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University  
of Glasgow

**School of Social and Political Sciences**

**Fragmented Reconciliation? The Strengths and  
Limitations of Cultural Diplomacy in Greek-  
Turkish Relations**

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## **Abstract**

Culturally aware approaches, such as cultural diplomacy, contribute to the understanding, preventing, and recovering of conflicts with a diverse outlook. Cultural diplomacy is a humanistic approach that acts as a delicate instrument of power politics which exchanges ideas, values, and traditions in order to foster mutual understanding and build peace. Since cultural diplomacy is fairly new in academia there is significant room for theoretical and empirical expansion. The Greek-Turkish case study is useful in this effect since it deals with two traditionally hostile nations aiming to reach durable reconciliation that extends beyond hard power politics. It provides insight to the practicalities cultural diplomacy faces when applied to a real life context. Unfortunately, in the case study, it becomes apparent that cultural diplomacy is effective only in 'low politics' as opposed to highly contentious political issues. As long as issues between Greece and Turkey remain unresolved, durable partnership between the two countries is in question, and cultural diplomacy does not meet its objectives.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

With sensational headlines dominating tabloids all over the world, it is easy to lose faith in humankind's ability to resolve international predicaments that are in fact of its own creation. This dismal perception is the inheritance of exercising hard power as a primary foreign policy tool. Hard power may at times provide short-term solutions, but it does not necessarily tackle the underlying problems, leading to further divides and violence. One of the most detrimental of these divides is in regards to 'otherness,' and the cycle of misunderstanding. Cultural diplomacy is a potential agent in combating such matters. It is a relevant approach where 'unity-in-diversity' is taken into consideration along with the 'infinite wealth of cultures of the world,' by averting the 'fear reflex when confronted with otherness' (Preis and Mustea, 2013: 1). This thesis will be focusing both theoretically and empirically on cultural diplomacy and assessing its strengths and limitations.

In *Maria Nephele*, Odysseus Elytis wrote, 'if only we lived on the reverse side. Would we see things straight on?' (Elytis, 2005:318). Stereotypes have been infused and engrained into Greek and Turkish societies. The enmity between these neighbours has been romanticized to the point where the two states are expected to be enemies *par excellence*. Expectations of such nature have been detrimental to reconciliation, which is why it is necessary to attempt to provide a fresh outlook for these two neighbours to arrive to a point of mutual understanding. Therefore, the Greek-Turkish case will be thoroughly analyzed and evaluated in order to elaborate on the theory and implementation of cultural diplomacy.

A thesis on Greek-Turkish relations is nothing innovative. In fact it is an overly researched subject, with vast amounts of academia reiterating the same ideas and voicing the same concerns. Even though this paper will be expressing some of these criticisms, it will attempt to take a diverse approach and focus more on civil society as opposed to the state. It will use constructivist framework, which interprets foreign policy as reproducing identities from within the self/other context, and question to what extent the recent improvements in Greek-Turkish relations at the wider societal level have penetrated the political level.

Chapters are organized accordingly to fully address cultural diplomacy. Chapter 2 will evaluate the relevant research and methodology used, to set the scene for the empirical chapters. Chapter 3 will give a brief background of the historically conflictual relationship between Greece and Turkey using images as representations of the misconstructions. Through the magnifying glass of the Greek-Turkish case, chapter 4 will give a synopsis of the application of cultural diplomacy in the past 15 years between the two countries and summarize its significant results. The final chapters will be analyzing the extent to which these recent improvements in Greek-Turkish relations at the societal level have entered the wider political sphere and explain how this case-study contributes to the building of cultural diplomacy.

Overall, this thesis acknowledges that cultural diplomacy has provided the basis for a solid foundation in reconciliation and peace building, since indeed; the tensions between Greece and Turkey have eased considerably. Nevertheless, cultural diplomacy has also led to the endorsement of a low-expectations scenario, which is unlikely to transform the rapprochement from being security-oriented into a genuinely durable partnership between the two countries. Therefore, cultural diplomacy is more likely to be successful in less contentious issues, or if it works alongside hard power.



## **Chapter 2: Theory and Methodology**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter will define and attempt to conceptually understand cultural diplomacy. It will evaluate the relevant literature and academia surrounding the topic. With criteria developed by Yin (2003), it will also establish the methodology of this thesis and explain why a qualitative approach consisting of single case study was chosen.

### **2.2 The effectiveness of soft & hard power as foreign policy tools**

Power in foreign policy has been a well-researched concept with extensive literature, paving the way to its sophisticated development. From Dahl's (1968) one face power definition, it has advanced into three phases of power, and the distinction between hard and soft power.

According to Joseph Nye, who was first to initiate conversation regarding the concept of soft power, power is the ability to achieve one's purposes or goals, while getting others to do what they would otherwise not do. His theory examines power as being aligned along the following continuum: command, coercion, inducement, agenda setting, attraction and co-optive power. Nye constitutes hard power resources as being on the command part of the continuum, while soft power resources rest on the co-optive power. More specifically, hard power refers to the use of military or economic coercions in order to exert influence over other political bodies.

Unlike hard power, soft power argues that power could come from diplomacy, culture and history. It does not necessarily mean assimilation of the weak by the strong, but an agreement through desirability. Various factors can feed soft power such as: culture, education, arts, print and visual media, film, poetry, literature, architecture, higher education, non-governmental organizations, science and technology, the capacity for innovation, tourism, platforms for economic cooperation and diplomacy (Nye, 2004). Hard and soft power may have the same end goals in regards to foreign policy, but they have different approaches.

Hard power, both structurally and conceptually, has dominated foreign policy. Soft power has become a popular concept in the current power scholarship, but is still divided about the extent of its effectiveness. On the one hand, scholars argue in its

favor due to its effectiveness in reinforcing ideologies, and at times its capability of overtaking hard power. Hence, 'soft power does not depend on hard power' (Nye, 2004). Following the same train of thought, another line of literature finds soft power as rapidly emerging and getting more influential in today's global information space 'without the resources of hard power' (Chong, 2005). This increased utilization of soft power, as John Ruggie has argued, is because governments are becoming more aware that the building blocks of international reality are 'ideational' as well as 'material' (Laos, 2001:158). Overall, soft power is not only the way forward for foreign affairs, but a form of power that can firmly stand on its own. Like Ralph Waldo Emerson said, 'peace cannot be achieved through violence; it can only be attained through understanding.'

On the other hand, sceptics of soft power argue that hard power is, and will remain, the most effective foreign policy tool (Gray, 2011: ix). Gray argues that hard power must remain the essential instrument of policy because soft power is unsuitable for policy directions and control, since it relies heavily on a foreign country's perception. In other words, a country's perception is not tangible, therefore much harder to manage and ensure its effectiveness, especially in times of crisis. Furthermore, Ferguson (2004) states that Nye's soft power is in fact a concept that has been around for several decades, only it is known as imperialism. Just like cultural imperialism failed on its own accord, so will soft power. He agrees with Gray in the sense that the capabilities of soft power are limited, and argues that the real power behind soft power is hard power itself. He explains that 'soft power is merely the velvet concealing an iron hand' (Ferguson, 2004:24). Finally, E.H. Carr identifies power over opinion as the third form of power alongside military and economic power and argues that soft power compliments hard power, but does not replace it (Cammack, 2008:6). These scholars understand that there is an emergence of soft power; however, this emergence is nowhere near ready to match the capabilities of hard power.

Generally, it seems that there is consensus in the fact that soft power is a reputable foreign policy tool. However, some scholars continue to be sceptical when it comes to its legitimate utilization over hard power. Nevertheless, Nye's terminology and

concepts have proven to be indispensable for analysis of discourse in international relations.

### **2.3 Cultural Diplomacy as an instrument of soft power**

According to Samuel P. Huntington, the ‘dominant great divisions among humankind’ and the ‘dominating source of conflict’ will be cultural, and eventually lead to a ‘clash of civilizations’ (Huntington, 1993). These divisions are fuelled by an ‘array of religious, historical and ethnic misunderstandings’ (Vakeikis, 2014:46). This is why it is important to place culture in politics and within state foreign policy. The overt focus on resources and hard power politics in dealing with identity based conflicts have merely ‘tended to exacerbate’ or ‘prolong’ the struggle, independent of whether or not the conflicts in question involved issues of resources and other tangible interests (Pries and Mustea, 2012: 3). Cultural diplomacy is a useful concept that conceptualizes a more sophisticated understanding of communication, one that looks at the communication process as being more than just temporary conflict resolution.

#### ***2.3.1 Why is culture a useful and necessary concept?***

In order to provide a satisfactory investigation to the empirical puzzle cultural diplomacy poses, it is necessary to first define culture. Nicolaos Laos (2011) explains how ‘every entity is not merely itself here and now’ as perceived by our senses, but simultaneously, it bears the idea of its ‘potential perfect being’ (Laos, 2011:7). To further elaborate, culture is a social contract that enables humans to live meaningfully through communities of people that are characterized by a consensus on the significance of certain things, a significance that has gained prominence over time. Ultimately, it endows people with criteria by which they can evaluate things and they can decide on how things ought to be, usually by remembering and transmitting the past into the future.

Sociologists Frank J. Cechner and John Boli (2005) have further explored culture through an analytical framework for interpreting globalization. In their world culture theory, the two scholars discuss how globalization has made culture a global predicament. This is because culture is no longer confined within state boundary lines. The theory refers ‘both to the compression of the world’ as well as the ‘intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole’ (Robertson, 1992:8). As a

major determinant of how people perceive each other and negotiate differences, culture is an essential component in the transition of the world into being this global entity, especially since globalization makes people more aware of their differences while simultaneously becoming interdependent. In this regard, because opportunities for global contact and exchange are increasing as never before, and culture itself is naturally evolving, particular emphasis is needed for understanding the meaning and functionality of culture.

It is important to mention that there also seems to be an inherent paradox of culture. As a source of identity, meaning and belonging, culture can facilitate social cohesion, but it can also be the necessary justification for social exclusion and xenophobia. Amartya Sen expands on this paradox by suggesting that:

‘A sense of cultural identity can be a source not merely of pride and joy, but also of strength and confidence and yet, cultural identity can also kill- and kill with abandon. A sense of cultural identity can make an important contribution to our relations with others. At the same time, it is important to recognize the fact that a sense of culture can firmly exclude many people as it warmly embraces others. Cultural identity can be a source of richness and warmth, as well as of violence and terror’ (Sen, 2006: 3).

This can be witnessed in numerous societies where people are in fact victims of their own historical or religious heritage (Vareikis, 2014: 51). In other words, the constant reproduction, often to extreme levels, of that culture is what actually limits conflict resolution. Thus, culture and cultural relations can be a candidate solution to certain foreign affair disputes, but could easily be the cause.

Moreover, history as a determinant of culture, can pose a similar paradox if excessively present. Historical consciousness can either ignite unity and a sense of pride, but it can also lead to its manipulated use. This is one of the reasons why Friedrich Nietzsche saw history as nothing more than a ‘fatal curiosity’ (Siemens and Roodt, 2008:785). It can destroy more than deserves destruction, and can leave the present uprooted, due to the fact that history (and culture to a certain extent), is formulated by actors that are committed to their own causes. They create assumptions as if they have discovered the truth, when in reality, according to Nietzsche there are no historical facts, but rather historical interpretations. History is a ‘sign of man’s creative powers’ and has the potential for ‘conscious manipulation’ (Siemens and

Roodt, 2008:790). This has been apparent in the political field, especially when political decisions are made not on the authenticity of the past, but rather a blurred version that is clouded by the personal political aspirations. Therefore, once again, culture has an unprecedented amount of social influence, either be for the greater good or not.

Overall, culture is not a parochial term, but rather a universal phenomenon. It is both the means by which we come to understand others, but also ourselves. This phenomenon (negative or positive), directly interacting with the tendencies of globalization, makes culture a critical component of international relations and necessary for both ‘sustainable development’ and ‘lasting peace’ (Preis and Mustea, 2013:2). It is imperative to investigate the use culture, in all of its ‘diversity of expression,’ as a ‘tool of rapprochement’ and for ‘crafting a shared vision’ (Bokova, 2010: 5).

### ***2.3.2 What is cultural diplomacy?***

Culture has the advantage of being a public good that all people can share. Cultural diplomacy is the ‘delicate instrument’ of power politics that projects this public good into the ‘understanding, and appreciation, of one’s society by another’ (Laos, 2011:205). Cultural relations are not necessarily an original or innovative conception; in fact it has been around for most of history. Thomas Jefferson’s letter to James Madison, sent from Paris in 1785, is often cited as still providing a useful underpinning of cultural diplomacy:

‘I am an enthusiast on the subject of the arts. But it is an enthusiasm of which I am not ashamed, as its object is to improve the taste of my country men, to increase their reputation, to reconcile to them the respect of the world and procure them in its praise’ (Bound et al., 2007: 15).

Thomas Jefferson’s ideology is still very much present today, and emphasizes how cultural relations have been and will remain central in international affairs. Recently, the most used interpretation of cultural diplomacy derives from American political scientist Dr. Milton Cummings who defines it as an ‘exchange of ideas, information, values, systems, traditions, beliefs and other aspects of culture with intention of fostering mutual understanding’ (Sehic, 2013:6). Cultural diplomacy encourages culture- driven development, acknowledges diversity and promotes the ability of individuals to freely participate in cultural life and access cultural assets. This

phenomenon contributes to the building of a culture of living together, and thus to peace and human security. Through ‘communication, language learning, dialogue, scientific cooperation’, it can extend ‘beyond the limits of ourselves; broaden our knowledge, discover other customs, and enter the ideal city of the mind aware of the humanity that binds us together’ (Bokova, 2010). Cultural diplomacy is vital for durable partnerships across the globe.

### ***2.3.3. What are the strengths of cultural diplomacy?***

The actual strengths of cultural diplomacy cannot accurately be quantified. Culture, as an abstract concept, cannot be placed in such confines. Nevertheless, general themes have become apparent, which point to advantages if applied appropriately. These strengths range from the mass reach cultural diplomacy may have, its direct and indirect economic benefits, its independence from official governmental policies and how it reflects the changing nature of the world.

Within culture, there are different interpretations and understandings of its purpose as well as its areas of interest. This freedom maximizes its reach. For example, culture can be administered by official and established institutions of the state such as cultural and education programs, but it can also be administered by a wider context of popular culture. The ability of the mass population to be directly involved with cultural diplomacy is a significant strength. The internet has proven to be an essential tool in affecting mass cultural exchange. YouTube, and other social websites like Facebook and Twitter, have generated more participatory form of globalized culture than any officially foreign policy tool could acquire. Social software has ‘multiplied spaces’ for cultural communication, creating a ‘multitude of points of connection’ that do not respect borders or conventional definitions of nations (Bound et al., 2007: 30).

Furthermore, television, cinema, and music reach and recruit millions of people in unconsciously being a part of cultural diplomacy. Popular culture recognizes no boundaries and increases cultural visibility to the point where it can aid in giving people the satisfaction that they are directly involved in international affairs. Sociologist Li Yinhe sees this occurrence as a victory of the ‘grass roots over the elite culture’ (Bogay, 2013). Cultural diplomacy having its foot in popular culture is the ‘best hope of transmitting traditional prejudices into attitudes of understanding and

co-operation' (Bogay, 2013). It is the best means at our disposal to ensure that 'power politics is not a dominant force that drives this civilization' (Bogay, 2013). Thus, cultural diplomacy has a key privilege which official foreign policy lacks. It has the benefit of utilizing creative means in order to appeal to large audiences.

Cultural diplomacy not only appeals to mass populations, but it can also produce direct and indirect economic benefits for participating countries. For example, cultural exchanges can generate actual income. While exporting cultural goods to foreign countries may have the intention of promoting cultural relations, they consequently derive monetary compensation. In 2002, the UK exported cultural goods that added up to the value £8.5 billion (Bound et al., 2007: 33). In such scenarios, cultural diplomacy not only receives ideological returns, but tangible ones as well.

Culture is also a leading force behind tourism, and obviously with tourism come economic benefits for the host country. It is to the advantage of states to have an appealing cultural framework in order to receive its economic benefits and create positive impressions about the country. Cumulatively, the memories of the visitor's from their travels, exemplify a powerful force in global political relations, since they can influence how a country's actions are perceived internationally. Ultimately, culturally driven promotions may have both economic and reputational benefits.

Additionally, advocates of cultural diplomacy argue that the value of cultural activity comes precisely from its independence from the government. In itself cultural diplomacy has 'no political meaning or learning, neither special advocacy nor any particular constituency' (Hecht and Donfried, 2010:10). It should work beyond the realm of the state. This freedom, and the fact that it represents and connects people, rather than policy positions, gives it room to respond more thoroughly. There is no strain to appease the public since there is no electoral pressure. The freedom also provides great potential for governments to work together with civil society and private organizations, companies and individuals to create joint strategies in partnership with each other. These partnerships can be the gateway for culture to renegotiate political relationships that may have been strained via the traditional routes of foreign relations. Cultural diplomacy may also reopen the case of fragile

matters and encourage negotiations through genuine communication and understanding.

Finally, many of the challenges the world face today includes the climate, environment, terrorism, and migration etc., which cannot be solved by military might and coercion. Therefore, identity and social politics gain influence on domestic and international exchanges, making culture a pivotal medium for finding solutions. Naturally, UNESCO is one of the most significant patrons of this. The constitution of UNESCO explains the changing nature of world dynamics, and how cultural diplomacy is an essential tool for its smooth transition. It is consistent with the idea that peace and prosperity cannot be secured solely through economic and political arrangements because there can be no lasting peace and global prosperity without the intellectual and moral cooperation of humanity. This need for the development of a global cultural diplomacy was stressed in Milan, on October 7 2010, by Director-General of UNESCO, Irina Bokova where she stated:

‘Culture is the best gateway to the human heart and mind. We must build a lasting universal community of human beings drawing on values- culture first and foremost- that are the essence of humanity. This is the task of the new humanism. Globalization is no longer a matter of contact, as it was in the 16th century, but of sharing’ (Bokova, 2010).

Cultural contact provides a forum for unofficial political relationship building. It keeps open negotiating channels with countries where political connections are in jeopardy, and helps to recalibrate relationships for changing times. In the future, alliances are just ‘as likely to be forged along lines of cultural understanding as they are on economic and geographical ones’ (Bound et. al., 2007: 12).

Even with the best airport security measures and border control, one can never replace the strength that comes from a sustainable dialogue and understanding between cultures. If utilized properly, cultural diplomacy can redefine the manner of foreign policy. It can appeal to the greater masses, provide economic benefits, and deal with series of changing problems that are dominating the political stage.

#### ***2.3.4. What are the limitations of cultural diplomacy?***

However, looking at cultural diplomacy through a socio- anthropological background, as opposed to a political science one, introduces greater sensitivity and hesitancy to



the relationships between ‘culture and politics, culture and power, and culture and hegemony’ (Maaß, 2015). It predisposes one to seek out the imperatives of ideology and power that has driven their inspiration of cultural diplomacy. This mind set makes the limitations of cultural diplomacy apparent. While cultural diplomacy has its strengths if implemented appropriately, it still has many conceptual and practical misappropriations. These misappropriations include limited separation from state interests, lack of neutrality by actors, and the difficulty in quantifying it.

Cultural diplomacy scholars tend to argue that the more distance there is between the agent of a cultural diplomacy program and a political or economic agenda, the more likely the program is to succeed. Unfortunately, this is not always the case; the state continues to dominate. For example, governmental agencies and individual national policy agendas limit cultural programs and agencies too strictly to sustain bilateral and multilateral relationships of true understanding. Governments tend to support cultural initiatives that directly translate in furthering political or economic power, and not necessarily improve genuine mutual understanding and communication. Cultural diplomacy is used as a display instead of an instrument of foreign policy.

Even the representatives of civil society, NGO’s, religious organizations, trade unions or professional associations- do not seem to be perfectly suited to carry out this task since they also have their ‘own specific agenda, missions and goals’ (Hecht and Donfried, 2010:7). In the case of NGO’s participating in cultural diplomacy, it was in fact the government that primarily fund their programs. As a result, the NGO’s interactive cultural programs are very similar to the official government policy on cultural diplomacy. There is close collaboration between the public and private sectors, even though the whole idea of an NGO is that it is free of government influence. Unfortunately, when cultural diplomacy efforts are perceived too obviously entangled with selfish interests, they run the risk of illegitimacy and ineffectiveness. This indirect symbiotic relationship between the state and non-state actors limits the full potential of cultural diplomacy.

Also, just like NGO’s rely on the state, the state relies on NGO’s. The state cannot do much without the support of ‘non- governmental actors such as artists, curators, teachers, lecturers and students’ (Hecht and Donfried, 2010: 9). However, the moment

these actors become overcome by selfish desires and fall into state interests, the boundary lines become blurred. This is because these actors frequently assume a responsibility and agenda of their own, regardless of the program or organization on to which they are assigned. Therefore, not only can the state manipulate the use of cultural diplomacy for its advantage, so can the non-governmental actors.

Theatre scholar and activist Dragan Klaic suggests that the motivations behind partaking in cultural diplomacy by people such as artists and actors is more than focusing on purposes such as mutual learning, joint reflection debate, and cooperation in the creative processes. These cultural actors may not be pursuing these state driven deliverables, but rather motivated by the grants available. So, there is respondent opportunism on the part of cultural actors. Assuming otherwise seems to signal a 'disjuncture from reality' (Isar, 2010: 29). This analytical perspective posits the existence of an 'economy of cultural prestige' or as James English has it, the 'various interests at stake for the institutional and individual agents of culture' (English, 2005:8-9).

Finally, one of the largest challenges facing cultural is the difficulty in quantify it. How can one quantify increased cultural understanding or increased bilateral trust? National opinion polls are one measure and statistics on the attendance of language and cultural events are another, but these measurement tools can provide only a vague signal and are quite imprecise at properly measuring the rate of influence of the cultural diplomacy programs (Hecht and Donfried, 2010:27). This poses concerns with its legitimacy, and consequently limits funding for further research.

Cultural diplomacy is no doubt a substantial and profitable strategy. It is accompanied by funding and visibility, even for the players who may not want to be in the business of diplomacy at all (Isar, 2010:32). However, this warrants a cautionary appeal to the culture sector not to become a 'prisoner of rhetoric developed and propagated by others' in the service of different agendas, and to be careful about jumping on to 'bandwagons' opportunistically, just to 'position itself' on contemporary policy agenda (Isar, 2010:32). Therefore, just because the state and non-state actors have shown interest in cultural diplomacy, does not mean that they are caught up with the

more sophisticated ideas of cultural diplomacy. It is not the intrinsic merit of culture that is valued, but rather the perks that accompany it.

#### **2.4. Methodology**

Though the strengths of cultural diplomacy are admirable, it is still consumed by inherent limitations; therefore extensive research is required for its legitimating. Through qualitative research, this thesis plants a fertile ground for an in depth single case study, contributing to the theory building of cultural diplomacy. It explores the broader questions of cultural diplomacy by applying the theoretical framework discussed to a real life context.

Just like Yin argues, the rationale for using a single instrumental case- study design is a way to ‘confirm, challenge or extend’ a particular theory such as cultural diplomacy (Yin, 2003: 40). A common critique of a single case study is how it can fall in the traps of generalizing. This is not the case for this thesis, since the objective of this thesis is to expand and generate theory or ‘analytical generalization’ as opposed to ‘proving statistical generalization’ (Yin, 2003: 23). Emphasis is placed on strengthening the concept of cultural diplomacy, and consequently its applicability.

The reason behind choosing to focus on the Greek- Turkish case is because most research about cultural diplomacy tends to be focused on the United States and the Cold War. As a result the term cultural diplomacy has assumed a ‘one dimensional meaning’ linked to ‘political manipulation’ and subordination, and it has also been ‘relegated to the backseat of diplomatic intervention’ (Hecht and Donfried, 2010:3). This thesis makes cultural diplomacy more universally applicable, while also relaying the conflictual relationship between Greece and Turkey by offering an alternative explanation regarding the elements influencing the foreign policy pursued by each country towards the other.

#### **2.5. Conclusion**

In summary, cultural identity has become one of the fundamental causes of intractable conflicts. For long lasting solutions, hard power operations have not been sufficient. As a tool of soft power, cultural diplomacy, if effectively used, has great potential in inspiring people to appreciate cultural diversity, and help humanize foreign policy towards greater mutual understanding and cooperation. However, as any theory, more

evidence is needed for its legitimating especially in combating its limitations. Rivalries such as the Greek and Turkish case, consumed by misunderstandings, can benefit from cultural diplomacy, and move away from the problem of historicism and aspire for cultural dialogue to discover mutual interests. However, if misused it only deepens conflict. The next chapters will be evaluating cultural diplomacy in a real life context.

## Chapter 3: History of Greek-Turkish Relations

### 3.1. Introduction

To grasp the link between culture and bi-lateral relations between Greece and Turkey, it is necessary to go back to the historical context surrounding the creation of the respective states along with the production of their national identities. This historical context lays out the ground work for why the Greek- Turkish case is a vital candidate in pursuing the expansion of cultural diplomacy theory.

### 3.2. The legacy and dissolution of the Ottoman Empire

Greece and Turkey have a long history, which unfortunately has been dictated by conflict. The birthplace of their interaction started in Istanbul. The Greeks, as decedents of the Byzantines, had been one of the leading ethnic groups to have inhabited the premises. With the ‘appearance of the Turkish element,’ after the Ottoman capture of Istanbul in 1453, one of history’s ‘most intensive cultural symbioses’ was inaugurated (Alexandris, 1983:21). Under the Ottoman rule Istanbul became the centre of Muslim- Christian co-existence that lasted for over 500 years (Alexandris, 1983:21). Through the usage of the *millet system*, the Ottoman Empire managed to thrive despite its heterogeneous make-up. However, just like all empires, the Ottomans found themselves in a downward spiral that eventually led to its dissolution.

The Balkan Wars of 1912-13, World War I, the Greco-Turkish War and finally the Turkish War of Independence destroyed what little was left of the Ottoman imperial control. The combination of this dissolution, and the birth of both the Greek and Turkish states as separate entities, encompassed an environment of ‘suspicion’ and ‘hostility’ over the future of the former Empire (Fabbe, 2013:436). While Greek policy makers obsessed over the opportunity to reignite the ‘*megali idea*,’ – a foreign policy goal of irredentist aspirations initiated in 1821 after Greece gained its independence from the Ottomans- Turkish policy makers were determined to protect their lands from all the vultures that were taking advantage of its current weakened state. Fig. 1 is an example of a Greek propaganda poster of the time that captures the essence of Greek imperial aspirations following the collapse of the Ottomans. It promotes the nationalist sentiment that the ‘*megali idea*’ is still alive, alongside with a picture of Eleftherios Venizelos, the prime minister of the time. The Greek saw it as

an opportunity to regain what were inherently theirs, since a large proportion of Greeks still lived in the area. On the other hand, Fig. 2 is a Turkish propaganda poster of the time where Kemal Ataturk, the leader of the Turks, is shouting to the Greek army that they have tried, and ‘had their fun’ in trying to recapture these territories. However, once again, they have been unsuccessful and it is time for them to march back to where they came from. Already it is apparent that the two countries have incompatible interests and direct conflict. With this mentality both states became consumed with their own nationalist projects, which were built on painting each other as the enemy both figuratively and literally. Antagonisms started being directed at minority groups in both countries – those that were given definite stay under the regulations of the Treaty of Lausanne(1923)- which only further enforced the notion of ethnic separation and eventually created ‘a spiralling situation’ in which elites from both sides become obsessed with ‘border security’ and ‘internal dissent’ (Alexandris, 1983: 22). This marked the beginning of the long lasting conflictual relationship that has been dominating Greek-Turkish bilateral relations.

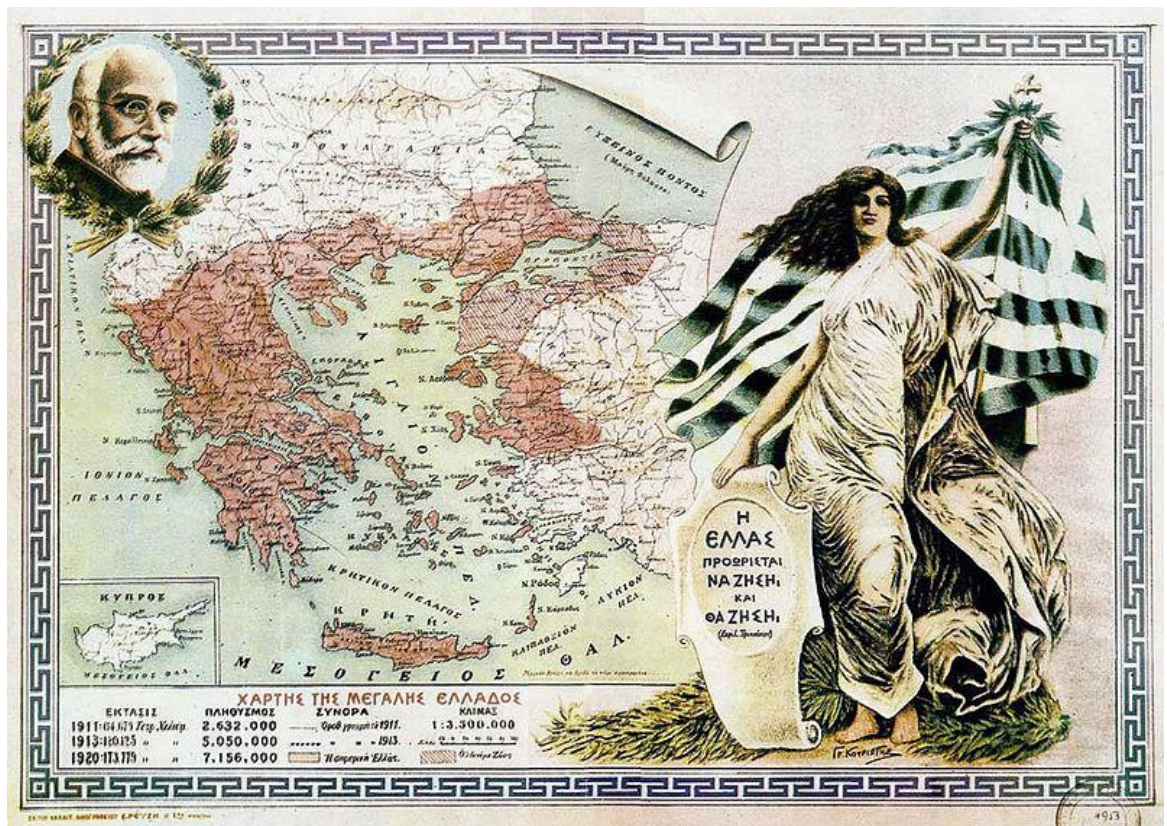


Fig.1 Map of Megali Idea (1921).





Fig.2 *Elveda Megalo İdea!* (1922).

### 3.3. Nationalist projects and the perception of the ‘other’

Aside from the fact that both countries have found themselves at war multiple times, according to Alexis Heraclides, the essence of the rivalry is the following ensemble: historical memories and traumas (real or imagined), which eventually became engrained in their national narratives and respective collective identities. The reproduction of these memories is the foundation for a relationship built on demonizing the ‘other.’ Nationalist projects are ‘parallel monologues’ like ‘choral odes in Greek tragedy,’ relentlessly emphasizing their differences yet ‘painfully aware of their similarities’ (Ozkirimili and Sofos, 2008:2).

This perception is constructed in textbooks, historiography, and literary texts. Textbooks in both countries ‘reproduce a Manichean dualism’ of the two countries’ modern history on the basis of ‘good’ and ‘evil’ (Mavrogenis and Kelman, 2013:78). It constitutes as a resource for instilling national pride and validating the nation and the ‘other’ to be seen through a lens of ‘introversion, xenophobia, siege mentality, and conspiracy theories’ (Mavrogenis and Kelman, 2013:78). Hercules Millas (1991) wrote an essay based on the study of history textbooks used in primary schools in Greece and Turkey. In his essay he found that the youth for decades has been ‘fed with aggressive ideologies,’ ‘prejudices against the other side’ with ‘one sided information’ and ‘historical distortions and exaggerations’ (Millas, 1991: 23). Both countries narrate the convenient truth. Historically, as Fig. 2 demonstrates, for the Greek, the Turks have become synonymous with the Ottomans and their portrayal as barbarians, backwards or prone to committing atrocities. The image is set within an Eastern Orthodox Church, where the priest is bound and forced to witness the sexual abuse of several women. This depiction exemplifies the deep-seated neurosis and pathological enmity Greeks suffer from.

On the other hand, portrayals of Greeks by Turks seem to be limited. This limitation is significant in its own way since it shows the belittling of their neighbour since they are not even worth being mentioned as extensively. Instead, as Fig. 4 shows, the Ottomans being depicted as scholars with interest in art and learning. The painting is showing the Gread Sa’nd teaching law to his students. It is the polar opposite view of the image alongside it. The Ottoman tradition is a source of pride for the Turks. These figures may not be representative of all portrayals, but they make it clear that there is an omission of facts from both sides. The Greeks seem to forget the advanced culture of the Ottomans, while the Turks limit the violent narratives. For generations both countries have been building nationalistic prejudices with the objective of ‘oblivion’ and ‘forgetting skeletons which tell a different story’ (Millas, 2004:17).



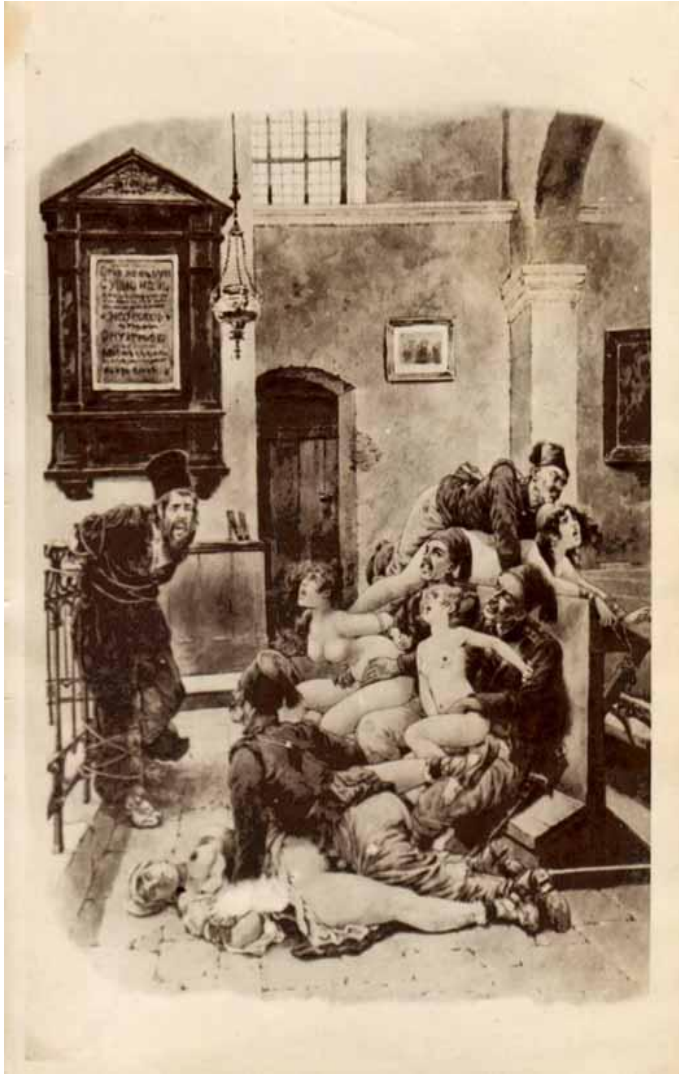


Fig. 3 Archibald Smith, *The Turk* (1909).

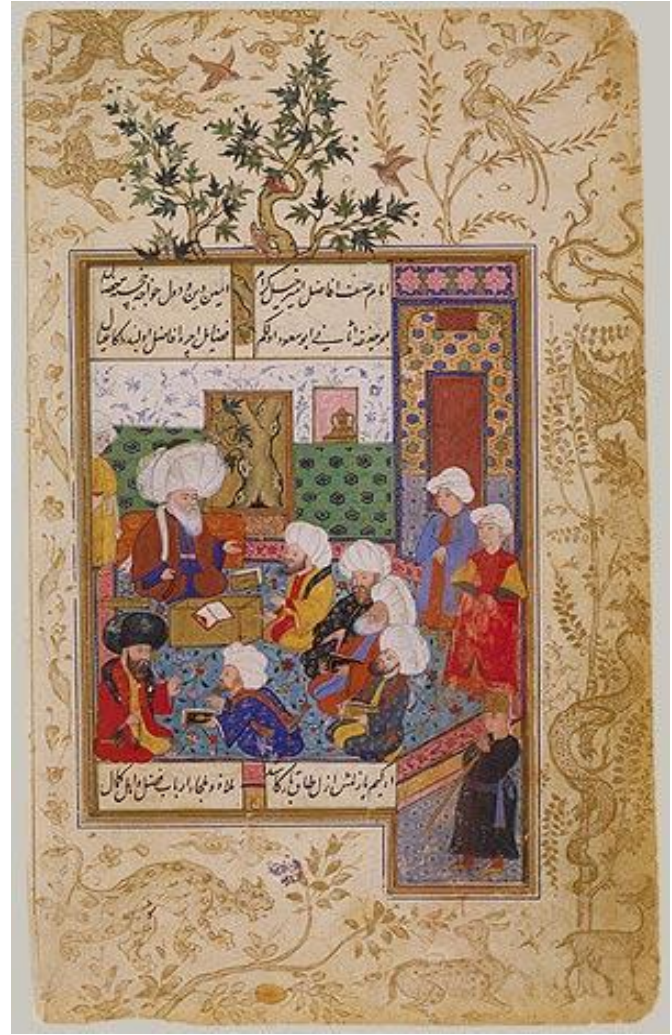


Fig. 4 *The Great Sa'ud Teaching Law* (16<sup>th</sup>- cent)

### 3.3. The nationalization of religion

As the figures above show, both Greek and Turkish nationalisms are products of cultural osmosis between the enlightenment and Ottoman elites. This led to the inheritance of a social environment in which religion maintained key social and political functions. Therefore, other than plain animosity based on land claims, one of the most fundamental differences between the Christian Greeks and Turkish Muslims is religion. Both countries have historically ‘privileged religious categories over potential alternatives such as race, blood ties or language’ (Fabbe, 2013: 435). The minorities left behind in 1920’s in each country are prime witnesses. They are explicitly targeted by the state due to their religious affiliations and not necessarily their nationality. So even though early secularist claims were made by both nationalist movements, a ‘symbiotic relationship’ between religion and nationalism was pursued through a ‘synthetic approach’ (Grigoriadis, 2012:3). The blending of religion with

the nation was an 'audacious movement' for both, and 'catalyst in the nation's historical destiny' (Grigoriadis, 2012: 5). Religion has proven to be a major obstacle for reconciliation since it has assumed a 'privileged and almost untouchable' position in both the Greek and Turkish narratives.

### **3.4. Conclusion: Current State of Affairs**

So far, it is clear that the Greek and Turkish relations have been trapped in a 'long trajectory of enmity and tensions' exemplified by political, geographical and religious differences (Karakatsanis, 2014: 12). This animosity does not limit itself to the state, but rather encompasses civil society. These factors have contributed to a theme of persistent repetition, traced through the recurrences of brink of war episodes and the institutionalization of threat that can be further conceptualized using what Buzan, Waeber and de Wilde have called 'securitization' (1998).

Recurring issues include: the fate of the republic of Cyprus, Aegean island's territorial waters, definition of borders, the designation of the continental shelf along with the exclusive economic zones, the width of the national airspace or the control of the commercial flight information regions of civil aviation and the mistreatment of ethnic minorities (Karakatsanis, 2014). Fig.5 may be a cartoon from 1922 but in a way it is still applicable today. The legacy of their struggles persist and the two states continue being locked in a security dilemma consumed by 'ethnocentric patriotic moralism' (Forde, 1992:62).

Fortunately, following the earthquakes in 1999, Greece and Turkey find themselves in unfamiliar waters of reconciliation. There is an unprecedented growth of exchanges and cooperation on what is described as 'low profile politics,' such as cultural, social and trade issues that are appearing to be driving a process of reconciliation. The next chapter of this paper will discuss the reason behind this phenomenon and the role of cultural diplomacy.

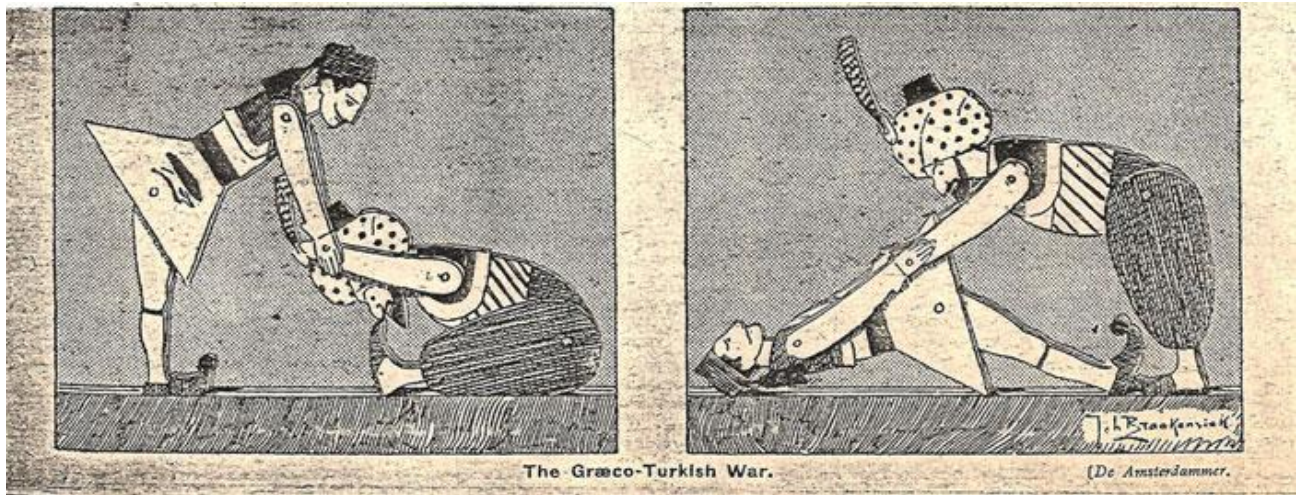


Fig.5 *The passing show* (1922).

## **Chapter 4: Consolidating broad support: Cultural diplomacy and Greek- Turkish relations**

### **4.1. Introduction**

The purpose of this empirical chapter is to apply the practice of cultural diplomacy in the context of Greek- Turkish bilateral relations, and assess whether it has been a pivotal implementation. As demonstrated in the background chapter, the two countries are consumed with historical baggage that it is intertwined with their culture. Therefore, focusing on culture is a significant element in overcoming their differences.

It will first discuss the effects of the infamous Ocalan affair and the 1999 earthquakes, and explain how they set the scene for political discussion amongst the elite, with the approval of the general public for the first time. It will then give concrete examples of cultural diplomacy between the two countries, and explain how the emergence of the new discourses, symbols and images that characterize the Greek- Turkish relationship, have contributed to the rapprochement of these traditionally hostile neighbours.

### **4.2. The 1999 earthquakes: fundamental shift in the perception of the ‘other’**

Bilateral relations between Greece and Turkey witnessed a significant improvement in 1999. Even though there are numerous factors that may have contributed to this event, there are two that were of considerable importance. First, is the crisis precipitated by the ‘Ocalan affair,’ after the revelation that the leader of the Kurdistan Workers Party wanted for terrorism charges in Turkey- Abdullah Ocalan, had been given sanctuary in the Greek embassy in Nairobi. This finding greatly embarrassed the Greek Government and led to the dismissal of several high ranking Greek officials, including Foreign Minister Theodoros Pangalos. Pangalos was replaced by George Papandreou, who adopted a ‘more conciliatory policy’ towards the Turks, and initiated ‘quiet dialogues’ designed to explore ways to improve relations (Evin, 2005:401).

The second factor was the 1999 earthquakes that devastated both countries, one after the other. Instantly both countries asked each other for assistance, and instantly that

assistance was provided. Prominent amongst the mutual aid was the Greek search and rescue team EMAK, which pulled a Turkish boy from the rubble, ‘triggering extensive media coverage’ across Greece and Turkey, including ‘commentary favouring a new approach to the other’ (Mavrogenis and Kelman, 2013:81). Then after the Athens earthquake, the Turkish search and rescue team, AKUT, in its first mission outside Turkey, pulled a Greek boy from the rubble during a televised rescue operation, causing ‘outpouring of support’ and pressure on the media and the governments to ‘follow suit’ (Mavrogenis and Kelman, 2013:81).

The media focused on the humanitarian crisis, ran headlines in each other’s language, and steered the popular feelings of empathy towards a criticism of past governmental policies towards the other (Rumelili, 2005:11). Even after the earthquake crisis, it continued being a protagonist in the shift of national consciousness. The positive spin in the coverage encouraged public support for the ‘other’ to drastically increase, helping the breakdown of old stereotypes. Both the Greek and Turkish media started making an effort to move beyond official sources and publish more stories on culture, economy, daily life, that are oriented towards presenting a more diversified image of the ‘other.’ Such images ‘humanized’ the other side, and aided in ‘reshaping the public’s views’ about Greek and Turkish societies (Grigoriadis, 2012:121).

Overall, this new found appreciation between the neighbours was the necessary insurance for the political elites on both sides to act publicly with their previously quiet dialogues, without suffering the political consequences. It provided a ‘domestic cover for diplomatic initiatives’ on both sides and helped to ‘insulate them’ from public criticism (Grigoriadis, 2012:121). They acted as the catalysts for social change, demonstrating how the reframing of the perception of the ‘other’ proved to be a vital element in political resolution. Finally, after years of monotonous hostility, Greek-Turkish relations gained new political momentum (Larrabee, 2012: 473).

#### **4.3. A cultural statement: reconciliation through mutual understanding and respect**

Since policymakers are influenced by the opinions of the general populace, a procedure targeted at the broadening of public knowledge about the ‘other’ seems to



have been essential for improving relations and sustaining the positive sentiment. Cultural diplomacy between the two countries looks beyond their religious, territorial, and political differences, and emphasizes common beliefs and social traditions. It exposes both civil societies' to see through their own experiences that the 'other' is nothing more than a fellow human which has been social constructed as an enemy. It is important to note that adopting a cultural understanding does not mean adopting the 'cultural style' of the other or abandoning one's cultural characteristics. The aim is to reduce the distance from the 'other' and to 'gain insight' (Rana, 2007: 208).

#### ***4.3.1. Examples of different forms of cultural exchanges***

Culture exchanges have been contributing to altering the mutual negative perceptions between the Greeks and the Turks. They have been occurring in many different sectors for the past 15 years. These sectors include education, films, television, music, festivals and sports. All these sectors open a window of opportunity for collaboration to be achieved not only in an official manner, but also by appealing to popular culture.

#### ***4.3.2. Education***

A series of educational exchanges and hosting of joint education programs have been hosted at centres such as Partnership for Peace. Exchanges of students and academics have taken place mainly at tertiary levels, with an extensive academic infrastructure giving priority in receiving foreign students. Furthermore, in 2013, a spokesman for the Greek embassy in Ankara announced that the two nations would create a permanent educational exchange program following a meeting between the rectors of the universities of Athens and Istanbul. This type of effective outreach in the academic world could produce results of long-term value in their relationship.

Moreover, there has also been a push for the improvement on the content and quality of Greek and Turkish textbook for younger students. As was previously mentioned, the two countries have tended to provide bias narration of their shared history, creating unjustifiable illusions of one another. With this new initiative, it seems that there has been some improvement in how the other is represented, which is a valued transition (Skouroliakou, 2005). Not brainwashing the youngest members of society

with stereotypes and ill-written history, is a strong contribution to the future relations. Students need to be able to first develop an objective understanding of their own history, since it builds a foundation of understanding that can be ‘later applied to understanding different cultures’ (Rana, 2007:208). One cannot be expected to understand other cultures, without knowing as close to as possible the fundamental truth of their own history. Through educational initiatives, an objective analysis of foreign traits has helped the acceptance of differences and development of understanding.

#### ***4.3.3 Art and food festivals***

Cultural activities that are co-hosted or co-organized by previously hostile states nations are another form of cultural dialogue that have aimed to reinforce and inspire further the process of reconciliation.

For example, in May 2014, a photography exhibition with the motto ‘Deep Roots, Common Roots’ was held in Mytilene, Greece just off the coast of Ayavlik in Turkey (Tokyay, 2014). The project was the result of collaboration between photography societies from each country. The exhibition itself was inspired by the metaphor of the ‘olive tree’ as a symbol of peace, as well as to represent the central role olive oil plays in the livelihood and daily lives of both communities. At the end of the exhibition, an olive tree was planted as a symbol for ‘preserving the friendship and peace between the two communities as strong and deep as the roots of an olive tree’ (Tokyay, 2014). Olives are the focal point because the livelihoods of both communities rely on it. This perception is important because it shows how similar in their nature Greeks and Turks are.

Moreover, coming up this September, there is a series of Turkish-Greek friendship gastronomy festivals that will first be held in Kos and Kalymnos islands of Greece, highlighting the gourmet cuisine of both countries, and then the Turkish provinces of Bodrum and Milas. These events invite dialogue between the two countries, the sharing of their traditions, and mutual appreciation for food. The more each country can understand and accept the other country’s national identity, the more likely there will be lasting reconciliation. Generally, festivals support peace building because

they invite creativity, ability to see the world with fresh eyes, facilitate expression, and reciprocal understanding.

#### ***4.3.4. Music and sports***

Music and sports have also appeared as components of cultural diplomacy looking to cement a mutual understanding between the two nations. For example, Greek musician Vasilis Saleas, one of the world's leading clarinetists, released his latest studio album, 'Travelling the World,' first and foremost in Turkey, via a Turkish record company (todayszaman.com, 2013). His album even included one song each from Turkish pop sensations Tarkan and Sezen Aksu. When asked about the impact in diplomatic relations through his artistic collaborations, Saleas stated that 'music knows no borders' (todayszaman.com, 2013). He expressed that 'musicians would like to make music anywhere on this earth, without the restriction of administrative borders' (todayszaman.com, 2013). This collaboration shows how Greeks and Turks can have a similar taste in music, and appreciate each other's work. They do not have to insulate themselves from the other country, but instead embrace and grow together artistically. Music also has the bonus that it can be accessed by everyone, spreading this sense of reconciliation amongst both Greek and Turkish societies.

There have been several more musical collaborations between Greece and Turkey. In the summer of 2013 there was a concert inside the historical palace of Topkapi, which used to be one of the permanent residencies of the Ottoman sultans. The concert consisted of Greek songs funded by the Turkish state, with a primarily Turkish audience. This exhibition of collaboration would have been deemed impossible prior to 1999. It shows how for the sake of music, the two countries can set aside their differences, and focus on the actual content. Without the people wanting that cooperation and without state funding, the event could not have happened, illustrating the people's track of diplomacy.

Just like music, sports have also acted as cultural facilitators. The example that stands out the most is the attempt of the two countries to jointly host the UEFA European Championship in 2016. Despite the fact they lost the bid, this commitment to one another showed incentive by both nations to focus on a future where they are true neighbours that can take advantage of their circumstances. Combining their bid



increased their chances of being hosts, and paved the way for both countries to upgrade their football capabilities, and erase some of the negative stigma that both teams have acquired the last couple of years. The fact that football is a highly televised sport, with a large number of fans, is also a great way to expose the general public towards mutual appreciation as well as incentives to join forces.

On a similar note, Greek football player Theofanis Gekas has recently acquired the title of ‘Greek God’ in Turkey. Gekas is first Greek football player to play in Turkey. He has been signed with Akhisar and almost ‘single handedly saved the Super League minnow from relegation’ (Hurriyet, 2015). Fans have been chanting anthems saying that he is better than Zeus, and giving him a standing ovation when he enters the field. The fact that Greek football player would sign to play for a Turkish team, and the Turkish population would give him utmost support, shows how far the reconciliation process between Greece and Turkey has reached. These fans have reshaped their perception to the point where differences are undervalued compared to similarities. What matters are the skills of the player and watching the team they love win. Just like culture and music, sports can be shared by anyone around the world. Nationalities have nothing to do with enjoying what they provide, which proves to be a healthy recipe for peace building amongst the Greek and Turkish civil societies.

#### ***4.3.5. Television and films***

In the summer of 2005, history was made when Greek and Turkish television united and created the television series ‘Love without borders.’ The series was not only co-produced, co-written by both Greeks and Turks, but it was also filmed in both countries, with both languages used throughout the series. The plot consisted of a love story between a young Greek man and a young Turkish woman overcoming the ‘conceptions, misconceptions and prejudices of Turks and Greeks against one another’ (Guler, 2012). It became an instant hit in both countries and in the three seasons that it aired, the audience’s saw the couple marry, have children but also the transformation of the die-hard nationalists falling for one another. The series proved to be vital for the image projection of both countries since it was an easily accessible medium by all, and was able to familiarise both sides with issues that could not be reached through more traditional mediums. This breakthrough exemplified the similarities between the two countries instead of being transfixed in the past.

Moreover, in 2003, the film ‘Politiki Kouzina’ (Kitchen of Istanbul) became a blockbuster hit in Greece. The plot consists of a *Rum*- Greek family that gets deported from Istanbul in 1964. It elaborates on the life of the family through their love of cooking, and depicts how different their Istanbul- based identities are from the Greeks. Through humour it subtly criticizes the ridiculous conformist pressures placed on them by the nationalist ideologies both in Turkey and Greece. It challenges the ubiquitous misconstructions of Greek and Turkish identities, and encourages the audience to critically re-assess their outlooks towards history.

In summary, cultural diplomacy has affected the general outlooks of citizens who may not necessarily be active political participants on Greek- Turkish issues. Each sector has its own importance; and taken together they can add to the increasing familiarity amongst both sides. Maintaining this optimism through social and cultural activities proves to be a useful mechanism employed by both governments, which can be directly applied to political initiatives.

#### **4.4. Achievements of Greek- Turkish bilateral relations**

As these cultural exchanges have shown, the Greek and Turkish people have developed a friendlier sentiment towards each other. Cultural diplomacy has increased their mutual understanding, and moved the relationship towards a phase where they are more likely to accept a breakthrough in bilateral relations, and not cling onto previous unexplainable hostilities. It has motivated the political elites to more openly negotiate for the future of their relations since there are no ‘vehement objections in the media or from public opinion’ (Grigoriadis, 2012:121). After all, policy makers and politicians are steered in foreign affairs, just like in domestic affairs, by civil society and culture.

The decision to grant Turkey candidate status, with the support of the Greek state at the 1999 Helsinki European Council opened the way for a dramatic improvement in political and economic contacts between the two countries. Since then, the two states have signed cooperation agreements on tourism, incentives for joint investment, environmental protection, economic cooperation, scientific and technological cooperation, maritime transport, culture, agriculture and the agreement on the

exemption from double-taxation (Grigoriadis, 2012). Bilateral trade alone has immensely increased from being around \$223 million in 1993, to reaching a peak of \$3.58 billion in 2008, which is when the global economic crisis hit, while a \$300 gas pipeline connects the Greek- Turkish natural gas grid line (Grigoriadis, 2012:123). The more interconnected the two countries become, the less likely they are to resort back to their old hostile policies.

#### **4.5. Conclusion**

The alteration of perception between the two countries fundamentally changed the nature of their political, economic, and social affairs, as well as their approaches of conflict resolution since it provided leeway for official cooperation. Not only that, but it promises to be far more ‘sustainable enhancement’ rather than simply an ‘upturn of the cycle’ in the conflictual history between the two since there is a re-education of the public (Onis and Yilmaz, 2008: 123). It is difficult to imagine the reversal or a ‘complete rejection’ of the rapprochement as a result of any unforeseeable changes in the domestic politics of either Greece or Turkey, given the ‘strategic commitments’ of both countries both politically, economically and socially (Onis and Yilmaz, 2008: 123).

It is important to note that this thesis is not implying that cultural diplomacy is solely responsible for this progression in Greek- Turkish relations. As discussed in the cultural diplomacy chapter, culture is hard to quantify therefore there is no exact way of knowing its influence. Clearly other actors such as the UN and the European Union have been motivators. However, what is clear is that cultural diplomacy has created a ‘unique atmosphere of openness’ by mobilizing the support of the civil society (Schneider, 2003: 5). Without the support of the civil society there are limited options for political enhancements. The next chapter will be discussing the durability and significance of this ‘low politics’ collaboration when analyzing Greek- Turkish relations as a wholesome picture.

## **Chapter 5: Limitations of cultural diplomacy: the incomplete breakthrough in Greek and Turkish relations**

### **5.1. Introduction**

This final empirical chapter will be analyzing the extent to which the recent developments in Greek- Turkish relations on ‘low politics,’ have translated into ‘hard’ security issues. It will argue that despite the improved bilateral climate, progress at the high political level between the two countries has been limited, as none of the primary issues of debate have been resolved; and there are few signs that the two states are close to reaching a solution any time soon. Therefore, cooperation in ‘low politics’ aided by cultural diplomacy, has not been strong enough to suppress nationalist and religious reactions, self-interest, or pressure to the government to achieve a resolution of their differences.

### **5.2. Unresolved issues and tensions of Greek-Turkish Rapprochement**

#### **5.2.1. The Aegean dispute and conflict over Cyprus**

The Aegean dispute between Greece and Turkey is a set of interrelated controversial issues over sovereignty and related rights in the area of the Aegean Sea stemming from the 1970’s. Areas of disagreement include: the width of territorial waters, airspace, the delineation of continental shelf, jurisdiction over the flight information region, and the demilitarization of eastern Aegean islands. Moreover, the Cyprus conflict consists of ethnic dispute between Greece and Turkey over the 40-year-long division of Cyprus between Greek- Cypriots and Turkish -Cypriots. The discovery of gas reserves off the coast of Cyprus has not only complicated the efforts to find settlement of the Cyprus issue, but also sparked new tensions and political alignments. Obviously this is a very brief overview of the areas of disagreements, but nevertheless it demonstrates how core problematic issues directly related to hard security remain unresolved. They exemplify how the ‘zero-sum game’ mentality on critical issues still persists, and that ‘fragile detente does not go beyond some mutual goodwill gestures and remarks’ (Onis and Yilmaz, 2008: 143).

Both disputes act as ‘a key litmus test’ for relations between Greece and Turkey (Athanasopoulou, 2011: 18). Clearly confidences building measures and cultural diplomacy have made little progress. Instead, the bilateral talks encouraged by civil society, have become largely ‘pro forma exercises in which both sides tend to repeat

long-standing positions' (Athanasopoulou, 2011: 18). Neither side has shown readiness to make the necessary compromises to move the negotiations towards a final settlement. As a result, the momentum toward permanent partition in Cyprus is gaining ground in both communities since a younger generation on both sides of the island has grown up with never having interacted with the other side and sees little reason to do so; while threat perception continues to blur political elites from coming to an agreement over the Aegean. These key issues do not paint an optimistic view of a durable partnership, but instead exemplify how cultural diplomacy and ultimately soft power have been inadequate towards solving key hard power related dilemmas.

### ***5.2.2. Historical legacies, modern conflicts: mistreatment of minorities and religious intolerance***

As discussed in previous chapters, the Greek-Turkish conflicts have been induced by strong nationalistic discourses which construct the 'other' as the anti-self. In many ways, the *Rum*-Greek minorities in Turkey, and the Muslim-Turkish minority in Greece, hold the key for eliminating these mutually antagonistic portrayals of Greek-Turkish identities. Both minority groups represent hybrid identities that are neither wholly 'Greek' nor wholly 'Turkish,' and serve as reminders to the long shared history between the Greeks and Turks, containing 'bittersweet memories of coexistence, conflict, injustice and loss,' and the powerful legacy of religion (Rumelili, 2005:15).

Kristin Fabbe argues that religious identity markers have and continue to assume a privileged position in both Greek and Turkish national narratives, making issues of religious tolerance and pluralism sensitive focal points in contemporary debates (Fabbe, 2013: 435). After the Treaty of Lausanne (1923) and the exchange of populations, with notable exceptions, both countries have been applying the principle of reciprocity in regards to minority groups and their religious affiliations. The well-being of these groups depends solely on the well-being of their counterparts in the other country (Oran, 2008: 37). Any oppressive measures against the minorities is legitimized and explained on the basis of a suspected future negative act by the other. Reciprocity not only triggers negative escalations but also retards positive steps, since it is a form of blackmail.

According to the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Greece accuses Ankara of still being ‘mired in this out-dated rationale of reciprocity’ (mfa.gr). They argue that Turkey continues to mistakenly link its obligation on human rights and religious freedoms, such as the reopening of the Halki Seminar with the Muslim minority in Thrace or even building a mosque in Athens. However, this argument could easily reverse. This is because the Greeks have been using the building of the mosque in Athens as a trump card to pursue minority rights in Istanbul. Therefore, both countries continue clinging onto national interest. Clearly no credible negotiations have been made that can surpass the important symbolic weight they carry. Their intolerance of other religions is not limited strictly to their relations, because in fact both countries seem to be intolerant of religions not their own. Familiarising the two states through cultural exchanges did not suffice in changing their religiously oriented ideologies.

### ***5.2.3. The on-going negative public opinion sentiments***

According to Onis and Yilmaz (2008), the nature of public opinion also limits the recent rapprochement process. They found that public opinion surveys suggest that there is still considerable lack of mutual trust at the level of the individual citizen; and indicate that Greeks in general tend to occupy relatively low standing in the evaluation of the Turks, and Turks tend to believe that if a military attack were to originate from anywhere, it would come from Greece (Onis and Yilmaz, 2008: 140). Obviously, public opinion cannot be changed instantly given the extended hostile history between the two nations. However, the recurring doubts exemplify how cultural diplomacy may have provided a recipe to forge a durable rapprochement, but in the meantime ingredients are still missing, so it is actually detrimental on fixating on the supposed mutual understanding the countries have for each other because it has not even achieved an optimal level. Public opinion remains potentially volatile for, and any event misunderstood or misrepresented. The conventional wisdom of cultural activists, scholars and policy makers alike is that cultural charms can dispel strongly hostile perceptions aroused by the exercise of hard power. However, there is no apparent reason why they should change their minds about another country because they are offered festivals, music and films.

### **5.3. Conclusion: Greek-Turkish relations: sustainable or durable partnership?**

If improved relations simply meant the implementation of more trade, more economic cooperation, more cultural exchanges, and regular meetings with top officials, then Greek- Turkish bilateral relations are at a high. But in the context of the issues that have poisoned bilateral relations for over 30 years, these changes have not been spectacular. Cyprus, the Aegean dispute, religion, minorities and the overall public opinion, all point towards the conclusion that there seems to be no real breakthrough over the past decade that has brought tangible changes. Instead there is the tendency of 'functional cooperation,' where both countries have attached importance to the dialogue as a means to an end (solutions to conflict) rather as an end in itself (improved relations) (Grigoriadis, 2012:131). This appeasing and display of reconciliation is part of a phase that unless more proactive measures are taken, will lose its affective power and grow weary. Like former Secretary- General of the United Nations stated, 'past achievements are not enough' (Annan, 2000).

This lack of progress questions whether cooperation overall is mechanical or in fact genuine. Claims being made on cultural diplomacy's behalf seem to be 'ambiguous and overstated' (Isar, 2010:32). This is because the political elite place the theory of cultural diplomacy on a pedal-stool, compared to actual practice. They have been incapable of releasing their national interest motivations. The failure to translate 'low politic' issues into more permanent fixture highlights the universal challenge of finding an effective balance in the relationship between culture and politics. It is not the intrinsic merit of cultural diplomacy that is valued; rather, it is the impact of the production and consumption upon national culture as a way of life. All these factors generate the conclusion that though the Greek- Turkish partnership is sustainable for the time being, its durability is in question.

## **Chapter 6: Conclusion**

This thesis defined cultural diplomacy as an instrument of soft power. In a highly globalized world, with cultural misunderstandings being one of the leading causes of conflict, it is useful to explore alternative conflict resolutions such as cultural diplomacy. There is no doubt that Greece and Turkey have a long, complicated and conflicting history that has negatively affected their cultures, and consequently their foreign policies towards each other. This makes it a concrete case study to explore the extent in which cultural diplomacy can effectively penetrate the political sphere.

Following certain trigger events in 1999, the two states find themselves in a period of détente for yet another time. Cultural diplomacy proves to be a key factor in maintaining this revival of optimism and cooperation. It serves the function of building mutual trust in both a social and political context, and notes the importance of public opinion in consolidating the improved state of political relations. It has encouraged a revision of the political discourse, which mutually reinforces a rather proactive approach to certain outstanding issues. As a result, the parties have been able to overcome certain deep-rooted animosities and arrive at short-term partnerships.

However, the fact remains that the two countries are still facing difficulty on highly contentious issues. Erdogan's policies have been aiming to resolve the range of issues in a way that is as satisfactory as possible to Turkey's interests. Of course that is not surprising, because all states are looking out for their state interests first and foremost. But at the same time, it shows that cultural diplomacy is used as a means to an end, rather as an end in itself (improved relations). Similarly, Athens has primarily considered the on-going process of improving relations with Turkey as a 'way of avoiding a serious crisis developing in the Aegean' (Athanasopoulou, 2011:18). It has come to appreciate the 'value of exploratory talk with their Turkish counterparts,' but the idea of 'actively working' towards a final settlement through a mutually acceptable agreement has been met with negative reaction (Athanasopoulou, 2011:18). The strengths of cultural diplomacy are in serious danger of running out of momentum unless concrete agreements regarding high politic issues are met.



This single- case study has built on conceptually understanding cultural diplomacy. It has shown how cultural diplomacy can be successful in regards to overcoming certain negative images and achieving short-term partnerships. It can effectively build shared values to foster dialogues and prevent immediate conflicts. Therefore, it is valuable for ‘low politics.’ However, since it has no check, its misuse can denote it to merely a tool for achieving national interests as opposed to re-educating the public and establishing permanent appeasement. Therefore, this paper concludes that though cultural diplomacy has its strengths, it is overpowered by its limitations. In fact it would be more effective if it worked alongside hard power since hard power is the enforcer. A combination would be the ideal foreign policy tool.

Greek-Turkish rapprochement has reached a flat line since the uniqueness of friendly encounters is wearing off. Moving beyond the existing gridlock require a serious and well planned attempt to overcome core issues of conflict, and more political spirit and determination from both sides. Unfortunately for now the conflict remains ‘centuries-old, emotional’ and ‘defies rationality’ (Kissinger, 2000:192). Cultural diplomacy is a condiment, and not a main ingredient in the recipe for this long journey towards concrete rapprochement.

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