A 'common future' in Cyprus? Public opinion in Cyprus on the Settlement Process

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Abstract

In this paper, we examine public opinion on the potentials of a 'common future' arguably promoted by "other community perceptions", "national / cultural identity", "top priority of national goals", "index of Cypriotness", and "trust" in Cyprus, from the viewpoints of the two Cypriot Communities. The core question is *what lies under the differences in attitudes and expectations from the peace process between the two communities?* In other words, *which factors determine Cypriots' willingness for and desirability of a peaceful solution to the Cyprus 'impasse'?* We suggest a close relationship between 'empathy' shared by the two Cypriot communities and the trust for community leaders, and prospects for a common future depleted from misunderstandings, hatred and fears of ordinary citizens. This paper expects to contribute to the discussion by providing possible suggestions for decision makers for a 'common future' for common and long-term interests as desired by people yet to be designed by the decision-makers themselves. To this end, we provide a rigorous empirical investigation into comparative public attitudes presenting a quantitative discussion of the "2009 - Cyprus 2015 – Research and Dialogue for a Sustainable Future" survey.

Introduction

The Cyprus conflict has been occupying the international agenda for more than half a century. Since the first stationing of the UN Peacekeeping Forces – the UNFICYP (UN Force in Cyprus) – in Cyprus in 1964, dozens of efforts from all political levels to solve the Cyprus problem had been tried and are still being tried. It is clear that the two communities in the island, the Greek Cypriots and the Turkish Cypriots, are doomed to live on the island. On many occasions the leaderships of the two conflicting sides have stated that Cyprus was the *common home* for both Turkish Cypriots and the Greek Cypriots.

Since 1977 and 1979 High Level Agreements (also known as Summit Agreements) endorsed by the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot leaders under the aegis of the United Nations (UN) as the basis for future negotiations, the parameters of the solution of the Cyprus conflict are known to everybody: establishment of a federal republic that will have one international character/personality and will be bi-zonal with regard to the territorial aspects – that is each federated state would be administered by one community - and bi-communal with regard to the constitutional aspects.

The current Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot leaders, Demetris Christofias and Mehmet Ali Talat respectively, have already confirmed their endorsement of the High Level Agreements in their joint statements dated 23 May and 1 July 2008. In all of these agreements, it is clear that Cyprus is a common home for both Turkish Cypriots and the Greek Cypriots and that they will share something in an administrative structure that is to be established on the island. Does that mean that they will share a "common future"? To a general observer, that is common sense! In a solution, if the two communities are to live in a federal republic where they share the power and the competences of the republic, then it must be natural to assume that they will share a common future.

In this paper, we analyze the public opinion in both Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities on the potentials of a common future arguably promoted by "other community perceptions", "national / cultural identity", "top priority of national goals", "index of Cypriotness", and "trust" in Cyprus. In simple terms, we try to understand how much the two communities are ready to *share* a common future. At this juncture there are some crucial questions that needed to be asked in order to understand whether the two communities are ready to *share* this common future. What lies under the differences in attitudes and expectations from the peace process between the two communities? What are the factors that determine willingness for and desirability of a solution to the Cyprus 'impasse'? Could this desire for a solution mean that the two sides want to share a common future? We suggest a close relationship between 'empathy' shared by the two Cypriot communities and the trust for community leaders, and prospects for a common future depleted by misunderstandings, hatred and fears of ordinary citizens.

This paper intends to contribute to the current discussion by providing possible suggestions for the decision makers as well as the third parties for a 'common future' for common and long-term interests as desired by people yet to be designed by the decision-makers themselves. To this end, we provide a rigorous empirical investigation into comparative public attitudes presenting a quantitative discussion of the "2009 - Cyprus 2015 – Research and Dialogue for a Sustainable Future" survey.

Contextual Background

Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriots have been *sharing* the *space* of the island of Cyprus since 1571 when the island was conquered by the Ottoman Empire and the ancestors of the Turkish Cypriots started to settle on the island. After the end of the British colonial rule in 1960 the Republic of Cyprus was created as a bi-communal state where the Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots were given the chance to *share* the competences – that is, the powers and functions – of the state for the first time in their history. The Republic of Cyprus was a consociational democracy in the form of a functional federation where a delicate balance was struck for the two communities to *share* the powers and functions of the *common* state. Naturally, having (/sharing) the *common state* would have meant sharing a *common future* for the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities in Cyprus. However the *sharing* of the *common state* and hence a *common future* lasted only three years until ethnic violence started when in 1963 the Turkish Cypriots were forcefully expulsed from all the state machinery of the Republic of Cyprus. This was due to the Turkish Cypriots' rejection of the Greek Cypriot proposals to turn the bi-communal Republic into a Hellenic one where the Turkish Cypriots would be a minority vulnerable to Greek Cypriot domination. Hence, the expulsion of the Turkish Cypriots from the Republic of Cyprus state machinery was sort of expulsion of them from the *common future* that the two communities were supposed to have.

From 1963 to 1968 the Turkish Cypriots were forced to live in small enclaves where they were allowed to use (not even *share*) only a small amount of the island's space – about 3% - under the fragile protection of the UN Peacekeeping force, the UNFICYP. In 1968, intercommunal negotiations between the two communities started under the UN and the blockade on the Turkish Cypriot enclaves started to loosen.

In the intercommunal negotiations, the two community interlocutors were negotiating on constitutional matters with the aim of modifying the constitution of the 1960 Republic of Cyprus where some level of autonomy would be given to the Turkish Cypriots in return for their concessions to the Greek Cypriot community on the constitutional matter. That solution envisaged some sort of *sharing* of the *common state* and hence a *common future* for the two communities in Cyprus, though probably less enthusiastically than the one in 1960.

The July 1974 coup d'état engineered by the military regime in Greece which attempted to unite the island with Greece and the successive Turkish military operation to stop *Enosis* – union of Cyprus with Greece – led to the current division of the island since then. This division became more pronounced after 1975 Population Transfer Agreement[1] when Turkish Cypriots moved to the north and the Greek Cypriots to the south of the island where they have been living under their own respective administration – Republic of Cyprus in the south and the TRNC in the north.[2] Therefore, on the ground the two communities continued to not *share* the *common state* and, hence, a *common future*.

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[1] UN Document S/11789.
[2] After the expulsion of the Turkish Cypriots from the state machinery the Republic of Cyprus became a purely Greek Cypriot one. Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus – TRNC - which was established by the Turkish Cypriot in 1983 as a successor to the Turkish Federated State of Cyprus which was established in 1975. The TRNC is recognized by Turkey only.

Intercommunal Negotiations and an attempt for a common state/future

The sole fact that the intercommunal negotiations have been continuing tells us that the two sides have not given up on negotiating for a *common state* and hence a *common future*. Here, one needs to pause and try to understand what the *common state* and the *common future* mean. There are critical junctures – sort of important milestones - in the intercommunal negotiations where the *common state* and *common future* for the two communities have been defined which by and large the leaderships of the two communities accepted – at least on paper.

During the High Level Agreements – also known as the Summit Agreements – which took place between Makarios and Denktaş in 1977 and between Denktaş and Kyprianou in 1979, the two sides agreed that the solution of the Cyprus problem – i.e., common future – will be an independent, non-aligned federal republic. This federation would have one international character/personality, where the powers and the functions of the central/federal government would be designed in such a way that the unity of the country would be safeguarded while maintaining the bicommunal character of the state with regard to the constitutional aspects. It has also been agreed that the federation would be bi-zonal with regard to the territorial aspects – that is each federated state would be administered by one community.

In 1992 the UN Secretary General prepared an overall framework agreement that was based on both the High Level Agreements complemented by years-long negotiations that started in late 1980s between the Turkish Cypriot leader Denktaş and his Greek Cypriot counterpart Vassiliou. The overall framework agreement which failed to be accepted by the two sides in Cyprus was called the Ghali's Set of Ideas. The Set of Ideas was comprised on 100 paragraphs of which paragraphs 2 to 4 described the general guidelines of the *common state* and the *common future* of the two communities in Cyprus:

> 2. The overall framework agreement is an integrated whole which, when it is approved by both communities in separate referendums ... will result in a *new partnership* and a new constitution for Cyprus that will govern the relations of the two communities on a federal basis that is bi-communal as regards the constitutional aspects and bi-zonal as regards the territorial aspects. The overall framework agreement is based on the 1977 and 1979 high-level agreements...
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> 3. The overall framework agreement recognizes that Cyprus is the *common home* of the Greek Cypriot community and of the Turkish Cypriot community and that their relationship is not one of majority and minority but one of two communities in the federal republic of Cyprus. It safeguards the cultural, religious, political, social and linguistic identity of each community. (emphases in italics are authors')
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> 4. The overall framework agreement ensures that the Cyprus settlement is based on a State of Cyprus ... comprising two politically equal communities.[3]

The Set of Ideas states that Cyprus is the *common home* of the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities. In this *common home*, the *common state* would be a federation based on the High Level Agreements where the *common future* for the two communities would be a *new partnership*. It is states that in this new partnership the relationship between the two communities would be not a relationship between majority and minority, but between politically equal communities who would be

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[3] Set of Ideas was an annex to the Report of the Secretary-General to the Security Council, S/24472 dated 21 August 1992.

sharing the powers and the functions of the federal government. However, the failure of the Set of Ideas to come into life prevented the creation of a *common state*, and hence, a *common future* for then two Cypriot communities.

During 2002-2004, the UN prepared a series of versions of a comprehensive solution plan based on the previous body of UN work as well as the results of the negotiations that started in 2000. This plan is also known as the Annan Plan that took its name from the then UN Secretary General Kofi Annan. The last version of the plan (31 March 2004) was put to simultaneous, separate referenda in both sides of the island on 24 April 2004. This was the only "comprehensive" solution plan that was ever been produced for the solution of the Cyprus problem. The plan described a *common state* and hence a *common future* for the Turkish Cypriots and the Greek Cypriots:

> (Main articles i): Affirming that Cyprus is our common home and recalling that we were co-founders of the Republic established in 1960
>
> (Main articles iv): Deciding to renew our partnership on that basis and determined that this new bi-zonal partnership shall ensure a common future in friendship, peace, security and prosperity in an independent and united Cyprus
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> (Main articles closing statement) We, the Greek Cypriots and the Turkish Cypriots, exercising our inherent constitutive power, by our free and democratic, separately expressed *common will* adopt this Foundation Agreement.[4] (Emphases in italics are authors').

The Annan Plan envisages a *common home* – a *common state* called the United Cyprus Republic which would have been bi-zonal and comprised of two constituent states of equal status, the Greek Cypriot State and the Turkish Cypriot state (Article 2). If the plan had passed from the referenda that reflected the *common will* of the Greek and Turkish Cypriots – the *co-founders* of the republic in 1960, it would have been an attempt to create a *common future* for the Greek and Turkish Cypriots in a *renewed partnership*. However, the plan was rejected by 76% of the Greek Cypriots while it was supported by 65% of the Turkish Cypriots, which meant that it became null and void.

Current Peace Talks (2008 – to date)

After four years of impasse in the Cyprus peace talks, the negotiations resumed in 2008 when the intransigent Greek Cypriot leader Tassos Papadopoulos who was the champion of the NO camp lost the presidential election to Demetris Christofias. Christofias came to power by promising solution to the Cyprus conflict in his election campaign. On 21 March 2008, Christofias and pro-solution Turkish Cypriot leader Talat agreed on establishing a number of working groups and technical committees and after reviewing their preparatory work to start the full fledged negotiations between the leaders.

On 23 May 2008, the two leaders met and made the following joint statement, which looks very much like the description of the *common state* as envisioned in the Annan Plan:

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4 "The Comprehensive Settlement of the Cyprus Problem" (31 March 2004) which is known as the "Annan Plan" is available in the original English at www.annanplan.org.

They reaffirmed their commitment to a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation with political equality, as defined by relevant Security Council resolutions. This partnership will have a Federal Government with a single international personality, as well as a Turkish Cypriot Constituent State and a Greek Cypriot Constituent State, which will be of equal status.

The two leaders made another joint statement on 1 July 2008 where they agreed in principle that the common state would have single sovereignty and single citizenship which is in line with the previous body of UN work. Since 2008, the two leaders have been negotiating on six dossiers – issues originally taken up by the six working groups: 1. Governance and Power Sharing, 2. Property, 3. Territory, 4. Economic Affairs, 5. European Union Affairs and 6. Security and Guarantees. The two leaders have met more than 60 times until 1 February 2010 when the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon visited the island and read a joint statement on behalf of the two leaders:

It is our *common conviction* that the Cyprus problem has remained unresolved for too long. We are also aware that time is not on the side of settlement. There is an important opportunity now to find a solution to the Cyprus problem which would take into full consideration the legitimate rights and concerns of both Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots. We are aware that such a settlement is in the interest of all and that it will finally bring peace, stability and prosperity to our *common home* Cyprus. [5] (Emphases in italics are authors')

According to the joint declaration dated 1 February 2010, the two leaders are – at least on paper – stating that they are determined to solve the Cyprus problem, which in their *common conviction* has lasted too long. While pointing out the need to find a mutually acceptable solution that would take into consideration the legitimate rights and concerns of the two communities, the leaders are already referring to a *common future* for the two communities in their *common home* Cyprus. From the above analysis, it is clear that there is a desire to create a *common state* and, hence, a *common future* for the Turkish and Greek Cypriots in Cyprus at least on the level of the international community – symbolized by the UN who has been hosting the intercommunal negotiations under its mission of good offices since 1968 – as well as on the level of the two leaderships in Cyprus. The *common state* is described as a federal state that would be bi-zonal with regard to the territorial aspects and bi-zonal with regard to the constitutional aspects. The *common future* that is attached to the *common state* can be roughly described as a future relationship between the two communities where they will be politically equal – that is, one community would not be able to dominate the other or take the other one as a hostage. Furthermore, it is envisaged that the Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots would respect the distinct language, identity and culture of each other in their *common future* that would be in stability, peace, and harmony. If this is the agreed upon *common state* and the *common future* on the political leadership level, then are the two communities ready for this? Here we examine the "2009 - Cyprus 2015 – Research and Dialogue for a Sustainable Future" survey results in order to understand if the common state and the common future endorsed by the two Cypriot leaderships – at least on paper – coincided with the ones that the two communities have.

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[5] SG/SM/12732 (http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2010/sgsm12732.doc.htm).

Data and Methods

In this study, we test one multiple regression model of 'desirability of a final settlement' on the island for a 'common future' of the two Cypriot communities. We build a unique model, which estimates the impact of contextual and demographic variables on desirability of a final settlement, controlling for religiousness, age, gender, ideology and education. The contextual variables incorporated into the analysis are present in the "2009 - Cyprus 2015 – Research and Dialogue for a Sustainable Future" survey designed by Cyprus 2015 team (Sözen, Kaymak, Lordos and Christou).[6] For both subsets (Turkish Cypriot dataset and Greek Cypriot dataset) two models - the TCC Desirability Model and the GCC Desirability Model - were designed with the variables seen below[7]:

> *The Desirability / Support Model*
> Desirability /Support = f (Other community perceptions, National/cultural identity, Top priority of national goals, Index of Cypriotness, Trust, Refugee status, Age, Education, Religiosity, Gender, Ideology, Interaction (Old*memories)

(a) Dependent Variable
The dependent variable in this paper is 'desirability of a final settlement'. To operationalise it, we use the question: "To what extent do you wish – and expect from the leaders – that they reach a mutually acceptable settlement through this process?" The quantitative 0 to 10 scaled-response categories to this question ranged from 0 ("I strongly wish that nothing comes of this process) to 10 (I strongly wish that this process leads to a Settlement). The closer the opinion to the value of 10, the higher the desirability of a settlement for a common future.

(b) Independent Variables
This study examines several contextual independent variables that are expected to have an impact on opinions about settlement process introduced previously. The selected clusters of independent variables are namely, "other community perceptions", "national / cultural identity", "top priority of national goals", "index of Cypriotness", "trust", and "refugee status".

Perception of the other community: Firstly, we argue that *(H1) when conflicting societies believe that they share more commonalities they are more willing to reach a resolution on the conflict.* To test this argument, we include the 'other community perceptions' cluster of variables to investigate into the extent to which the respondent agrees with (i) We have much in common with the Turkish Cypriots (Greek Cypriots) (ii) would not mind having Turkish Cypriot (Greek Cypriot) neighbors (iii) The Cyprus Problem must be solved on the basis of a mutually acceptable compromise (iv) recognize that both communities in Cyprus have made mistakes in the past (v) I try to look at the Cyprus problem, both from the point of view of Greek Cypriots (Turkish Cypriots) and from the point of view of Turkish Cypriots (Greek Cypriots). On a five-point scale with 1-strongly disagree, 2-

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6 Sample Size: 1,000 Greek Cypriots and 1,000 Turkish Cypriots; Sampling Process: Multi-stage Random Stratified Sampling; Method of Data Collection: Face to Face Interviews with a Structured Questionnaire at Homes of Respondents and in their Native Language; Period of Data Collection: 06th October – 06th November 2009; Field Work: Symmetron Market Research for Greek Cypriots and KADEM Cyprus Social Research for Turkish Cypriots. Ahmet Sözen, Erol Kaymak, Alexandros Lordos and Spyros Christou, "Investigating the Future: An In-depth Study of Public Opinion in Cyprus," Cyprus 2015: Research and Dialogue for A Sustainable Future (December 2009).

7 For reasons of practicality, Turkish Cypriot Community and Greek Cypriot Community will be abbreviated as TCC and GCC, respectively, in the remainder of the paper.

somewhat disagree, 3-neither agree nor disagree, 4-somewhat agree, 5-strongly agree. These values are recoded as 1-agree (values 4&5) 0-disagree (values 1&2), and others as missing.

Cultural/national identity: Secondly, we hypothesize that *(H2) if both communities drift away from motherland cultural and national identification they give higher consent to reach a solution on the island.* We test this assumption with the 'national / cultural identity" question reads 'To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements regarding national and cultural identity? (5 point scale, 1-Strongly Disagree, 2-Somewhat Disagree, 3-Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4-Somewhat Agree, 5-Strongly Agree. This is also recoded as 1-Agree (values 4&5) 0-disagree (values 1&2) others-missing). This cluster is composed variables (i) I consider myself to have Greek (Turkish) cultural roots (ii) Cyprus historically is Hellenic (Turkish) (iii) I consider Greece (Turkey) to be my mother country.

Index of Cypriotness: Thirdly, and to strengthen the previous hypothesis *(H3), we argue that the more the level of Cypriotness is the more the desirability of a solution on the island.* Then we constructed an index of Cypriotness to measure if the respondent considers himself to be (i) Mostly a Cypriot but also somewhat a Greek (Turk) OR (ii) Only a Cypriot and not at all a Greek (Turk) – the so-called 'full Cypriotness'. On the contrary, those respondents who identified themselves as (i) 'Only a Greek (Turk) and not at all a Cypriot' OR (ii) 'Mostly a Greek (Turk) but also somewhat a Cypriot' are called as 'less Cypriot'. The reference category in this cluster was 'half Cypriotness' which we measured with association oneself as 'a Greek (Turk) and a Cypriot to the same degree'.

Trust: We also measure the impact of the level of trust in the EU and UN, motherland governments and the two leaders who are conducting the peace process. We test the assumption that *(H4) level of confidence in some actors in the peace talks also has an impact on the support given to the process.* Since we cannot detect at the outset the direction of this relation we think this as a two-way interaction. More specifically we test the level confidence in the Turkish Cypriot Leader, Mehmet Ali Talat, the Greek Cypriot Leader, Demetris Christofias, the United Nations, European Union, and the governments of Turkey and Greece who are in different ways involved in the process. The answers include 1 'none at all', 2 'not very much', 3 'moderate', 4 'quite a lot', 5 'a great deal'. We recode them as 1 'high trust' (values 4&5) and 0 'low trust' (values 1&2).

National top priority goals: We also test the impact of materialist priorities of the countries as perceived by the mass public in Cyprus. We argue that *(H5) if one believes that economic growth is essential then he prefers a final settlement over indeterminate continuation of the Cyprus problem.* We also expect this to be true for the Turkish Cypriot community. On the contrary, we believe that the Greek Cypriots' alternative to the economic goal is more security-related. That is they wither away deployment of defense forces on the island. Thus, the assumption is that *(H6) prioritizing strong defense as a national goal discourages people to support the process.* That said, this group of variables observed the top priority of national goals for the next ten years. Is it (i) A high level of economic growth or (ii) making sure this country has strong defense forces that the respondent considers the most important? Lastly, the 'refugee status' variable asked whether respondent himself or his parents, is/are displaced person(s) from areas currently under the control of the other community? Those who gave positive response are included in the analysis.

(c) Control Variables

We include "gender", "education", "ideological self-placement", "religiousness" and "age" as control variables (Russet and Hansen 1975; Gabel 1998; Nelson et al. 2001). Female respondents are coded as 0, whereas male respondents are coded as 1. Education is measured by using the self-report of completed level of education. The two education variables are also dummy variables, which are 'elementary' (some/up to elementary) and 'high-school' versus 'graduate/ post-graduate' (university degree and higher). Ideological self-placement was a 3-scale variable ranging from 1 'left' to 3 'right'. From this variable we created three dummy variables as 'leftist' (1) vs. the other (0), 'rightist' (1) vs. the other (0), and 'centrist' vs. the other (0). To measure religiousness, we created a dummy variable, indicating whether the respondent attended 'many times each week OR every Sunday/Friday' or not. We coded these respondents as 'religious' (1) versus the 'non-religious (0) ones. We created two age variables 'young' (age = 18-24) and 'middle age' (age = 25 to 54) versus the 'old' (age = 55+) as a reference category. Then, we created the interaction variable between 'old' dummy variable and 'having strong memories of 1970s' to measure the impact of the opinions of those people who are over the age of 55 and who also lived the conflict of the 1970s on the island.

Empirical Analysis

Descriptive results

In 2008, the leaders of the two Cypriot communities Demetris Christofias and Mehmet Ali Talat started the process of negotiations for a Comprehensive Settlement on the island. The initial efforts were conducted through Technical Committees and Working Groups. Recently direct discussions between the two leaders have begun. The "2009 - Cyprus 2015 – Research and Dialogue for a Sustainable Future" study found out that the two Cypriot communities (the Greek and the Turkish Cypriots) expressed low hopes (66 % both) about that this process would produce results. Contrary to the Greek community's high desires (80%) the Turkish Cypriots had somewhat lower (59%) aspiration to expect from the leaders to reach a mutually acceptable settlement in the end of the talks.

What lied under the differences in attitudes and expectations from the peace process between the two communities? Why were the Greek Cypriots relatively more willing than their Turkish Cypriot neighbors to come up with a solution to the Cyprus 'impasse'?

To start with, the two communities had contrasting views on the evaluation of their 'common future'. Contrary to Greek Cypriot optimism (50%) that the Greek and Turkish Cypriots had 'much in common' with each other, the Turkish Cypriots disagreed (50%) with this estimation. (While half of the Greeks believed in a 'common future', half of the Turkish Cypriots (50%) disagreed with this). However, despite the lack of belief as such, the Turkish Cypriots still expressed that they would not mind having a Greek Cypriot neighbor. Greek Cypriots, on the other hand, were more compromising when neighborhood was issue at stake. Greek Cypriots (75%) were more willing than the Turkish (55%) that for a resolution of the 'Cyprus problem' both communities should be willing and ready to compromise. Neither the Turkish Cypriots nor the Greek Cypriots, however, were for an 'armed struggle' for a resolution. Among the two communities, the Greek Cypriot community (87%) was more cognizant of the mistakes done in the past, whereas

Turkish Cypriots (52%) were less accepting the past. The Greek Cypriots empathized the Turkish Cypriot viewpoint more than did the Turkish Cypriots for the Greek Cypriots.

As far as the identity of the individual was concerned, the Greek Cypriots developed stronger and deeper ties with their Greek cultural roots (88%) yet with weaker ties with their 'mother country' (53%). Turkish Cypriots on the other hand, developed stronger level of attachment (74%) with Turkey as a mother land. Both communities adopted in principle that the 'island' belonged to their own culture. Likewise, as for self identification, they considered themselves 'Cypriot' and at the same time Greek or Turk. These results could be encapsulated as that neither community would disregard their ties with the motherland, yet they were also claiming their Cypriotness at the same degree. These patterns revealed a similarity in the level of self-identification between both communities, contrary to opposing views on social and political perception of hopes and desires about the Cyprus issue.

Trust in institutions is an essential aspect of governance in democratic polities. If citizens do trust an institution, they may adhere to its policy decisions or they exempt from undermining its authority. This issue of institutional trust is a central concern in the process of peaceful resolution of a conflicting situation. In this respect, the two Cypriot communities showed similarities in their levels of confidence for certain institutions such as religious authorities, armed forces and the others. For instance, contrary to Greek Cypriots' higher level of confidence in church, Turkish Cypriots expressed a significantly high trust in the armed forces and the police forces. None of the Cypriots trusted the political parties while their respective governments also received lower confidence than the other institutions. Apart from the differences of confidence recorded for the religious authorities and the armed forces, once again the two communities marked 'similar attitudes'. But what was more striking was their approaches to their leaders' performances in dealing specifically with the Cyprus peace process. That is, in contrast with the Turkish Cypriots' moderate trust (44%) in President Talat, the Greek Cypriots expressed more confidence (64%) in Christofias' capacity to contribute to the process. The EU was another source of difference in perception of confidence, which was trusted (53%) by the Greek Cypriots yet untrustworthy for the Turkish Cypriots (31%).

Lastly, Cypriots had competing views on the peace process and a prospect for resolution. Although the leaders in principle had agreed upon a 'bi-zonal and bi-communal federation, the mass publics in two administrations disagreed with each other on this matter. While bi-zonality was essential and acceptable for the Turkish Cypriots (71%) it was rather unacceptable and not essential for the Greek Cypriots (55%). Likewise, Turkish Cypriots were also strongly (71%) pro-bi-communality contrary to the Greek Cypriots' anti-bi-communality choice (54%). Both publics however, were at similar levels (around 55%) in favor of a 'federal government' option. Alone, the Greek Cypriots were supportive of a 'single international personality', a 'single sovereignty' and a 'single citizenship' (at around 82% level). In other words, they put the emphasis on a 'single' entity whereas the Turkish Cypriots strongly favored the co-existence within a politically equal status quo. Furthermore, as for the guarantorship of the solution, Turkish Cypriots' preference of Turkey's guarantorship was replaced with that of the EU for the Greek Cypriots. In other words, the EU surpassed Greek motherland's political role on the peace talks.

These descriptive patterns revealed certain general patterns of attitudes.
- Both Cypriots were more hopeless for the process.
- Greek Cypriots were more optimist that both sides had much in common.
- Greek Cypriots were more in favor of a mutual compromise.
- Turkish Cypriots were more attached to Turkey; Greek Cypriots were less to Greece.
- While Church was the most trusted institution for the Greek Cypriots, Turkish Cypriots prioritized the armed forces.
- Political parties suffered from lack of trust in both sides.
- Bi-zonal and bi-communal federation was essential for Turkish Cypriots,
- A single international personality', a 'single sovereignty' and a 'single citizenship' was essential for the Greek Cypriots.

Multivariate Regression Analysis and Findings

The multivariate nature of regression analysis in this paper relied on the assumption that public opinion is such a complex phenomenon that explanations from a single perspective remain insufficient, misleading and incomplete. In other words, public opinion does not depend on a single factor but a complex set of variables. Taking this as a point of departure, a multivariate framework is proposed, in which all the variables tested in this paper are collocated as seen below:

The Desirability / Support Model
Desirability /Support = f (Other community perceptions, National/cultural identity, Top priority of national goals, Index of Cypriotness, Trust, Refugee status, Age, Education, Religiosity, Gender, Ideology, Interaction (Old*memories)

To test this model, we use multiple linear regression technique since our dependent variable is quantitative. All independent variables included in the regression models were dichotomous or dummy, and the dependent variable 'desirability of settlement on the island' was a numeric one. This made the multivariate regression technique the most appropriate statistical tool for a segregated analysis of sub-samples with the entry of all relevant variables in regression models. To get a parsimonious model that included the variables with important effects on the dependent variable but excluded those variables that had trivial effects, *backward deletion technique* of automated variable selection was chosen.[8] Public desirability was regressed over independent variables in both models by applying the *backward elimination technique* to variable selection. The reason of selecting this technique was that the dataset contained a large pool of variables to draw on. This would result in certainly with some statistical significant results even if there were no real impact or significance. In order to avoid perplexing results, rather than putting all of them in the model, by backward deletion technique only variables with significant effects were incorporated.

It was not accidental to omit some variables, from the models because they were not statistically significant for none of the two models. The presentation of models was designated firstly in Table 1 with all variables included in the regression model, then secondly in Table 2 only with significant variables ($p < .05$). At each iterative step, the least useful predictor was removed until an established criterion ($p < .05$) for the coefficients no longer held. As seen in Table 2 it illustrates the results of

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[8] When the analyses were run with the 'enter' method, there were large amount of variables excluded from the analyses, which however were computed to be significant when backward elimination technique was adopted. Therefore, not to lose significant explanations we preferred backward elimination technique for the regression models.

tests of hypotheses (H1 to H6) presented previously within the framework of this research whether they were confirmed in regression models, and whether there was a common explanatory power of the same argument that would explain opinion patterns for different cases and in different communities.

[Table 1 – About here]

For the TCC model the model was run 21 times to get at the most explanatory model with the most significant variables to explain 'desirability/ support' (Table 2). On the other hand for the GCC model, there were 20 iterations of the analysis. Different combinations of explanatory factors born out differences in statistical significance, in directions of the effect of explanatory variables, or in the overall fit of the model in which those combinations were embedded. Obviously, the scope of this paper allowed analyzing not as many combinations as possible but the best model for the study of the extent under which conditions that the two Cypriot communities desired and expected a final settlement on the island for their 'common future'. That's why, having experimented several models with different combinations of variables, we considered the models seen in Table 2 as the ultimate best fit regression models.

Perception of the other community
Both communities were investigated about how they perceived the other community and the prospects for a solution on the island with this respect. Respondents were interrogated their understanding of the other community as regards commonalities among the two communities, willingness to have a neighbor from other group, mutual compromise as a condition of a solution, mistakes done in the past, and level of empathy about the Cyprus problem. The findings of the regression analysis revealed that only the willingness to resolve the Cyprus problem with mutual compromises (b = 3.521 and b = 3.207, TCC model and GCC model, respectively) and readiness of each community to look at the problem from the viewpoints of the other community publics, that is to empathize the other's perception (b = 1.843 and b = .830, TCC model and GCC model, respectively) did render significant and positive impact on popular desirability of the settlement on the island. On the other hand, indifference towards having a Greek neighbor (b = .882) also proved significant and a positive impact only on Turkish Cypriot community's support for the settlement (Table 2). This correspondence was almost a 1-point change on desirability for a 1-point change in the level of agreement on not minding having a Greek neighbor. The most powerful explanation of the desirability for a settlement process was in effect that it was a *sine qua non* for both Greek and even more for the Turkish Cypriots as the b coefficient of this variable almost tripled up the effects of all other variables in the models. We could safely confirm the Hypothesis 1 *(H1)* that *when conflicting societies believed that they share more commonalities they were more willing to reach a resolution on the conflict.*

[Table 2 – About here]

Cultural/national identity
As far as the cultural/national identification was concerned, respondent's considering himself/herself to have Turkish cultural roots, had a significant yet negative (b = -1.636) impact on his / her support for the settlement process on the island (Table 2). Having regressed both Turkish and Greek Cypriots' desire for a mutually acceptable settlement through this process over the same variables of the cultural/ national identity (asking Turkish cultural roots in TCC, and Greek cultural roots in GCC community) the models produced that for the Turkish Greek

community strong Turkish cultural root (associated with motherland Turkey) offered a negative association. For the Greek community, as there was not such a significant impact, it was not included in the findings (Table 2). To sum up, the *H2* was only confirmed for the Turkish Cypriot public opinion *as they were close to the motherland Turkey's cultural and national identification they gave less consent to reach a solution on the island.*

Trust
In the TCC Model, desirability of a settlement was predicted significantly by the trust for the Turkish Cypriot leader Talat, which was the only trusted leader / institution, in fact, involved in the process having a significant impact on Turkish Cypriot community's attitudes towards the resolution of the Cyprus problem (Table 2). Literally, that regression in TCC Model produced a *b* coefficient of .752 for the trust for President Talat meant that the average level of public support for his way of handling the process was about 1 point higher controlling for the other trust and remainder of variables in the model. While for the Turkish Cypriots trust in their leader was a strong and significant indicator of desirability of a solution, for the Greek Cypriot Community, it was the Greek Cypriot leader Christofias (*b* = .807) as well as the government of motherland Greece (*b* =. 585) that the Greek Cypriots had a significant confidence in the process. That is, a 1-unit increase in mentioning how much confidence you have in Christofias and the government of Greece who are in different ways involved in the process was associated with an increase of 1 point on public desirability in the settlement. We could thus conclude that the *H4* held true for the impact of the trust for community leaders' on the desirability of a settlement on the island. In other words, the *high level of confidence in leaders that involve in the peace talks yielded a positive impact as the support given to the process.*

National top priority goals
National top priority goals also resulted in competing views. The Turkish Cypriot community prioritized national economic growth so that through the lenses of such a prioritization they gave their support for the process. As evidence revealed, a high level of economic growth was statistically significant at .05 level. Those who considered economic growth to be the top priority also strongly supported the settlement efforts of the leaders. Desire for the settlement was associated with an increase of almost 1 point (*b* = .858) of expectation of economic growth (Table 2). This validated the *H5* that *if one believed that economic growth was essential then he preferred a final settlement over indeterminate continuation of the Cyprus problem.* On the other hand, the Greek Cypriot community was significantly for the need for a strong defense forces (*b* = -.592). In so far as the necessity for strong defense forces was issue at stake, they withdrew their support for the peace process. Apparently, prioritizing the need for a strong army on the island deterred the Greek Cypriots to support or expect a resolution on the Cyprus problem. Thus the *H6* is confirmed that *prioritizing strong defense as a national goal discouraged people to support the process.*

Demographics
The results of the multiple regression analysis showed that each one-unit increase (from center to right) in "ideological self-placement" was associated with -1.309 unit of decrease for the centrist Turkish Cypriots and even higher -1.770 unit of decrease for the right-wing ones in desirability of a settlement. For the Greek Cypriots, besides that ideology had not a significant impact on desirability estimations, age and education appeared to have significantly negative impact. The young (*b* = -.970) and middle-aged (*b* = -.925) Greek Cypriots, as well as the highly educated (*b* = -.645) ones hesitated to support the settlement process carried out by

leaders Talat and Christofias. The regression models for Turkish and Greek samples were run with two "ideology", two "age" and three "education" dummy variables. The reason underlying this decision was to avoid extreme *multicollinearity*.[9]

Some of the independent variables had very significant and good coefficient estimates as far as determination of popular support is concerned, whereas some others failed to have even a small significant effect. The unstandardized *b* coefficients gave clear confirmation that many indicators in the models provided satisfactory explanations about the determinants of support for use of force (Table 2). But, how well was the desirability for a settlement predicted by knowing the selected independent variables in the regression model? The overall significance (*F* value) of two models looked positive. Furthermore, the independent variables in each model (as shown in Table 2) proved to be the statistically significant variables despite relatively low adjusted R^2s of models in general.[10] Noticeably, with respect to Turkish Cypriot community's support for a settlement, results demonstrated that 44 % of the variation in support was captured with putting all those variables in the TCC Model (Adjusted R^2 = . 438). On the contrary, the GCC Model discerned that the model obtained the lowest estimate of support with 22 % of variation (Adjusted R^2 = .262). Despite these modest adjusted R^2 values, since the dataset was proportionally large in its size with its great variety of variables 22 % to 44 % explanatory power about the real population data was deemed pretty satisfactory.

Conclusion

Our analysis revealed interesting but mostly consistent opinion patterns of the Cypriot communities' perception of each other, of the self-national/cultural identification, national goals, and the trust for actors involved in the peace process.

In so far as the Turkish Cypriots consider themselves closely attached with their 'Turkish' cultural and national roots, they wither away from any form of current settlement alternatives introduced by their leader Talat. Such a concern is not valid for the Greek Cypriots. Nor is there any intrusion of Cypriotness as felt by the two community members. At least, the hope for the future is that national identity (here 'Cypriotness' means identity based on being an islander) does not hinder the popular support given for the peace process. The leaders and the other parties of the negotiations should feel safe on this matter.

Furthermore, it is no surprise that each community has a confidence in its own leader on the issue of final settlement. In a mirror effect, the leaders also feel confident that their constituency's support for the process relies on their own popularity. Neither the EU nor the UN does exercise any impact on public perceptions about the peace process. Would this be a *call* by the *Cypriots* that is, managing of the Cyprus problem should be handled by the 'Cypriots' themselves rather than by the external actors? If so, the Cypriots already feel for a 'common future' that lies in the island, not somewhere else.

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[9] "Old" and "high-school" categories were "reference category" of 'age' and education' variables, respectively, and excluded from the analysis. For the ideological self-placement, the 'leftist' was left out as reference category in the TCC model, and the 'centre' was the reference category in the GCC model. It was because of the normal distribution consideration of the ideology variables for each sample. See footnote *b* of the Table 2.

[10] Theoretically, the more the adjusted R^2 value is closer to the value of 1, the closer the estimated regression model fits the sample data. Though according to many scholars the higher the adjusted R^2, the better the model is. However, large sample size, in general, does not yield strong adjusted R^2.

Last but not the least, as far as the *perception of the other community was concerned,* our argument that when conflicting societies believe that they share more commonalities they are more willing to reach a resolution on the conflict. In other words, there was a very strong convergence between the Turkish and Greek Cypriots who preferred to view the current problem looking through the 'others' lenses as a part of win-win mindset and with the emphasis of the notion of compromise rather than a win-lose stubbornness. This, indeed, would have a very promising implication for the future as the two Cypriot communities believe that 'empathy' is a *sine qua non* for the prospect for success of the settlement talks and negotiations.

In conclusion, this paper, first, pointed to a convergence of opinion between the two communities as well as community leaders' positions. The joint declaration dated 1 February 2010 stated a joint determination to solve the Cyprus problem. The two leaders also devoted themselves to find a mutually acceptable solution that would take into consideration the legitimate rights and concerns of the two communities, the leaders are already referring to a *common future* for the two communities in their *common home* Cyprus. Second, the popular opinion climate this paper pointed to also reflected similar concerns as that of leadership. Prescriptively, scrutinising the issue of desirability of a 'common future' in Cyprus from a mass public opinion perspective is instructive for not only the Greek and Turkish Cypriot decision-makers, but also all parties that take part in this issue at the moment of the final resolution and for future strategies and governance. The value-added of this research is also to further democratic consolidation by promoting our understanding of conflict resolution and peace processes. Normatively the expected value of studying public opinion in conflict resolution in democratic systems is to reinforce the public actor as an 'effective' organism in decision making. Policymakers need to be responsive to acquire and sustain popular backing of decisions rather than looking from their glass-houses.

Table 1 Multiple regression of desirability of a settlement in Cyprus (all included)

	TCC Community b (Std. Error)	Beta	GCC Community b (Std. Error)	Beta
Trust				
Trust for Turkish Cypriot Leader, Mehmet Ali Talat	,696 (,480)	,076	1,115 (,977)	,054
Trust for Greek Cypriot Leader, Demetris Christofias	,161 (1,079)	,009	,991** (,381)	,146
Trust for UN	,688 (,758)	,054	,223 (,522)	,022
Trust for EU	-,796 (,623)	-,074	-,060 (,367)	-,008
Trust for Government of Turkey	-,286 (,489)	-,031	-3,477 (3,043)	-,052
Trust for Government of Greece	1,029 (1,120)	,054	,507 (,387)	,068
National/cultural identity				
A3.1 I consider myself to have Greek (Turkish) cultural roots	-1,472 * (,867)	-,089	-,065 (,802)	-,004
A3.2 Cyprus historically is Hellenic (Turkish)	,357 (,718)	,033	,441 (,634)	,040
A3.3 I consider Greece (Turkey) to be my mother country	-,534 (,865)	-,040	-,360 (,424)	-,049
Top priority of national goals				
A7_1 Most important goals of this country: A high level of economic growth	,927** (,482)	,092	-,095 (,434)	-,010
A7_2 Making sure this country has strong defense forces	,485 (,430)	,056	-,466 (,346)	-,064
Index of Cypriotness				
Full Cypriot (1) vs. Half Cypriot (0)	,096 (,602)	,008	,215 (,373)	,032
Less Cypriot (1) vs. Half Cypriot (0)	-,001 (,545)	,000	,857 (,624)	,065
Other community perceptions				
A2.1 We have much in common with the Turkish Cypriots (Greek Cypriots)	,449 (,522)	,051	-,271 (,423)	-,038
A2.2 I would not mind having Turkish Cypriot (Greek Cypriot) neighbors	,872** (,435)	,101	,493 (,414)	,068
A2.3 The Cyprus Problem must be solved on the basis of a mutually acceptable compromise	3,347*** (,513)	,369	2,981*** (,498)	,323
A2.6 I recognize that both communities in Cyprus have made mistakes in the past	,077 (,542)	,009	,880 (,631)	,070
A2.7 I try to look at the Cyprus problem, both from the point of view of Greek Cypriots (Turkish Cypriots) and from the point of view of Turkish Cypriots (Greek Cypriots)	1,698*** (,548)	,191	,616 (,462)	,072
Refugee status				
D4 Refugee Status (respondent or parents)	,050 (,460)	,006	-,735** (,389)	-,106

	b (SE)	Beta	b (SE)	Beta
Age				
Young (1) vs. Old (0)	-,494 (,799)	-,047	-,804 (,674)	-,071
Middle age (1) vs. Old (0)	-,331 (,688)	-,037	-,864* (,497)	-,126
Education				
Elementary (1) vs. High-school (0)	-,629 (,665)	-,048	-,017 (,564)	-,002
Graduate and postgraduate (1) vs. High-school (0)	,361 (,445)	,040	-,605* (,353)	-,082
Religiousness				
Religious (1) vs. Non-religious (0)	,829 (,679)	,060	-,099 (,413)	-,012
Gender				
Male (0) vs. Female (1)	,068 (,438)	,008	,190 (,318)	,028
Ideology [a]				
Leftist (1) vs. Centrist (0)	NA	NA	-,183 (,454)	-,025
Centrist (1) vs. Leftist (0) /	-1,215*** (,543)	-,139	NA	NA
Rightist (1) vs. Leftist (0) / Centrist (0)	-1,742*** (,588)	-,191	,528 (,405)	,076
Interaction				
Old * With memories	-,674 (1,111)	-,034	,006 (,662)	,001
Constant	3,320 (2,280)		2,670 (1,978)	
Adjusted R^2	,419		,247	
F (Sig.)	8,660 ***		5,581 ***	

Dependent variable: 'desirability' (a continuous variable with values ranging from '0' to '10').
b = Unstandardised regression coefficient with standard error in parentheses;
Beta = standardized regression coefficient.
* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$.
Note. To run the regression analysis, 'backward elimination' method was adopted. This table shows the 1st model run with this technique.
[a] For the Greek Cyprus model, due to normal distribution concerns, instead of the centrist category the analysis was run with the 'leftist' and 'rightist' dummy variables of ideology.

Table 2: Multiple regression of desirability of a settlement in Cyprus (*backward eliminated*)

	TCC Community b (Std. Error)	Beta	GCC Community b (Std. Error)	Beta
Trust				
Trust for Turkish Cypriot Leader, Mehmet Ali Talat	,752 * (,428)	,082	a	a
Trust for Greek Cypriot Leader, Demetris Christofias	a	a	,807 * (,309)	,119
Trust for Government of Greece	a	a	,585 * (,331)	,078
National/cultural identity				
A3.1 I consider myself to have Greek (Turkish) cultural roots	-1,636 * (,743)	-,099	a	a
Top priority of national goals				
A7_1 Most important goals of this country: A high level of economic growth	,858 * (,446)	,085	a	a
A7_2 Making sure this country has strong defense forces	a	a	-,592 * (,322)	-,081
Other community perceptions				
A2.2 I would not mind having Turkish Cypriot (Greek Cypriot) neighbors	,882 ** (,393)	,102	a	a
A2.3 The Cyprus Problem must be solved on the basis of a mutually acceptable compromise	3,521 *** (,465)	,388	3,207 *** (,453)	,348
A2.7 I try to look at the Cyprus problem, both from the point of view of Greek Cypriots (Turkish Cypriots) and from the point of view of Turkish Cypriots (Greek Cypriots)	1,843 *** (,451)	,207	,830 ** (,434)	,096
Refugee status				
D4 Refugee Status (respondent or parents)	a	a	-,920 ** (,304)	-,132
Ideology [b]				
Centrist (1) vs. Leftist (0)	-1,309 ** (,508)	-,149	a	a
Rightist (1) vs. Leftist (0)	-1,770 *** (,539)	-,194	a	a
Age				
Young (1) vs. Old (0)	a	a	-,970 * (,554)	-,086
Middle age (1) vs. Old (0)	a	a	-,925 ** (,337)	-,135
Education				
Graduate and postgraduate (1) vs. High-school (0)	a	a	-,645 * (,332)	-,088
Constant	3,494 *** (,871)		5,991 *** (,720)	
Adjusted R^2	,438		,262	
F (Sig.)	29,977 ***		16,357 ***	

Dependent variable: 'desirability' (a continuous variable with values ranging from '0' to '10').
b = Unstandardised regression coefficient with standard error in parentheses;

Beta = standardized regression coefficient.
* p < 0.05; ** p< 0.01; *** p<0.001.
Note. To run the regression analysis, 'backward elimination' method was adopted. This table shows the last models iterated with this technique.
[a] These variables are included in the analysis but are insignificant.
[b] For the Greek Cyprus model, due to normal distribution concerns, instead of the centrist category the analysis was run with the 'leftist' and 'rightist' dummy variables of ideology.