



UNIVERSITY OF MACEDONIA
FACULTY OF ECONOMIC AND REGIONAL STUDIES
DEPARTMENT OF BALKAN, SLAVIC AND ORIENTAL STUDIES
MASTER'S DEGREE IN POLITICS AND ECONOMICS OF
CONTEMPORARY EASTERN AND SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE

DISSERTATION THESIS

Maritime Dispute Between Albania
and Greece: Analyzing Foreign Policy
through the Media Representation

Erilda Goga

Student Registration Number: mpe21005

Supervisor: Ioannis Armakolas, Associate Professor

Evaluation Committee Member: Georgios Christidis, Associate Professor

Evaluation Committee Member: Konstantinos Tsitselikis, Professor

Thessaloniki 2022

"The approval of Master's Thesis by the Department of Balkan, Slavic and Oriental Studies of the University of Macedonia does not necessarily imply that the Department shares the author's opinions."

I hereby declare, that all the data used in this work, have been obtained and processed according to the rules of the academic ethics as well as the laws that govern research and intellectual property. I also declare that, according to the above mentioned rules, I quote and refer to the sources of all the data used and not constituting the product of my own original work.

Erilda Goga

Abstract

The main issue that has been preoccupying relations between Greece and Albania over the last decade is the delimitation of the maritime zones in the Ionian Sea and the inability to reach an agreement on the issue. In general, Greek-Albanian relations have always been one of the issues that have swayed both countries. After the independence of the Albanian state, bilateral relations have gone through periods of intense political and diplomatic crisis, while in the last decade, the strategic line followed has been that of common course and cooperation. The aim of this diplomatic thesis is to investigate the dispute over maritime territorial waters, in the context of the way the issue is relayed in the Greek and Albanian media respectively. Based on the framing approach, the way the issue is presented will be examined with the ultimate aim of drawing conclusions about the correlation between media and politics, and how this is reflected in the political agendas of the respective countries.

Keywords: Greece, Albania, Maritime Issue, Framing, Media and Politics

Contents

<i>Abstract</i>	3
Introduction.....	5
Albanian-Greek Diplomatic Relations: Past, Present, and Future.....	8
1.1. The status of the Greek minority in Albania.....	9
1.2. The Cham issue.....	12
1.3. The paradox of The State of War Law	14
1.4. Greek-Albanian Relations after the fall of the communism.....	17
The Maritime (Dis)Agreement between Albania and Greece, from the 2009 agreement to the Hague.....	18
2.1. The points of disagreement for Greece and Albania	19
2.2. The reach of the first agreement of 2009	21
2.2.1. Significance of agreement for Greece.....	22
2.2.2. Significance of agreement for Albania	23
2.3. Annulment of the Agreement by the Albanian Constitutional Court	24
2.4. Address of the dispute in the International Court of Justice in the Hague as the resolution of the issue	28
Framing The Maritime Dispute in the Albanian and Greek Media	30
3.1. Methodology	31
3.2. The Albanian and Greek media scene	34
The Albanian media landscape.....	34
The Greek media landscape	35
3.3. The Albanian Media Representation.....	36
3.3.1. Attribution of responsibility for the management of the Agreement	37
3.3.2. Sale of Albania's sovereign rights to Greece	40
3.3.3. Rational choice of appeal to the ICJ	42
3.4.1. The resolution of the maritime problem in reference to Turkish policy in the Aegean Sea	46
3.4.2. The resolution of the maritime problem as an example of the doubting of the Albanian political capacity.....	50
3.5. The impact of the media representation	51
Drawing conclusion over the bilateral relations based on the media representation	51
The impact of the media representation on the formation of Greece and Albanian public opinion.....	53
Conclusions.....	56
Bibliography.....	59

Introduction

Greece and Albania are two neighboring countries located in the Balkan Peninsula. Through the years, bilateral relations of them have been characterized by periods of intense tensions and periods of reconciliations. In the last decade, bilateral relations have been going through a favorable period where the spirit of cooperation prevails. In the last decade, Greek-Albanian relations are in a period of maturity, as on the one hand Albania's goal is to have allies on its journey towards EU accession and on the other hand Greece seeks the prevalence of cooperation and peace in its Balkan neighborhood. One of the main issues in bilateral relations over the last decade has been the dispute over the delimitation of the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and other maritime zones. It is this issue that will be the subject of the thesis.

The scope of the thesis is to study the conceptualization of the maritime dispute between Greece and Albania through the representation of it in the local media. In other words, an attempt will be made to analyze the way in which the issue of maritime zones has been presented in each country and the impact of the way in which it has been presented. It is widely held by many analysts that politics and media

are inextricably linked and interdependent, the only thing that changes is the level of interdependence and this is due to the links that the political situation has with the media system. Using the framing approach of the political communication theory, the opinion of politicians, scholars, and opinion-makers will be studied. The aim of this study is to determine if the framing of the issue in the media has an impact on the diplomatic relations of the country and, on a secondary level, on the shaping of the public opinion over the perception of the neighboring country.

In order to reach the desired conclusions, it is necessary to have a general overview of the diplomatic relations of Greece and Albania, as well as a general picture of the background of the maritime dispute. Having in mind that concept, the first chapter is dedicated to the diplomatic relations facing the two countries from the declaration of independence of Albania until nowadays. The main points of the diplomatic agendas will be analyzed, which are the issue of the Greek minority residing in the Southern part of Albania, the Albanian side's requests for acknowledgment of the Cham issue, and the conundrum of the "war status". The last part of the chapter will have the focus on the current issues of the 21st century and how these have shaped contemporary bilateral relations. Thus, Albania's European perspective will be analyzed as an important variable that determines the relations between Greece and Albania. In addition, reference will be made to the influence of the existence of a large community of Albanian immigrants in Greece, and how this affects bilateral relations.

The context in which the dispute over the maritime zones of Greece and Albania developed will then be analyzed. Starting from the political situation of Albania and Greece in the 2000s, the diplomatic context in which the 2008 agreement was reached will be examined. Of course, as it is known, this treaty could not be implemented as it was voted unconstitutional by the Constitutional Court of Albania. The reasons and causes that led the then opposition and current ruling party of Edi Rama will be examined. At the same time, an attempt will be made to document the consequences that this annulment had on Greek-Albanian relations, both politically and economically. Finally, the 2020 agreement between the two countries to refer the issue to the International Court of Justice in The Hague, and the reasons that led the

two states to opt for international arbitration, will be studied. Consequently, the last part of the chapter will examine the factors that led the two countries to this decision and how the acceptance of this decision was.

For this purpose, research and study of articles from (mainly) electronic formats of the major newspapers of Greece and Albania was carried out in order to collect the articles referring to the maritime dispute. The time period chosen as the period of examination was the period in which the appeal to the International Court of Justice in The Hague was agreed upon. The purpose of the research is to examine the position of the respective government, the opposition, and important influential actors in the two countries on the issue. To this end, the views of journalists specializing in foreign policy issues as well as influential opinion-makers, such as former diplomats, internationalists, political scientists, and members of the wider academic community will be examined.

From the analysis of the articles, the aim is to draw conclusions as to how each country conducts its foreign policy, through the analysis of the priorities of each country and the impact this has on the diplomatic level between Athens and Tirana. For this reason, the diplomatic relations between the two countries will be thoroughly analyzed following the Hague referral agreement. The second part which will be examined is the impact of the media on the formation of public opinion. The latter is important, as readers or viewers are the most direct recipients of the news and thus the ones who are most influenced by it. For this reason, the joint research and study of the Open Society Foundation and the Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy (ELIAMEP) on Greek-Albanian relations will be used. From this research, we will focus on the responses of Greeks and Albanians on issues of bilateral relations and in particular on the issue of maritime zone delimitation. In this way, it will become known whether public perception on specific issues differs between Greece and Albania. The ultimate aim will be to examine whether this difference in public opinion is directly or indirectly due to the way national media choose to present the news.

Albanian-Greek Diplomatic Relations: Past, Present, and Future

Since the independence of the Albanian state in 1912, the bilateral relations of Albania and Greece have always been a high priority in the political agendas of each country. Over the years the relations have been through different phases, making it hard to be defined. Glevin Dervishi, an advisor and former member of the negotiation team with Greece, has insightfully linked Albanian-Greek relations with the traditional Greek clothing of fustanela. (Dervishi, 2019). According to him, the bilateral relations between the two countries, just like the fustanela, have to be untangled in order to reveal their whole figure (ibid, 2019). Using this comparison, Dervishi wants to emphasize the complexity and entanglement of the issue, which explains the instability of bilateral relations through the years.

Diplomatic relations were officially established in 1971 between Greece and Albania. Before that and since the independence of the Albanian state in 1912, bilateral relations were characterized mainly by tension and instability. The reasons for this tension can be imputed to many variables, such as the border disputes and the existence of minority groups in both countries that were claiming land and rights. After the end of World War II, the communist regime prevailed in Albania, marking the beginning of Hoxha's prevalence of totalitarianism and isolation for the country. During this period, in Greece, the right-wing Colonels known as the period of Junta, was in power after staging a coup. The dominance of authoritarian regimes in both countries increased the disputes and made it impossible to maintain diplomatic relations. Paradoxically, this changed in 1971 when Athens and Tirana decided the reestablishment of diplomatic relations, focused on commercial and trade links, as well as in the exchange of ambassadors (Nafpliotis, 2009). That was considered a milestone in the normalization of relations, as the two neighboring countries began to establish cooperation mainly in the commercial field, and attempted to resolve some of the open issues.

After the end of the Cold War, the diplomatic relations between Greece and Albania continued to be characterized by tensions but were strengthened in the fields of economic cooperation, due to the large number of Albanian emigrants living in Greece. In 1996, the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation was signed by Greece and

Albania, which is considered a milestone in bilateral relations. The signing of the Treaty came after a crisis escalation in the years 1994-1995, during which the Greek minority in Albania was mistreated and similarly, the undocumented Albanian immigrants were expelled. Through this treaty, the two countries established relations in the fields of “friendship, cooperation, good neighborliness and security” (UNTC,1998). From that period and onwards the relations of the two countries are based on cooperation and mutual attempts to resolve open issues.

In this chapter, the diplomatic relations of the two countries will be examined in order to get a comprehensive overview of the bilateral relations. The focus will remain on the main issues that the two countries have faced since the independence of the Albanian state in 1912. According to the research of Albert Rakipi (2018), who served as Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Albania, the two main issues that the two countries are facing are the “territorial/border disputes and the issue of ethnic minorities”. In other words, this chapter will analyze the status of the minorities, examining the status of the Greek minority in Albania but also the effort of the Albanian side to claim rights over Chameria. In addition, the status of the State of War will be analyzed as a key issue that has determined the formation of the foreign policies of both countries as concerns the Greek-Albanian relations. Moreover, the political reality of Athens and Tirana will be examined as it has been formed after the collapse of the communist regime in the country.

1.1. The status of the Greek minority in Albania

One of the main issues between Greece and Albania is the existence of the Greek minority in Southern Albania. Through the years the minority has been a bone of contention. After 1912, the newly- established Albanian state contained the Greek minority, which is located in the Southern part of Albania. The treatment of the minority was a key issue for Albanian-Greek relations.

Specifically, the minority zone of Albania, as is defined by Albanian law Nr. 96/2017, consists of 99 villages around the cities of Saranda, Gjirokastër, and Himara. There are certain legally defined traits that need to be present, for someone to be part of the

Greek minority as set by Tirana. Those are the language, religion, place of birth, and origin of the individual. In addition, someone has to live in one of the above-mentioned cities or villages in order for him to be considered as a minority member (Vickers, 2000). This latter distinction with regards to the geographical setting of the individual is the part of the reform that Enver Hoxha first established, and which found the Greek side utterly opposite. The Greek Minister of Foreign Affairs, Nikos Kotzias has clearly stated in 2016 that “Albania should not continue with the reform of Hoxha, who recognized as minority only people living in two areas, who if they move to Tirana or any other town, would lose that status” (Kotzias at CNN Greece, 2016). The issue of the geographic condition of the minority people remains on the agendas of each country as an issue to be solved to this day.

From the Albanian side, the Greek minority was officially recognized by the Albanian government in 1922. This political move was essential for Albania, as it was one of the conditions for the accession of the country to the League of the Nations on December 17, 1920 (Meta, 2002). The Albanian state had to prove that it recognizes the minority groups in its territory and respects its rights. However, the recognition could not be achieved without political pressure by the Greek side, that forced Albania to instigate the assimilation of the Greek minority within the country. It was this political power play, according to Meta (2002), that accelerated the official recognition of the Greek minority by the Albanian representatives.

From the Greek side, Athens followed a political agenda of assertions over Southern Albania or “Northern Epirus” (Rakipi, 2018). Eleftherios Venizelos, who served as Prime Minister of Greece between 1910 and 1933, was the first to mention the term “Northern Epirus” referring to Southern Albania. This was part of his larger political vision, known as “Megali Idea” since this is where the majority of the Greek minority was located. At the 1919 Paris Peace Conference, the Greek Prime Minister Venizelos, advocated that "Northern Epirus" should be included in Greece's borders. Nevertheless, the claims of the Greek side were not recognized by the board of the Conference.

The reactions of Tirana on the use of the term “Northern Epirus” were instant and explicit. The Albanian side considered the use of “Northern Epirus” as the definition

of the location of the Greek minority as an encroachment of the national identity and a conflict of interests. When it came to the promotion of minority rights, the Albanian representatives made an effort to align with the international standards, nevertheless were accused by Athens. The situation escalated and the minority issue was brought before the League of Nations with the Greek side getting justice.

On May 28, 1920, the Kapshtica Protocol was signed by Greece and Albania. With this protocol, Albania was required not to impinge on minority rights to education and religious expression. On the other hand, Greece was bound not to conduct military operations in Albania (Dervishi, 2019). Specifically, minority schools were established where the Greek language was taught, so that the children could be properly educated in their mother tongue. During the Hoxha regime and particularly after World War II, the number of schools operating was diminished, a fact that he was called to answer for at an international level and led to the normalization of the bilateral relations once again.

After the re-establishment of the diplomatic relations in 1971, the Greek minority remained one of the biggest sources of tensions between Greece and Albania with both diplomatic representatives making significant efforts to eliminate the tension. The efforts were successful as “the territorial claims over ‘Northern Epirus’ were achieved by the End of the Cold War” (Rakipi, 2018). The above-mentioned achievements were sealed with the mutual signing of the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation, as well as with Albania’s NATO membership in 2009. Nevertheless, Athens has continued to use this matter in question and is high on its political agenda as a bargaining chip. The issue of minority rights is often brought to the EU and Council of Europe, even though the accession of Albania into the EU is not something Athens is opposed to. It would seem, that Athens aims to highlight the importance of the issue to a European level, as an encroachment of the European *acquis* and Copenhagen pre-conditions for the future accession of Albania in the EU.

It is worth mentioning that, the Greek minority as the only minority officially recognized by the Albanian state is being represented in the Albanian parliament by the minoritarian parties. In particular, according to the research of Miranda Vickers (2010), the Greek minority is represented by the Democratic Union of the Greek

Minority, OMONIA, and by the Union of Human Rights Group (UHRP), a political party that has worked in cooperation with both the Democratic Party and the Socialist Party. The aims of both parties are the promotion of interests of the minority people in Albania, as well as the influence of the political developments of the country.

1.2. The Cham issue

When we are referring to border disputes between Greece and Albania, the controversial issue of Chameria could not be excluded. The Chameria region was located in the southern part of Albania and in the northwestern part of Greece and consisted of a majority ethnic Albanian, predominantly Muslim, population. Most of them were originally Christian Orthodox, who converted to Islam during the latter years of the Ottoman occupation. After the London Conference of 1912-1913, the Great Powers put the majority of the Cham population under Greek jurisdiction by taking those territories from the Ottoman Empire and placing them under the control of Greece.

According to the analysis of Miranda Vickers, whose expertise is the Balkan region and especially Albania, the Cham population has been through 3 distinct phases of emigration: the first one was during the Balkan Wars 1912-1914 and the second occurred following the signing of the Turkish-Greek Convention of Lausanne in January 1923 when the population exchanges were set in motion. The third phase of emigration of the Cham population was at the end of World War II, between June 1944 and March 1945, an estimated 5,000 men, women, and children were killed (Vickers, 2002). Although all the emigration flows were important for the delineation of the Cham population, the third phase was the one that played a crucial role in the future of Chameria.

The paradox of the Cham issue is that it is not considered an actual issue for both of the involving countries. While Albania considers the period of 1912-1945 as a massacre and expulsion of Muslim ethnic Albanian inhabitants from Greek territory, the Greek side argues that there is “no issue”, as the Greek Foreign Ministry spokesman Panayiotis Beglitis stated in the newspaper “Kathimerini” (Athens), 2-3 June 2001. According to Miranda Vickers (2002), there is disproportional attention

given to the Greek minority in comparison to the Cham issue. This is an outcome of the unstable, immature, and insufficient political system of Albania. In particular, after 1939 Albania was a country without any legitimate body with decision-making prerogatives, whereas by the end of the Cold War, it passes through the “anarchy” period when the communist regime collapsed and the transition to democracy began. All the above compose a state with vital problems that made it impossible to focus on policies addressing the crucial issues of the Chams.

In an attempt to internationalize the issue of Chameria, representatives from Tirana have addressed the issue to international courts. They demand the recognition of about 4,000 Chams who disappeared as a result of the 30-year conflict of Greece and Albania and the property rights of about 150,000, who were cast from their homes. Apart from that, as Rrapaj (1995) aptly highlights the Cham population demand compensation of around US \$340 million of properties lost during those years. The response from the international fora was not expected. From their side, the UN Assembly in New York recognized the humanitarian crisis and provided humanitarian aid to Albania in order to face the refugees’ crisis. The aid reached the amount of US \$26 million for the period of 1945-1947, as Vickers (2002) underlines in her analysis.

During the communist era, the issue of Chameria was not at the forefront of the bilateral relations of Greece and Albania. After the restoration of democracy in the country of Albania, the issue of Chameria was again included in the diplomatic agenda of Tirana. The Cham community is organized through the creation of political organizations and PDIU (Party for Justice, Integration, and Unity), which achieved parliamentary representation. The goal of PDIU, which was established in 2011 by Shpetim Idrizi, is to defend the claims for recognition and compensation of income for the confiscated properties of the Cham community. Specifically, PDIU declares itself as a “Party of the national causes, of the Cham issue, the inclusion of patriotism in the country’s governance” (*Kryefaqe*, 2021). Athens was not accepting the importance of the issue of Chameria at the level that the Albanian side presented it. Only once in 1991, as Albert Rakipi mentions in his analysis (2018), did the Greek side accept the “return of the Cham issue in the countries’ bilateral relations” during representative discussions. In particular, Foreign Minister Karolos Papoulias stated that the request for financial compensation of the Cham properties should be

discussed and aimed to be resolved by a bilateral commission. In spite of that, the Athens diplomatic agenda later did not recognize Chameria as an issue worth involving, thus the closure of the Chameria issue remained unfinished.

On the Albanian government front, since the restoration of democracy, their stand on the Cham issue has moved in various directions (Rakipi, 2018). During the 1994-1995 crisis, Tirana “radicalized” the stand of the government towards the Cham issue, while after the 1997 crisis, the government had to deal with issues of vital importance such as the anarchy that the state came close to, that left the Cham issue outside the political agenda altogether. Furthermore, the issue is frequently used as a tool during the internal debates of the Albanian political parties, but in a superficial meant to distract and place the blame on opposition parties and their failure to resolve the Cham issue.

The Cham issue is considered by many scholars (Rakipi, 2018; Cela, 2017; Vickers, 2002) as an “unresolved national issue”, that contains many political interests. From this point of view, the resolve of the Chameria issue is dependent on the political feasibility of the involving parts as well as by the involvement or not of the international fora. The recent event of an exhibition of the “Genocide of the Chams” that took place at the Presidential Palace in Tirana and which was visited by President Ilir Meta in November 2021, arose once more tensions and intense reactions from Athens (Kathimerini Newspaper, 2021). The Greek embassy in Tirana responded with a *démarche* over the use of the term “genocide” and the irredentist claims that the exhibition promotes. Overall, the Greek side does not consider that there is an issue when it comes to the status quo of Chameria and Athens stands up with the appropriate political acts to prevent such alternations.

1.3. The paradox of The State of War Law

Many of the political problems and ethnic/border issues mentioned before in the bilateral relations of Greece and Albania are caused or have been escalated due to the status of the war law that was in effect from the beginning of World War II.

In particular, after the invasion of Italy to Greece through Albania, on November 10, 1940, the Greek state passed decree no. 2636/1940, which is stated: “On Legal Actions of Enemies and Seizes Conservative Assets of Enemies” (Government Gazette of the Kingdom of Greece, Athens 1940). Through this decree, Greece and Albania were considered opposing states, due to the fact that Italy, which had already invaded Albania, also invaded Greece through the Albanian territory. Thus, the diplomatic relations were interrupted and the two countries did not share any political, economic, or commercial relations.

The state of war law between Athens and Tirana is considered a paradox, as it refers to “two states at war living in peace”, as Albert Rakipi (2018) mentions in his paper “Understanding Albanian-Greek relations: Deconstructing paradoxes and myths”. By this, Rakipi attempts to describe the foreign relations of the two states that were practically in war, but without any actual conflict or battle occurring. The Albanian side considered the war law meaningless, as Albanian was a conquered country at the time; thus, it would have been impossible to attack Greece (Koci, 2018). This is a thesis that can be easily proven right as through the history of both countries Albania did not attack any country, on the contrary, it struggled for ethnic survival. Although Greece managed to withdraw the state of war law with Italy after the ending of World War II, it left in power the Law of War with Albania, considering it still an enemy state.

The scrutiny of the Law of War continued and after the re-establishment of diplomatic relations. Although the Greek State Council declared the decision SE 2327/76, where it was stated that “Albania ceases to be considered an enemy state since its establishment of a regular diplomatic relationship or a decision of the Greek government of Andrea Papandreou of 1987 to formally abolish the state of war, it lacks legal efficiency”. This is due to the fact that the Greek parliament did never abolish the law. In other words, Greece and Albania are not de facto in a state of war, but they are de jure in a state of war because the decision of 1984 was never turned into Greek law.

The state of war law is important for our analysis, as it is a tool that has shaped bilateral relations. In particular, both countries have used the argument of war law, on the basis of which several claims are made. The most predominant argument of this point is the inability of the Cham population to claim compensation for their confiscated lands and properties. As it is analyzed by Fatjona Mejdini for BIRN (2018), the Albanian Prime Minister pointed out, during an interview on the Greek television, that the “Balkan Paradox” of the law war between Greece and Albania is a tool of the Greek side against the right of exiled Chams to internationalize the issue. As concerns the Greek side, Athens attempted to use the argument of the state of war as an alibi in order to bring the territorial claims’ request in the international fora (Morina, 2020; Krisafi 2014). To put it in another way Greece wanted to re-launch the territorial claims on the basis of the “war situation” between Greece and Albania, while the discussion of the conclusion of the peace treaty between them was also set on the table by the Greek government. The research of Morina and Krisafi (2020; 2014) refers to the aspiration of the Greek representatives to the territory of the Greek minority living in Albania, based on the expansionist policy of “Megali Idea”. Through the “war situation” of Athens and Tirana, the imposition of Greek dominance in those territories seemed a potential development.

Analyzing the research of multiple scholars (Koci, 2018; Feta 2018; Dervishi, 2019; Rakipi, 2018), someone can easily draw conclusions for the reason of existence of the status of war, which is the political convenience of the national representatives. This political convenience was the reason this issue was not clearly mentioned in the 1996 Agreement on Friendship, Cooperation, Good Neighborliness, and Security. The above-mentioned was pointed out by the Greek ex-Minister for Foreign Affairs, Nikos Kotzias, who admitted that the state of war was still active due to the non-signing of the 2018 agreement between him and the Albanian ex-Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ditmir Bushati. Furthermore, both Albania and Greece are members of NATO. Hence, both countries are obliged, according to article 5 of the Treaty of NATO, “to engage in a common defense in a case of an attack by a third party”. Despite the fact that this is one of the fundamental principles of NATO and it institutes a straight contradiction with the war situation of the two-member states, the royal decree of the war law still persisted.

1.4. Greek-Albanian Relations after the fall of the communism

The fall of the communist regime and the reconstitution of democracy for Albania was the beginning of a new era. At the public and foreign policy level, Albania aimed to come closer to the West and become part of the evolved world, leaving behind the dark era of Hoxha's isolationism. As concerns the external relations, the vision of the newly-elected democracy was to gradually build good neighborly relations, which was had already began through the restoration of diplomatic relations with Greece in 1971.

The main issue that dictates the bilateral relations of the countries remains the Greek minority in southern Albania. In other words, one of the most significant objectives of Greek foreign policy is the respect of the human rights of the minority. Thus, it promotes the safeguard of the Greek minority rights in Albania. From the point of view of Tirana, the respect of minority rights is one of the key criteria set by the EU for the accession of the country in the European family. Thus, Albania has made a progress on the required policy reforms in order to reach the conditions set by the EU institutions, and this progress is noticed by the EU officials.

From 2000 and until now, bilateral relations are characterized mainly by cooperation in a variety of fields, and mainly in the fields of European integration and North-Atlantic cooperation. Since the European Council of Thessaloniki in 2003, when the "European dream" became a possibility for the countries of the Balkan peninsula, Tirana shaped its policy agendas based on that factor. Greece, from its point of view, was a strong supporter of the enlargement of the EU towards the Balkans. Albania officially applied for an EU membership in 2009, and waited until 2014, when it got the status of candidate country by the Commission. Albania had to face the Eurosceptic countries, which considered the enlargement of the Union a fallacious step for the future and prosperity of the EU. Greece was not one of them, as along with Italy and Bulgaria, it endorsed the progress made by Tirana and pushed the EU to open the negotiations (Armakolas and Triantafyllou, 2015).

Undoubtedly Athens and Tirana have reached a milestone in their communication and cooperation since the re-establishment of diplomatic relations in 1971. Nevertheless, there are some crucial issues that need to be addressed and prioritized in each country's political agendas. The first one would be the demand of the Greek side for the establishment of cemeteries of Greek Soldiers in Albanian land, as a sign of commemoration to the soldiers that fought and died for Greece. Although there is an agreement on the issue, as Bledar Feta (2017) points out in his analysis, the Albanian side, represented by the ex-Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ditmir Bushati, "needs some guarantee from the Greek part on how this agreement would be implemented in practice". In other words, the arrangement of the establishment of the cemeteries would be a visual reality only when the two counterparts have reserved their interests.

In addition, the open issues between Greece and Albania remain the same as in the previous decades. Therefore, the political agendas of both countries consist of the respect and preservation of the Greek minority's rights in Southern Albania, the improvement of the living and working conditions of the Albanian immigrants residing in Greece, and the pressure of Tirana on Greece to move towards the recognition of Kosovo.

Moreover, in the past decades, and in particular, in 2014, the bilateral relations are intensified due to the maritime dispute over the agreement for the Delimitation of the Greek-Albanian Continental Shelf and Maritime Zones between Greece and Albania. In the following chapter, the highly sensitive issue of the Maritime disagreement will be researched and examined to understand how the issue is waiting to be resolved in the International Court of Justice in the Hague after failing to be settled otherwise.

The Maritime (Dis)Agreement between Albania and Greece, from the 2009 agreement to the Hague.

In this chapter, the issue of the maritime dispute between Greece and Albania will be analyzed. Firstly, the definition of the international law based on the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea for the delimitation of: the territorial water, and the continental shelf and Exclusive Economic Zone will be given. In addition, the political development of both countries will be analyzed, for the way it led to the signing of the initial agreement of 2009 over the delimitation of the continental shelf and other maritime areas. The most interesting part will be to point out the significance of the treaty for each country, and whether it was considered a political success from each side. The nullification of this mutual agreement and the new wave of tensions between the countries, will also be analyzed. In the last part of this chapter, the mutual decision of Athens and Tirana to address this issue in front of the International Court of Justice in the Hague will be examined.

When it comes to maritime law, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea is considered the most important document about international maritime law, and usually is referred to as the “constitution of the maritime law”. The Convention, which is ratified by both Greece and Albania, set the basis for the declaration of maritime borders of coastal countries. Each coastal state has the right “to establish its territorial water up to 12 nautical miles, measured from baselines”, according to Article 3, while article 76 gives a definition of the continental shelf and the right of its delimitation. In particular, the continental shelf is established up to “200 nautical miles from the baselines from which the breadth of the territorial sea is measured where the outer edge of the continental margin does not extend up to that distance”. Furthermore, the notion of the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of a coastal country is defined as “an area beyond and adjacent to the territorial sea, where the coastal state has sovereign rights and jurisdiction” (UNCLOS, art. 55 & 56). The breadth of EEZ shall not extend beyond 200 nautical miles from the baselines from which the breadth of the territorial sea is measured”, as it is stated in article 57 of the Convention.

2.1. The points of disagreement for Greece and Albania

The maritime borders between Albania and Greece were firstly defined by the Protocol of Florence (1926), but the definition was inadequate and was left to be analyzed in due course. In particular, Article 10 of the protocol stated that “various

issues will arise for determining the boundary line, which are not provided by this Protocol and shall be the subjects of different agreements between governments". In 1926 Albania, Greece and Yugoslavia signed the final judgment concerning the maritime borders at the Paris Conference of Ambassadors.

Greece and Albania, as two countries that have ratified UNCLOS, had set their maritime borders by signing agreements over the delimitation of the territorial sea, continental shelf, and EEZ. Greece ratified UNCLOS in 1994 and established its right to exceed the breadth of its territorial sea from 6 to 12 nautical miles. The extension to 12 nautical miles has been difficult to be achieved by Greece due to the maritime dispute with Turkey over the delimitation of the territorial waters in the Aegean Sea (Siousiouras & Chrysochou, 2014). On the other side, Albania ratified UNCLOS in 2003 and has to reach bilateral agreements with its neighbors for the delimitation of the three maritime zones.

Despite the fact that both countries have ratified the Convention, the natural topography and location of the islands in the Ionian Sea make the delimitation of the maritime borders more complicated. Although each country has the right to extend its territorial waters up to 12 nautical miles according to UNCLOS, there are certain circumstances that this right cannot be exercised. In the case of Greece and Albania, the existence of Greek islands close to the mainland of Albania such as Corfu, Lazaretto, Erikousa, and Othonoi put constraints on the above-mentioned exercise.

When it comes to the Exclusive Economic Zones, the UNCLOS states that "when there are two countries with coastal opposite or adjacent to each other, the establishment of an exclusive economic zone should be decided upon mutual agreement". In other words, Greece and Albania had to sign an agreement not just to delimitate the territorial waters of each country, but to define the Exclusive Economic Zones, which are a significant factor of the national economies for each country. According to article 15 of UNCLOS,

Where the coasts of two states are opposite or adjacent to each other, neither of the two States is entitled, failing agreement between them to the contrary, to extend its territorial sea beyond the median line every point of which is

equidistant from the nearest points on the baselines from which the breadth of the territorial seas of the two States is measured. However, the above provision does not apply where it is necessary because of historic title or other special circumstances to delimit the territorial seas of the two states in a way which is at variance therewith. (Art. 15, UNCLOS)

Based on that article, the delimitation of the Ionian Sea refers to the conditions of special circumstances where the presence of a small uninhabited island should be considered or should not be considered as a point on the baseline.

2.2. The reach of the first agreement of 2009

On March 19, 2009, the “Agreement between Greece and Albanian on the delimitation of the continental shelf and other maritime areas, according to the International Law”, was signed in Tirana. It marked the conclusion of the negotiations of the two countries over the maritime border. The agreement was signed by the two prime ministers, Kostas Karamanlis and Sali Berisha, and was considered an important accomplishment of each government. The two sides agreed on defining the maritime borders in accordance with the Montego Bay Convention, which required the demonstration with coordinates on the map of the borders of the territorial sea and other sea areas that must be expressed by a bilateral agreement accompanied by a map (Dervishi, 2021).

During the process of the agreement, the two negotiating sides agreed on the delimitation of the Territorial Sea first, since the last coordinate of the territorial sea consists of the first coordinate of the continental shelf and Exclusive Economic Zone. In addition, it was agreed on the use of the principle of strict equality. According to this, the maritime borders will be defined by the midline, each point of which is equidistant from the nearest points of the baseline from which the breadth of territorial sea waters is measured (Reci & Zefi, 2021). In the case of Greece and Albania, the use of the principle of strict equality is not the appropriate one, as it does not consider any particular circumstances, for instance, the existence of islands close enough to each other.

Furthermore, by using the principle of strict equality, there is no distinction between islands and inhabited rocks, which may not have a continental shelf or Exclusive Economic Zone when uninhabited or engaged in economic activity. Thus, the existence of small islands like Erikousa, Lazareto, Othonoi, or the Barchetta rock has given Greece a strategic advantage to set its territorial water. On the other side, Albania criticizes the use of the principle of strict equality, as it has to be considered as circumstances with particular characteristics. The signing of the agreement by Albania was criticized not just by the opposition, but the whole political elite society of the country who considered it as disrespectful of the national and strategic interests of the country.

2.2.1. Significance of agreement for Greece

The significance of the agreement was enormous for Greece, and it was considered by the government representatives at the time as innovatory. In particular, the former Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, George Valinakis, in his book “Greece of four seas” explains the political strategy of Greece during these years and considers the agreement of 2009 to set a “multi-purpose boundary that delimitates the traditional maritime zones (territorial waters and continental shelf) and new jurisdiction zones (EEZ) (...) and a built-in mechanism for an automatic extension to any future maritime zone might be proclaimed” (Valinakis, 2020). According to Valinakis, the aim of the government of Karamanlis was to expand the geostrategic space of Greece to 500.00 square kilometers of new marine and sub-marine space, which provide geopolitical, economic, and energy efficiency advantages to Greece. Furthermore, Greece as a coastal state that invests a huge part of its budget on shipping, has many reasons to pursue the extension of its territorial waters to 12 nautical miles.

In addition, the conflict with Turkey over the delimitation of maritime borders on the Aegean Sea is one of the most important issues on its political agenda. Due to that fact, achieving the delimitation on the Ionian Sea would be a sign of success for Greek diplomacy and a demonstration of power towards its neighbors. In addition, the demarcation of the maritime borders at 12 nautical miles in the Ionian Sea could be

for Greece, and the international fora, the driver for the equivalent resolution of the issue of maritime borders with Turkey in the Aegean Sea.

Furthermore, the economic significance of the agreement is another important component of the agenda of the Greek government. Thus, the delimitation of the maritime borders will provide Greece with the advantage of the exploitation of marine resources. The same advantage will be given in the shipping industry, which is a strong field of economic prosperity for the country.

2.2.2. Significance of agreement for Albania

In comparison to Greece, the signing of the agreement for Albania contains mainly disadvantages in the levels of economy, geopolitics, and historical importance. Geographically, the country loses more than 354,4 square kilometers of sea from the limits set under the agreement for the avoidance of marine waters and the continental shelf division. Historically, the Albanian side claims that the maritime borders between Greece and Albania are set through the Protocol of Florence (1926). Greece has ratified that agreement and accepted the delimitation of the sea, which renders unnecessary the re-definition of the maritime borders.

Apart from that, the economic importance of the delimitation of the borders is significant for the country of Albania for a number of reasons. Firstly, the ports of Albania, especially those of Vlora and Durres, would mark the front of the entrance of the Pan-European Transport Corridor No 8, which connects the Adriatic Sea with the Black Sea through Albania, Macedonia, and Bulgaria. Furthermore, the same ports will be the finish point of the AMBO pipeline, according to the plan. Those projects will boost the economy of Albania and enhance financial stability and attract Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). According to the research of Kasem Cenaj (2015), the delimitation of the Albanian territorial waters will cause the deduction of ships stopping in the ports of Vlora and Durres. Instead of those, cargo ships coming from the Suez Canal, as well as gas and oil carriers, will stop at the port of Igoumenitsa. Furthermore, the section of tourism is also affected by the signing of the agreement. Especially, the Albanian ports lose their attraction as tourist ports for yachts.

Additionally, the geopolitical significance of delimitating the maritime borders and exclusive economic zones is important. The Adriatic Sea and the Ionian Sea are considered a bridge between the Balkan Peninsula and the rest of Europe. Thus, the control of those waters gives to the country strategic advantages on the whole region. Worth mentioning is the project of Trans-Mediterranean Renewable Energy Cooperation (TREC), which aims to initiate a common market and an interconnection in infrastructure for renewable energies among the countries surrounding the Mediterranean Sea. One of the branches of the network crosses the channel of Otranto, which is located in the Albanian maritime territory. Based on the corpus of the agreement, the channel of Otranto was about to pass to the Greek state. This turn would have created an enormous strategic and economic disadvantage to Albania.

To sum up, the agreement for the delimitation of the maritime borders created two different impressions in the public opinion. For Greece, it was considered an act of supreme diplomacy that managed to solve in the most appropriate way a crucial issue for the region. On the other hand, Albania considered the signing of the agreement a humiliating move that did not respect and preserve the national interests.

2.3. Annulment of the Agreement by the Albanian Constitutional Court

Only a year after the signing of the “sea Agreement”, the Constitutional Court of Albania annulled it on 15 April 2010. The significance of this development was not just the annulment of a mutual agreement that could have resolved one of the most crucial issues between the two neighboring countries, but the political reasons that lead to that decision and how this has shaped the bilateral relations of Tirana and Athens.

To begin with, after the signing of the agreement by the two countries, the Socialist Party led by Edi Rama, which was the opposition party at that time, set the issue of the agreement to the Constitutional court. After examining the situation, the Constitutional Court of Albania released Decision no. 15, dated 15.04.2010, where it declared the incompatibility of the Agreement with the principles of the Constitution of the Republic of Albania. Particularly, the agreement faces inconsistency with articles 3, 4, 7, and 92/e of the Constitution of Albania (Reci & Zefi, 2021).

According to these articles, the agreement does not respect the sovereignty and national identity of the country and its ability to govern based on the separation of powers. CC Decision 15.3 declared the constitutional points that need to be addressed when it comes to the agreement of the delimitation of maritime zones. Those are:

1. the title and content of the agreement and the need to define the respective maritime spaces;
2. the application of the principle of strict equality or equidistance of distance for the division of maritime spaces belonging to both countries;
3. the influence of islands and rock masses in the determination of maritime spaces points to crucial importance for the issue.

Apart from the incompatibility of the agreement, the Constitutional Court decided over the “power of the negotiating team of the Albanian government” (Reci & Zefi, 2021) and the “lack of plenipotentiary power” (Noussia, 2010). The Court examined whether the constitutional body has violated the rights of political parties through a normative act issued by it. The Court considered illegal the representation of the state by the government without the prior authorization of the president. In particular, the negotiating team of 2009 exceeded its mandate by delimitating the Territorial Sea, (Dervishi, 2021). According to Decision 35, 2010, the Albanian side has negotiated for a wider object than it was authorized, which made the agreement incompatible with the principle of the rule of law guaranteed by article 4/2 of the Constitution. Thus, one of the main arguments of the Court was the lack of transparency that surrounded the agreement process, which made it easier to consider it illegal and unconstitutional.

The abovementioned point of the Court was the main and only “lag” recognized from the Greek side as concerns the signing of the agreement of 2009. Athens considered the violation of the rule of law principle as an obstacle to the progress of the agreement. Nevertheless, the nullification of the agreement created distress in Athens, which rejected the decision of the court and put pressure on Tirana for future ratification of the agreement. That period is described as a “discourse of hostility” (Ndoj, 2015) between Greece and Albania. By this term, Ndoj explains the diplomatic efforts of Albania to come closer to a new agreement over the sea issue and the

persistence of the Greek political elite for the ratification of the same agreement despite the court's decision.

In order to achieve the aim of ratification from the Albanian side, Athens used the “carrot and stick” method. This is one of the most frequently used diplomatic techniques when it comes to bilateral relations between Greece and Albania. Athens utilizes the necessity of Tirana for allies in the European integration process and uses its position as the “dominant signifier” based on the discourse analysis theory (Fairclough, 1989) to position Albania as the “less powerful signifier”. Hence, Greece used its supremacy of power and pressured Albanian for the maintenance of the nullified agreement, despite the absolute disagreement of the Albanian side.

Additionally, the Court argued that the agreement should be considered illegal as it was not structured based on the “sea law” of UNCLOS, while there were deficiencies in the content of the agreement. Firstly, the Constitutional Court points out the use of the principle of equity as the way to successfully and fairly achieve the maritime zones' delimitation. On the basis of that, the Court points out the main pillars against the agreement. The first one is the baseline drawing of the relative coasts of the two countries. Particularly, the Albanian territorial waters are measured from the low tide line of the relative coast, while the Greek territorial waters are measured with straight baselines coasts. This results in the bay of Corfu being enclosed (internal waters) while the islands in the north of Corfu to be closed in common line, with a full effect in the maritime zones calculation. (Reci & Zefi, 2021).

Moreover, the issue of Barchetta has been one of the points of argument of the Constitutional Court. In particular, Greece has used the rock of Barchetta as a baseline point to delimitate its territorial water (Figure 1). Barchetta or Psillos in Greek is an uninhabited reef located in the north of Corfu Island. Thus, a small, deserted island with minimum economic activity cannot be considered as a baseline point according to article 121 of UNCLOS, so it is illegal for Greece to set its maritime borders based on the Barchetta rock. Last but not least, the court concluded that Lazaretto, Othonoi and Ereikousa were not considered as "special circumstances". (Figure 2). According to the Court, these islands should have not been given full effect on the delimitation

process regarding the Continental Shelf and the EEZ, as it has happened in the Serpent Island decision by the ICJ (ICJ Reports, 2009).



Figure 1: The territorial sea delimitation between Greece and Albania in the straight between Albania and Corfu. The effect of the Barchetta island.

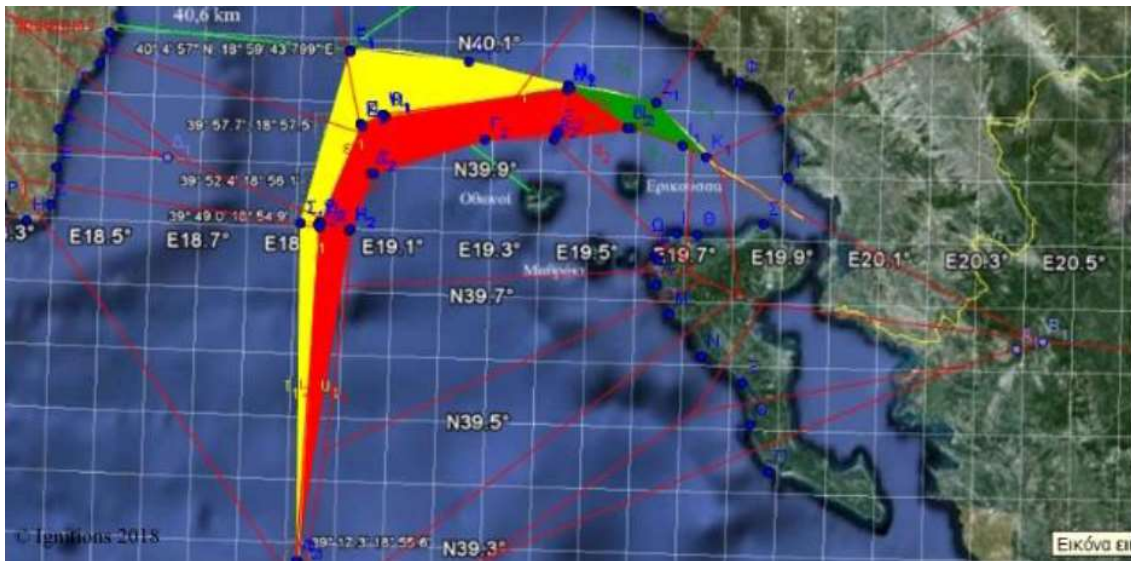


Figure 2: The Albanian EEZ delimitation, affected by Othonoi and Erikousa

2.4. Address of the dispute in the International Court of Justice in the Hague as the resolution of the issue

In order for the process of delimitation to be considered complete, an international treaty based on international law must be signed, or there must be a court decision, which will be accepted by the counterparts (UNCLOS, art. 83). Greece and Albania were close to signing the final agreement for the delimitation of the maritime zones between them, but the decision of the Constitutional Court made impossible the resolution of the maritime issue. From 2010 until 2020, the issue of maritime borders remained out of the political agendas of the foreign ministers of both countries, as neither Greece nor Albania were ready to compromise.

The maritime issue was a hot topic on the agendas of the foreign affairs of each country but remained unresolved as both sides could not reach an agreement. In June 2020, after the agreement of the maritime borders with Italy, Greece decided to double its territorial waters from 6 nautical miles to 12 nautical miles in the Ionian Sea. Tirana reacted to this political movement with strong criticism from the political elites and media. The Albanian side questioned the extension of the territorial waters of Greece as a threat and redefinition of the exclusive economic zones on Albania's

continental shelf, which was considered as an immense violation of its economic and geopolitical interests.

After rounds of diplomatic discussions that did not come up with the desired resolution of the issue, the two countries decided to address the issue at the International Court of Justice. During an official visit to Tirana in October 2020 the Greek Minister of Foreign Affairs, Nikos Dendias discussed with the Albanian Prime Minister, Edi Rama, the bilateral issues that faced the two countries. One of them was the maritime dispute and the two government representatives came to the conclusion that the best possible solution is to take the maritime dispute to the International Court of Justice.

This development was approved by the European Union. After the joint decision of ICJ assistance, the European Commission's Spokesperson Ana Pisonero wrote on her Twitter account that "the EU welcomes the announcement of the governments of Albania and Greece on how to proceed with their maritime dispute. Issues related to delimitation of borders are indeed best addressed through dialogue, in accordance with international law and in pursuit of the principle of good neighborly relations" (2020). The fact that the EU approved the agreement benefited the image of both countries in the international fora; thus, is considered a win-win situation.

Both Foreign Minister Dendias and Prime Minister Rama declared mutual trust and will in order for the two countries to resolve the issue. The efforts by the two countries confirm the political focus on the strengthening of the bilateral relations of Greece and Albania, that both governments have declared through the past years. Furthermore, for Tirana, the resolution of the maritime border issue was of great importance as it was preliminary for the opening of accession negotiations with the EU. Athens has been a strong supporter of the EU accession process of Albania, and the events of October 2020 were additional proof of that.

To summarize, the maritime dispute is a controversial issue that forms the bilateral relations of Greece and Albania. The issue dates back to 1926 when the borders were set in the Protocol of Florence. The 2009 agreement was the only point that the resolution of the dispute was close, but the Constitutional Court of Albania nullified

the agreement as illegal and unconstitutional. This fact caused a period of tension for the diplomatic relations of the two countries, which ended with the address of the issue to the International Court of Justice. Although the country representatives managed to reach a mutual solution, neither Greece nor Albania are prepared to accept a solution for the delimitation of the maritime borders that could undermine their national interests.

Framing The Maritime Dispute in the Albanian and Greek Media

Having analyzed and understood the issue of the maritime dispute between Greece and Albania, this chapter will proceed and attempt to associate political communication and this particular issue. As Voudouri aptly points out in her analysis for Tirana Observatory “both Greek and Albanian media usually function as an extension and mirror of government policies and decisions” (2021). Thus, studying the representation of the issue can contribute to shaping a more integrated picture of the diplomatic and bilateral relations between Greece and Albania.

The maritime dispute, as it was mentioned in the previous chapters of the thesis, has been one of the most significant issues of the political agendas of Greece and Albania. According to scholars, media plays an important role in the formation of public opinion and it is considered as a continuation of official policy. By analyzing the media representation of the sea issue through the framing analysis, would make it possible to reach conclusions over a) the differences in the scope of representation of the issue in Albanian and Greek media, b) the impact of the media framing in the bilateral relations of the two countries, and c) the impact of the media framing in the formation of the public opinion over the dispute.

In order to achieve the aforementioned objectives, articles in Greek and Albanian newspapers will be collected and analyzed. The content of the articles will concern the agreement of the two countries to settle the dispute in the international court of the Hague. In this context, the way the same issue is represented in the two countries will be examined on the basis of framing theory. Furthermore, an attempt will be made to categorize the frames that have been used, with the ultimate aim of drawing

conclusions about the objectives and policy lines of the two countries. The findings of the framing analysis will be compared with the findings of opinion polls conducted both in Albania and Greece, aiming to underline the correlation between the news framing and the impact of it in the formation of the perspectives of people for the neighboring countries.

3.1. Methodology

In order to achieve this analysis, it is worth developing the theoretical framework of the framing approach. In this way, both the categorization of the material and the results that will be derived from it will be more understandable.

Framing is a common method of analyzing mass communication, which applies to a wide variety of social sciences. Many scholars have studied the method of framing and have given different aspects on the use of frames and framing. Erving Goffman (1974) was the first to analyze framing theory as a research method. In his book “Frame analysis” he defined frame as “the culturally determined definitions of reality that allow people to make sense of objects and events” (1974). While Entman (1993) a few years later highlighted that framing influences thinking and is a way to show the power of the communicating text.

In political communication, framing is a valuable research method that can shape and influence the political relations of the countries, as well as impinge on the configuration of public opinion. In the research of Entman (1993), it is stated that frames play a major role in the exertion of political power. Specifically, depending on the frame used in the news text, the identity of actors or interests can be differentiated to the recipients. Thus, depending on the use of framing on news texts, the result on the audience can vary. Furthermore, in the same paper, Entman identifies the locations of framing, which are the communicator, the text, the receiver, and the culture (Entman, 1993), while the stages of framing are: the frame-building, frame-setting, and individual and social level consequences of framing (d’Angelo, 2002; Scheufele, 2000; de Vreese 2002).

Through the frame-building stage, the primary characteristics of the frames are determined, with the influence of journalists and elites. The new frames that appear in the text are the result of the frame-building process (de Vreese, 2005). The upcoming stage of frame-setting consists of the affection of the frames in the recipient's knowledge and interpretation of issues and events. The final stage is the consequences of the frame-setting to individuals and societies. In the first case, the individual might change attitudes over the issue being framed, while on the societal level, the consequences might be "political socialization, decision-making, and collective actions (ibid.)

Scheufele studied thoroughly in his research paper (2004) the levels of framing, which gives an analytical definition of the level that framing functions. Particularly there is a horizontal and vertical division of framing. On the horizontal level Scheufele involves a) journalists or media system, b) recipients or society, and c) political, economic, cultural, etc. groups or organizations (ibid, p.5). At the vertical level there are three ways of identifying framing: a) as a cognitive complex, b) in public or inter-media discourse and c) as a textual structure of discourse products (ibid.). From this classification derive three branches of framing research: a) the communicator approach, b) the public discourse or social movement approach and c) the media effects approach, which is the one that will be used for the purpose of this paper.

Entman (1993) explained deeply and detailed the concept of media frames which consists of "selection and salience", which encompasses the way of making information more noticeable and memorable to the audience. The concept of framing of Entman was supported by numerous scholars (Price, Tewksbury, & Powers, 1995; Scheufele, 1999), which concluded that the way of representation of news can "systemically affect how the recipients of the news come to understand these events" (Price, Tewksbury, & Powers, 1995, p. 4). Ghanem took a step further in his study (1997), where he expressed the position that "the media do not only determine what we think but also how we think".

Besides defining the significance of framing in political communication, it is equally important to set the characteristics that a frame has in a news story, in order to

identify it in the media. There are two approaches documented in the framing identification process. The first one is the inductive approach, where the analysis of the news is based on a priori frames set in mind (Gamson 1992; Neuman et al. 1992). In the category of inductive approaches, many scholars have included methods like hermeneutic, linguistic, manual, and computer-assisted approach (Matthes and Kohring, 2008). The common thing of all these methods is that they attempt to reason from the particular to the general. The second one is the deductive approach, which is preferred by most scholars. According to this approach, frames are already defined prior to the operationalization and investigation process (de Vreese, 2005). The second approach consists of methods more credible on the identification of frames in order to be able to get more concrete outcomes.

In addition, Entman has defined the components of a frame as “the presence and absence of certain keywords, stock phrases, stereotyped images, sources of information and sentences that provide thematically reinforcing clusters of facts or judgments” (1993, p.52). Through the years, various scholars have studied and examined the components of a frame, but all the definitions are indefinite and consist of general characteristics that cannot help to precisely give the definition. In the research study of Tankard, there is a list of eleven framing mechanisms that help identify and measure new frames. Those are: headlines and sub headlines, photos and photos’ caption, leads, source, and quotes selection, pull quotes, logos, statistical charts, and concluding statements and paragraphs (Tankard, 2001).

In the research of Coombs & Holladay (2004), it is stated that the news frame can help crisis managers to identify the appropriate strategy for the minimization of the crisis. In particular, the crisis is an event that people aim to know more about from the news. The way that news provides that information can affect the perception of public opinion over the issue.

In that concept, it is stimulating to analyze a political issue based on the frame that it is used on the media and how this has affected the public opinion or the counterparts involved. In this chapter, the maritime issue between Greece and Albania will be analyzed, based on the theory of framing in both Albanian and Greek media. In particular, two major developments in the maritime dispute will be used as the

baseline: the annulment of the 2009 agreement by the Constitutional Court and the 2020 decision to address the sea issue to the International Court of Justice in the Hague. This comparison aims to see the differences in the representation of the issue in Greek and Albanian media, based on the framing that is used in each case. Besides, in the last part of the chapter, the framing effects in the Albanian and Greek public opinion will be analyzed. Through this part, there will be an attempt to clarify if the bilateral relation of the two countries has been affected through the media representation of the maritime dispute.

3.2. The Albanian and Greek media scene

Before proceeding to the news analysis, it is worth mentioning the general conditions under which the media functions in both countries. Through this process, it would be more comprehensive and coherent the framework that the issue is covered.

The Albanian media landscape

Article 12 of the Albanian Constitution stated that the country guarantees “freedom of speech and freedom of the press, radio and television and considers them a part of the fundamental human rights and freedom. In practice, the country faces many challenges on the respect of the above-mentioned rights and is usually criticized by press freedom organizations for non-transparency of the media. According to the 2021 World Press Freedom Index, Albanian ranks 83 out of the 180 countries (*World Press Freedom Index*, 2021). The polarization and politicization of media are frequent, while there are restrictions to journalists and there were attempts to criminalize journalism through arrests of journalists during a protest.

According to many analysts, the restriction of press freedom is a result of Albania's socio-political history. The independence of the press is inextricably linked to the country's overall transition from the isolationism of the communist period to the period of democracy. In particular, in Zguri's analysis of the relationship between Albanian media and politics, it is stated that "in the early 1990s, TV channels and media were born after the strong political demand, while afterwards the influence of

social and market demand prevailed in shaping Albanian media" (Zguro, p. 52). Therefore, Albanian channels were in essence the property of political parties and were driven by their interests and political expediencies.

In particular, the Albanian Parliament has called for the passage of a "defamation law" that orders the government to withdraw and empowers news websites to fine. After the intervention of the Venice Commission, the proposed bill was not voted in the Albanian parliament as it did not meet the international standards and principles of media freedom. In general, the legal framework for enforcing press freedom exists, as it is a prerequisite for the EU accession process, but its implementation by the media is incomplete.

In the overall picture of the Albanian media, there is a clear distinction in terms of the support of each TV channel or newspaper for each political party. As the country is strongly bi-partisan, the channels are friendly to either the socialist (PS) or the democratic party (PD). In fact, the country's prime minister launched his own private television channel in 2017 called ERTV.al, which presents the government's activities and news. This venture of the Prime Minister was subjected to huge public criticism and was accused of infringing on the freedom of the press. However, instead of proceeding to suspend its operation, the Rama government announced the creation of the Media and Information Agency after its re-election in 2017.

The Greek media landscape

Although Greece respects the freedom of the press, the Greek media landscape is characterized by fragmentation. According to the 2021 World Press Freedom Index, Greece ranks 70 out of 180 countries (RSF, 2021). This ranking decline is concerning and comes as a result of the media propaganda, the polarized TV channels, the online fragmentation, and the print sector crisis. The power of social media as a news source is increasing, as a result of the disbelief of people in the validity and transparency of the media.

Furthermore, political information in Greece becomes increasingly fragmented and skewed. The respective government establishes a “political line”, which all media channels are obliged to follow. According to Voudouri (2021) and Pleios and Frangonikolopoulos (2011), the Greek public's ability to form independent opinions is hampered by a lack of expert knowledge on foreign policy matters. Therefore, the landscape of the Greek media is guided by the respective political authorities of the country, which justifies the use rife use of framing in the media.

3.3. The Albanian Media Representation

After Greek Foreign Minister, Nikos Dendias, and Albanian Prime Minister, Edi Rama, agreed to refer the issue to the ICJ, most news agencies reported the news in a positive manner. Specifically, on 20 October 2020 news portal “Telegrafi”, posted an article with the title: “Greece and Albania address to The Hague on the sea issue” (2020). Through the article, the journalist informs the readers on the manner of achieving the international arbitration option and what this means for Albania. The positive atmosphere in which the treaty was reached by both sides is mentioned, while the journalist also seems to consider the joint decision a positive outcome on the issue. This covered a section of the press, who handled the issue with the prevalence of a positive style and tone.

In all the Albanian press surveyed, the issue of the delimitation of the maritime zones between Greece and Albania is categorized as follows: one part of the press refers to the political initiatives of the ruling party and another part presents the resolution of the issue through international arbitration as the most rational option. In the first category, the government representatives are criticized for their diplomatic skills and political expediency behind the settlement of the issue with Greece. In addition, articles or news features are also included in this framing, presenting the government's responses to the opposition's criticisms of them. At the same time, the research includes the opinion and positioning of both foreign policy journalists and opinion-makers, who comment on the strategic importance of the agreement for Albania.

3.3.1. Attribution of responsibility for the management of the Agreement

In the majority of the articles, the issue of marine zones is covered in the framework of responsibility for management. On the one hand, the opposition blames the government for corruption and lack of transparency, and on the other hand, government representatives argue that the opposition's purpose is to malign the government's practices rather than to make a meaningful contribution to the country's political events. Another characteristic of the presentation of the issue in the Albanian press is the framing of the inability of government representatives to perform their duties properly and impartially. Therefore, the main issue on which the Albanian press is focusing on is the internal political situation in Albania and the bipartisan conflict in the Albanian Parliament.

In 2020 “Shqip” newspaper published an article, in which the former ambassador Shaban Murati expresses his opinion over the resolution of the maritime issue. Murati considered a forced march from the Albanian side. In particular, he points out that “Greece had negotiations with Italy over 40 years to reach an agreement over the delimitation of their maritime zones...while Albania, which chooses its foreign ministers from the street, has managed to reach an agreement in after 9 months and 6 months of negotiations” (Murati, 2020). Murati, as a significant opinion-maker in Albania, considers the political capability of the Albanian foreign ministers insufficient and blames the government officials for signing a treaty that is not favorable for the Albanian interests. This is of significant importance, as it comes from a former diplomat, who is specialized in the issues of the relationship between Greece and Albania. Consequently, Murati's questioning of politicians' decisions on this issue raises many questions about the validity of the Albanian government's political actions.

That was not the only position of Murati against the settlement of the issue of the delimitation of the maritime zones. The online news portal “thealbanian.co.uk” published an article of the distinguished diplomat Murati with the title “Maritime issue and an unpublished meeting of an Albanian Diplomat in Athens” (2020). In his text, Murati points out that the appeal to the ICJ was motivated by the Greek side,

which questioned the ability of Albanian diplomats to cope with the negotiations. Again, Murati accuses the Albanian administrative and their insufficient negotiating and decision-making skills, while he clearly highlights the need of redefinition of the Albanian, national interests in the Ionian Sea.

Following the criticism of the government and Rama's policy choices towards Greece, a number of renowned foreign policy journalists take a stand on the issue. One of them is Andi Bushati. In October 2020, the newspaper “Koha Jone” published an article by Andi Bushati, an experienced political journalist, with the title “Andi Bushati: Why we have to say “ejvallah” (Thank you) to Rama for the sea?” (2020). The article criticizes the decision to address the issue to the International Court of Justice. Bushati considers the outcome of the negotiations an uncertain solution, which was motivated by the national interests of Athens. Thus, it is a hasty move to congratulate Rama’s government for the way it has handled the issue of delimitation of the maritime zones. It was an abortive move, which predisposes the journalist to the difficulty of dealing with the crisis on the part of the government's representatives.

Similarly, in September 2020, news portal “lajme.al” published an article with the headline “Rudina Xhunga comments on the maritime dispute and makes a strong statement against Rama” (2020). Rudina Xhunga, a outstanding journalist and strong opinion-maker in Albania, stated that the maritime issue has significant national importance and is mandatory to be dealt with transparency from the government representatives. Through that, the journalist accuses indirectly Rama of corruption and states that he should prioritize communicating the issue with the Albanian people and not just the opposition. Again, in this case, the issue is presented by focusing on the political inability of government representatives to exercise power impartially. Moreover, the inability of the Rama government to maintain the principle of transparency both with the other Parliamentary members and with the Albanian people is also highlighted.

Apart from journalists and opinion makers positioning in the issue of the maritime borders, the position of the opposition needs to be examined. Particularly, after the announcement of the international arbitration, the leader of the opposition party PD, Lulzim Basha, expressed his opinion over the issue. For the past 10 years, he

considered the address of the issue to the ICJ as the only viable resolution (2020). In like manner, Basha gave an interview for the “Politiko.al” news portal. Basha criticized the government’s handling of the sea issue and declared that from his point of view the settlement of the issue by an international arbitration should have been chosen after the annulment of the first agreement by the Constitutional Court. The above presentation of the issue is evidence of the framing of the issue in terms of the blame game among Albanian political circles. In particular, while in essence, the opposition agrees with the recourse to the ICJ as the best possible solution, the title of the article and the way it is structured initially projects the criticism from its side. The fact of agreement on the issue of resolving the dispute in the same way as the ruling party takes a back seat.

Following the framing of distrust towards the governments’ management of the issue, the digital version of the newspaper “Tema” in February 2021 published an article with the title “Maritime issue, Ilir Meta accuses Rama: He hasn’t shown transparency and cooperation” (2021). The article analyses the opinion of President Meta, who considers that Edi Rama has not cooperated with him or the other members of Parliament, while he has not made his political decisions based on transparency.

In November 2020 the newspaper “Sot” published the article “The hot issue of the sea, the Greek minister reveals the background: 6 months of negotiations with Rama, Meta, and Basha” (2020). Reporter Aleksander Marku writes that one of the Greek Ministers (which is not named in the article) considers the delimitation of the maritime zones in the Ionian Sea as a message of achievement to Turkey, with which Greece has to delimitate the maritime zones in the Aegean Sea. Although Turkey's involvement is one of the most common patterns in the Greek press, the Albanian coverage of the issue does not so often associate the negotiating battle between Greece and Albania with Turkish foreign policy in Albania. For this particular article where the connection is made, it could be concluded that the journalist is influenced by the Greek media, where he works from time to time.

However, the government did not remain inactive in the face of accusations of lack of transparency and undermining of Albanian interests. In like manner, the biggest tv

media in Albania, top-channel.tv, broadcasts a video of Prime Minister Rama, talking with civilians from the city of Saranda. The title of the article is “The decision of Greece are misinterpreted”/Rama for the sea issue: Blackguards that add fuel to the fire” (2021), in which Prime Minister Rama pointed out the right of Greece for the expansion. Rama indicated that the opposition is blatantly trying to undermine the importance of settling the issue by fanning tensions. He accused the opposition of exacerbating the issue by claiming that Albania has sold its Sea to the Greeks. In addition, he declares that the internationalization of the issue was the only rational choice for the resolution of the problem. Although the Prime Minister's words refer to all the categorizations of framing that have been mentioned in this chapter, one could easily draw a conclusion about the way the article emphasizes the issue. This can be understood from the choice of the title, which mentions the accusation against the government for selling off the sea in Greece.

In like manner, the newspaper “Shqip” in January 2021, reports on an interview of Edi Rama to the tv show “Open” with the title “Maritime agreement with Greece? Rama accuses Berisha and Nishani: in 2008, they took that decision, there is no agreement with Athens” (2021). The article portrays the opinion of the Albanian Prime Minister that former Prime Minister Sali Berisha and former President Bujar Nishani are the ones to blame for the unprofitable agreement of 2008. Moreover, he refutes another accusation of the opposition against him concerning the annulment of the 2008 agreement. In particular, the opposition claims that the same people who canceled the 2008 agreement are now at the negotiating table with Greece. Edi Rama makes it clear that although he appealed to the Constitutional Court in 2008, it was the Supreme Court that ruled the agreement unconstitutional and ordered its annulment, not him or his party.

3.3.2. Sale of Albania's sovereign rights to Greece

This way of framing the issue is based on the fact that the original 2008 agreement was challenged by Edi Rama's party, which was then in opposition. Another important frame that was observed while examining the way the issue of maritime delimitation was presented in the media is the blaming of decision-makers for the

violation of Albania's vital and strategic rights and the selling off of the sea to the Greeks.

It is worth mentioning the position of opinion-maker Fatos Lubonja on the issue of the political management of maritime zoning. This article was published in 2018 by the news portal "Tirana Today", but Lubonja's opinion applies appropriately to the topic of this research. According to Lubonja, Rama's policy on foreign policy issues with Greece is summarized in the expression of the title of the article "We are losing Albania, Rama sold Albania to Greece". It accuses the Prime Minister of lacking transparency and failing to stand up to Greece's expansionist, as he says, tendencies. In addition to the failure to settle the issue of Chamuria, Lubonja believes that Rama's acquiescence to Greece's policy of maritime zones undermines Albanian interests and Albanian sovereignty in the Ionian Sea.

On the same day, Tirana Today newspaper devoted another article to the issue of negotiations with Greece on the maritime zones in the Ionian Sea. This time, the columnist compared Rama's policy with that of his predecessor Sali Berisha, who in 2008 signed the agreement on the delimitation of the zones. It is stressed that although the Constitutional Court ruled on the unconstitutionality of the agreement, and even at the instigation of Rama's Socialist Party, the prime minister is currently in negotiations with Greece to grant Albania's sovereign rights in the Ionian Sea and allow Greece to extend the 12 nautical miles.

In the same vein, the online version of the "Ora News" published an article on the position of former President and Prime Minister Sali Berisha. The title of the article is "Berisha for Rama: You sell out the sea and pretend to be clueless. You will not escape punishment" (2021). The article quotes Berisha's harsh criticism of Rama for accepting Greece's 12 nautical mile extension. Specifically, it states that through the "secret Rama-Dendia deal, the Albanian prime minister sold 3000 miles of Albanian territorial waters, the economic exploitation of oil and gas and the corresponding Albanian airspace". Consequently, the text highlights not only the inadequate negotiating capacity of the government, according to Berisha, but also the damaging factor of the agreement for Albania.

3.3.3. Rational choice of appeal to the ICJ

The third feature of framing the issue of maritime zones is to present it as the only rational option for resolving the issue. Undoubtedly, this framing of the issue characterizes pro-government articles and media, without this meaning that there are no journalists or academics who support this position. In the articles studied in this particular frame, it was observed that Greece's inalienable right to extend its territorial waters to 12 nautical miles, as defined in UNCLOS, is emphasized. At the same time, however, the Albanian position is also emphasized, according to which the Albanian government has explicitly negotiated to defend its interests and will not allow their violation. Therefore, in any case, the rationalization of the choice of recourse to the Hague is defended, but in a way that leaves no doubt about the attempt of the Albanian government representatives to assert the country's rights against Greek aspirations.

In this context, the news portal “Euronews Albania” posted in January 2021, an interview of the famous Albanian journalist Baton Haxhiu. The title of the article is “Sea Issue with Greece| Baton Haxhiu: Rama stands by the statements that he makes” (2021). Haxhiu’s opinion comes to contrary to Bushati’s statement, as Haxhiu considers that the government of Edi Rama has a stable and unchanging political agenda regarding foreign affairs and in particular the management of the sea issue with Greece.

In the year 2020, Glevin Dervishi, expressed his opinion on the maritime issue through interviews in the Albanian media. Tirana Post, one of the biggest newspapers in Albania posted the article “Greece and Italy agreement on the delimitation of the maritime zones, Dervishi: What impact has that on Albania” (2020). Through the interview, Dervishi explains how the delimitation of the maritime zones between Greece and Albania will show the way for a similar delimitation of the maritime dispute between Greece and Albania. A few days later newspaper “Si” published an interview of Dervishi with the title “Delimitation of the sea, Albania-Greece to follow the model of resolution of Italy”. In like manner, Dervishi expressed his opinion that the delimitation with Italy could be an example that Greece and Albania should follow.

Furthermore, the daily independent newspaper “Koha Jone” published an article with the title “Greece expands to 12 nautical miles, Glevin Dervishi: Nothing new for Albania ” (2020). The article points out the opinion of Dervishi, who explains the constitutional right of Greece based on UNCLOS, but stresses out that Greece and Albania are subject to the special circumstances regime set out in the Convention as the distance between the two states is less than 24 nautical miles. In this case, he stresses that maritime zones should be defined using the median absolute line. The style of Dervishi's text is neutral as he presents the legal side of the issue without arguing for and against it. At the same time, it seems that he is a strong supporter of settling the issue through international arbitration, as he believes that with this move Albania has the opportunity to claim what theoretically belongs to it, depending on the outcome of the court.

In January 2021, “Tirana News” published a long commentary of the former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ditmir Bushati, with the title “Let’s be serious!”. Bushati explains in the article the decision-making process of the time that he was in charge of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Bushati's statement is one of the most prominent, as he, as a political figure and former foreign minister, is an expert on the subject and can contribute to shaping a picture of the political situation. In his opinion, the government succeeded to set the ground for negotiation and cooperation with Greece after the signing of the Agreement of 2008. The urgent need to conclude an agreement on the delimitation of Albania's maritime zones with its neighbors and the implications this will have for the development of bilateral relations with them is mentioned. In this context, the need for better cooperation between Members of Parliament in order to achieve the most favorable agreement for the country is highlighted.

Although most of the articles come from pro-government sources, there are still opinions from journalists with foreign policy expertise and experts who see the referral of the issue to the International Court of Justice as a positive outcome. Mustafa Nano, a significant part of the foreign relations journalists in Albania, has expressed his opinion over the maritime dispute with Albania during an interview in Panorama Newspaper (2020). When the journalist asked Nano if he considered a

national betrayal the expansion of the Greek maritime zone, he answered that he did not. In particular, he points out that the Albanian government did not accept that declaration by Greece, instead, Rama's government suggested the international arbitration of the ICJ. In addition, he expressed the need for diplomats, specialized in the issue to take part in the opinion-making process and not just the opposition criticizing the government's decision.

The daily independent newspaper "Koha Jone" published an analysis of the maritime agreement of 2020 by the expert analyst Ksenofon Krisafi titled "The Maritime Issue in the Hague/ Expert Krisafi: The two countries have to reach an agreement!" (2020). During his analysis, Krisafi points out that international arbitration was the only way of resolution, after the unsuccessful attempts of negotiations. Furthermore, Krisafi argues that the choice to appeal to the ICJ is an initiative of Greek political circles, which Tirana rightly followed. Krisafi's opinion mainly promotes the correctness of the choice to refer the case to The Hague. At the same time, it stresses the superiority of Greece in leading the negotiations. In this way, Albania's weakness, presented by many, in taking initiatives and pursuing policy driven by imposing its interests on others is perceived.

In September 2020 the newspaper "Sot" published the article "An island as big as a table cannot take up half the sea", the well-known journalist reveals the behind-the-scenes of the agreement with Greece: This is the main problem!" (2020). According to journalist Ferdinand Dervishi, the problem with the agreement is the non-closure of the sea gulfs, while the issue of the Barchetta rock is mentioned. Dervishi considers that this small, uninhabited rock in the Ionian Sea cannot be considered as a baseline for the delimitation of the Greek maritime zones. In like manner, Dervishi gave an interview to the tv show "Open"(2020), during which he points out the settlement of the issue at the ICJ as the most suitable option. Apart from supporting the choice to internationalization of the issue, Dervishi's article attributes responsibility to Greece and its unreasonable demands. In this perspective, the reference to the Barqueta rock as a basis for the delimitation of maritime zones is absurd and conflicts with Albanian interests in the Ionian Sea. Consequently, the way the issue is presented emphasizes, at this time, the absurd demands of Athens, while praising Tirana for the way it has been settled. Of course, there is also an encouragement from the journalist's side to

put pressure on Greece over the issue of the Barchetta rock.

3.4. Greek Media Representation

When it comes to the analysis of the maritime issue in the Greek media there are some key differences. In particular, the use of the framing method is again observed in the way of presentation and the highlighted points. Following the research, the articles on the maritime zones issue can be categorized as follows: a) projecting the issue as a means to achieve better results in the political confrontation with Turkey and b) projecting the questioning of the political integrity and maturity of the Albanian government to meet its obligations.

What is also worth to be mentioned for a better understanding of the conclusions of this thesis is the insufficient coverage of the issue in the Greek media. In contrast to the Albanian media, in Greece the issue of the delimitation of the maritime zones in the Ionian Sea did not become front page news, which means two things for this thesis: firstly, the research in the Greek media was much more limited and secondly, this fact alone shows the different approach to the issue in the two countries.

The delimitation of maritime zones holds an important place in Greece's political agenda. The vitality of the issue differs from the Albanian side in terms of the geostrategic motives behind the settlement of the issue. Specifically, the aim of the Greek side is to send a strong message to Turkey, which faces the most major problem of delimitation of the maritime zones in the Aegean Sea, through the delimitation of maritime zones with Italy, Egypt, and Albania.

The aforementioned position is confirmed by the way the Greek media covered the fact of the resolution of the maritime dispute through the appeal to the International Court of Justice in The Hague. The characteristics of the framing of the media coverage consist of the evolvment of Turkey into Albanian's national politics for the purpose of sending a strong political message to Greece. In addition, most of the Greek media focus on how the Albanian government representatives handled the

issue, in comparison with the Albanian representation that is focused on intragovernmental criticism and blame game.

Furthermore, the main pillar of Greek foreign policy is Turkey's expansionist policy in the Aegean Sea. As Frangkonikolopoulos points out in his analysis, Greece's foreign policy is dedicated to its "neighborhood" and mainly to Turkey, the name issue with North Macedonia and Cyprus (2016). Therefore, the unanimous referral of the settlement of the maritime issue to The Hague is an important achievement of Greek foreign policy, but what makes it important is its impact on the Greek-Turkish issue. This argument is also visible in the way the Greek media portrayed the achievement of an agreement between Greece and Albania in 2020.

The aim of this part is to analyze the Greek media representation of the issue through the scope of framing analysis. The eventual aim is to investigate whether the use of framing in the Greek media had an impact on bilateral relations between the two countries and on the perception of citizens.

3.4.1. The resolution of the maritime problem in reference to Turkish policy in the Aegean Sea

During the research of the media posts about the maritime dispute, the first observation is that the number of articles on the subject is significantly lower than in the Albanian press. Thus, the importance given to the issue is significantly different in the two countries. The articles were chosen to be analyzed concerns mainly the issue of addressing the issue to the Hague in 2020. In order to have an overview of the issue, there is a categorization of articles in those coming from government-friendly sources, articles showing the opposition's side, as well as articles expressing the point of view of Greek opinion-makers.

After the mutual agreement for the resolution of the issue at the international level, most of the Greek news portals published articles on the issue. In particular, "Naftemporiki" and "Huffington Post Greece" covered the issue with the headlines "In the Hague the resolution of the maritime dispute between Greece and Albania" (2020). In both newspapers, the main concern of the writers was to report the events

in an informative and objective manner. Besides, the agreement was described as an optimistic and useful outcome of the dispute. It is worth mentioning the fact that Huffington Post refers to the statements of the Greek Foreign Affairs Nikos Dendias on the Turkish attitude towards the analogous issue in the Aegean Sea.

In January 2021 the newspaper “Proto Thema” published the article “The bill on the extension of the coastal zone in the Ionian Sea in the plenary session”. The reporter points out the opposition’s opinion over the issue. The opposition parties consider the political move to delimit the maritime zones in the Ionian Sea as a positive step of the Mitsotakis government. However, it is considered as a sign of the government's diminished strategic capacity, as it cannot confront Turkey in the Aegean and focuses on the "easy" issue of the Ionian Sea. The frame used in this article raises Turkey as the main challenge of Greek foreign policy. The resolution of the Ionian problem is aimed at displaying power against Turkey.

On the occasion of the 2020 agreement, the digital version of “Proto Thema” newspapers makes a thorough analysis of the timeline of the maritime dispute with the title “The Greece-Albanian EEZ agreement (2009) that was never implemented”. Starting from the original agreement in 2009, its annulment by the Constitutional Court of Albania, and up to the 2020 negotiations, the reporter attempts to write down his opinion over the way of dealing with the dispute. According to this, Albania violated the international principle “pacta sunt servanda (agreements must be honored) but also showed disregard for its obligations as a, EU associated country (Πρώτο Θέμα & Στούκας, 2020). In like manner to a similar analysis, it is indicated that Turkey's involvement in Albanian political affairs played a decisive role in the cancellation of the 2009 agreement. The article ends with the reporter’s opinion that Greece is at a disadvantage compared to its neighbors, who take from it what rightfully belongs to it.

In October 2020, the newspaper “Kathimerini” hosts an article with the headline “Recourse to the International Court of Justice: the only way out of the Albanian quagmire” written by Angelos Sirigos, who is a Professor of International Law and Foreign Affairs, as well as a member of the Parliament with the party of New Democracy. Through the article, the analyst explains his argument that the settlement

of the issue in the Hague is the best option for the Albanian political agenda. The expert in foreign affairs analysis considers that the annulment of the 2009 agreement was a significant mistake of Albania. According to Sirigos (2020), the 2009 agreement was an elaborate resolution of the issue, which Albania wrongly failed to respect. The appeal to the International Court of Justice in The Hague is a positive development in the issue, which had been stalled. At the same time, the article underlines, once again, Turkey's influence in Albanian politics in general and in the specific issue of maritime zones. Moreover, according to Syrigos, the resolution of the issue through international arbitration sends a strong message to Turkey and the Greek-Turkish conflicts in the Aegean. Concluding the article, the analyst questions Albania's adherence to the agreement and trust in the country's political leadership.

The digital version of the center-left newspaper *Efymenrida ton Syntakton* (Newspaper of the Press) has published the interview of Yanis Varoufakis, the leader of Mera25 party. During the interview, Varoufakis is asked to comment on the political choice of the Mitsotakis government to expand to 12 nautical miles in the Ionian Sea. Varoufakis' response was that the extension from the Ionian is certainly a positive development but misleading as the main issue is the containment of Turkey, an issue the government has not addressed at all (Γ. Βαρουφάκης: «Ασπρίνη σε καρκινοπαθή τα 12 ναυτικά μίλια στο Ιόνιο», 2021). Once again it is confirmed that for the Greek government the relationship with Turkey plays a primary role in its political agenda, while Greek-Albanian relations take a back seat. In fact, the main reason for achieving the 12 nautical mile extension in the Ionian Sea is to impose a position of strength against Turkey's expansionist policy in the Aegean Sea.

Moreover, it is important for our research to assess the position of important Greek opinion makers on the issue. In this context, the news agency "Documentonews.gr" addressed the issue of the delimitation of maritime zones, in the light of the positioning of international relations experts to examine the 2020 agreement. The title of the article is "The background behind the Greek-Albanian appeal to the Hague", and it documents the views of experts in international relations and international politics: Yannis Houvardas, Charis Papisotiriou, and Konstantinos Filis.

Houvardas believes that the agreement between Greece and Albania is an indirect result of pressure from the great powers. Specifically, the scientist positions Greece as a promoter of the interests of the USA, EU, and NATO for the co-exploitation and co-management of the region's economic wealth. At the same time, he believes that Greece will use the potential outcome of the ICJ to apply it in its confrontation with Turkey. Greece seeks to ensure that the islands will also have maritime zones, i.e. EEZ and continental shelf. If this is achieved, it will be in direct confrontation with Turkey's argument that the islands have no continental shelf and EEZ at all. Therefore, according to Hoovardas, the Greece-Albania agreement is considered as facilitation for a Greek-Turkish agreement in the Aegean.

Papasotiriou examines the agreement in light of Turkey's aggressive policy. In sum, the expert believes that Greece is seeking to show that it is managing its disputes through international justice and with respect for international law. This will show Turkey the way to a possible future resolution of their own disputes. Moreover, it is stressed that the agreement could have been reached several years ago, but became a reality in 2020 after pressure from powerful systemic players to achieve peace in the region.

Filis, on the other hand, underlines the weakness of the management of the signing of the 2009 agreement. Filis believes that it is Albania's European perspective that pushed the Rama government to accept the settlement of the issue at the ICJ. Moreover, in an interview with "iefimerida.gr" (2020), he stated that Turkey's influence in the Albanian political scene and the interpersonal relations between Rama and Erdogan are well known. Although it is a given that Turkey will exert great influence on Albania for not reaching the agreement, for Tirana, strengthening relations with the EU takes precedence over relations with Turkey. Therefore, Albania will invest more in meeting the preconditions for EU membership and in this context, an agreement between the two is considered likely. It is also stated that the settlement of the maritime zones issue with Greece will serve as a ground for the settlement of other issues that make the diplomatic engagement between the two countries rather problematic. In particular, reference is made to the end of the law of war and the status of the Greek minority in southern Albania.

Regarding the strategic importance of the referral to The Hague for Greece, Filis argues that it is involved in strengthening its position of power against Turkey, through the improvement of its diplomatic image in the region. According to all analysts, Greece's aim is the impending, favorable settlement of the maritime zones in the Aegean in a way that does not lose its strategic and economic advantages in the Aegean.

3.4.2. The resolution of the maritime problem as an example of the doubting of the Albanian political capacity

The second most common context in which the agreement between Greece and Albania on the settlement of the issue in The Hague was presented in the Greek media is the doubt and questioning of Greek politicians, journalists, and public opinion about the compliance of the Albanian side with the agreement. In particular, many articles and journalistic texts refer to the insufficient political validity of the Albanian political system, which implies an unreliable negotiator who at any time and at any moment can break the terms of the agreement. What is worth noting about this frame is the vastly disproportionate use of it compared to the first one, which concerned Turkey's involvement in the issue.

In particular, the newspaper “Efymerida ton Syntakton” covered the official visit of Prime Minister Rama in Athens in January 2021. Journalist Babis Aphrolambos, a foreign policy expert, comments that Rama made a stop in Athens after his visit to Ankara. He points out that the Albanian prime minister has taken on the role of mediator between Greece and Albania. But he does not hesitate to question Rama's ability to carry out this role (Agrolampos, 2021). It could be reasonably concluded that Rama's political choices on foreign policy issues, and especially on those related to Greece, Turkey acts as a guide and instigator. This impression seems to prevail in the majority of Greek media as a consequence of the difficulty in reaching an agreement with Albania regarding the delimitation of the maritime zones in the Ionian Sea.

In like manner, the digital version of the newspaper “Kathimerini” hosted the article of the Honorary Ambassador Alexandros Mallias with the title “EEZ: What’s going on with Albania?” (2020). The opinion of Mallias is that Albania is an unreliable negotiator, which based on its track record will not be able to meet the ICJ's requirements in order to reach the final settlement on the issue. In particular, Mallias states that Albanian governments and specifically Edi Rama lacks “besa” (H Καθημερινή, 2021). Furthermore, according to Mallia's analysis, Albania's foreign policy, regarding the issues with Greece, is determined and instigated by the Erdogan government. In this vein, Turkish interests are imposed in the Ionian Sea under the veil of the Albanian political agenda.

3.5. The impact of the media representation

Drawing conclusion over the bilateral relations based on the media representation

After presenting the articles on the Albanian and Greek media coverage of the maritime zones issue respectively, it is useful to present the overall results obtained on the bilateral relations between Greece and Albania. In this manner, it will be more convenient to answer the initial research question posed in this thesis, whether the way the issue was framed had political implications for the diplomatic relations between the two countries.

In particular, for the Albanian media, the issue of the delimitation of maritime zones is a major topic and often dominates the headlines and news broadcasts. This implies the importance and relevance of the issue for the Albanian political agenda. The Albanian articles researched were categorized in three different frames: criticizing the government for the way the agreement was managed and negotiated, the support from the opposition for the view that Rama managed to sell out the Albanian sea, and finally the support for the Hague settlement agreement as to the most rational one.

The dominant frame that prevailed was the blame game of the Albanian Parliament for the issue of the management of the negotiations. There is a significant polarization between the parties in the Albanian Parliament, which to a large extent implies political instability in the country. Both members of the opposition and important opinion-makers or journalists are critical of the negotiations with Greece, while others raise the issue of the lack of transparency and the devaluation of the country's national interests. The Albanian media's treatment of the issue as a matter of the domestic political scene, rather than a purely foreign policy issue where the country's vital interests are at stake, demonstrates the lack of political maturity in the country, as well as the lack of confidence in the government's negotiating abilities. Consequently, one could draw the conclusion that Albania gives priority to national political conflicts and disputes, while foreign policy issues are secondary in media coverage.

Furthermore, the context of Rama “selling the sea to the Greeks” completes the puzzle of lack of trust towards the government. Specifically, the context under which this is being presented is to blame the governmental proponents who made the decisions, not the decision itself to extend Greece's coastal zone. Someone can reach the conclusion that the bilateral relations with Greece are important to Albania, but from the perspective of the management of the Albanian government and not as an act of foreign policy that affects both countries.

Albania's political representatives supported Greece's position and by inference their own political choices on the issue, to expand its territorial water to 12 nautical miles. The argument of the government was that the country has the right to the extension based on the Convention of Montego Bay and Albania is obliged to respect Greece's right but not without negotiating its respective right on the issue. Thus, they supported the settlement of the issue in The Hague as the most rational option, which would not infringe on Albania's sovereign rights in the region.

On the other hand, the way the issue is portrayed in the Greek press is very different from that of Albania. As already mentioned above, the number of articles on the issue is significantly reduced, thus showing the lack of interest from the Greek side on the issue, while many considered it as not so significant. The main priority of the Greek agenda as far as its foreign relations are concerned is the settlement of the Greek-

Turkish disputes as well as the containment of Turkish provocations in the Aegean. For this reason, two clear frames have been observed with regard to the maritime zones issue: firstly, the resolution of the issue with regard to the Greek-Turkish issue in the Aegean and, secondly, the lack of confidence in the Albanian authorities to honor their obligations.

The issue of maritime zones and its connection with the Greek-Turkish dispute seems to unfold on two levels. Firstly, it is concluded that Turkey exerts decisive influence on Albania and guides it in negotiations with Greece, based on its own strategic, geopolitical, and economic interests. This causes concern on the Greek side about the possible consequences for Greece of a partnership between the two. The second level at which the Turkish factor in the maritime delimitation agreement is analyzed is that of the impact it would have on the Greek-Turkish conflict. Specifically, according to many writers, the resolution of its disputes with Albania would give Greece the element of a shrewd negotiator, which it could later use as a reference point for the Greek-Turkish conflict. In this light, the conclusion can be drawn about Greece's desire and need to strengthen its position, both in the European and international arena and in relation to its rival Turkey.

Beyond the dominance of the Turkish issue in Greece's political strategy, it is also the result of Albania's disadvantageous treatment of Greece as a weak player in the negotiating game. From the frequent references to the insolvency of Albania's political moves at the international level, it becomes clear that Greek diplomatic circles view Albania with distrust and caution, especially in the part of keeping its promises. This also affects the issue of maritime zones, where part of the Greek political world doubts that Albania will respect what has been agreed upon regarding the procedure of appeal to the International Court of Justice in The Hague.

The impact of the media representation on the formation of Greece and Albanian public opinion

The purpose of this chapter is to analyze whether there is a link between the way the issue of maritime delimitation has been presented and the formation of public opinion on issues of bilateral relations. To achieve this, the public opinion survey conducted in parallel in Greece and Albania on the relations between the two states will be used. The Open Society Foundation of Albania (OSFA) and the Hellenic Foundation for European & Foreign Policy (ELIAMEP) published the results of the survey, in which Albanian and Greek citizens were interviewed on issues of international relations, issues of bilateral relations between Greece and Albania and issues related to personal attitudes, values, and stereotypes. For the purpose of this paper, mainly issues related to bilateral relations will be examined in order to draw conclusions on the research questions raised.

The survey conducted on behalf of OSFA by the Data Centrum Research Institute and polling agency focused on issues of Albania's foreign policy regarding relations with Greece (Armakolas et al., 2021). When asked to define the relations between Greece and Albania, 6 out of 10 respondents answered that Albania's relations with Greece are excellent. On the other hand, in the same question from the Public Opinion Research Unit of the University of Macedonia regarding the opinion of Greeks on the relationship between Greece and Albania, 1 out of 3 respondents answered that the overall picture of bilateral relations is in a good state. The difference in the results of this answer gives an overall picture of the views of the two nations: for Albanians, Greece is an important factor both in political, social, and economic terms, while on the other hand, Greeks put bilateral relations with Albania in a secondary position, considering it as a minor issue.

Moreover, as far as economic relations are concerned, public opinion in the two countries seems to be diametrically opposed. In sum, for Albanian public opinion, Greece has benefited more from bilateral economic relations, while for Greek public opinion, Albania is in a more privileged position in terms of economic relations. According to the analysis of the survey by ELIAMEP and OFSA, this difference in terms of economic relations relates to various factors such as educational level, political beliefs, age group, and place of residence in the case of Albania (i.e., whether they come from the northern or southern part of the country). The point on which respondents agreed was that of improving bilateral relations over the years. In both

cases, respondents perceived an improvement in relations at both the economic and political levels. In particular, one out of two Albanians and one out of two Greeks see bilateral relations with Greece as having improved and matured compared to the previous decades. The prevailing spirit of cooperation is that of the two countries and this is also perceived by public opinion.

The aforementioned argument is reinforced by the answer to the question about the biggest problem in bilateral relations between Greece and Albania. According to the answers of Albanians, the issue of the delimitation of maritime zones is ranked as the most important issue in bilateral relations with Greece with 30%. The next result was the issue of the recognition of the Chams and their properties' claims in Greece. On the other hand, in the corresponding question to Greeks, the results were completely different. Specifically, the issue considered most important for Greeks was that of Albania's expansionist tendencies through the idea of "Greater Albania", and the next most important was the Albanian attitude towards the Greek minority in Southern Albania.

According to the analysis of the way the news of the settlement of the maritime zones in Greece and Albania is disseminated, the results of the public opinion surveys are consistent and well-founded. The conclusions are as follows: the fact that the issue of the maritime zones' delimitation occupies a leading role in the Albanian media is reflected in the perception of public opinion that considers it the most important issue between the two countries. On the other hand, the responses of Greeks to the corresponding question ranked the option "other" first, while the next most important issue (but again with a small percentage) was the expansionist policy of the Albanians. In fact, the issue of maritime zones is in the penultimate place among the most important problems concerning the two countries. This shows the treatment of the issue as secondary, as is also reflected in the way the issue is reported in the Greek press and media.

Therefore, one could easily recognize the interdependence of the media in the formation of public opinion. After all, the main recipient of news is the listener or reader, to whom the message being conveyed is passed on. Furthermore, it can be concluded that public opinion is influenced by the political agendas of the country in

question, as reflected and transmitted through the media. In this way, as the issue of maritime zones is important mainly for the internal political situation in Albania, which implies the extensive preoccupation of the press with the issue, it influences public opinion in terms of prioritizing national issues with Greece. Similarly, for the Greek political reality, the primary role is played by the interception of Turkey's expansionist policy, which is clearly shown by the large percentage of the press devoted to the issue and the positioning of Greece as a major problem in terms of its bilateral relations.

Conclusions

In summary, Greek-Albanian relations have gone through many periods of turmoil and peace, while in the recent period bilateral relations can be characterized by a relatively mild desire for cooperation and harmony. Although the two countries still have some important issues that need to be resolved at the foreign policy level, the political representatives of both countries are friendly towards each other. The issue of maritime delimitation has caused a stir in the relatively favorable grace period for the two countries. Although the attempt to resolve the issue in 2008, with the agreement to delimit the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) through the use of the absolute straight-line method, was ruled unconstitutional by the Constitutional Court in The Hague, the two states managed to reach an agreement in 2020 to use international arbitration through the International Court of Justice in The Hague to resolve the issue.

The aim of the thesis was to investigate whether there is a difference in the way the issue is presented in the Greek and Albanian media respectively, and then to analyze the political reasons that contribute to the way the issue is covered. The media articles were analyzed using the framing approach, in the context of which the conclusions reached are categorized.

The first conclusion drawn from the initial research is the disproportionate presentation of the issue in the two countries. The number of sources that raised the issue of the delimitation of maritime zones in Albania is several times higher than the number of sources in the Greek press. Consequently, most of the research was devoted to Albanian articles and texts, as there was a lack of sources in the Greek media. Moreover, it quickly became apparent that the way the issue was presented was different in the two countries, with Albania focusing on the government's management of the negotiations, and Greece focusing on Turkey's expansionist policies. The aforementioned is also evident in the formation of public opinion, as reflected by the OFSA and ELIAMEP (2021) survey, in which the most important issue for Albanian citizens was the issue of maritime zones, while for Greeks it was not even ranked as one of the important issues.

According to the Albanian media, the issue of the delimitation of maritime zones is a major issue of the country's internal politics. What can be observed in the Albanian press is the portrayal of the issue in the light of blaming the respective political decision-makers. Therefore, through the way this issue is presented, one can easily conclude that the polarization and the fierce debate in the Albanian Parliament between the government and the opposition outlines the government's line of managing national and diplomatic crises for the country: insistence on the blame game and not so much on managing the issue as a crisis in the country's bilateral relations. Undoubtedly, government sources for their part are trying to rationalize their decisions, but again this is in the context of responding to the harsh criticism of the opposition.

On the other hand, Greece puts the bilateral relations with Albania on a secondary level in its political agenda. From the lack of media covering the issue, especially in comparison with the priority given in the Albanian media, it is obvious that the priority of the Greek foreign policy is the deduction of Turkey in the Aegean Sea. In particular, even the settlement of the issue through international arbitration was seen as an impact of the Turkish involvement in the Albanian political scene. Therefore, Greece seeks to settle the issue of maritime zones with Albania, in the context of its maritime zones policy with all its neighbors in the Ionian Sea. By the time of writing this paper, it has managed to finalize maritime zones entirely with Italy and partly

with Egypt. This would confer prestige to its negotiating ability both with its partners and with rival Turkey, so that in the long run it would be able to settle the Greek-Turkish dispute in the Aegean.

Moreover, there is a lack of trust between the two countries, with Athens questioning both the negotiating skills and Tirana's adherence to what was agreed. The main argument of the Greek side is the cancellation of the 2009 agreement by the same people who agreed to appeal to The Hague. This attitude of Greece largely defines the bilateral relations between the two countries, which are often characterized by suspicion.

From the way the issue is presented in the media, it is therefore easy to understand the structural differences between the national strategies of the two countries in terms of their bilateral relations. Consequently, the conclusion is that the relationship between the media and the policy-making of the government is disproportional, as it is national or government policies that shape the way the news is portrayed in the media. Subsequently, the context in which the news is reported usually has a significant impact on the shaping of public opinion on the issue in question.

Thus, a cycle of influence is formed, which could be characterized for the case of Albania as follows: the political moves of the Albanian government influence the Albanian media to overreact to the maritime zones issue, and in turn the media influence public opinion, which considers the delimitation of the maritime zones as the major issue between Greece and Albania. In the case of Greece, the circle of influence is as follows: political decision-makers consider the country's priority to be the containment of Turkey's provocative policy in the Aegean, the media are influenced by this and present the issue under the Turkish factor in the region, and public opinion ends up not even including the issue of maritime delimitation with Albania in the list of important issues of bilateral relations.

Last but not least, it is worth mentioning the need of further research on the Greek political strategies and media representation, which at the moment are a few and inadequate. It is worth noting that the survey was limited in terms of the number of media reports from the Greek side. For this reason, it would be interesting to conduct

further research on the Greek perception of the issue in order to reach a universal conclusion on the correlation between the media and the national strategy on the issue of the delimitation of maritime zones in the Ionian Sea.

Bibliography

- An, S. K., & Gower, K. K. (2009). How do the news media frame crises? A content analysis of crisis news coverage. *Public Relations Review*, 35(2), 107–112. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2009.01.010>
- Annulment of the maritime agreement, available at <https://www.gjk.gov.al/>
- Armakolas, I., & Triantafyllou, G. (2017). Greece and EU enlargement to the Western Balkans: understanding an ambivalent relationship. *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, 17(4), 611-629.
- Aydın, A. F., & Progonati, E. (2011, May). *ALBANIAN FOREIGN POLICY IN THE POST-COMMUNIST ERA* (No. 26). UNISCI Discussion Papers. Available at: <https://www.redalyc.org/pdf/767/76718800012.pdf>
- Armakolas, I., Siakas, G., Berzani, A., & Seferaj, K. (2021). RELATIONS BETWEEN ALBANIA AND GREECE. Open Society Foundation for Albania (OSFA) & Hellenic Foundation for European & Foreign Policy (ELIAMEP). <https://www.eliamep.gr/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Public-Opinion-Greece-and-Albania-Relation-ENG.pdf>
- B. (2018, May 22). *Albania PM Highlights Cham Plight on Greek TV*. Balkan Insight. Available at: <https://balkaninsight.com/2016/11/23/cameria-becomes-the-focus-of-albanian-pm-interview-in-the-greek-tv-11-23-2016/>
- BIRN. (2021, August 19). UN Court Move Raises Hopes for Albania, Greece Border Deal. Balkan Insight. Available at: <https://balkaninsight.com/2021/08/19/un-court-move-raises-hopes-for-albania-greece-border-deal/>
- BIRN, & Cipa, A. (2020, October 15). Albania, Greece Must Reflect on Past Mistakes to Settle Maritime Borders Issue. Balkan Insight. Available at: <https://balkaninsight.com/2020/10/06/albania-greece-must-reflect-on-past-mistakes-to-settle-maritime-borders-issue/>
- Cela, A. (2018). Albania-Greece relations in the context of Albania's EU integration process: gap between reality and perception. *Albania and Greece: Understanding and Explaining*, ed. A. Cela, A. Rakipi, A. Balla, B. Zeneli, B. Feta, D. Koçi, J. Jorgji, K. Giakoumis, L. Krisafi, S. Xhepa, 137-60.
- Cenaj, K. (2015). Albania - Greece Agreement on Setting Maritime Boundaries, According to International Law. *Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*, 4(3). Available at: <https://doi.org/10.5901/ajis.2015.v4n3p143>
- Cenaj, K. (2017). THE SOLUTION TO THE SEA DISAGREEMENT. Proceedings of the Law & Political Science Conference, Vienna. Published. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.20472/lpc.2017.001.002>

- Coombs, W. T., & Holladay, S. J. (2004). Reasoned action in crisis communication: An attribution theory-based approach to crisis management. In D. P. Millar & R. L. Heath (Eds.), *Responding to crisis communication approach to crisis communication* (pp. 95–115). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- McCombs, D. L. Shaw, and D. Weaver (Eds.), *Communication and democracy, Exploring the intellectual frontiers in agenda-setting-theory* (pp. 3–14). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Dervishi, G. (2019). Greek-Albanian Relations, the Past, the Present and the Future. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 10(3), 24–35. <https://doi.org/10.2478/mjss-2019-0038>
- Entman, R. M. (1993). Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm. *Journal of Communication*, 43(4), 51–58. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.1993.tb01304.x>
- ENTMAN, R. M. (2003). Cascading Activation: Contesting the White House’s Frame After 9/11. *Political Communication*, 20(4), 415–432. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10584600390244176>
- E.W.B. (2020, October 21). EC welcomes the decision of Albania and Greece on the maritime border issue. *European Western Balkans*. Available at: <https://europeanwesternbalkans.com/2020/10/21/ec-welcomes-the-decision-of-albania-and-greece-on-maritime-border-issue/>
- Fairclough, N. (1992). *Discourse and Social Change*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Feta, B. (2018). *Bilateral Governmental Communication: A Tool for Stronger Albanian-Greek Relations*. A. Cela et al. *Albania and Greece: Understanding and exp Gamson*, W.A. (1992). *Talking Politics*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Ghanem, S. (1997). Filling the tapestry: The second level of agenda-setting. In *M.laining* (Tirana: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung), 71-106.
- Giakoumis, K. (2018). Greek-Albanian Relations in Greek and Albanian Historiography of the 2000s. *Albania and Greece: Understanding and Explaining*, ed. A. Cela, A. Rakipi, A. Balla, B. Zeneli, B. Feta, D. Koçi, J. Jorgji, K. Giakoumis, L. Krisafi, S. Xhepa, 137-60.
- ICJ Reports, “Case Concerning Maritime Delimitation in the Black Sea (Romania v. Ukraine), Judgment”, 3 February 2009
- Koci, D. (2018). Unresolved political issues between Greece and Albania threaten the stability and liberal democracy in Balkans. *Albania and Greece: Understanding and Explaining*, ed. A. Cela, A. Rakipi, A. Balla, B. Zeneli, B. Feta, D. Koçi, J. Jorgji, K. Giakoumis, L. Krisafi, S. Xhepa, 107-114.
- Krisafi, K. (2014). The International Legal Status of Albania from the End of the London Conference of Ambassadors to the End of the First World War. *SEEU Review*, 10(1) 71-101. <https://doi.org/10.2478/seeur-2014-0009>
- Matthes, J. (2011). P. D’Angelo and J. A. Kuypers *Doing News Framing Analysis: Empirical and Theoretical Perspectives*. New York: Routledge, 2009, 376 pp. *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 16(2), 284–285. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1940161210394632>
- Matthes, J., & Kohring, M. (2008). The Content Analysis of Media Frames: Toward Improving Reliability and Validity. *Journal of Communication*, 58(2), 258–279. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.2008.00384.x>

- Media Freedom - Balkanmedia Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V. (2020). Balkanmedia. <https://www.kas.de/en/web/balkanmedia/media-freedom>
- Murati, S. (2018). *The Inexistent Sea Issue: a Greek or Albanian Diplomatic Intrigue?* ALSAR Publications.
- Murati, S. (2021). *Deti midis Shqipërisë dhe Greqisë*. Albas Publication.
- Nafpliotis, A. (2009). *The 1971 Re-establishment of Diplomatic Relations between Greece and Albania: Cooperation and Strategic Partnership within Cold War Bipolarity?*. na.
- NATIONAL AND KAPODISTRIAN UNIVERSITY OF ATHENS
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AND PUBLIC
ADMINISTRATION MA IN SOUTHEAST EUROPEAN STUDIES. (2018, September). *Islands and Exclusive Economic Zones in Southeast Europe International Law Solutions*. Vasileios Moraitis. Available at: <https://pergamos.lib.uoa.gr/uoal/uoal/dl/frontend/file/lib/default/data/2837809/theFile>
- Ndoj, D. (2015). THE POLITICAL DISCOURSE ON THE ALBANIAN-GREEK ‘SEA AGREEMENT DISPUTE. *International Journal of Academic Research and Reflection*, 3(7), 3.
- Neuman, W.R., Just, M. R., & Cringler, A.N. (1992). *Common knowledge. News and construction of political meaning*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Newsroom. (2021, November 20). *Tirana display stuns Athens*. [kathimerini.gr. https://www.ekathimerini.com/news/1172171/tirana-display-stuns-athens/](https://www.ekathimerini.com/news/1172171/tirana-display-stuns-athens/)
- Noussia, K. (2010). *Current Legal Developments Albania, The International Journal of Marine and Coastal Law*, 25(4), 601-608. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1163/157180810X526745>
- Pan, Z., & Kosicki, G. (1993). *Framing analysis: An approach to news discourse*. *Political Communication*, 10(1), 55–75. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.1993.9962963>
- Pleios, G. and Frangonikolopoulos, Ch. (2011) “Τα “Εθνικά Θέματα” Στη Δίψη Των ΜΜΕ”, Athens, Publication: Sideris.
- Rakipi, A. (2018). *Understanding Albanian-Greek Relations: Deconstructing paradoxes and myths*. A. Celaet al. *Albania and Greece: Understanding and explaining* (Tirana: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung), 17-34
- Reci, S., & Zefi, L. (2021). *ALBANIA-GREECE SEA ISSUE THROUGH THE HISTORY FACTS AND THE FUTURE OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION*. *Journal of Liberty and International Affairs*, Institute for Research and European Studies
- Reese, O. H. Gandy & A.E. Grant (Eds.), *Framing in public life* (pp. 95-106). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Reporters Without Borders Organization. (2021). *World Press Freedom Index Report*. World Press Freedom Index Report. Available at: <https://rsf.org/en/ranking/2021>
- Rounis, A. (2020, November 22). *Ελληνοαλβανικές σχέσεις: Διευθέτηση Θαλασσιών Ζωνών | Αριστείδης Ρούνης*. *La Evolución Política*. Available at: <https://www.lep.gr/ellinoalvanikes-scheseis-dieythetisi/>
- Rrapaj, F. M. (1995). *Fjalori onomastik i Epirit*. Eurorilindja.
- Sadiku, B. (2016). *Cham Issue during the Peace Conference in Paris 1919*. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 7(4), 676-681.

- Siousiouras, P., & Chrysochou, G. (2014). The Aegean Dispute in the Context of Contemporary Judicial Decisions on Maritime Delimitation. *Laws*, 3(1), 12–49. <https://doi.org/10.3390/laws3010012> itola, 7(3), 299–309. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.47305/jlia2137299r>
- Scheufele, B. (2004). Framing-effects approach: A theoretical and methodological critique. *Communications*, 29(4), 401–428. <https://doi.org/10.1515/comm.2004.29.4.401>
- Scheufele, D. A. (1999). Framing as a Theory of Media Effects. *Journal of Communication*, 49(1), 103–122. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.1999.tb02784.x>
- Tankard, J. W. (2001). The empirical approach to the study of media framing. In S.D.
- Valinakis Giannis. *Greece of the Four Seas*. Sideris Publication, 2020
- Vickers, M. (2010). *The Greek minority in Albania: current tensions*. Defence Academy of the United Kingdom.
- Vreese, C. H. (2005). News framing. Identifying Information and Tenor in Texts, 13(1), 51–62. <https://doi.org/10.1075/idjdd.13.1.06vre>
- UNCLOS art. 3, 76, 55-57.
- Vickers, M., & Pettifer, J. (2000). *Albania: From Anarchy to a Balkan identity*. NYU Press.
- Voudouri, A. (2021, December 22). *Albanian Greek Relations- Media as an Extension of Official Policy*. Tirana Observatory. Available at: https://tiranaobservatory.com/2021/12/22/albanian-greek-relations-media-as-an-extension-of-official-policy/#_ftn2
- *Why the Greek-Albanian Law of War should not exist?* (2020, June 25). ICRP. Available at: <http://culturalrelations.org/why-the-greek-albanian-law-of-war-should-not-exist/>
- World press freedom index. (2020). RSF. <https://rsf.org/en/ranking/2021>
- Zeneli, B. (2018). *Why are the Albanian-Greek relations moving backwards?*. *Albania and Greece: Understanding and Explaining*, ed. A. Cela, A. Rakipi, A. Balla, B. Zeneli, B. Feta, D. Koçi, J. Jorgji, K. Giakoumis, L. Krisafi, S. Xhepa, 47-70
- Zguri, R. (2015). *Marrëdhëniet mes medias dhe politikës në Shqipëri*.

Albanian Bibliography

- Berisha-Ramës: Shet detin dhe bën të pagdhendurin. S’do ti shpëtosh ndëshkimit. (2021, February 7). *Ora News*. <https://www.oranews.tv/berisha-rames-shet-detin-dhe-ben-te-pagdhendurin-sdo-ti-shpetosh-ndeshkimit/>
- Basha: Kam 10 vite që mendoj se çështja e detit duhet të vijë përmes Gjykatës Ndërkombëtare. (2020, October 20). *Tirana Post*. <https://tiranapost.al/aktualitet/basha-kam-10-vite-qe-mendoj-se-ceshtja-e-detit-duhet-te-vije-permes-g>
- BRGL. (2021, January 5). *Ditmir Bushati/ Le të jemi seriozë!* *Tirana News*. <https://tirananeews.al/ditmir-bushati-le-te-jemi-serioze/>
- Bushati, A. (2020, October 20). *Andi Bushati: Pse si themi dot Ramës “ejvallah” për detin?* *Gazeta Koha Jone | E Perditshme e Pavarur*. <https://kohajone.com/andi-bushati-pse-si-themi-dot-rames-ejvallah-per-detin/>
- Çështja e detit me Greqinë, Basha: Një dështim i politikës së jashtme, ne do ta çojmë në gjykatën ndërkombëtare. (2021, April 12). *Politiko - Ditari i Opozitës*.

<https://politiko.al/ditari-i-opozites/eshtja-e-detit-me-greqine-basha-nje-deshtim-i-politikes-se-jas-i433772>

- Dervishi, F. (2020, September 16). “S’ mund të lejohet që një ishull sa një tavolinë të marrë gjysmën e detit”, gazetari i njohur nxjerr prapaskenat e marrëveshjes me Greqinë: Ky është problemi kryesor! Sot Newspaper.

<https://sot.com.al/aktualitet/smund-te-lejohet-qe-nje-ishull-sa-nje-tavoline-te-marre-gjysmen-e-det>

- Doci, A. (2020, June 13). “Ndarja e detit, Shqipëri-Greqi të ndjekin modelin si me Italinë.” Gazeta Si. <https://gazetasi.al/ndarja-e-detit-shqiperi-greqi-te-ndjekin-modelin-si-me-italine/>

- E. (2020a, October 20). Çështja e detit në Hagë/ Eksperti Krisafi: Dy shtetet duhet të çojnë një marrëveshje! Gazeta Koha Jone | E Perditshme e Pavarur.

<https://kohajone.com/ceshtja-e-detit-ne-hage-eksperti-krisafi-dy-shtetet-duhet-te-kojne-nje-marreveshje/>

- Euronews Albania. (2021, January 5). *Deti me Greqinë | Baton Haxhiu: Rama i qëndron deklaratave që bën.* <https://euronews.al/al/i-pakategorizuar/2021/01/05/ceshtja-e-detit-me-greqine-baton-haxhiu-rama-i-qendron-deklaratave-qe-ben/>

- From ERTV to the Media Agency, Rama’s initiatives to increase media “control.” (2021, September 21). Politiko.AL. <https://politiko.al/english/e-tjera/nga-ertv-te-agjensia-per-mediat-nismat-e-rames-per-te-rritur-kontrollin--i443892>

- Greqia dhe Italia marrëveshje për delimitimin e hapësirave detare, Dervishi: Çfarë efektësh ka për Shqipërinë. (2020, June 9). Tirana Post.

<https://tiranapost.al/aktualitet/greqia-dhe-italia-marreveshje-per-delimitimin-e-hapesirave-detare-dr->

- *Greqia dhe Shqipëria i drejtohen Hagës për çështjen e detit.* (2020, October 20). Telegrafi. <https://telegrafi.com/greqia-dhe-shqiperia-drejtohen-hages-per-ceshtjen-e-detit/>

- Kryefaqe. (2021, April 4). PDIU. <https://pdiu.al/>

- L. (2020a, September 1). *Rudina Xhunga komenton çështjen e kufirit detar me Greqinë dhe bën deklaratën e fortë ndaj Ramës.* Lajme.AL.

<https://www.lajme.al/rudina-xhunga-komenton-ceshtjen-e-kufirit-detar-me-greqine-dhe-ben-deklaraten-e-forte-ndaj-rames/>

- L. (2020c, September 17). Ferdinand Dervishi: Ja ç’do të ndodhë nëse marrëveshja për detin shkon në Gjykatën Ndërkombëtare -. Lajmet e Fundit.

<https://lajmetefundit.al/2020/09/17/ferdinand-dervishi-ja-cdo-te-ndodhe-nese-marreveshja-per-detin-shkon-ne-gjykatën-nderkombetare/>

- L.B. (2021, February 13). Çështja e detit, Ilir Meta akuza Ramës: Nuk ka treguar transparencë dhe bashkëpunim. Gazeta Tema.

<https://www.gazetatema.net/2021/02/13/ceshtja-e-detit-ilir-meta-akuza-rames-nuk-ka-treguar-transparence-dhe-bashkepunim/>

- Marku, A. Çështja e nxehtë e detit, ministri grek zbardh prapaskenat: 6 muaj negociata me Ramën, Metën e Bashën. (2020, October 29). Sot Newspaper.

<https://sot.com.al/politike/eshtja-e-nxehte-e-detit-ministri-grek-zbardh-prapaskenat-6-muaj-negocia>

- *Pakti detar me Greqinë/ Murati: Italisë iu deshën 40 vjet, Shqipëria ka 15 muaj me ministrat nga rruga.* (2020, June 11). Kryesoret.

<https://www.gazeta-shqip.com/2020/06/11/pakti-detar-me-greqine-murati-italise-iu-deshen-40-vjet-shqiperia-ka-15-muaj-me-ministrat-nga-rruga/>

- *Pakti detar me Greqinë? Rama akuzon Berishën dhe Nishanin: Në 2008 morën këtë vendim, nuk ka marrëveshje me Athinën.* (2021, January 14). Gazeta Shqip. <https://www.gazeta-shqip.com/aktualitet/pakti-detar-me-greqine-rama-akuzon-berishen-dhe-nishanin-ne-2008-more-4402>
- R. (2020b, August 26). *Zgjerimi i Greqisë me 12 milje, Glevin Dervishi: Asgjë e re për Shqipërinë.* Gazeta Koha Jone | E Perdritshme e Pavarur. <https://kohajone.com/zgjerimi-i-greqise-me-12-milje-glevin-dervishi-asgje-e-re-per-shqiperine/>
- R. (2018, January 30). *Çështja e detit/Lubonja: Po humbim Shqipërinë, Rama “shiti” Çamërinë.* Tirana Today. <https://tiranatoday.al/ceshtja-e-detitlubonja-po-humbim-shqiperine-rama-shiti-camerine/>
- R. (2018b, January 30). *Rama si Berisha, i shet detin Greqisë. Pse hesht Shqipëria?* Tirana Today. <https://tiranatoday.al/rama-si-berisha-shet-detin-greqise-pse-hesht-shqiperia/>
- TheAlbanian.co.uk. (2020, November 15). “Çështja e detit” dhe një takim i papublikuar i një diplomati shqiptar në Athinë – Nga Shaban Murati. The Albanian. <https://www.thealbanian.co.uk/ceshtja-e-detit-dhe-nje-takim-i-papublikuar-i-nje-diplomati-shqiptar-ne-athine-nga-shaban-murati/>
- Top Channel Sh.a. (2021, February 7). “Vendimet e Greqisë janë keqinterpretuar”/ Rama për çështjen e detit: Maskarenj që i fryjnë zjarrit. <https://top-channel.tv/2021/02/07/vendimet-e-greqise-jane-keqinterpretuar-rama-per-ceshtjen-e-detit-maskarenj-qe-i-fryjne-zjarrit/>
- *Zgjerimi i detit nga ana e Greqisë/ Mustafa Nano: Fakti që flet vetëm Rama dhe një aluzion që vjen nga Athina bën që. . .Pse e konsideroj absurde idenë e tradhtisë kombëtare.* (2020, December 28). Panorama News. <http://www.panorama.com.al/zgjerimi-i-detit-nga-ana-e-greqise-mustafa-nano-ne-cdo-rast-del-flet-vetem-kryeministri-rama-dhe-jo-pse-e-konsideroj-absurd-idene-e-tradhtise/>

Greek Bibliography

- Frangonikolopoulos, C. (2016). ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΕΞΩΤΕΡΙΚΗ ΠΟΛΙΤΙΚΗ ΚΑΙ ΜΜΕ: Οι προϋποθέσεις διαμόρφωσης μιας νέας δημοσιογραφικής & επικοινωνιακής πρακτικής. Οι Θεσμοί Στην Ελλάδα Της Μεταπολίτευσης Αποτίμηση Μιας Αντιφατικής Περιόδου Συλλογικό Έργο, Παπαζήσης.
- Newsroom. (2020a, October 20). *Θετική υποδοχή από Ε.Ε. για τη συμφωνία Ελλάδα-Αλβανίας.* ΚΑΘΗΜΕΡΙΝΕΣ ΕΚΔΟΣΕΙΣ. <https://www.kathimerini.gr/politics/561124804/thetiki-ypodochi-apo-e-e-gia-ti-symfonia-elladas-alvanias/>
- Newsroom. (2020b, October 26). *Προσφυγή στο Διεθνές Δικαστήριο: η μόνη διέξοδος από το αλβανικό τέλμα.* ΚΑΘΗΜΕΡΙΝΕΣ ΕΚΔΟΣΕΙΣ ΜΟΝΟΠΡΟΣΩΠΗ Α.Ε. <https://www.kathimerini.gr/politics/561131095/prosfygi-sto-diethnes-dikastirio-i-moni-diexodos-apo-to-alvaniko-telma/>
- Αγρολάμπος, Μ. (2021, January 8). *Στάση Ράμα στην Αθήνα.* Η Εφημερίδα των Συντακτών. https://www.efsyn.gr/politiki/exoteriki-politiki/275903_stasi-rama-stin-athina
- Γ. Βαρουφάκης: «Ασπρίνη σε καρκινοπαθή τα 12 ναυτικά μίλια στο Ιόνιο». (2021, January 19). Η Εφημερίδα των Συντακτών. <https://www.efsyn.gr/node/277575>

- *Ενήμερη η ΕΕ για την επέκταση της αιγιαλίτιδας ζώνης στο Ιόνιο.* (2020, August 26). Η Εφημερίδα των Συντακτών. https://www.efsyn.gr/politiki/exoteriki-politiki/257184_enimeri-i-ee-gia-tin-epektasi-tis-aigialitidas-zonis-sto-ionio
- Η Καθημερινή. (2021, March 15). *ΑΟΖ: τι συμβαίνει με την Αλβανία;* ΚΑΘΗΜΕΡΙΝΕΣ ΕΚΔΟΣΕΙΣ ΜΟΝΟΠΡΟΣΩΠΗ Α.Ε. <https://www.kathimerini.gr/politics/561294502/aoz-ti-symvainei-me-tin-alvania/>
- (2020, September 15). *Κροναζιέρα Ράμα – Ερντογάν και οδηγίες πριν τη συνάντηση με Μητσοτάκη (εικόνα).* in.gr. <https://www.in.gr/2020/09/15/politics/krouaziera-rama-erntogan-kai-odigies-prin-ti-synantisi-mitsotaki-eikona/>
- Κοτζιάς“ Διαφορετική η προσέγγιση Ελλάδας-Αλβανίας στο θέμα των Τσάμιδων, CNN Greece, 6 June 2016.
- *Κωνσταντίνος Φίλης στο iefimerida: «Μπρα ντε φερ της Ελλάδας με την Τουρκία με επίκεντρο την Αλβανία μετά τα 12 μίλια»* Πηγή: iefimerida.gr - *Κωνσταντίνος Φίλης στο iefimerida: «Μπρα ντε φερ της Ελλάδας με την Τουρκία με επίκεντρο την Αλβανία μετά τα 12 μίλια».* (2020, August 27). Iefimerida.Gr. <https://www.iefimerida.gr/politiki/konstantinos-filis-ellada-toyrkia-albania>
- Μπίτσικα, Π. (2021, June 17). *Το παρασκήνιο πίσω από την προσφυγή Ελλάδας Αλβανίας στη Χάγη.* Documento. <https://www.documentonews.gr/article/to-paraskhnio-pisw-apo-thn-prosfygh-elladas-albanias-sth-xagh/>
- Μπούρας, Δ. (2020, October 20). *Στη Χάγη το ζήτημα των θαλασσιών ζωνών Ελλάδας και Αλβανίας.* HuffPost Greece. https://www.huffingtonpost.gr/entry/stechaye-to-zetema-ton-thalassion-zonon-elladas-kai-alvanias_gr_5f8ed652c5b69daf5e16abed
- *Πρώτο Θέμα.* (2021, January 19). *Στην Ολομέλεια το νομοσχέδιο για την επέκταση της αιγιαλίτιδας ζώνης στο Ιόνιο.* ProtoThema. Διαθέσιμο σε : <https://www.protothema.gr/politics/article/1086003/stin-olomeleia-to-nomoshedio-gia-tin-epektasi-tis-aigialitidas-zonis-sto-ionio/>
- *Πρώτο Θέμα, & Στούκας, Μ.* (2020, October 24). *Η συμφωνία Ελλάδας - Αλβανίας για την ΑΟΖ (2009) που δεν εφαρμόστηκε ποτέ.* ProtoThema. Διαθέσιμο σε: <https://www.protothema.gr/stories/article/1058441/i-sumfonia-elladas-alvanias-gia-tin-aoz-2009-pou-den-efarmostike-pote/>
- *Στη Χάγη το ζήτημα των θαλασσιών ζωνών Ελλάδας- Αλβανίας.* (2020, October 20). Naftemporiki.gr. <https://m.naftemporiki.gr/story/1648467/sti-xagi-to-zitima-ton-thalassion-zonon-elladas-albanias>
- Τζίμας, Σ. (2020, October 23). *Ελλάδα – Αλβανία, ΑΟΖ μέσω Χάγης.* ΚΑΘΗΜΕΡΙΝΕΣ ΕΚΔΟΣΕΙΣ ΜΟΝΟΠΡΟΣΩΠΗ Α.Ε. Εθν.Μακαρίου & Φαληρέως 2. <https://www.kathimerini.gr/opinion/561129280/ellada-alvania-aoz-meso-chagis/>
- Φωτάκη, Α. (2020, October 21). *Μήνυμα στην Αγκυρα μέσω Τιράνων.* ΤΑ ΝΕΑ. <https://www.tanea.gr/print/2020/10/21/politics/minyma-crstin-agkyra-meso-tiranon/>