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## **PROPAGANDA OVER PLACES' NAMES AS A TOOL TO PROMOTE CONFLICT ABSTRACT**

### *Abstract*

Objective of the study: To research the long-running tensions between Greece and Turkey under the prism of contemporary propaganda which through the impact of toponymic nationalism on territorial disputes, is used as a tool to promote or to prelude conflict. To demonstrate that how geographical names are used by political leaders and ingrained in propaganda contribute to the creation of national identities by using the sense of ownership, and the arousal of conflict.

Methodology: Historical and modern claims have been deployed to form the foundation of the theoretical basis. Emphasis is given to the role played by political figures in influencing place names to support patriotic feelings and boost territorial claims. A distinction is made on how propaganda may incite conflict and thwart peaceful coexistence between nations. Although these actions can increase internal support for policy goals, they also run the danger of exacerbating tensions and impeding diplomatic efforts to find a solution.

Results and Conclusions: To prevent possible conflicts from igniting or historical conflicts from re-igniting, the transmission of factual information and conduct of responsible approach towards geopolitically sensitive places poses a necessity in order to promote peaceful diplomacy. The study's suggestion is to develop policies that would lessen territorial conflicts and promote peaceful cohabitation.

**Keywords:** National identity, Sense of Ownership, International Relations, Propaganda, Conflict, Toponymic

### *Introduction*

For a very long time, territorial disputes between nations have been a source of conflict and stress. These territorial conflicts are frequently exacerbated by political and nationalistic objectives [1]. One of the strategies that political

leaders use to project a feeling of ownership and national identity over contested territories is the usage of place names in their own languages [1]. This phenomenon, which has been given the name “toponymic nationalism”. has been seen in a broad variety of geopolitical circumstances and has the potential to greatly contribute to the development of relations between nations [2].

An enlightening illustration of how the manipulation of geographical names may heighten geopolitical rivalry and serve as a cause for conflict is provided by the case of Greece and Turkey. Both nations have a long history of territorial disputes, which have been affected by a variety of historical, cultural, and political variables throughout their respective histories [3]. In the context of Greece and Turkey, the significance of place naming is investigated in this study. Particular attention is paid to historical claims, current claims, the role of political leaders and propaganda, as well as the concepts of national identity, a sense of ownership, and the motivation of politicians to incite conflict.

According to Khmeleva (2019), international law and international relations are inextricably linked due to the fact that they both influence and are influenced by the actions of nations operating within the international system. In the case of Greece and Turkey, territorial conflicts have been resolved via the use of a variety of legal instruments, such as the Treaty of Lausanne (1923), which created the contemporary borders that separate the two nations [4]. However, these legal mechanisms have not been wholly effective in addressing the underlying tensions since both nations continue to establish historical and cultural claims over disputed territory through the use of place names. This is even though the underlying conflicts have been resolved [5].

In this context, the participation of political leaders and the employment of propaganda are particularly essential because of their ability to influence public opinion and aggravate nationalist feeling, both of which make it more difficult for nations to resolve their differences through diplomatic means [6]. This study intends to provide insight on the underlying dynamics of territorial disputes and contribute to the creation of policies for encouraging peaceful cohabitation between nations. This will be accomplished by understanding the complex interplay between place naming, national identity, and geopolitical rivalry. This will allow the paper to achieve its goals.

### *Research methods*

With the help of the traditional complex of historical and legal methods (text study, comparative analysis, legal analogy), were analyzed the content and strategic significance of key toponymic areas whose legal ownership has switched sides over the years, but the social groups residing or those who historically have in these areas and their descendants now live elsewhere, are connected through their inherited national identity. Structural and functional method allowed to isolate the main reasons for the impactful effect of propaganda in preparing a

social group for a claim over another country's territory. One of the main reasons for the successful application of propaganda on the peoples of Greece and Turkey, is the historical conflict and historical overlapping ownership of territories. The socio-psychological approach, in turn, determined the sense of ownership and national identity as the main tools used to promote a territorial claim. The article argues that once a territory starts to be called in a different name, and more specifically a name that has been used at some point in history when another social group was ruling over that territory, the probability of military conflict increases.

### *Results and discussion*

#### **Place-naming in Territorial Conflicts**

By examining significant regions that have experienced toponymic nationalism, this research looks deeper into the thorny issue of place-naming in territorial conflicts, notably between Greece and Turkey. In Turkish media, the Greek island of Kastellorizo is sometimes referred to as Meis, a name that dates to the Ottoman Empire and suggests expansionist inclinations. This essay contends that this naming strategy is consistent with Turkey's geopolitical objectives in the Eastern Aegean and their agreement with Libya on maritime borders.

On the other hand, Greece's significant usage of historically based toponyms for a variety of locales, such as Istanbul (Constantinople), Izmir (Smyrna), and Ankara (Ancyra), is a strategy to support the historical Greek dominance over these territories and buttress their stance in territorial claims. The usage of these Hellenic names is widespread in Greek media, textbooks, and popular discourse and is not just restricted to political debates, boosting patriotic emotion and territorial claims among the populace.

The Aegean Sea, which is split into the Northern Aegean, Central Aegean, and Southern Aegean, is similarly affected by the political agendas driving these place-naming conflicts. To assert their maritime rights, Turkish political narratives frequently highlight the idea of a "Blue Homeland" (Mavi Vatan), which includes a large portion of the Aegean Sea.

Similar to this, Greece's use of the term "Aegean Sea," which has Greek roots, to designate the water between it and Turkey serves to emphasize its own territorial claims. Greece's emphasis on the unique names of the Aegean islands, many of which have legendary Greek roots, further emphasizes their claim to the area.

These examples show how the research intertwines the stories of identity, history, and politics by showing how both nations use geographic names to emphasize their territorial claims and patriotic feelings. Exploring the effects of these activities on diplomacy and international relations, the necessity of appropriate toponymic usage is emphasized. This thorough investigation

intends to aid in the creation of regulations that will lessen territorial conflicts and promote peaceful coexistence.

### **Historical Claims between Greece and Turkey over Land/Islands**

The beginning of the history of territorial conflicts between Greece and Turkey may be traced back to the 15th century, with the collapse of the Byzantine Empire and the subsequent development of the Ottoman Empire [4]. The Ottoman capture of Constantinople in 1453, which is today known as Istanbul, signaled the beginning of a rivalry between the Ottoman Empire and the Byzantine Empire over territory and islands in the Eastern Mediterranean area that would last for centuries [4].

These territorial conflicts became much more contentious in the latter half of the 19th century and the early 20th century as a direct result of the fall of the Ottoman Empire and the birth of the modern state of Greece. The Balkan Wars, which took place between 1912 and 1913, resulted in considerable territorial gains for Greece at the expense of the Ottoman Empire. The islands in the Aegean Sea were a prominent area of dispute throughout these wars [3].

The Treaty of Sèvres (1920), which was signed in the aftermath of World War I with the intention of redefining the borders of the area, was never completely implemented because of the Turkish War of Independence [3]. The Treaty of Lausanne, which was signed in 1923 and succeeded the Treaty of Sèvres, was an attempt to settle these disagreements by creating the contemporary lines that divide the two nations [4]. However, the pact did not touch all contentious regions, notably those in the Aegean Sea, and it did not resolve all of the territorial issues that existed before it [3].

For instance, the islands of Imbros (now known as Gokceada) and Tenedos (now known as Bozcaada) were granted to Turkey by the Treaty of Lausanne. However, the Greek population of these islands suffered great difficulties in retaining their cultural and religious identity as a result of measures aimed at fostering Turkification [4]. In a similar manner, the Dodecanese islands, which were governed by Italy at the time of the treaty's creation, were not a part of it, and the question of their status was not settled until 1947, when they were handed over to Greece [3].

The historical claims that Greece and Turkey have made about various pieces of land and islands have helped to contribute to a tangled web of territorial disputes between the two countries. These territorial disputes have persisted despite the attempts of international law to settle them [3]. Both the usage of place names in a variety of languages and the propagation of nationalist narratives have played a crucial influence in both the continuation of these conflicts and the formation of the political discourse that surrounds them [1].

### **Modern Claims between Greece and Turkey over Land and Islands**

In recent years, Greece and Turkey have been unable to resolve their territorial differences, with the Aegean Sea continuing to be a primary source

of tension between the two countries. [5] The existence of a large number of islands, islets, and rocks in the Aegean, along with disagreements over the maritime boundary, have resulted in a complicated web of contemporary claims that continue to strain ties between the two nations [3].

The issue of the continental shelf and Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) in the Aegean Sea is one of the most serious and recent disagreements between Greece and Turkey [5]. Greece contends that each of its islands is entitled to a continental shelf and an exclusive economic zone (EEZ), which, if granted, would extend Greek maritime authority over a sizeable area of the Aegean Sea. Greece has argued this point [3]. On the other side, Turkey is certain that the continental shelf should be split between the two nations according to the concept of equidistance. This would provide Turkey with significantly expanded maritime rights in the area [5].

Another contentious issue is the legal standing of several rocks in the Aegean Sea known as the Kardak and Imia islets, which are devoid of human habitation [3]. Since the 1990s, there have been a number of events as well as military confrontations as a result of Greece and Turkey's competing claims of sovereignty over the islets [5].

The Cyprus problem is also a significant source of friction between Greece and Turkey. The island of Cyprus has been divided between the Republic of Cyprus, which is dominated by Greek Cypriots, and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, which is dominated by Turkish Cypriots and is only recognised by Turkey [4]. The finding of hydrocarbon deposits in the Eastern Mediterranean has made the issue much more complicated because Greece and Turkey have conflicting claims to the resources in that region [5].

These contemporary disputes between Greece and Turkey reflect the long-standing historical and cultural conflicts that exist between the two countries and highlight the continuing significance of place names and nationalist narratives in the process of sculpting the geopolitical landscape [1]. The application of international law and the conduct of international relations in the handling of these disagreements continues to be of critical importance, since the solution to these problems demands persistent diplomatic work and a dedication to peaceful discourse [3].

### **The Role of Political Leaders in Place Naming**

Political leaders play an important part in setting the conversation surrounding territorial conflicts and in cultivating a sense of national identity through the naming of places [1]. Leaders are able to generate a sense of ownership over contested territory and legitimize their claims in the eyes of their domestic constituency by invoking historical place names that resonate with their individual national identities. This is done by evoking historical place names that have a strong connection to the nation's past [1].

In the context of Greece and Turkey, political leaders have utilised place naming as a strategic tool to emphasize their territorial claims and inspire feelings of nationalism among the inhabitants of their respective countries [3]. For example, Greek politicians may keep referring to Istanbul as Constantinople, which is a reference to the city's time when it was ruled by the Byzantine empire. This would lend credence to the idea that there was an ancient Greek presence in the area [4]. In a similar vein, Turkish officials may choose to adopt the names that were in use during the time of the Ottoman Empire for the islands in the Eastern Aegean in order to emphasize Turkey's historical link to the regions and to bolster their claims [5].

In times of heightened geopolitical tension, the usage of place names by political leaders may also function as a tactic for mobilizing public support for their policy goals. This is especially true when place names are controversial [6]. Strong nationalist language from political leaders on both sides has been heard in the case of Greece and Turkey in relation to the ongoing territorial disputes in the Aegean Sea and the Eastern Mediterranean [5]. This rhetoric frequently incorporates the tactical use of geographical names in order to establish various claims and defend stances on the world arena [3].

However, the use of place names in this way may also contribute to the escalation of tensions and make it more difficult for diplomatic solutions to be found to disputes [1]. As a result of this, the role that political leaders play in the naming of places bears major significance for the possibilities of peaceful cohabitation and collaboration between nations that are engaged in territorial disputes, such as Greece and Turkey [3].

### **Propaganda and Conflict**

Political leaders and governments frequently make use of propaganda because it is a potent instrument that may be used to influence public opinion, build narratives, and support certain policy goals [6]. In the context of territorial wars and disputes, propaganda may serve numerous functions, including legitimizing claims over contested territory, demonizing the opposite side, and solidifying public support for government actions [6].

According to Hoskins and O'Loughlin (2010) [7], the employment of propaganda in scenarios involving armed conflict can take on a number of different forms. These forms include the manipulation of historical facts, the broadcast of information that is biased or misleading, and the framing of events in a manner that favors the perspective of the government. In addition, propaganda may be disseminated through a variety of media outlets, including newspapers, television, radio, and social media websites [6].

When it comes to Greece and Turkey, propaganda has been a significant factor in maintaining the decades-long territorial disputes between the two countries, most notably with regard to the Aegean Sea and the Eastern Mediterranean [5]. Both parties have made use of nationalist narratives and historical claims in

order to assert their rights over contested regions and resources, and they frequently invoke a feeling of ownership and national identity through the use of place names [1].

In addition, the governments of Greece and Turkey have engaged in a campaign of propaganda aimed at undermining the respective narratives of the other country and reiterating their different stances in the global arena [5]. This may be illustrated in the example of the Cyprus dispute, where both parties have circulated opposing narratives regarding the events leading up to the island's separation and the legitimacy of their separate claims. This has led to a standstill in the negotiations [4].

Even though propaganda has the potential to be a useful instrument in gathering domestic support and advancing national objectives, it also carries the risk of raising tensions and aggravating conflicts [6]. According to Hoskins and O'Loughlin (2010), the persistent reinforcement of nationalist narratives and the demonization of the other side might make it more difficult to resolve disagreements by diplomatic means and can raise the possibility of confrontations using armed action.

It is necessary for political leaders and governments to provide correct information, participate in constructive discourse, and look for peaceful solutions of settling disagreements in order to limit the detrimental impact that propaganda may have on conflict situations [6].

### *Conclusions*

As has been demonstrated, the use of place names and propaganda by political leaders in territorial conflicts, such as those that exist between Greece and Turkey, has major consequences for the development of conflict as well as the possibility of the resolution of disputes of this nature [1; 7]. Leaders on both sides may legitimize their claims and build a sense of ownership over contested territory by citing historical place names and nationalist narratives. This helps leaders on both sides garner support from inside their respective nations for the policies they advocate [1; 7].

It has been emphasized in this article that these tactics can also worsen tensions, making it more difficult to find a diplomatic solution to the problem [1; 7]. This is because both parties become more steadfast in their beliefs and less inclined to compromise as a result of the situation. In the instance of Greece and Turkey, the continuous conflicts over the Aegean Sea, the Eastern Mediterranean, and Cyprus highlight the persistent influence that place names and propaganda have on determining geopolitical dynamics and the continuation of war [4; 7]ю

Ultimately, it is essential for political leaders and governments to recognize the potential dangers of using place names and propaganda as tools for advancing conflict, and to instead focus on promoting accurate information, engaging in constructive dialogue, and looking for peaceful means of resolving disputes.

This is because it is important for political leaders and governments to recognize the potential dangers of using place names and propaganda as tools for advancing conflict [3][6]. The application of international law and the conduct of international relations in the handling of these disagreements continues to be of critical importance since the solution to these problems demands persistent diplomatic work and a dedication to peaceful discourse [3; 6].

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## **ПРОПАГАНДА ТОПОНІМІКИ ЯК ІНСТРУМЕНТ ПРОСУВАННЯ КОНФЛІКТУ**

### *Резюме*

Мета дослідження: Дослідити довготривалу напруженість між Грецією та Туреччиною крізь призму сучасної пропаганди, яка через вплив топонімічного націоналізму на територіальні суперечки використовується як інструмент для розпалювання конфлікту або як прелюдія до нього. Продемонструвати, як географічні назви, що використовуються політичними лідерами та вкорінені в пропаганді, сприяють створенню національної ідентичності, використовуючи почуття власності, та розпалюванню конфлікту.

Методи: Історичні та сучасні претензії були розгорнуті, щоб сформувати фундамент теоретичної бази. Особлива увага приділяється ролі політичних діячів у впливі на топоніми для підтримки патріотичних почуттів і посилення територіальних претензій. Розрізняється, як пропаганда може розпалювати конфлікт і перешкоджати мирному співіснуванню між націями. Хоча такі дії можуть посилити внутрішню підтримку політичних цілей, вони також несуть у собі небезпеку загострення напруженості і перешкоджають дипломатичним зусиллям, спрямованим на пошук рішення.

Результати і висновки: Щоб запобігти можливим конфліктам або повторному розпалюванню історичних конфліктів, передача фактичної інформації та відповідальний підхід до геополітично чутливих місць є необхідністю для просування мирної дипломатії. У дослідженні пропонується розробити політику, яка б зменшувала територіальні конфлікти та сприяла мирному співіснуванню.

**Ключові слова:** Національна ідентичність, почуття власності, міжнародні відносини, пропаганда, конфлікт, топонімічні назви.

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