

Cyprus and the Roadmap for Peace: A Critical Interrogation of the Conflict

MICHALIS S. MICHAEL AND YUCEL VURAL (EDS.)

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Michael and Vural's edited volume represents an ambitious undertaking in terms of what it aims to contribute to the voluminous literature on the topic of the Cyprus conflict. It brings together academics, practitioners and decision-makers from both sides of the ethnic divide in order to shed new light on an old conversation. As the co-editors outline in their opening contribution to the volume, this innovation lies in the usage of Oliver Ramsbotham's (2010)¹ notion of agonistic dialogue, which is essentially the dialogical engagement of disparate – even opposing – sides to a conflict, as well as the inclusion of heretofore-marginalized groups such as settler, refugee and diasporic communities. The lofty stated goal of the book is to use this theoretical mechanism in order to provide answers to a series of overarching questions such as why has there been negligible progress in the intermittent process of negotiations, what can third parties contribute realistically to the process, and what does the future hold for the conflict and its participants, among others. The book's ultimate contribution has to be judged in juxtaposition to these stated aims.

Michael and Hadjipavlou's contribution on locating the conflict within the literature on conflict resolution is a highlight of the volume. It provides a very comprehensive overview of the literature on conflict resolution as well a historical timeline of the connection between the academic sphere and its application – both in terms of case study as well as on-the-ground implementation – to Cyprus. It should constitute required reading for anyone interest in the topic, as it presents not only a sobering analysis of the results of past attempts, as well as the potential for contribution in future attempts. If anything, in a self-deprecating act, the chapter does not cite sufficiently Hadjipavlou's² own contribution to the area.

¹ Oliver Ramsbotham, *Transforming Violent Conflict: Radical Disagreement, Dialogue and Survival* (Oxford: Routledge, 2010).

² See, inter alia, Maria Hadjipavlou, 'The Cyprus Conflict: Root Causes and Implications for Peacebuilding' (2007) 44(3) *Journal of Peace Research* 349-365; Maria Hadjipavlou-Trigeorgis and Lenos

Part II of the volume presents a review of Greek, Turkish, and Turkish Cypriot perspectives and approaches to the issue and it is here that the biggest shortcoming of the book becomes evident. With the exception of the chapter by Heraclides, which provides a number of preconditions and possible avenues for Greece's contribution to the resolution of the conflict, the other chapters do not attempt to address the major questions posed by the editors as the overarching aims of the entire project. Nevertheless, the remaining chapters are very well-written and do contribute to the literature despite this general shortcoming. Gunal provides a comprehensive and meticulously documented overview of the various sub-components of Turkish motivation for involvement in Cypriot affairs, and Moudouros analyses the evolving patterns of the Turkish geopolitical vision of Cyprus while including various possible Turkish contributions to a solution. The chapter by Vural, Sonan and Michael situates the Turkish Cypriot position within the potential for settlement while presenting the dilemmas faced by the ethnic community really well.

Part III presents a variety of new roles of and engagements with additional actors and stakeholders to the conflict. Ekenoglu and Loizides shed light on the issue of refugees and internal displacement in addition to two of the most understudied elements of the conflict with an in-depth treatment of the usually contentious issue of the post-1974 settler and immigration dynamics, and an emphasis of potential contribution to the settlement of the conflict by diasporic communities. The remaining chapters shift the focus to the prospects of engagement with external actors with two chapters focusing on the role of the United Nations (UN) and two on the European Union (EU). As with Part II, these chapters make interesting and valuable contributions to the literature on the topic, but do not engage with the project's stated aims in any systematic way with minor exceptions as indicated below. Sozen focuses mainly on the missed opportunity of the pursuit of confidence building measures as proposed in the 1990s; the author concludes with the presentation of a set of recommendations for better utilization of UN resources in the pursuit of a negotiated settlement to the conflict. Adamides and Kontos present Greek Cypriot perceptions of the UN and analyse the reasons for which they tend to gravitate towards skepticism, as well as the resulting preferences over various potential idealized forms of resolution to the conflict. A common issue with this approach is the conflation between preferences and outcomes that is by no means warranted by the strategic interaction among pri-

Trigeorgis, 'Cyprus: An Evolutionary Approach to Conflict Resolution' (1993) 37(2) *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 340-360.

mary actors. The chapters by Christou and Icener present respectively Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot perspectives on the role and influence of the EU on the conflict. Both present excellent historical overviews of the topic and a juxtaposition of the two contributions illustrates the disparity of perspective between the two ethnic communities on the role, the extent of influence, and the possibility of contributing towards reconciliation by the EU. At the same time, neither makes any concrete recommendations on harnessing the power of the EU in ways that will facilitate further convergence towards a mutually agreeable form of conflict resolution.

Parts IV and V are a distinct departure from the preceding character of the volume. In the two chapters of Part IV, the two editors present two binary strategy positions: Michael for the Greek Cypriots and Vural for the Turkish Cypriots in collaboration with Ozejder. Both chapters cover various possible approaches to the issues of transitioning to federalism, security and guarantees, settlers, territorial adjustments, property and refugees, restrictions on fundamental freedoms, and lastly, forms of power sharing in a federal framework of governance. While the listing of topics is fairly comprehensive, the coverage of each is restricted to a very concise – and conceptually narrow – definition of each position. While it is understandable that in-depth coverage of all of these aspects in terms of the possible options, the associated necessary constitutional provisions and their political ramifications would require massive additions to the edited volume, the mere listing of all these complicated and highly technical issues does not contribute to their understanding in any meaningful way.

Part V is both a very interesting inclusion in the book as well as a missed opportunity. In applying the aforementioned explanatory framework of agonistic dialogue, the editors have solicited reflections by some very important political actors including two leaders from each side. George Vassiliou and Demetris Christofias respectively served as Presidents of the Republic of Cyprus and chief negotiators to the peace talks between 1988-93 and 2008-13, while Mehmet Ali Talat and Dervis Eroglu led the Turkish Cypriot community and were likewise chief negotiators to the peace talks respectively between 2005-10 and 2010-15. Additionally, there are contributions by Yiannakis Omirou, the President of the Parliament of the Republic of Cyprus in 2011-16, and Turkish Cypriot journalist Aysu Basri Akter. In all cases, the contributions are structured as responses to the various elements of a possible political settlement presented in the two strategic position papers of Part IV. As a result, all contributions are very short (they vary in length between three and six pages), and do not usually present much if any justification for the position that is presented in each case.

Taking additionally into account that the political and ideological foundations of the authors – especially in the cases of the political leaders – are widely known, it is to be expected that there are no surprises in the positions that the authors advocate. As a result, there is no significant value added for those already familiar with the basic tenets that tend to characterize the dominant positions within the two communities. On the other hand, the combination of Parts IV and V can serve a quick and effective primer for new students of this research area. Ultimately, this more generally constitutes the contribution of the entire volume as it can serve as an excellent introduction to the topic both as a presentation of historical overviews of different aspects as well as a general statement on the positions of different actors and stakeholders.

ODYSSEAS CHRISTOU