A FEDERAL CYPRUS
IN A FEDERAL EUROPE

Nicos Peristianis

Abstract

It would be a great omission to debate matters relating to the European Union and Cyprus, and ignore the tact that they have both resorted to federalism as the way for their future. The European Union first embarked on the federal project some decades ago, while Cyprus is considering adopting a federal solution as a way out of its present political impasse. This paper briefly considers federalism in its main forms and the choice of federal modes of political organization by the European Union and Cyprus. It then notes how consociational/consensus features have been an integral element of federalist arrangements in both cases. However, whereas the consensual elements seem to have worked quite well in the case of the European Union, the same does not seem to apply in the case of Cyprus; a main reason relating to the absence of a suitable political culture in the fatter. It finally considers how accession to the European Union can strengthen civil society and citizenship in Cyprus, thereby improving the chances for success of consensus politics and federalism.

Between Federalism and Confederation

Federalism in one form or another seems to have been adopted or proposed as the appropriate form of political governance in a wide range of cases in the modern world (cf. the Middle East, the ex-Soviet Union, the Balkans). The choice of federalism is becoming so prevalent in the contemporary world, that Elazar talks of a "federal revolution", which he considers to be "among the most widespread – if one of the most unnoticed – of the various revolutions that are changing the face of the globe in our time".[1]

We should note right away that there is no "correct" version of federation: "every actual federation appears 'sui generis', since each responds to a particular set of geographical and historical circumstances".[2] Federalism is not "one, specific, well-defined system of government". It is rather a spectrum of constitutional arrangements involving the combination of self-rule and shared-rule. The constant and primary aim is to achieve political compromise between the apparently contradictory

benefits of union/interdependence and the benefits of autonomy/separation.

CONFEDERATION $\longleftrightarrow$ FEDERATION

When political compromise ends up stressing autonomy or separation, we are closer to the Confederation end of the spectrum. When the stress is on union and interdependence, then we are closer to the Federation end of the spectrum.

Confederations developed in Europe "entail the joining together of pre-existing polities to form a common government for specific purposes such as defence, security and welfare, the common government remaining dependant for its existence and strength on the constituent polities".[3]

Federation developed in the United States (out of the previous confederal arrangement) and "involves a polity made up of strong constituent entities and a strong general/central government, each possessing powers delegated to it by the people and empowered to deal directly with the people/citizens in the exercise of these powers".[4]

The rationale behind the choice of federal models of political organization by both Cyprus and the European Union, differs in some substantial respects from the rationale behind the formation of the more "classical" forms of federation and confederation outlined above. In the case of Cyprus we have an example of a polity which was a unitary state (albeit with federal characteristics - cf. "consociational democracy"), which broke up and is exerting efforts to reintegrate on a different basis. In the case of the European Union, a number of states with a long history of independence have been working towards "ever closer union", in order to achieve a number of aims/objectives (among which the economic being the primary one), but without sacrificing their sovereignty.[5]

Let us consider the two cases in more detail. According to Murray Forsyth the case of Cyprus belongs to a category of polities which broke up, or are in danger of breaking up, as a result of incompatible aims or objectives, and are attempting to reconstitute themselves on a looser, and hence more acceptable basis. The constituent parts wish to "keep a distance" because there is a serious lack of trust between them, as a result of previous bad experiences of living together under a more integrated or unitary system. Usually at the root of mistrust lies ethnic rivalry {memories of ethnic discrimination, violence, bloody struggles, forced expulsions, 'ethnic cleansing' and so on.)

At the same time the constituent parts may wish to (or may have to) "keep together" for a variety of possible reasons (cf. geographical proximity, economic viability), their complete separation or autonomy being generally considered an unfavourable

outcome. Thus, some sort of federal arrangement (whether it be federation or con-federation) seems to be the only way of keeping such parties "both together and apart".

The Greek-Cypriots are the ones who wish to be "more together than apart". This is because they consider the "break-up" a result, not so much of incompatibility between the parties to ethnic conflict but of foreign intervention(s) by a foreign power(s). Their ideal position would be a unitary state, with themselves enjoying the democratic right of majority rule and the Turkish-Cypriots the rights/protection of a minority group. Failing this, the next best solution is that of a federation with a strong central government.

The Turkish-Cypriots wish to be "more apart than together". They stress the dif-ficult times they had when closely integrated with the Greek-Cypriots in the post-independence unitary state, the violence of the 1963 conflict, their ensuing isolation and marginalization, all leading to a loss of trust. Since their starting point is the "new reality" of the existence of two separate entities, their ideal position is that of two sep-arate states; failing this their next best choice is that of a loose alignment/integration - i.e. confederation.

The two sides have been battling ever since 1974, each pressing for a resolution which comes nearer to their preferred position; the various mediation plans present-ed seem to naturally revolve around some kind of compromise along the lines of a loose federation.

To return to the general argument, one could agree with Forsyth's observation, that such attempts at federation constitute a response to a "new historical challenge", namely political disintegration, brought about by contemporary ethnic self-determi-nation movements and subsequent efforts for compromise and reintegration. Obviously classic federations had little to do with such "negative motives", since the rationale behind their constitution was an intent to more closely integrate units which were less integrated before.

Let us now turn to the case of the European Union, which constitutes yet anoth-er unorthodox federal arrangement. Here the principles of federalism, instead of being applied to the organization/governance of a state, or a union of states, (cf. clas-sical federation) are being utilized to achieve the integration into a supranational union of states which have a long history of independent existence, and which wish to maintain their sovereignty; furthermore, the guiding logic was, and in many ways still is, an economic one (unlike classical federations).

It is well known that the need for European integration became apparent in the aftermath of the Second World War. Politically, European countries wished to ensure that there would be no repeat of the conflict between European states (especially Germany and France) which previously led to the two world wars, devastating the

continent and spilling over to the rest of the world. An equally strong, if not stronger motive was economic: the desire to rebuild a Europe ravaged by war - but also to take advantage of a much larger regional market through removal of barriers to trade, to investment and to labour movement. One could say, of course, that behind these, and of paramount significance, was a strategic consideration: Europeans felt they would become irrelevant in the emerging bipolar world order if they did not pull their strength together, to form a third polar.

European integration was often understood in clearly federal terms. Winston Churchill envisaged as early as 1946 "a kind of United States of Europe". Yet conditions were not ripe at the time and a more gradual 'functionalist' road to unity was chosen instead, which allowed for incremental steps toward integration - mainly within specific areas of policy-making, usually economic, and at a pace controlled by member states. Although cautious and gradual, this approach had far-reaching implications since progressive moves towards economic integration brought about overall integration.[6]

The extent of integration that European federalism should aim for, has been a con- stant source of debate. Denton differentiates between the "Nationalists" and "Federalists" who hold quite different views in this debate.[7]

The Nationalists who have remained loyal to the principle of national sovereignty, believe that the union should be guided by decisions taken at inter-governmental meetings. Characteristic of this view was de Gaulle's vision of a "Europe des patries"/"Europe of the Fatherlands", within which member states would continue to retain the right to veto decisions they considered a threat to vital national interests. Thatcher's polemic versus moves to create a "United States of Europe" followed a similar line of thought, stressing the need to maintain national cultures and identities. If we translate these views into federalist terminology, De Gaulle's and Thatcher's vision of Europe is more that of a confederation than a federation.

Obviously, "Federalists" share the opposing view, believing that the European Union should be based on institutions endowed with supranational powers.

There is a constant battle between these two views, which often ends up in compromise. The Maastricht Treaty for instance can be seen as a hard-fought compromise between 'Federalists' and 'Nationalists'. It contained one decisive supranational development: the economic and monetary union, to be completed before the end of the century. This would clearly require a common monetary policy managed by a European central bank; more controversially, it could require further constraints on the fiscal policies of member states. The treaty also included aspects of political union but kept them largely of an inter-governmental character: a Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), and an Internal Security Policy.

Overall it seems that presently "unifying forces appear too strong for a return to a

Europe des patries, but the dividing forces are also sufficiently well established to make a strongly integrated European federation with a common political culture unlikely in the near future".[8]

Consociational Elements in the Federalist Arrangements

We have seen how Cyprus and the European Union are moving along the federalist path and how the debate continues regarding how far down this path they should move. We have also noted how the causes behind the formation of these federal arrangements differ in both cases to the classical federations and confederations.

We next consider a common feature both cases share, namely the strong "consociational" elements involved in the federalist arrangements pursued. Consociationalism is a term used to describe a form of political accommodation, which tries to deal with the problem of peaceful co-existence in contexts of multi-nationality and multi-ethnicity. It provides a model of government which utilizes consensus politics (cf. "consociational/consensus democracy") and power sharing, so as to facilitate the "peaceful coexistence of more than one nation or ethnic group in a state, on the basis of separation yet equal partnership rather than the domination by one nation or the other(s)".[9]

Lijphart proposed that the 'ideal form' of a consociational democracy entails four major prin ciples.[10]

a) A "grand coalition" government, consisting of representatives drawn from all of the major segments of society (nations/ethnic groups). This is otherwise known as 'elite accommodation', since it is the leading elite groups of the seg- ments who jointly govern the country.

b) Segmental group autonomy, which means that the decision-making is delegated to the various segments/nations/ethnic groups, to the extent possible, either through territorial federalism or "corporate federalism" (non-territorial autonomy, i.e. self-governing institutions - cf. educational) of the segments.

c) A mutual (or minority) veto system, whereby a segment can veto government decisions in matters of vital interest to it.

d) Proportionality in political representation, public service appointments and the allocation of public funds.

These principles are applied in practice through a number of political devices, such as a written constitution (specifying the allocation of powers between the various segmental groups), a bicameral legislature, decentralized government, and others.

Consociationalism or consensus democracy, is considered by many scholars as

the most appropriate form of government for "deeply divided societies". Yet the political regime established with Cyprus independence in 1960, had all the features of a consociational democracy - but lasted only for a few short years. Why was that so? Many critics of consociational principles would support the view that the system itself was to blame - because, among other things, it maintained, legitimized and even strengthened segmental claims, reinforcing instead of ameliorating ethnic divisions. Supporters of consociationalism would counter that the conditions favourable for success of the system were not there - for instance, there were no prior traditions of elite accommodation, neither were there any cross-cutting cleavages across ethnic divisions, and most importantly there was no overarching sense of loyalty to the whole or to the state.[11]

Even though the consociational .model was originally utilized to describe the political system of particular states, it has of late been applied to account for the quite unique features of the European Union. Tsinisizelis, for instance, proposes the term "Confederal Consociation", for the European Union, pointing out that the system can be seen to "draw its inspiration" from the idea of "consociational democracy". Thus the Union consists of a plurality of national communities and is governed by a "grand coalition" of national elites. There is a mutual veto system for decisions sensitive to segmental/national interests, proportionality in political representation, as well as the practice of balancing benefits for all parties involved in the interstate negotiation processes, through the achievement of "package deals" which reinforce the integrating trends of the system. There is, in general, a constant effort to search for commonly acceptable solutions and far-reaching "amicable agreements".[12]

The European Union has thus achieved "pluralistic co-habitation", by moving from the principle of self-determination to the practice of co-determination of the constituent states. The consociational elements adopted (which seemed not to have worked in the case of Cyprus, back in the 1960s) do away with majoritarian democracy which carries the danger of alienating minorities, especially when it comes to decisions vital to sensitive national interests; possible sources of conflict are reduced or eliminated. On the surface it may seem that some of the widely accepted norms and practices of republican traditions tend to get compromised: in fact, we hereby have a redefinition of democracy – which ceases to be seen as an end in itself but as a "flexible organizational mechanism", as a "rationally controlled procedure" in the search for viable compromises, for cultivating a culture of tolerance, pluralistic coex- istence and the peaceful settlement of disputes.

Such an approach seems to be the only viable approach in a context of multi-nationality and heterogeneity of cultures. Since there is no feeling of common national identity, some other bond for sustaining social and political integration must both pre-exist but also be nurtured. Indeed, Europe may be a "mosaic of cultures and languages" but, despite diversity the various Western European countries have man-

aged to maintain a common pattern of liberal democracy, which constitutes the basis for closer integration. There is thus a "compatibility of societies", which share common political and civil values, norms and expectations. Strong civil societies and a strong tradition of citizenship make possible the adoption of consensus politics for peaceful coexistence as well as for the achievement of common aims and objectives.

In the case of Cyprus consensus politics was not practiced back in the 1960s and this led to the collapse of consociational democracy. Consensus politics was not possible in an era, which was preceded by intense ethnic strife and a "dialectic of intolerance".[13] A weak civil society and the absence of a tradition of strong citizenship could not support the necessary culture of tolerance required for living in the fragile consociational house.

Forty years later, can we ascertain whether the required political culture and the consequent political maturity are there? We should remind ourselves that, for any of the proposed federal solutions (which always contain strong elements of the consociational philosophy) to work, the primary condition of success is the existence of a "federal spirit". One could claim with a good degree of confidence that in many ways things are much better now than they were in the 1960s. If we consider Greek-Cypriot society, for instance, it is obvious that in the post-Makarios era, with the growth of party politics, new social movements (cf. women's, ecology, human rights and as of late conflict resolution groups) as well as the rapid expansion of the mass media and all kinds of pressure groups, civil society seems to have matured considerably. Citizenship has also become better established. Turning to the Turkish- Cypriot community we may also note some progress – but the weakness of civil soci- ety and citizenship are definitely much more pronounced there (cf. "strong-man" rule is still a reality, along with the strong presence of the Turkish army and Turkish settlers).[14] Overall, things do not seem to have progressed far enough to enable us to talk of strong civil societies and citizenships, and the growth of such political cultures that would nurture the federalist ethic. Yet if we consider the case of joining the European Union, we could see some hope of pushing developments in this direction. Strangely enough, this is a benefit that accession will provide, which is rarely discussed by anyone.

Accession, the European Union and Consensus Politics

Greek- and Turkish-Cypriots have different attitudes towards joining the European Community. The Turkish-Cypriots are obviously aware of the important economic benefits which could accrue following accession, but they are still quite negative, or at least skeptical, of the move, their main worry apparently being the problem of security. More specifically the Turkish-Cypriots, for various historical-political reasons, treasure highly the military protection afforded to them by Turkey. Hence, their stress on Turkey continuing to be one of the guarantor powers in a future settlement,

and their strong preference for Cyprus to join the European Union only after, or concurrently, with Turkey.

What the Turkish-Cypriots seem not to realize or adequately appreciate is that in the post Cold-War era, "security has acquired a broader meaning".[15] As one of the declarations of the European Community itself states:

> "Security in the broadest sense encompasses not only military but also political aspects, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, as well as economic, social and environmental aspects".[16]

Obviously, the Turkish-Cypriot community will need all the assistance it can get to improve its economic position, to further democratization and build a stronger civil society as "economic insecurity and weak institutions for domestic conflict resolution, are primary sources of disorder" .

Greek-Cypriots seem to be some of the strongest supporters of joining the European Union. For one, they have pinned high hopes on joining the Union as a means of resolving the political problem in a way, and within a context, which will secure the future reunification of the island, which is one of their primary objectives. Yet they seem to believe that the resolution of the Cyprus problem will somehow be a magical outcome of accession into the European Union. The example of the Irish problem demonstrates how this is not the case and that successful conflict resolution remains the result of laborious and painful political processes, in a spirit of mutual understanding and tolerance. Hopefully for them, it is precisely the enhancement of these latter qualities, which will be one of the greater benefits that will accrue to Cyprus, as a result of European Union accession.

We can better understand how this change in political culture could be achieved, by considering Deutsch's and Adler's analysis of how an "imagined (security) community", such as the European Union, could provide both the context and the support for such a change. Deutsch and his associates introduced the concept of "pluralistic security community", to describe a union of member states which have retained their legal independence as separate states but have become sufficiently integrated so as to enable each member to entertain "dependable expectations" that disputes among members will be settled peacefully.[17] Such confidence is based on the fact that members possess compatible core values derived from common institutions, mutual responsiveness and the existence of a sense of 'we-ness' or a 'we-feeling' among states. Security communities are socially constructed and rest on shared practical knowledge concerning the behavior among states as to the peaceful settlement of disputes. In liberal democracies, this practical intersubjective knowledge is based on historical experiences and the institutionalization of liberal values in 'civic cultures', "whose concepts of role of government, legitimacy and duties of citizenship, and the rule of law constitute the identities of individuals". This in turn encourages the creation of strong civil societies.[18]

The behaviour of member-states in a pluralistic security community such as the European Union reproduces this civic culture, which, in turn, constructs an overarching community-region civic culture.

Adler notes that liberal pluralistic communities (such as the European Union) may exert influence through the various forms of power available to them (cf. sheer power, the power to set agendas and ideological power); what is interesting is his addition to the list of such powers, of another form of power, namely that of setting the "underlying rules of the game, of defining what constitutes acceptable play and of getting other players to commit themselves to these rules, because these rules are now part of the self-understanding of the players". This power to influence the norms and rules which frame and redefine reality and thereby determine the range and value of political choices as Adler notes are," the most subtle and most effective form of power".[19]

When applied to the case of the European Union and the power it has over aspiring members, the argument becomes that, by eliciting acceptance of the liberal/democratic norms and values through which the political game within the European Community is played, aspiring entrants are encouraged to develop a new self-understanding and a new self-definition/identity; i.e. we (Cyprus) are a democratic state and a democratic state solves its internal and external disputes through peaceful means, exercises tolerance, respects civil rights and so forth. In other words the shift in emphasis is that:

> "... the state follows democratic norms not just because its people believe in democracy, but because the category 'democratic state' now defines, in part their identity".[20]

It is important to appreciate a theoretical point here, coming from Adler's constructionist perspective, namely that the "sense of community" within the European Union is no longer seen as "a matter of feelings, emotion and affection, but as a cognitive process through which common identities are created". Thus, the point is not whether one is European because one "likes" or "feels warm" towards other Europeans (whether they be British, German, French, etc). "What matters is how we perceive and define ourselves and not how we feel about others".

One could counter that the existence of the "stronger" national identities, (based on deep emotive feelings, common history, myths and memories), make the creation of an overarching European identity difficult, if not impossible to achieve. Habermas notes that a shared European identity is possible if it builds on the civic dimension of nationality, i.e. citizenship, rather than on the myths of common origin, and believes we can have "cautious optimism for the course European developments could take".[21] Laffan stresses the importance of appeals to the shared collective future and destiny (rather than to the past) and the need to accept diversity as a positive value - i.e. that one is European through being German or British etc.[22] Barry Buzan adds

that people are quite capable of holding multiple identities at the same time: "one can, for example, be English, British, European and Western, simultaneously".[23]

One could only note, in closing, that such insights can help Cypriots deal with the issue of their own collective identities, prompting the realization that nothing stops them from being Greek- or Turkish-Cypriot and European, whilst living in a federal, democratic Cyprus, characterized by European consensus politics.

NOTES

1. Elazar D. (1987) *Exploring Federation.* Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1987.

2. Denton G. (1993) *Federation and the European Union After Maastricht.* London: HMSO, 1993.

3. Elazar D. (1987) *Exploring Federation.* Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press.

4. Ibid.

5. Forsyth M. (1996) *The Contemporary Meaning of Confederation* (in Greek), in *Tsinisizelis M.,* Thoughts on the European Union (in Greek), Athens: I. Sideris. Forsyth provides a similar analysis for the prevalence of confederation as an attractive paradigm, adopted as appropriate for the solution of many contemporary problems. Although Forsyth narrows his focus to confedera-tion, my view is that it is federalist solutions in general, (whether federations or confederations) which seem to be on the rise (Elazar 1987).

6. Miall H. (1993) *Shaping the New Europe.* London: Pinter Publishers, Royal Institute of International Affairs.

7. Denton G. (1991) *Federation and the European Union after Maastricht.* London: HMSO.

8. Miall H. (1993) *Shaping the New Europe.* London: Pinter Publishers, Royal Institute of International Affairs.

9. Kellas J. (1991) *The Politics of Nationalism and Ethnicity.* London:The Macmillan Press.

10. Lijphart A. (1997) *Democracy in Plural Societies.* New Haven: Yale University Press.

11. For the conditions favourable to consociationalism, see Sisk T. (1996) *Power Sharing and International Mediation in Ethnic Conflicts,* Washington D.C.: United States Institute of Peace. For the development of ethnic conflict

in Cyprus, see, among others Attalides M. (1979) *Cyprus - Nationalism and International Politics,* Edinburgh: Q Press.

12. Tsinisizelis M. *(1996)Thoughts on the European Union* (in Greek). Athens: I. Sideris.

13. On the 'Dialectic of Intolerance', see Kitromilides P. (undated) 'From the Dialectic of Intolerance to an Ideology of Ethnic Coexistence', in Worseley P. and Kitromides P. (ed.) *Small States in Modern World - The Conditions of Survival.* Nicosia.

14. See Elazar D. *Exploring Federation,* for the 'strong man' problem in fed- derations.

15. Miall H. (1993) *Shaping the New Europe.* London: Pinter Publishers, Royal Institute of International Affairs.

16. WEU Ministerial Council: Petersburg Declaration, June 1992, quoted in Miall Hugh.

17. Deutsch K. et al (1957) *Political Community and the North Atlantic Area.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

18. Adler E. (1997) 'Imagined (Security) Communities: Cognitive Regions in International Relations', *Millenium - Journal of International Studies,* Vol. 26, No. 2.

19. Ibid.

20. Ibid.

21. See Haberman J. (1996) 'Citizenship and National Identity', in Steenbergen Bart Von (ed.) *The Condition of Citizenship.* London: Sage Publications.

22. See Laffan B. 'The Politics of Identity and Political Order in Europe', *Journal of Common Market Studies,* Vol. 34, No. 1.

23. Suzan B. (1992) 'From International System to International Society: Structural Realism and Regime Theory Meet the English School', *International Organization,* Vol. 47, No. 3.

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