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Legitimate return to the partnership state revisited

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Mission impossible in Cyprus? Legitimate return to the partnership state revisited

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Cyprus has been divided for far longer than it has been united. There have been many attempts to reconcile conflicting parties but without remarkable success. The two communities – Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots – see the solution to the “Cyprus problem” in opposite terms. Although recent public opinion surveys have concluded that the most preferred option for the Turkish Cypriots would be “independence of the TRNC” and “reunification of the country”, for the Greek Cypriots, there is much less information about the legitimacy of these competing regimes and their respective claims. This paper seeks to fill this gap by identifying different legitimacy sources and their effect on the course of conflict settlement.

Somewhat paradoxically it appears that those most strongly identifying themselves with the Republic of Cyprus, and approving the regime legitimacy of the Greek Cypriot government, are actually for status quo and not for the reunification of the country which makes the return to the partnership state mission impossible.

Keywords: Cyprus; partnership state; conflict settlement; legitimacy; public opinion

Introduction

“We want this partnership state to take over the EU term-presidency”, the Turkey’s Minister for the EU and Chief Negotiator Egemen Bağış said in 25 November 2011 to the Anatolian News Agency with the reference to Cyprus as a forthcoming EU presidency since July 2012 (BRT 2011). Although founded in 1960 as a compromise solution between the rival powers of Turkey and Greece, and under the supervision of decolonizing patron the UK, the Republic of Cyprus (RoCYP) has been divided for far longer than it has been united. In response to violent clashes between extreme elements of the two communities, the Turkish Cypriots established protective enclaves already in 1964. After Greek support to a coup in 1974 to overthrow Archbishop Makarios’ regime and to set the course to Cyprus’ unification with Greece (enosis), Turkey intervened with the aim to re-establish the state of affairs guaranteed by the basic articles of the 1960 Constitution and effectively reified the separation of the island. During a short (20 July–16 August 1974) and bloody conflict around 3500 people were killed and 2000 were reported as missing. Out of the total community of 574,000 some 180,000 became refugees.

Beyond the “no-man’s-land”, a UN buffer zone, which separates the conflicting parties today, two political entities operate – the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot states, with the major difference that the former is recognized by the international community despite the domestic legitimacy deficit (the 1960 Constitution factually ceased to exist in 1963, 11 years before the Turkish invasion), whereas the latter may be legitimate in the eyes of the
Turkish Cypriots, but represents an outlaw rebellious entity for the rest of the world. In light of past atrocities that continue to affect people’s minds and reconfirm the enduring division of the island, it is highly questionable whether it is possible to return to the partnership state idea, most vividly expressed in Bağış’s missionary statement.

The partnership state idea is usually associated with the original Republic of Cyprus and is often used in the context of proposed solutions. Indeed, the founding Constitution (1960) sanctified the equal status of the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities as co-founding partners in the new state. However, these partners preserved also the pre-existing, separate communal administrations, which would later on lay the ground for divergent political developments and institutional set-ups. The Turkish Cypriots’ secessionist endeavours to establish at first a “federated state” (the Turkish Federal Republic of Cyprus) (1975) and then later on an “independent republic” (the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus) (1983) were aimed at paving the way for an equal standing vis-à-vis the Greek Cypriot administration – a goal that had remained unachieved after 1963.

According to the independence declaration from 15 November 1983 “the Turkish Cypriots have been in a state of legitimate resistance and self-defence in the face of threats and attacks directed against its fundamental rights and freedoms, its political status and its very existence in Cyprus” and that “the proclamation of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus will not hinder the two equal Peoples and their administrations from establishing a new partnership within the framework of a genuine federation” (Declaration of Independence... 1983). However, the UN Security Council Resolution 541 (1983) called the decision of the Turkish Cypriot authorities “incompatible with the 1960 treaties” and “legally invalid”, and therefore urged other states not to recognize the new state (Bahcheli 2004).

Since 1975 both conflict parties have continuously declared their support for an independent, non-aligned and bi-communal federal republic, with independence and territorial integrity adequately guaranteed against Cyprus’ partition, or union in whole or in part with any other country (Groom 1993). These views were reflected in the High Level Agreements of 1977 and 1979 as well as in the “Set of Ideas”, proposed by the Secretary-General of the United Nations (UN), Boutros Boutros-Ghali, in 1989. But when it came to moving beyond general principles and signing a detailed peace deal, problems abounded.

The same is true of the UN-sponsored Annan Plan which, on the one hand, provided for a single international personality, sovereignty and citizenship, thus safeguarding the independence and territorial integrity of the parent state. On the other hand, it included strong power-sharing elements, intended to establish politically equal constituent states in a loose (con)federal structure. But the proposed gamble did not convince the Greek Cypriots, who were largely guided by President Papadopoulos’ address to Cypriots on 7 April 2004: “Taking up my duties [as president of Cyprus], I was given an internationally recognized state. I am not going to give back “a community” without a say internationally and in search of a guardian. . . . I call upon you to reject the Annan Plan. I call upon you to say a resounding NO on 24 April. I call upon you to defend your dignity, your history and what is right.” (Cyprus News Agency 2004).

The “Cyprus problem” refers to the sensitivity of the Greek Cypriots to anything which might appear to constitute a recognition of Turkish Cypriots as constituent people and the TRNC as the partnership state in the northern part of the island, and the sensitivity of the Turkish Cypriots which might resemble a recognition of inter-communal relations as a majority–minority affair and Greek Cypriot authorities as the legitimate and representative government of Cyprus (Kyle 1997). This explains the Turkish Cypriots’
fear of becoming an impoverished minority within a Greek-dominated state, and the Greek Cypriots’ fear of the TRNC becoming a sovereign state inextricably linked to Turkey.

These symptoms of the “Cyprus problem” are also revealed by several public opinion surveys. According to the UN in Cyprus poll from 2007, 59% of Turkish Cypriots considered a two-state solution satisfactory; on the other side 71% of Greek Cypriots considered a unitary state solution satisfactory (UNIFCYP 2007). Building Confidence in Peace has also tested ideas for a preferred solution to the “Cyprus problem” that would be acceptable to both communities (see Kaymak, Lordos, and Tocci 2008). Unsurprisingly, Greek Cypriots accept evolutionary integration into a unified state (57%) and disapprove of a confederation (50% against) as the basis for a solution; Turkish Cypriots prefer recognition prior to the negotiated solution (76%) and are skeptical of an evolutionary integration into a unified state (33% against) (Kaymak, Lordos, and Tocci 2008).

Our own survey conducted in 2009 demonstrated the split among those Greek Cypriots who expected to see reintegration (53% were in favour), and those who took the status quo option for granted (40% of respondents preferred no change at all). Things turned out differently in the north where 37% of the Turkish Cypriot respondents preferred full independence and 34% expected to see reintegration of the island in one or the other form. Would it be then fair to say that power-sharing is off the agenda for the Greek Cypriots, who, as the Turkish Cypriots regularly complain, have effectively abandoned serious contact and dialogue since Cyprus acceded to the EU? Similarly, it can be asked whether the Turkish Cypriots have discarded the idea of a partnership state in favour of full independence due to the spread of disillusionment felt in the post-Annan Plan era?

While the “Cyprus problem” has been under the scrutiny during the last 50 years (e.g. Tamkoc 1988; Dodd 1993; Diez 2002; Tocci 2004; Lacher and Kaymak 2005; Papadakis, Peristianis, and Welz 2006; Constantinou 2008; Diez and Tocci 2009; to name but few of them) the legitimacy of the mutually opposing claims (reunification vs. independence) has not received sufficient attention. To fill this gap, this paper seeks to address legitimacy issues affected by the partition – do people find the regimes legitimate and are these perceptions reflected in the preferred solution to the “Cyprus problem”? We elaborate on the concept of legitimacy, which serves as a key to understanding popular acceptance of the justifications that regimes provide to their contradictory policies, either directed towards reintegration or secession, respectively. A two-step quantitative analysis enables us to define and measure the effect of legitimacy sources on the course of conflict settlement in Cyprus. We believe that our findings point out important obstacles to possible reintegration which must be overcome by those searching for the final peace.

Theoretical and methodological considerations

Legitimacy is a complex and contested notion (see e.g. Easton 1975; Weber 1978; Grafstein 1981; Beetham 1991; Coicaud 2002). Although we may largely agree with Brinkerhoff (2005, 5) that legitimacy is all about “the acceptance of a governing regime as correct, appropriate and/or right”, there are scholars who continue to address “the issue of sites where legitimacy is generated, grounds on which it is founded, and the process by which it is produced and contested” (Kostovicova 2008, 634). They have brought out different dichotomies, depending thus on how states justify morally their political power to the international community or to their own members (external vs. internal legitimacy) (Arvan 2009), or how various sources of legitimacy lay ground for the justified actions (“input-oriented” vs. “output-oriented” legitimacy) (Scharpf 1999).
Legitimacy can be taken both as empirically descriptive and normatively prescriptive. Just as legitimacy concerns certain standards for justification of a particular polity (Obradovic 1996), it is also heavily influenced by, or almost a function of, the performance of the regime (Lipset 1959, 1993).

In principle, one can evaluate the legitimacy of states, regimes and policies. With the reference to the “changes in the “basic structure” of a political community, then the relevant object is the state” (Gilley 2005, 32). It is quite usual that “regimes that enjoy little legitimacy can be found in legitimate states, and states that lack legitimacy can host regimes that enjoy some legitimacy” (Conflict and Fragility 2010, 31). If it concerns a “degree of support, acceptance, or tolerance accorded by relevant actors to a [definite course of actions] which is required for it to be approved”, then the relevant object is policy (Sakamoto 2005, 264). Because of the conceptual ambiguity and empirical evidence, legitimacy remains “a regulatory ideal, not a fixed point on a scale” and there seems to be “no magic line to draw between decisions or regimes that are clearly legitimate or illegitimate” (Parkinson 2003, 183). What matters is the fact that legitimacy transforms power into authority (Conflict and Fragility 2010).

Legitimacy can bring along empowerment and prioritize secession over power-sharing (Philpott 1995), and vice versa, legitimacy can be one of the crucial factors for the success of the peace process (Hansen 1997). However, this depends on the relative weight these aspects have gained in particular post-conflict settings. When liberal processes can validate “democratic legitimacy”, then “performance legitimacy” can be derived from government effectiveness in fulfilling core state functions (Francois and Sud 2006). “Popular legitimacy” can be generated through identity politics and securing of group borders. “Security-based legitimacy” is also central to state functioning because it makes the production of other sources of legitimacy possible. Last but not least, “public consent” reveals the permissive go-ahead to the incumbent authorities. As a rule, “diverse sources of legitimacy co-exist and interact: no one source can itself legitimize political power, and no particular hierarchy is involved” (Conflict and Fragility 2010, 35). Which sources of legitimacy define the course of conflict settlement more precisely, and how, is an empirical question to study in this paper.

Legitimization refers to the process through which claimants empower themselves with the “right to govern”. What are the various sources of legitimacy? Under what conditions are some sources of legitimacy more important than others? The starting point for this study of legitimacy is an acknowledgement of possible causal factors that might at once contribute to making political authority rightful in the eyes of the subject population. It focuses on the following five sources of legitimacy – “popular legitimacy”, “security-based legitimacy”, “democratic legitimacy”, “performance legitimacy” and “public consent” in order to figure out whether RoCYP has a stronger legitimacy basis to claim for reintegration of the island than the authorities of TRNC which obviously seek legitimacy for their counter claim aiming at secession. Reintegration perspective or looming secession is thus conditioned by the relative cohesion of the “self”, the degree to which security is provided, and also the extent the people’s expectations are matched with the recorded regime performance and the way this finds expression in the public consent.

“Popular legitimacy” reflects the degree of sovereignty exercised by a polity over the population and territory it claims. Cohesive political community reveals a “basic attachment to the nation beyond the present institutions of government and a general willingness to cooperate together politically” (Norris 1999, 10). Popular legitimacy combines political interests with group boundaries, thus making citizens those rightfully holding and exercising political power (Gilley 2006). A question – With which of the following do you most
closely identify yourself? – makes an opening to the reintegration/secession issue conditioned by the relative cohesion of the “self”.

Conflict settlement depends to a large extent on the experience of different groups within the conflicting pairs, and on the capacity of a parent state and secessionist entity to provide security. The following question – *Do you think any of these (groups) pose a real threat to peace and security in this society?* – enables us to assess the level of trust towards other ethnic communities, and clear demarcations between friends and foes as well as a sense of insecurity which ultimately are linked to the question of survival. Without the insurance of long-term sustainability there is only a small chance that secessionist policies will be approved by the governed, failing thus in securing an international recognition bid domestically.

People are the only valid source of political authority in liberal-democratic societies. Their consent of the governance and subjective belief in the validity of an order (Weber 1978) lay certain standards for justification of a particular polity (Obradovic 1996). It is their “psychological support for regime norms” as well as their “moral judgment of fundamental regime principles” which can lay the ground for regime legitimization (Yang 2005, 82). One of the widely used indicators for “democratic legitimacy” inquires: *Where would you place your country at the present time?* People may evaluate governmental authority by expressing optimism about the responsiveness of the political system based on citizens’ perceptions of procedural and distributive fairness (Weatherford 1992).

Another type of legitimacy can be “derived from government performance and effectiveness in fulfilling core state functions” (Francois and Sud 2006, 147). “Performance legitimacy”, understood as satisfaction with both the ends and outcomes of governance, implies the ways in which citizens evaluate state performance from a public perspective (Gilley 2005). While approving that “the main sources of political legitimacy have to do with the quality of government” (Rothstein 2009, 325) then the question of *how satisfied are you with the way the government is doing its job?* reflects the support for how authoritarian or democratic political systems function in practice (as opposed to the ideal) (Fuchs 1995).

Confidence ratings enable us to demarcate “popular consent”. Every political regime which seeks to prove the right to govern has to demonstrate also institutional confidence. It grounds the feeling of obligation and makes political life a search for the rules and procedures through which the members of a community come to an understanding in order to be obligated (Coicaud 2002). If for instance one may wonder *how much confidence do you have in the civil service?,* then even this kind of manifestation demonstrates satisfaction with the formal structures of the political system.

**Method**

Data used in this article were collected in spring 2009 by two market research and polling firms – Cyprus Centre for European and International Affairs at the University of Nicosia and Cyprus Social and Economic Research Centre (KADEM), respectively. A total of 1002 face to face interviews lasting on average 20 minutes were conducted by experienced interviewers. Surveyed municipalities were selected according to probability proportional to population size and households selected by random walk technique. 50.1% of the interviews were conducted in the RoCYP and 49.9% in the TRNC. The combined response rate was 78.5%. An identical questionnaire was fielded in the two entities. The list of questions included items designed to measure four distinct dimensions of legitimacy, drawing on the World Value Survey, Eurobarometer, and New Democracy Barometer questionnaires.
The two entities are not equal in size, with the TRNC having a smaller share in the overall population of the island. One could therefore say that the RoCYP is underrepresented in the total sample. However, the survey treated the parent state and its secessionist entity on an equal footing because regardless of population share, they both are veto players when it comes to the future of the United Cyprus Republic. Moreover, systematic comparison of entity level units may uncover crucial attitudinal differences that otherwise remain latent when taking merely a “national level” approach under the focus. To control for the possible effect of the fifty–fifty sample, the cases were weighted to attain proportionality with their population share in the whole country, but this did not have any statistical significance. All the results reported below represent the un-weighted sample as our focus is on comparison of the two constitutive entities.

The central aim of the research was to determine whether the solution to the “Cyprus problem” is backed by the perceived regime legitimacy. The solution as such has been seen differently on both sides of the border. As Turkish Cypriots have been formally living separately from Greek Cypriots since 1974, it raises a question whether the claim for independence of the TRNC authorities is legitimate enough in the eyes of the people. The same concerns Greek Cypriots and the legitimacy of the RoCYP’s respective claim to the reunified island. Although defined in a specific context, a legitimate solution to the “Cyprus problem” depends largely on regime legitimacy both in north and south of the island.

Regime legitimacy is derived from five different sources which are closely related to the rightful governance: identity, security, democracy, performance and confidence. We believe that these five independent variables in the form of specific survey questions enable us first to demonstrate comparatively the differences which characterize particular legitimacy sources in our two cases. The next step takes us to the more thorough-going analysis where combinations of approved legitimacy sources (four in five) in relation to context specific solutions to the “Cyprus problem” are tested. In this stage, all variables are dichotomized. The solution to the “Cyprus problem” is turned into a dummy with answers “independence” (TRNC) and “reunified Cyprus” (RoCYP) to be coded as “1”, and all the rest coded as “0”. In case of the RoCYP, two answer categories (“integration” and “federal solution”) are merged to represent “reunified Cyprus”. The identity source dummies for the north and south are “TRNC” and “RoCYP” respectively, coded as “1”. Democracy, performance, confidence and security are sources of legitimacy, measured in ordinal scale and therefore dichotomized from the middle point. Democracy and performance are originally on a ten point scale where 1 signifies extreme dictatorship/dissatisfaction and 10 signifies complete democracy/extreme satisfaction, respectively. We have dichotomized scores from one to five to represent “No” democracy/performance and coded it as “0” and scores from six to ten to represent “Yes” democracy/performance and coded it as “1”. In case of confidence the original scale is from one to four; here it is dichotomized as “Yes” (“a great deal of confidence” combined with “quite a lot of confidence”) and coded as “1” and “No” for others. The security source is recoded in a similar fashion with “big threat” and “some threat” being combined and coded as “1” whereas the rest makes up “0”.

The third step takes us to the logistic regression to find out which of the sources of legitimacy have an effect on the preferred solution. Therefore the same data is used in the regression analysis to determine variables that could be more important in shaping people’s opinions about their regime’s legitimacy. Here, most of the dichotomized variables are left in place but those measured in a survey’s ten point scale are used in their original forms. In addition, demographic and social control variables are added. These
include “sex” coded as “0” meaning male and “1” meaning female. The “age” variable indicates age in years; “education” and “economic situation” are both dichotomized variables. Dichotomized values used are “1” for secondary school or higher and “0” for anything less; “satisfied with the economic situation of the household” is coded as “1” and “not satisfied” is coded as “0” (measured in ordinal four point scale and dichotomized from the middle point). We treat all the “don’t knows” as missing values.

**Describing the difference**

This section takes a look at the unmodified data used in the following analysis. The dependent variable, defined as “future preferences for solutions to the Cyprus problem”, was measured in nominal scale with five different possible answers to the question, labelled as “status quo”, “integration”, “federal solution” and “union with Turkey/Greece” in both TRNC and RoCYP while additional options such as “independence” were available only in the former and so-called “other options” in the latter case (Figure 1).

Apparently, the preferences in north and south vary substantially. While in the RoCYP the majority supports *status quo* (“I’m happy with the present situation” – 35.3%) then in the TRNC the mode is independence (“I support full independence of the TRNC” – 36.6%). After all, *status quo* is preferable for 17.6% of the respondents in the TRNC. If we merge two integrationist perspectives (“gradual integration into unitary state” and “a federal partnership”) together then the percentage of people supporting some sort of reconciliation is significantly higher in the south than in the north, with 45.2% and 33.8% respectively. In both cases, the federal arrangement turns out to be more popular than the unitary state model, while the irredentist stance seems not to be really grounded: only 7.3% in the RoCYP and 11.2% of respondents in the TRNC supported union with their respective kin-states.

Before getting to each independent variable separately and comparing their results more in detail it would be interesting to have a first look at the modes (see Table 1). These descriptions highlight the most pronounced differences between the parent state and secessionist entity in descending order, starting with perceived insecurity feelings and ending with manifest identity affiliations.

As one can observe, the main differences lie, firstly, in the security field where most of the Greek Cypriots do not perceive the Turkish Cypriot community alerting their own

![Figure 1. “What is your preference for the future settlement in Cyprus?”](Note: Not including missing values. N = 496 (South); N = 500 (North).)
well-being, contrary to those perceptions in the north which see the Greek Cypriot community threatening their peace and security (see Figure 2). One may also notice striking differences with two extremes (“big threat” and “no threat”) prevailing in the TRNC and a rather linear increase of support to “no threat” in the RoCYP. For the Turkish Cypriots, the prospect of having an insecure minority status in a state which they don’t consider their own polity (RoCYP) is not entirely counterbalanced in security terms by their majority status in the self-proclaimed entity which operates under Turkey’s wings (TRNC).

Again, the Greek Cypriots may have a good reason to consider Turkey as a conditioning element of the “Cyprus problem” and be not so much disturbed by the vocal minority in the north. According to the survey results, 70% of the Greek Cypriot respondents claimed Turkey to be a “big threat” and only 2.6% of them maintained “no threat”. At the same time, the respective percentages were 36.8% and 33.4% in the TRNC, referring to those almost equal groups of presumably protected and insecure Turkish Cypriot

### Table 1. Modes and their respective percentage of the independent variables.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent variables</th>
<th>RoCYP</th>
<th>TRNC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Security (Do you think any of these pose a real threat to peace and security in this society? The Turkish/Greek Cypriot community. Scale 1–4)</td>
<td>No threat 37.3</td>
<td>Big threat 38.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance (Now thinking about the government in the RoCYP/TRNC, how satisfied are you with the way it is doing its job? Scale 1–10)</td>
<td>8/10 20.7</td>
<td>Extremely dissatisfied 1/10 48.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democracy (Where would you place your country at the present time? Scale 1–10)</td>
<td>8/10 22.9</td>
<td>Complete democracy 10/10 25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidence (Could you tell me how much confidence you have in them: The civil service. Scale 1–4)</td>
<td>Quite a lot 42.7</td>
<td>Quite a lot 31.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identity (With which of the following do you most closely identify yourself? Four different options)</td>
<td>RoCYP 73.2</td>
<td>TRNC 59.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Percentages include missing values.

![Figure 2. “Do you think any of these pose a real threat to peace and security in this society? The Turkish/Greek Cypriot community”](image-url)
respondents. The corollary of this asymmetry of security perceptions is that while the Greek Cypriot community fears Turkey’s presence on the island, the Turkish Cypriot community fears domination by the larger Greek Cypriot community.

The second major difference lies in the performance of authorities. While modes are at different ends of the continuum there are also noticeable distributional differences (see Figure 3). The largest share of the Turkish Cypriot respondents are extremely dissatisfied with their government (48.0%) while in the south camp the distributions are only little skewed. Among the Greek Cypriot respondents 65.1% were satisfied or even very satisfied (scale points from 7 to 10) with the way the government is doing its job.

Perhaps the TRNC authorities have been criticized because of their unfulfilled promises. People feel the constraints of unclear status and as series of governments have set recognition as their utmost goal and failed, the public opinion does see them in a negative light. The right wing conservative part of the electorate may easily blame the leftist TRNC government for the reconciliatory mood and concessions made since 2003 for the sake of unachieved reunification. The left wing partisans, on the other hand, may accuse the government of moving not far enough in order to find a comprehensive settlement for the “Cyprus problem” and reunify the country. The fact that the survey was conducted in 2009 and coincided with economic recession and political unrest also explains the government’s low popularity. Needless to say, 2009 marked the year of political change in the TRNC with the National Unity Party (UBP) taking a landslide victory in the national elections and setting a more secessionist course in force.

The third difference comes from the recognition of democratic regime principles. Even though it seems to be quite similar at first glance, as both modes are in the same “democratic continuum” — the TRNC having most respondents in the “complete democracy” column (10/10) and the RoCYP in the 8/10 column — yet there are major differences in the distributions. While in the south the pattern of “democracy” distribution on the ten point scale is fairly similar to the one of “performance”, in the TRNC these two variables create somewhat opposite graphic images, even though not perfect mirrors (Figure 4).

As one can observe the perception of how democratic the regime is in the RoCYP is again negatively skewed with score “10” or “complete democracy” gaining a little bit in the end. In case of the TRNC the respondents are more divided on the issue. The largest percentage claims the entity to be “complete democracy” and while the majority fills the

![Figure 3](image-url). "Now thinking about the government in the RoCYP/TRNC, how satisfied are you with the way it is doing its job?".

Note: 1 – extremely dissatisfied; 10 – extremely satisfied; not including missing values. N = 470 (South); N = 486 (North).
scale points from five to eight there is also a visible amount of people who think that their regime is a “complete dictatorship” (8%; compared to 1% in the south).

The fourth difference is revealed by the distributions of people’s confidence. Both communities have “quite a lot” of confidence in the civil service. Both cases also resemble normal distributions while having the more moderate answers dominating over the more extreme ones. However, the difference occurs where the extremes are spelled out. While in the south “quite a lot” and “not very much” make up a total of 82% of all respondents, in the north the corresponding figure is 61.4% (Figure 5).

Somewhat similar results occur in the self-identification. Both communities seem to opt for civic-political identification (RoCYP in case of the Greek Cypriots and TRNC in case of the Turkish Cypriots) and show less allegiance towards their ethnic groups and kin-countries. The relative popularity of this civic-political identity is somewhat larger in the south with over 73% of respondents opting for this answer. In the north, even though it’s smaller than the south, the percentage of people supporting TRNC is also very high at 59% (Figure 6).

Simple comparison would allow predictions that a well-performing and fully democratic parent state (RoCYP) has a lot of incentive to carry on integrative measures and attract a secessionist entity (TRNC) for reunification. However, previous scholarship has also outlined the major obstacle to making the idea of a common state legitimate

Figure 4. “Where would you place your country at the present time?”
Note: 1 – complete dictatorship; 10 – complete democracy; not including missing values. $N = 468$ (South); $N = 460$ (North).

Figure 5. “Could you tell me how much confidence you have in them: The civil service”.
Note: Not including missing values. $N = 499$ (South); $N = 500$ (North).
for both parties; this lies in the security field and becomes evident in distrust of each other and their external patrons (see Berg 2012). Although mutually recognized security guarantees would definitely increase the legitimacy of the partnership state in the eyes of Cypriots, we do not know which claim indicating the solution for the “Cyprus problem” is more legitimate and what legitimacy source affects this claim the most. These questions will be elaborated in the following sections.

Legitimacy of reunification/independence claims

According to the underlying assumption of this paper, regime legitimacy is derived from five different sources which are closely related to rightful governance: identity, security, democracy, performance and confidence. The next step takes us to the more thorough-going analysis where combinations of approved legitimacy sources (at least four in five) in relation to context specific solutions to the “Cyprus problem” are tested. Our given variables are organized into a crosstab where people who have opted for the context specific solution to the “Cyprus problem” evaluate the regime’s legitimacy in five different categories. As it would be unreasonable to suggest that there will be a critical mass of identically thinking people in the positive (code 1) combination of five variables with perceived solution to the “Cyprus problem”, we propose to score those positive results in at least four of the five legitimacy sources (Table 2).

There are three interesting findings to report. First, the overall number of those respondents approving the regime legitimacy (five independent variables) is higher in the RoCYP than in the TRNC. With both “Yes” and “No” answers to the dependent variable there are overall 196 cases in the RoCYP and 114 cases in the TRNC. One may conclude that the respondents in the RoCYP consider their regime to be more legitimate than the respondents in the TRNC.

Secondly, out of those respondents regarding their political regime legitimate (at least 4/5 legitimacy sources), 46% support the independence of the TRNC in the north and 54% support reunified Cyprus in the south. The divergence grows even larger if we consider all the “Yes votes” to the respective solutions, i.e. including also “illegitimate Yes votes”. The relation of people who consider their regime legitimate and have supported independence in the TRNC or unified Cyprus in the RoCYP, contrary to those who answered “Yes” in the dependent variable irrespective of their attitude towards the regime’s legitimacy, is higher in the south. Here, out of all 204 “Yes” respondents 105 (51%) consider their regime legitimate. In the north, however, the respective figure is only 52 out of 167 (31%).
Thirdly, there are two combinations of legitimacy sources which stand out separately. In the TRNC, the combination of *Identity/Security/Democracy/Confidence* has more respondents with “1” in all of them than any other combination. In the case of the RoCYP, the distinctive combination is *Identity/Democracy/Performance/Confidence*. Perhaps this could be read so that poor regime performance discredits regime legitimacy in the TRNC and that disregarded security threats from the Turkish Cypriot community do not set obstacles to the reunification goal of the RoCYP. Yet, the number of the TRNC respondents who have neglected one particular legitimacy source in the 4/5 combinations makes up to 46% of the total number of positively scored respondents, regardless of their view on the “Cyprus problem”. Additionally out of those who have answered “Yes” in the dependent variable, 54% have omitted performance source. The exclusion of the security factor in the RoCYP results in 61% and 81%, respectively.

### Variables affecting the course of settlement in Cyprus

This section of the paper seeks to uncover those legitimacy sources which have individually made the biggest impacts on dependent variables. Before presenting the results of logistic regression, it would be important to note that our multicollinearity tests showed...
no VIF results that are either too low or too high; correlation tests showed no extraordinary
correlations with the only exception in the RoCYP where “democracy” and “performance”
variables exposed correlation with Pearson’s $r$ at 0.644 and significance at 0.01 level. The
model was tested with each of these variables separately and they still did not show statistically significant results. Also, they did not alter the results of other variables. Therefore multicollinearity is not an issue in this case. The model has at least moderate predicting power with reasonably high pseudo $R^2$ scores and percentages for correctly predicted cases in both models (Table 3).

The regression model shows some interesting results when we compare our two cases. Firstly, the difference between “identity” source’s odd ratios – both are statistically significant, but show opposite effects. In the north, those who identify themselves with TRNC are nearly 2.5 times more likely to support an independent Turkish Cypriot state than those who do not have these identities. In the south, however, those who identify themselves with the RoCYP are less likely to support reunification. Our assumption that identities should lead to the opposite preferences for the future solution is therefore not confirmed.

Secondly there are manifest differences in the “security” field, both in statistical and substantial terms. Those respondents from the RoCYP who consider the Turkish Cypriot community as a threat are clearly more against a reunified Cyprus solution than those who do not perceive this threat. This comes close to the finding in the second section where the distinctive combination of variables gaining most legitimacy to the solution of the “Cyprus problem” in the South was Identity/Democracy/Performance/Confidence. Most people who scored in four out of five legitimacy sources omitted security. The explanation for this kind of behaviour is quite straightforward; those who feel threatened by the Turkish Cypriot community do not want to live in the same state with them.

Thirdly, the “democracy” and “performance” variables have effects that are compatible with descriptive statistics. In the RoCYP, they have neither statistical nor substantial significance. In TRNC, the effects are statistically significant and also bear some substantial importance. As these sources are measured on a ten point scale the differences in odd ratios between the lowest and highest are worth mentioning. Also, as mentioned above, the

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>TRNC</th>
<th>RoCYP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identity</td>
<td>2.463***</td>
<td>0.556**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security</td>
<td>1.167</td>
<td>0.250***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democracy</td>
<td>1.108**</td>
<td>0.990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance</td>
<td>0.860***</td>
<td>1.044</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td>1.030</td>
<td>2.188***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>1.336</td>
<td>0.823</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>1.017**</td>
<td>1.040***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>1.111</td>
<td>1.493</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic situation</td>
<td>0.944</td>
<td>1.540***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>0.106***</td>
<td>0.133***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nagelkerke Pseudo $R^2$</td>
<td>0.153</td>
<td>0.261</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$N$</td>
<td>445</td>
<td>422</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2LL</td>
<td>536.000</td>
<td>492.784</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of correctly predicted cases</td>
<td>67.4</td>
<td>68.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table reports odd ratios. $^*p < 0.1; ~ ^{**}p < 0.05; ~ ^{***}p < 0.01.$
All missed values are dropped from the analysis.
modes of these sources in the north are the extreme ends of scales; therefore they might have a heavier effect on the results than normal distribution would have predicted. Fourthly, it appears that those who have some or a great deal of trust in the civil service in the south are more than twice as likely to support a reunified Cyprus as those who have little or none of it.

As to the demographic variables, “age” has the biggest influence. It is measured in ratio scale and therefore the initially small differences in odd ratios can grow rather big when comparing individuals with large age differences. In both cases the growth is positive; the older people are, the more likely they are supporting independence in the TRNC and reunified Cyprus in the RoCYP. In the north this could be explained with the memories of more conflicting periods in the relations between the two communities. Free travelling between the entities is a relatively recent option and one does not have to be too old to remember hostilities.

Other demographic variables have less effect, with “sex” and “education” not being statistically significant. The “economic situation” variable has some statistical significance (at 0.1 level) only in the south. People who are satisfied with their economic situation are presumably more likely to support reunified Cyprus than people who lack this satisfaction. Reunification may bring along more opportunities for economically satisfied people and create more competition in the eyes of economically less secured Greek Cypriots.

Conclusion: Mission impossible in Cyprus?

This study acknowledged legitimacy as a set of independent variables – identity, security, democracy, performance and confidence – that might contribute to making political authority rightful in the eyes of the subject population. It then examined how five sources of legitimacy – “popular legitimacy”, “security-based legitimacy”, “democratic legitimacy”, “performance legitimacy” and “public consent” – may provide a more solid legitimacy basis for the solution of the “Cyprus problem”.

The solution as such has been seen differently on both sides of the border. As Turkish Cypriots have been formally living separately from Greek Cypriots since 1974, it raises a question whether the claim for independence of the TRNC authorities is legitimate enough. The same concerns Greek Cypriots and the legitimacy of the RoCYP’s respective claim to the reunified island. Although defined in a specific context, a legitimate solution to the “Cyprus problem” depends largely on regime legitimacy both in the north and south of the island. Reintegration perspective or looming secession is thus conditioned by the relative cohesion of the “self”, the degree to which security is provided, and also the extent to which the people’s expectations are matched with the recorded regime performance, and the way this finds expression in the public consent.

Based on the research findings, one may conclude that the respondents in the RoCYP consider their regime to be more legitimate than the respondents in the TRNC view their own. Among those respondents regarding their political regime as legitimate, less than half support the independence of the TRNC in the north and more than half support a reunified Cyprus in the south. When distinguishing legitimacy sources one could easily notice how poor regime performance discredits regime legitimacy in the TRNC and how disregarded security threats from the Turkish Cypriot community do not set obstacles to the reunification goal of the RoCYP.

One of the most interesting findings came out from the logistic regression. It appears that civic-political identification with the TRNC has a very strong effect on preferred solution (independence) in the north whereas in the south strong identification with the
RoCYP creates status quo supporters. In this way, our assumption that identities should lead to the opposite preferences for the future solution was therefore not confirmed. Paradoxically, the TRNC regime may have serious shortcomings in fitting into the bigger legitimacy picture; however, this does not seem to have decisive impact on the question of national self-determination. On the other hand, legitimate regime in the south is the one which keeps things as they are and moves “reintegration agenda” in a more distant future.

Legitimacy has its role to play in the on-going arguments over the failure of reconciliation and post-conflict settlement in Cyprus. Indeed, the peace process has turned out to be a mission impossible not because the Greek Cypriots and the Turkish Cypriots are destined to live in protracted conflict and determined to be violent against each other, but due to the fact that the legitimate regime of the RoCYP has a problem in coming to the terms with an illegitimate reunification policy, whereas the illegitimate regime of the TRNC may pursue a legitimate independence policy uncritically. In order for the parties to reach a solution based on the 1977 high-level agreements, the idea of a partnership state (in the form of (con-)federal setting) should gain a more legitimate ground. As it stands now, there is a fatal discrepancy between regime and policy legitimacy of the respective rival political entities and not much enthusiasm among the public for reintegration by unification of rightful authority. A more federally inclined approach in the “legitimate south” and less support to full independence in the “illegitimate north” would definitely bring the two communities closer.

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