envisages filling a gap that exists in the current literature on the topic by providing a comparative analysis of the disputed islands that concludes that they refer to two distinct pillars of conflict theory.

CONCEPTUAL MAPPING

The term *conflict* is defined as a social situation in which at least two actors struggle to obtain a limited collection of scarce resources at the same time.[2] Both the actions and the behaviors of the particular actors can be included in conflict analysis.[3] Defining conflict as a situation in which parties pursue their perceived conflicting goals by undermining their opponent's (or opponents') goal-seeking credentials, Sandole proposes that the conflict process can be subdivided into distinct phases: initiation, escalation, maintenance, settlement, and transformation.[4] Accordingly, it happens between goals pursued by actors.[5] Deutsch characterizes actors of conflict as individuals, groups, or organizations.[6] Vitally important is that

[2] Peter Wallensteen, *Understanding Conflict Resolution: War, Peace and the Global System,* London, Sage Publications, 2002, p. 16.

[3] *Ibid*., p. 15.

[4] Dennis J. D. Sandole, *Paradigms, Theories, and Metaphors in Conflict and Conflict Resolution: Coherence or Confusion?*, in D. J. D. Sandole, H. van der Merwe (Eds.), *Conflict Resolution Theory and Practice: Integration and Application,* Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1993, p. 6.

[5] Johan Galtung, *Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution: The Need for Transdisciplinarity*, in "Transcultural Psychiatry", 2010, Vol 47, No. 1, p. 21.

[6] Morton Deutsch, *Cooperation and Conflict: A Personal Perspective on the History of the Social Psychological Study of Conflict Resolution*, in M. A. West, D. Tjosvold, K. G. Smith

conflict requires a comprehensive understanding "at the levels of interpersonal interaction, within countries, between nations and between whole regions or civilizations which conceptualized as micro, meso, macro, and mega," respectively.[7] Within this paper, the macro-level or interstate conflict is most suitable and thus applied.

In addition to the parties involved, there are three significant components of conflict theory, each of which has phases during which conflict may occur. Galtung depicts this scheme as a triangle whose three corners are labeled "attitudes," "behavior," and "the context of conflict," respectively.[8] It is at the corner of behavior that destructive or constructive action emerges. It is worth noting here that conflict behavior and changing positions are interrelated. As a consequence of this relatedness, the conflict process is directed by two reactions: whereas destructive action leads to incompatibility and conflict formation, constructive action catalyzes the formation of shared institutions and compatibility.[9]

Conflict theory examines the analogy between person-to-person conflicts and state-to-state relations by aiming to provide a general understanding.[10] In the light of this goal, it is crucial to define exactly how and when conflict occurs. Deutsch argues that conflict occurs once incompatible activities exist.[11] It may emanate from opposing interests, goals, values, or beliefs between its actors.[12] These sources enable participants to decide on what direction – constructive or destructive – they will take. It is this constructive or destructive orientation that determines the outcome of the conflict.[13]

Nearly all conflicts comprise both cooperative and competitive elements.[14] Cooperative elements include effective communication, friendliness, coordination on some common efforts, similarity in beliefs and values, reciprocal recognition of

(Eds.), *The Essentials of Teamworking: International Perspectives,* John Wiley & Sons Inc., 2005.

[7] Johan Galtung, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

[8] Idem, *Peace by Peaceful Means. Peace and Conflict, Development and Civilization*, London, Sage, 1996.

[9] Peter Wallensteen, *op. cit.*, p. 58.

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 62.

[11] Morton Deutsch, *The Resolution of Conflict: Constructive and Destructive Processes*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1973.

[12] Morton Deutsch, *Cooperation and Conflict...*, p. 2.

[13] Morton Deutsch, *Cooperation and Competition*, in M. Deutsch, P. T. Coleman, E. C. Marcus (eds), *The Handbook of Conflict Resolution: Theory and Practice,* John Wiley & Sons Inc., 2nd ed., 2006, p. 23.

[14] *Ibid*.

parties, willingness to enhance the other's power, and providing common solutions for mutual problems defined as conflicting interests, whereas competitive elements include the opposite.[15] Thus, should the conflicting parties opt for cooperative elements, they will all win. Otherwise, in competitive circumstances, they will all face a zero-sum game.

While studying conflicts in hopes of proposing solutions to them, conflict analysts and potential third parties find it necessary to first understand who the parties are and what the issues, objectives, means, orientations, and environments are.[16] Within this study, the presentation and analysis of the similarities and differences between the disputes over Hans Island and the Imia/Kardak Islets will be structured following these lines.

ANALOGOUS, YET QUITE DIFFERENT, DISPUTES

Many territorial disputes currently exist and are monitored across the world. While some disputes are solved through the involved parties coming to a common agreement, others lead to confrontational behaviors and even war. Yet, war is often the least desirable choice for the involved parties. Instead, the optimal choice is to convince the other parties to reach a common solution. The two disputed areas discussed in this paper have analogous components and are often understood as similar territorial disputes at first glance, although they are quite different. But before discussing their differences, I will first outline the contexts of both disputes.

The Hans Island dispute is the sole land-based territorial dispute in the Arctic region.[17] For this reason, it is of vital regional importance. The uninhabited island is located midway between Ellesmere Island and northwest Greenland.[18] Disagreement over the island began[19] with the delimitation of maritime boundaries

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[15] *Ibid.*, p. 27.

[16] Dennis J. D. Sandole, *A Comprehensive Mapping of Conflict and Conflict Resolution: A Three Pillar Approach*, in "Peace and Conflict Studies", Vol. 5, 1998, No. 2, Article 4.

[17] Michael Byers, *Creative Thinking on Sovereignty*, in "Policy Options", 2014, Vol. 35, March 3, in https://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/opening-eyes/creative-thinking-on-sovereignty/ (Accessed on 01.04.2021).

[18] *Ibid.*

[19] Michael R. Mitchell, *Arctic Sovereignty: Using the Hans Island Dispute as a Diplomatic Laboratory,* in "Conflict Analysis", April 1, 2014, in https://doi.org/10.13140/2.1.1027.0089 (Accessed on 10.08.2021), See *Delimitation Treaty*, December 17, 1973, in https://treaties.un.org/doc/Publication/UNTS/Volume%20950/volume-950-I-13550-English.pdf (Accessed on 02.04.2021)

between Canada and Denmark in 1973. The ownership of Hans Island has remained unclear since then. For decades, Hans Island has been legally claimed by both parties. Whereas it was a frozen dispute, recently it has come to the fore since it is believed that there may be potential oil and gas deposits underneath the island and that Arctic shipping routes will soon be redirected to go past it.[20]

More precisely, the dispute reentered mainstream political discourse in 1984 when Canadian troops visited the island and left a flag and a symbolic bottle of Canadian whiskey. In response, Denmark's minister Tom Hoyem visited the island and replaced the whiskey bottle with a bottle of Danish schnapps. In addition, both countries have sent in their military troops to strengthen their presence on the island, since claiming of title requires occupation of territory.[21] Yet, no armed clash has occurred so far. Conversely, since 2005, both parties have realized that the best way to solve the dispute would be to work in a coordinated manner.[22] To this end, Canada and Denmark agreed to establish a joint task force to solve the dispute in 2018.[23]

Similarly, there has been a territorial dispute over the Imia/Kardak Islets since the 1990s. The dispute broke out when the Turkish freighter *Figen Akat* radioed for help and a Greek tug responded in return for the salvage fees, only for the captain of the freighter to deny its help, claiming that he was aground on *Turkish* territory and that *Turkish* tugs were coming to help him.[24] The issue's flame was predominantly fanned by the provocative media interpretations that followed within both countries. Since the incident, opposing flag-planting cases by military troops have taken place. As there is ambiguity regarding whom the islets

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[20] Godfrey Baldacchino, *Solution Protocols to Festering Island Disputes*, Routledge, 2017.

[21] Michael Byers, *International Law and the Arctic: Cambridge Studies in International and Comparative Law*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 2013, p. 10.

[22] Christopher Stevenson, *Hans Off! The Struggle for Hans Island and the Potential Ramifications for International Border Dispute Resolution*, in "Boston College International & Comparative Law Review", 2007, Vol. 30, No. 1, p. 263.

[23] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, *Canada and the Kingdom of Denmark (with Greenland) Announce the Establishment of a Joint Task Force on Boundary Issues*, May 23, 2018, in https://um.dk/en/news/newsdisplaypage/?newsID=E624A67D-1317-4AC6-8F28-30F5234E9759 (Accessed on 04.04.2021); Kevin McGwin, *Denmark, Canada agree to settle the Hans Island dispute*, May 24, 2018, in https://www.arctictoday.com/denmark-canada-agree-come-agreement-disputed-island/ (Accessed on 07.04.2021).

[24] Michael R. Hickok, *Falling Toward War in the Aegean. A Case Study of the Imia/Kardak Affair*, in http://www.dodccrp.org/events/2001_sensemaking_workshop/pdf/war_in_the_agean.pdf (Accessed on 10.04.2021).

formally belong, both parties have claimed them. Greece has claimed that Imia/Kardak is part of the Dodecanese, over which it has sovereignty according to the Lausanne Treaty, the Italo-Turkish Agreements, and the Paris Peace Treaty[25]. On the other hand, Turkey's sovereignty claims are based on the fact that sovereignty over these specific uninhabited islets is not explicitly mentioned within these very treaties.[26]

Triggered by destructive actions, the regional crisis grew into an international crisis.[27] One of the reasons for the increasing tension is that the islets were of great strategic importance for both parties, located around four miles off the coast of Turkey and Greek territory.[28] Another reason for which the Imia/Kardak crisis is of vital importance is that it marks the first time that Turkey has questioned the legal status of some of the islands in the Aegean Sea.[29] And as a consequence of the crisis, the parties involved in the conflict have come to the brink of war. What is important here is that both Greece and Turkey have taken such militant stances over the issue because of their symbolic role in the sovereignty struggle between the two countries regarding their conflicting agendas for delineating their respective continental shelves, territorial seas, and air space in the Aegean Sea.[30] The crisis could be interpreted as a tiny – but urgent – iteration of the classical geopolitical competition between Greece and Turkey. For instance, the media and politicians of both sides refer to the islets as "Turkish Soil" or "Greek Soil," demonstrating how symbolically powerful islets are.[31] The nature of the conflict is one of changing the

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[25] Murat Bayar, Andreas Kotelis, *Democratic Peace or Hegemonic Stability? The Imia/Kardak Case*, in "Turkish Studies", 2014, Vol. 15, No. 2, p. 256.

[26] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Greece, *Turkish Claims*, in https://www.mfa.gr/en/issues-of-greek-turkish-relations/relevant-documents/turkish-claims.html (Accessed on 12.04.2021), Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, *The Kardak Dispute*, in https://www.mfa.gov.tr/the-kardak-dispute.en.mfa (Accessed on 12.04.2021).

[27] Gülden S. Ayman, *The Kardak (Imia) Crisis and Turkish-Greek Relations*, in "Helenic Studies", 2001, Vol. 9, No. 2, p. 61.

[28] Emily A. Georgiades, *The Imia Islets: A Beginning to the Maritime Delimitation of the Aegean Sea Dispute*, in "Ocean and Coastal Law", 2011, Vol. 17, No. 1, p. 125.

[29] Theodore Koukis, Ilan Kelman, Emel N. Ganapati, *Greece-Turkey Disaster Diplomacy from Disaster Risk Reduction*, in "International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction", 17, 2016, p. 25; Fotios Moustakis, Michael Sheehan, *Greek Security Policy after the Cold War*, in "Contemporary Security Policy", 2000, Vol. 21, No. 3, p. 108, https://doi.org/10.1080/13523260008404270

[30] Gülden S. Ayman, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

[31] Alexis Heraclides, *The Greek-Turkish Conflict in the Aegean: Imagined Enemies*, Houndmills, Basingstoke, New York/Hampshire, Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.

status quo. To illustrate, recent statements from the then Turkish ruling elites were interpreted as challenging the overall status quo in the Aegean Sea.[32] The dispute has temporarily been settled thanks to the intervention of third parties such as the USA and the European Union (EU)[33], although it remains "frozen."

Parties

Hans Island and Imia/Kardak Islets are both uninhabited and thus have no resident parties. In both conflict cases, there are two main actors: Canada and Denmark in the former and Greece and Turkey in the latter. Thus, in terms of the number of main actors, they are similar. Yet, the conflicts differ in terms of their potential third parties and mediators. For instance, there are multiple potential third parties for the Hans Island dispute. In terms of international organizations, both the Arctic Council and NATO could be taken into consideration as significant potential third parties, as both Canada and Denmark are members. Since there haven't been any military threats over Hans Island, the option of NATO could be underestimated. However, the Arctic Council is of vital importance when it comes to facilitating cooperation among its members – including Canada and Denmark – as an inter-governmental forum. On the other hand, NATO, the USA, and the EU could be evaluated as potential mediators between Greece and Turkey. In fact, during the Imia/Kardak crisis, NATO was one of the actors to ask both Turkey and Greece to refrain from a military conflict.[34] Furthermore, despite their limited in-volvement, the USA and the EU have tried to appease both sides, keeping them away from potential military confrontation.

Issues

The term *issues* refer to what the parties are fighting about, or over which claims they are conflicting.[35] Where points to facts, values, and interests while depicting the issues behind a conflict.[36] Some other scholars designate issues such as rights, political power, control over resources, preferences, values, beliefs, and

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[32] Charitini Dipla, Georgios Kostakos, Nikolas Ziogas, *The Status of the Greek Islets "Imia"*, in http://www.eliamep.gr/wp-content/uploads/en/2008/10/96imia.pdf (Accessed on 13.04. 2021).

[33] Theodore Koukis, Ilan Kelman, Emel N. Ganapati, *op. cit.*, p. 25; Erdem Denk, *Disputed Islets and Rocks in the Aegean Sea*, in "The Turkish Yearbook", 1999, Vol. 29, p. 131.

[34] Murat Bayar, Andreas Kotelis, *op. cit.*, p. 251.

[35] Dennis J. D. Sandole, *op. cit.,* p. 9.

[36] Paul Wehr, *Conflict Regulation: Westview Special Studies in Peace, Conflict, and Conflict Resolution*, Boulder, Westview Press, 1979, p. 20.

the nature of the relationship between the parties.[37] In this context, the issues are essential for grasping how the two conflicts have evolved.

One of the conflicting issues – territorial claims – is analogous between the Hans Island and Imia/Kardak situations. In terms of similar territorial claims, they can be identified as classical conflicts. To illustrate, Hans Island is claimed by both Canada and Denmark. While Canada's claims are based on its acquisition of all of Great Britain's Arctic possession in 1880, Denmark's claims are based on its ownership of Greenland, which the Permanent Court of International Justice granted it in 1933.[38] Similarly, while Greece's sovereignty claims over Imia/Kardak are based on some agreements including the Treaty of Lausanne, Turkey argues that Imia/Kardak islets were not specifically mentioned within the documents in question.[39]

As for the differences in issues between the two conflicts, it is essential to first mention that the sovereignty claims over Hans Island are closely linked to the shifting landscape of the Arctic region. Proverbially, because of climate change, the Arctic has become a focal point of global politics. As a consequence of the receding ice cap, numerous Arctic routes are opening, and potential hydrocarbon sources in the region are becoming accessible.[40] With this in mind, interest in the Arctic is rising thanks to its potential resources beneath the Arctic waters.[41] Thus, the dispute over Hans Island is motivated by a potential "control over resources," as Deutsch mentions.[42] In this context, it could be assessed through a geoeconomic framework. In comparison, the conflicting issue between Greece and Turkey over the Imia/Kardak Islets is a question of "control over territory." Thus, it is more logical to evaluate the Imia/Kardak crisis through a geopolitical framework. Put differently, once Rapoport's framework of conflicting issues is taken into consideration, the crisis over the islets could be best understood as a struggle to gain "political power."[43]

Objectives

Whenever a conflict occurs, the objectives of the parties are substantial to

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[37] Anatol Rapoport, *Conflict in Man-Made Environment*, Harmondsworth, Eng.; Baltimore, Penguin Books, 1974; Morton Deutsch, *op. cit.,* p. 8.

[38] Christopher Stevenson, *op. cit.*, p. 265; Michael Byers, *International Law …,* p. 11.

[39] Murat Bayar, Andreas Kotelis, *op. cit.*, p. 246.

[40] Michael R. Mitchell, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

[41] Rob Huebert, *Return of the "Vikings": The Canadian-Danish dispute over Hans Island. New challenges for control of the Canadian North*, in F. Berkes, R. Huebert, H. Fast, M. Manseau, A. Diduck (Eds.), *Breaking Ice: Renewable resource and ocean management in the Canadian North,* Calgary, University of Calgary Press, 2005.

[42] Morton Deutsch, *op. cit.,* p. 15-16.

[43] Anatol Rapoport, *op. cit.,* p. 174.

elucidate what the parties aim to reach. Thus, it is crucial to figure out the expectations of the parties so that conflict could be sufficiently analyzed. Here, there are key questions to be answered to comprehend the objectives of a conflict. Are parties within a zero-sum game or do they prefer a win-win game? How do their objectives relate to the *status quo*?

Beginning with the dispute over Hans Island, through a geoeconomics – rather than geopolitical – assessment of the region, it can be ascertained that there is no potential for a zero-sum game, though there certainly is potential for a win-win one. Even if there have been some instances of symbolic, opposing flag-planting, no serious military confrontation has occurred so far. Instead, the dispute has been sort of a funny game between Canada and Denmark, with each country placing its patriotic beverage – Canadian whiskey or Danish schnapps – on the island, inspiring some to speak of an emerging "whiskey war" in the region.[44] In comparison to military competition, each party's firm commitment to initiate joint cooperative discussions to solve the issue has been more preferable. Similar claims regarding ownership of the island and common understandings between the two parties point to a homogenous perception of reality.[45] Worth noting is that Canada and Denmark decided to agree on resolving the status of the island in 2005 as a significant step in these peace dialogues.[46] Thus, once the objectives of the parties are taken into consideration, it can be deduced that dispute over the island has taken place in a 'status-quo maintaining' manner. Both Canada and Denmark have wished to avoid challenging military reactions over Hans Island. In this respect, mutual gains are a preferable solution to the Hans Island dispute. Instead of a *zero-sum* game, both sides of the dispute are prone to examine a *positive-sum* game.

Similar to those of Canada and Denmark in the Hans Island dispute, the primary objective of Greece and Turkey in the Imia/Kardak crisis has been claiming territorial sovereignty over the islets. Yet unlike the Hans Island dispute, the Imia/Kardak dispute has become a high-level conflict because of numerous con-

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[44] Jeremy Bender, *2 Countries have been fighting over an uninhabited by leaving each other bottles of alcohol for over 3 decades,* in "Business Insider", Jan 10, 2016, in https://www.businessinsider.com/canada-and-denmark-whiskey-war-over-hans-island-2016-1 (Accessed on 17.04.2021).

[45] Michael R. Mitchell, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

[46] Dan Levin, *Canada and Denmark Fight Over Island With Whisky and Schnapps,* in "The New York Times", Nov 7, 2016, in https://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/08/world/what-in-the-world/canada-denmark-hans-island-whisky-schnapps.html (Accessed on 17.04.2021).

flicting issues – especially related to sovereignty in the Aegean – plaguing the relations between Greece and Turkey, which deteriorated in the 1990s.[47] As one of these issues, the Imia/Kardak crisis brought Greece and Turkey to the brink of war in 1996.[48] Unlike the symbolic beverage placements in the Hans Island dispute, there was a more aggressive flag-planting combat over Imia/Kardak. According to Burton's conceptualization of classical conflicts as conflicts over territory, the Imia/Kardak dispute is an example of a classical conflict.[49] Thus, the Imia/Kardak crisis has better be analyzed through a *zero-sum* game. Put differently, it has been a destructive conflict because of the confrontational process. In contrast to the Hans Island dispute which demonstrates a desire to maintain the status quo, the Imia/Kardak crisis has indicated its push to change the status quo.

Means

Parties benefit from means to pursue their objectives.[50] They are utilized in all conflicts. Here, some structured opposing identifications are applied. Thus, they are simply related to the way they define each other. Rapoport indicates how conflicting parties identify each other as "enemies to be destroyed," "opponents to be outwitted," and/or "opponents to be persuaded," depending on their level of conflict.[51] Applying this framework to Hans Island, it could be deduced that the most suitable choice is that the two parties identify each other as "opponents to be persuaded." In other words, there has been a such significant amount of dialogue between the two parties that they could easily be persuaded to pursue a mutually beneficial, common solution. They have been working collaboratively with each other for years. To illustrate, in 2005, both parties agreed to resolve the dispute to prevent Russia's aggressive presence in the region.[52] Additionally, in 2008, a mixed group of Canadian and Danish scientists built a weather station on Hans Island, a testimony to their peaceful collaboration with one another.[53]

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[47] Michael R. Hickok, *The Imia-Kardak Affair, 1995-96. A Case of inadvertent conflict,* in "European Security", 1998, Vol. 7, No. 4, p. 121.

[48] Fotios Moustakis, Michael Sheehan, *op. cit.,* p. 95.

[49] John W. Burton, *Peace Theory: Preconditions of Disarmament*, New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1962.

[50] Dennis J. D. Sandole, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

[51] Anatol Rapoport, *op. cit.,* p. 180-183.

[52] *The Whisky War on Hans Island You Must Know*, March 20, 2019, in https://usaspiritsratings.com/en/blog/insights-1/the-whisky-war-on-hans-island-you-must-know-96.htm (Accessed on 17.04.2021).

[53] *Ibid.*

On the other side, there has been a far more heated debate between Greece and Turkey over the Imia/Kardak Islets. Referring to Rapoport's categories,[54] the conflicting issue between them could be depicted as a "fight". Correspondingly, the parties' perceptions of one another fall closer to the "enemies to be destroyed" option. Here, media representations play a key role. As stated before, it was primarily because of the media involvement in the Imia/Kardak issue that it started to blow up into a crisis.[55] Military intervention was even proposed by magazines within both countries. Moreover, the journalists working for the Turkish magazine *Hürriyet* have been directly involved in exacerbating the conflict, going to the Imia/Kardak islets by helicopter to replace the Greek flag with the Turkish one and even arguing that Turkey should have sent warships to the region.[56] In response, through radio broadcasts, the Greek media has defined this initiative as "provocative" and pressured Greek authorities to immediately respond.[57] Notably, Greek newspapers such as *Eleftherotypia, Apogevmatini, Kathimerini*, and *Ta Nea* have not hesitated to apply such "provocative language," either.[58] In this context, media, as a substantial part of the means, has played a provocative role during the crisis to manipulate the behaviors of the ruling elites. The media's inflammatory interpretations have fomented political unrest and brought both countries to the brink of war.[59] In a nutshell, reciprocal media outputs enabled parties to implement their objectives regarding the Imia/Kardak crisis, which has evolved into a destructive conflict.

Orientations

Orientation means the intention of the parties to achieve their objectives during the conflict.[60] Here, the analysis of the parties' orientations is crucial for figuring out how they are perceived and how they behave during conflicts. Are they competitive or cooperative? For instance, a competitive orientation understands conflict through adversarial acts and confrontation, and evaluates it via *zero-sum* games; in comparison, a cooperative orientation seeks out non-adversarial and non-

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[54] Anatol Rapoport, *op. cit.*

[55] Murat Bayar, Andreas Kotelis, *op. cit.*, p. 251.

[56] *Ibid.*, p. 248.

[57] Michael R. Hickok*, The Imia-Kardak Affair, 1995-96…,* p. 126.

[58] Ioanna Kostarella, *Framing the Other: Turkey in the Greek Press.*, in "GMJ: Mediterranean Edition", Spring 2007, Vol. 2, No. 1.

[59] Neslihan Ozguness, Georgios Terzis, *Constraints and Remedies for Journalists Reporting National Conflict: the case of Greece and Turkey*, in "Journalism Studies", Vol. 1, No. 3, 2000, pp. 405-426, https://doi.org/10.1080/14616700050081759

[60] Dennis J. D. Sandole, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

confrontational paths forward and prefers to find *win-win* solutions.[61]

Sandole applies the paradigms of *Idealpolitik* and *Realpolitik* to these orientations.[62] Accordingly, a state influenced by the *Realpolitik* paradigm is prone to competitive orientation, while the one influenced by *Idealpolitik* is prone to cooperative orientation. Whereas the former may be more interested in destructive outcomes, the latter may opt for constructive outcomes. Within this paper, relations between Canada and Denmark have been interpreted through *Idealpolitik*, and those between Greece and Turkey have been understood via *Realpolitik*. On Hans Island, Canada and Denmark have preferred cooperation and coordination so far. Their presence within the Arctic Council and willingness to solve the dispute over the island through joint initiatives attest to their *Idealpolitik* orientation. The fact that all the Arctic states have been prone to benefit from opportunities existing in the Arctic incentivizes them to pay particular attention to geoeconomic insights and rights. As Wallensteen argues, the ongoing discovery of economic assets—such as hydrocarbons and transportation routes—in the region has encouraged the Arctic states to opt for *peacemaking* and *Kapitalpolitik* as political problem-solving instruments.[63] Consequently, *absolute gains* or *positive-sum* games are preferred by the Arctic states in the region, hence the applicability of *Idealpolitik* as the best explanation of relations between them. On the contrary, relations between Greece and Turkey are better examined via *Realpolitik*. For decades, both countries have been in geopolitical competition, especially in the Aegean Sea. Thus, many of the conflicts between them were predominantly influenced by their *Realpolitik* orientation, with the Imia/Kardak crisis serving as a representative example.

Environments

Consideration of the environment in which a conflict occurs enables conflict analysts to propose how it could be resolved. Equally important is the existence in the given political environment of any mechanisms that could resolve the conflict between the parties. Fortunately, the Arctic Council has served as one such mechanism in the Arctic. Focusing on sustainable development and environmental protection, the Council promotes cooperation, coordination, and interaction among its members.[64] Throughout the years, the Council has grown

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[61] Morton Deutsch, *The Resolution of Conflict…,* p. 17.

[62] Dennis J. D. Sandole, *op. cit.*

[63] Peter Wallensteen, *op. cit.,* p. 120.

[64] *Ottawa Declaration*, Arctic Council, 1996, in https://oaarchive.arctic-council.org/bitstream/handle/11374/85/EDOCS-1752-v2-ACMMCA00_Ottawa_1996_Founding_Declaration.PDF (Accessed on 20.04.2021)

from a policy-shaping body into a crucial policy-making one. Binding agreements adopted under the auspices of the Council have been supportive for exemplification of this body. The Council has been fruitful in providing a common ground for its members, whose priorities in the region differ. In this capacity, it plays a mediator role in the region. With this in mind, it is an indisputable fact that the Council implicitly influences the environment in which the parties of the Hans Island dispute are included.

Science diplomacy pursued within the Arctic region also influences the conflict environment between Canada and Denmark. Its role is crucial in the Arctic since the region has been witnessing global threats such as climate change. Science diplomacy aims to promote scientific cooperation to help individual states overcome common threats.[65] The impact of science diplomacy on the Hans Island dispute can be easily observed. Both countries assign scientists a significant role to scope out and provide common solutions regarding the dispute. As a consequence, science diplomacy strengthens collaboration and fosters cooperative mechanisms, two prominent components of conflict environment.

However, no such cooperative mechanism has existed between Greece and Turkey, especially regarding the Imia/Kardak crisis. Even NATO's and the EU's appeasement attempts had been limited and impartial during the crisis. Competition between parties has been intensifying in the region for years, leading to many disputes that have brought the country to the brink of war, including those over airspace and continental shelves in the Aegean Sea, Cyprus, and Imia/Kardak.[66] As a consequence, geopolitical competition has been triggering the issue of bilateral relations rather than cooperation.

CONCLUSIONS

Applying conflict theory, this paper examines the territorial disputes over Hans Island and the Imia/Kardak Islets. It aims to clarify that despite some similarities, there are many distinct characteristics between the two particular disputes. These differences are explained by two significant pillars of conflict theory: constructive and destructive conflict. In this respect, it is clear that whereas the Hans Island dispute is a constructive conflict, the Imia/Kardak crisis is a destructive

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[65] Ministry of Foreign Affairs. France, *Science Diplomacy for France. Report 2013*.

[66] Michael R. Hickok, *op. cit.*; Bahar Rumelili, *Transforming Conflicts on EU Borders: The Case of Greek-Turkish Relations*, in "Journal of Common Market Studies", 2007, Vol. 45, No. 1, pp. 105-26.

conflict, once the situation of both conflicts is taken into consideration. Moreover, although they are both land-claimed territorial disputes between regional actors, they are differentiated from one another by the objectives, means, orientations, and environments framed as considerable elements of their respective conflicts.

The Hans Island dispute between Canada and Denmark has been a low-level territorial conflict so far. Even if it is a sovereignty issue between the two countries, there has been no serious military confrontation between them. On the contrary, only the symbolic replacing of beverages has occurred. Yet, the official status of the island remains ambiguous, and the increasing geoeconomic value of the Arctic since the 2000s has rekindled the countries' interest in obtaining sovereignty over the island. In particular, Hans Island's potential undersea hydrocarbons and the new polar trade routes traversing the island's waters have piqued Canada and Denmark's interest. Thus, as opposed to geopolitical competition, common interests have fostered cooperative mechanisms between Canada and Denmark. For instance, science diplomacy provides a crucial cooperative ground for both. Here, it is assumed that *Idealpolitik* or *Kapitalpolitik* orientations have been influencing the actors. Since the desires and needs of both are compatible, a *positive-sum* may be the best explanatory instrument between them. Thus, the issue points to behaviors that maintain the status quo. Consequently, the sovereignty struggle over the island will be resolved by a common solution regarding its status. Recent developments indicate just how willing both countries are to agree.

On the other hand, the Imia/Kardak issue has been a high-level international crisis and has even brought Greece and Turkey to the brink of war. The issue is a vital manifestation of the sovereignty struggle between the two countries within the Aegean Sea. Thus, it is best interpreted as a destructive conflict. Unlike the current geoeconomic perception strengthening the collaboration among the Arctic states, the Imia/Kardak dispute has traditional geopolitical components and resembles a classical territorial dispute. In this respect, the dispute has an orientation towards changing the status quo. Additionally, *Realpolitik*'s impact on both Greece and Turkey has been dominant during the crisis. Bilateral media interpretations regarding the issue have been the main agent catalyzing antagonistic viewpoints and behaviors. As a consequence, the *zero-sum* choice of both sides has triggered geopolitical competition in the region. Accordingly, both sides would have preferred to fight if third parties had not interfered to defuse the crisis.

Through this comparative analysis of the territorial disputes over two significant islands, this paper concludes that and demonstrates how both disputes are quite different in terms of conflict components. This information can inform

decision-makers and enable them to better pursue conflict resolution goals re-garding both islands.

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