

# State Power, Ideology, and Societal Beliefs in Cyprus How Society in a Small State Perceives Uneven Power Relations

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## **Abstract**

*The general research purpose of this article is to examine how civil society and opinion leaders in Cyprus incorporate affairs related to state power and inter-state power distribution in their beliefs and assessments. A very important aspect of this relation is Cyprus' 'smallness' vis-à-vis other parties involved in the Cyprus Conflict. In this context, the article discusses Greek Cypriot perceptions of the Cyprus Problem. More specifically, it examines Greek Cypriot perceptions on two particular issues: i) the uneven distribution of capabilities between Cyprus and Turkey, and ii) the interaction among the directly-involved parties and other external actors, which forms a broader balance of power that impacts significantly on the structure of the Cyprus Problem.*

**Keywords:** Cyprus Problem, State power, ideology, perception and misperception, cognitive consistency

## **Introduction**

The general research purpose of this article is to examine how civil society and opinion leaders in Cyprus deal with affairs related with State power and Inter-State power relations, given Cyprus' small size and unfavourable power distribution, and more specifically, how they incorporate them in their own beliefs and assessments. To this end, I will discuss Greek Cypriot perceptions of the Cyprus Problem with special focus on an international aspect that relates to two particular issues: i) the uneven distribution of capabilities between the small island State of Cyprus and Turkey, which essentially dominates every possible ramification of the Cyprus Problem, and ii) the interaction among the directly-involved parties and other external actors, which tends to form a broader balance of power that impacts significantly on the structure of the Cyprus Problem.

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In relation to this remarkable set of interactions, I will argue that individuals, opinion leaders and organized groups in Cyprus tend to set forth ideas and express views on public affairs based on deeply internalised ideological stereotypes. These stereotypes stem from perceptions and assumptions on State power and power distribution. In some cases, though, hardly visible but significant contextual variables deriving from the international environment remain unseen by political observers. In other cases, trying to grasp some clearly visible contextual factors and introducing them in the public discourse usually happens through an ideological and stereotypical lens, with distorting consequences.

In the first part, I will analyse the international dimension of the Cyprus Problem with special focus on theoretical aspects of State power, distribution of capabilities, and balance of power, mainly from a realist point of view. In the second part, I will set forth a theoretical framework suitable for the discussion of the concepts of ideology and perceptions/misperceptions in international affairs. In the third part, I will critically evaluate some established societal beliefs on power-related issues, which are pertinent to the Cyprus Problem.

The article applies a process-tracing method to trace causal relations between historical facts, concepts, and beliefs. It does not predominantly aim to discuss the history of Cyprus or the Cyprus Problem, but perceptions that relate to particular contexts of beliefs regarding historical facts. Although to some extent some historical analysis is necessary, this will not take the form of historical evaluation. Instead, it will focus on specific chains of events that fall within the broader scope of the history of the Cyprus Conflict, justified on the grounds of the research objectives. Against this backdrop, I will pay more attention on how history is perceived by specific opinion leaders and societal groups, from an explaining (rather than a reflectivist) viewpoint. In the same vein, when discussing acts of States or international institutions, the emphasis is on how they are perceived and how these perceptions play out in the realm of societal beliefs. Of course, this attempt is not without challenges. First of all, societal beliefs are not monolithic, neither can we always observe and categorise them with unquestioned clarity. Consequently, using sets of beliefs as the main empirical pool to build hypotheses bears significant risks. I will try to contain these risks by putting forward two theoretical frameworks: one that focuses on the concept of power and one on ideology and perceptions, in an effort to narrow down the conceptual frames as much as possible. For hypothesis testing, I will use some smoking-gun tests that aim to put established societal beliefs to the test and highlight the relationship

between the independent variable (ideological stereotypes) and the dependent variable (views on power-related affairs in small States).

### **The Cyprus Problem and the question of power in international politics**

#### *The Concepts of Power, Balance of power, 'Greatness' and 'smallness'*

The debate on State power is as old as social action and political thought. Ancient thinkers like Thucydides and Sun Tzu, and founders of modern political philosophy like Thomas Hobbes have set forth the original ideas that culminated in the contemporary understanding of State power and its role in international politics, mainly encapsulated in the theoretical assumptions of the realist school of thought. In contemporary international-relations theory, which focuses on the study of nation-States of various sizes and capabilities, this debate has culminated in categorisations that consider different levels of power possession (i.e. 'great powers', 'superpowers', 'small States', etc.) As of the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, realist thinkers like Hans Morgenthau developed a remarkably influential debate on the issue of State power. After observing that '[p]olitical power is a psychological relation between those who exercise it and those over whom it is exercised,' Morgenthau underlines the inherent nature of power in human thinking and action by noting that those who would try to abolish power would 'simply fall victims to the power of others'.<sup>2</sup>

Among other related issues discussed in literature, this debate brought back to the fore the concept of 'balance of power', which has been identified with international politics in 19<sup>th</sup>-century Europe. In a world that continuously struggles for power, international relations theorists underline the importance of considering the power sources and capabilities, as well as the objectives of other units as a paramount feature of State policies in pursuit of security and survival. As the Cold War experience indicated, powerful States may seek dominance over less powerful ones, while peers will try to stop them, fearing that such a development could undermine their own interests and security. In this process, levels of power possession among States will be redistributed, and therefore power status will be readjusted. The inherent characteristics of these shifting international environments will define whether peace or war will prevail and when.<sup>3</sup> The examination of these characteristics of international

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<sup>2</sup> Hans Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace* (first published 1948, New York: McGraw Hill 2006) 30-36.

<sup>3</sup> Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (first published 1979, Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press 2010); Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

systems that vary according to the number or poles of power in them (the concept of 'polarity') became the most important feature of the neorealist (or structural realist) approach that thrived following the publication of Kenneth Waltz' *Theory of International Politics*, in 1979. According to these theoretical assumptions, relations among interacting units with conflicting worldviews and interests could, under given circumstances, enter a status of oscillation between balance and hegemony.<sup>4</sup> Whether States (especially great powers) tend to prioritise pursuing stability through hegemony<sup>5</sup> or through balance<sup>6</sup> is a matter of different theoretical interpretations.

Morgenthau's classical realism was based on human nature as the cognitive foundation upon which knowledge of power politics could be based. However, due to the theoretical evolution described above, realist thought eventually escaped from Morgenthau's human-nature theory and embraced a positivist approach that aimed to turn the scholars' attention towards the structure of the international system (namely the distribution of capabilities across the system), as the main apparatus governing power relations among States. Theorists like Waltz, Walt, and Mearsheimer made a significant contribution to the importance of dynamics stemming from the distribution of power among States in the international system, to describe and explain the universal rules that States obey. After the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, the revolutionary change that took place in the international system stimulated the emergence of post-positivist theoretical approaches that put neorealist positivist determinism to the test and brought the human factor back to the center of research.<sup>7</sup> Following this development, some realists re-evaluated the main pillars of their research program. As a result, the neoclassical realist approach has emerged, which attempts to combine attributes of systemic analysis with individual and State-level variables as a means of explaining foreign policy and power-related choices made by States.<sup>8</sup> In this framework, issues like the leaders' perceptions of

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1981); Kenneth N. Waltz, 'Structural Realism after Cold War' (2000) 25(1) *International Security* 5–41.

<sup>4</sup> Adam Watson, *The Evolution of International Society: A Comparative Historical Analysis* (first published 1992, New York: Routledge 2009).

<sup>5</sup> John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (first published 2001, New York: W. W. Norton & Company 2014).

<sup>6</sup> Stephen M. Walt, *The Origins of Alliances* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1990).

<sup>7</sup> Yosef Lapid, 'The Third Debate: On the Prospects of International Theory in a Post-Positivist Era' (1989) 33(3) *International Studies Quarterly* 235–254; Steve Smith et al. (eds) *International Theory: Positivism and Beyond* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

<sup>8</sup> Gideon Rose, 'Neoclassical Realist Theory of International Politics' (1998) 51(1) *World Politics* 144–172; Radnall L. Schweller, 'Unanswered Threats: A Neoclassical Realist Theory of Underbalancing'

power distribution, as well as individual characteristics of each national political and governance system, gained attention as factors that may explain foreign policy and security decisions.

In the context of this article's topic, understanding how power relations among States play out and, especially, how power asymmetry reflect(s) on domestic social and political affairs constitute the main theoretical pillars. Therefore, it is important to direct the theoretical discussion towards the issue of power asymmetry and opposing asymmetric relations. Power relations, even between big and small States, involve a high degree of complexity. In fact, power relations can be more accurately assessed through a contextual approach that grasps potential intervening variables which could transform the causal nexus between means and goals in an asymmetric bilateral relationship.<sup>9</sup> Beyond the classic Thucydidean dictum that 'the strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must,' which is central to the realist understanding of the world, Waltz<sup>10</sup> takes a contextual approach to argue that comparative power advantages may not be enough for powerful States to impose their will upon weaker ones:

[W]hen great powers are in a stalemate, lesser states acquire an increased freedom of movement. That this phenomenon is now noticeable tells us nothing new about the strength of the weak or the weakness of the strong. Weak states have often found opportunities for maneuver in the interstices of a balance of power.

Other researchers focus on potential variations between the degrees of commitment of the involved parties in a standoff that rests on power asymmetry. The structure of motives and, especially the difference in their motives' volume and gravity in the case could take such a form that the outcomes of the dispute may not necessarily reflect the power equilibrium.<sup>11</sup> Another way to approach this issue is by examining the power sources that each State possesses, which define the public understanding

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(2004) 29(2) *International Security* 159–201; Norrin M. Ripsman et al., *Neoclassical Realist Theory of International Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

<sup>9</sup> David Baldwin, *Power and International Relations: A Conceptual Approach* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2016); Andreas Paul Spee, Paula Jarzabkowski, 'Strategy Tools as Boundary Objects' (2009) 7(2) *Strategic Organization* 223–232;

<sup>10</sup> Kenneth N. Waltz, 'International Structure, National Force, and the Balance of World Power' (1967) 21(2) *Journal of International Affairs* 215–231, 222.

<sup>11</sup> Brantly Womack, *Asymmetry and International Relationships* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016); Robert Jervis, 'Deterrence and Perception' (1982) 7(3) *International Security* 3–30;

on ‘greatness’ and ‘smallness’. As the experience of great powers has shown several times in the past, not all the means are suitable for achieving any kind of goals.<sup>12</sup> Therefore, a general theoretical assumption that stems from this discussion is the following: big States may be better suited in achieving their objectives at the expense of smaller opponents, but this is not an absolute axiom as several factors may play out in such a way as to undermine the efficiency of this power advantage.

### ***The Post-1974 Phase of the Cyprus Problem:***

#### ***Sources of Greek Cypriot Perceptions***

Since its emergence in the 1950s in the dual form of Greek Cypriot anti-colonial armed revolt as well as Greek-Turkish ethnic conflict, even after the independence of the island and the establishment of the bi-communal Republic of Cyprus (RoC) in 1960, the Cyprus Question has always involved significant international ramifications: disputes over Cyprus have affected relations between Greece and the United Kingdom, particularly so between Greece and Turkey, while balancing calculations have also drawn great powers in Cyprus-related power games.<sup>13</sup> In the meantime, since the resurgence of intercommunal clashes in 1963-64, the RoC had been *de facto* governed only by the Greek Cypriots under the Doctrine of Necessity,<sup>14</sup> while Turkish Cypriots had been enclosed in quasi-autonomous pockets. Turkey’s military invasion of Cyprus in July and August 1974 following a coup organised by Greece’s junta and the subsequent *de facto* partition of the island created a new situation on the ground, whereby Ankara recognises only the so called ‘Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus’ (‘TRNC’) in the north, which was established in 1983. Ever since, Turkey has held a dominant role in the governance of the ‘TRNC’ that enjoys no international recognition by any other country. Therefore, after the events of 1974 and the forcible transfer of populations, the internationally-recognised government of the RoC has been essentially controlling only the southern part of the island.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Waltz (no 9); Samuel P. Huntington, ‘Conventional Deterrence and Conventional Retaliation in Europe’ (1983) 8(3) *International Security* 32–56; William W. Kaufmann, *The Requirements of Deterrence* (Center of International Studies, Princeton University, 1954).

<sup>13</sup> Van Coufoudakis, *Cyprus and International Politics* (Nicosia: University of Nicosia/Intercollege Press, 2007); Michalis Kontos et al., *Great Power Politics in Cyprus: Foreign Interventions and Domestic Perceptions* (Newcastle Upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014).

<sup>14</sup> Christos Papastylanos, ‘The Cypriot Doctrine of Necessity within the Context of Emergency Discourse: How a Unique Emergency Shaped a Peculiar Type of Emergency Law’ (2018) 30(1) *The Cyprus Review* 113-143.

<sup>15</sup> Andreas Theophanous, *The Cyprus Question and the EU: The Challenge and the Promise* (Nicosia: Intercollege Press, 2004); William Mallinson, *Cyprus: A Modern History* (London: Bloomsbury

As the UN Security Council Resolution 186/1964 implied, the original phase of the Cyprus Conflict after the independence was broadly understood as an intra-Cypriot affair. However, the events of 1974 significantly reconfigured the old Cyprus Problem: on the one hand, the *de facto* situation on the ground with the division of the island's territory in two ethnically solid areas, as well as the continuous diplomatic efforts under the auspices of the UN Secretary General in pursuit of an agreed solution between the Greek Cypriots and the Turkish Cypriots, maintained the pre-1974 inter-communal aspect. On the other hand, despite the lack of official diplomatic relations, the RoC and Turkey often come across each other, as Turkey's application for accession to the European Union (EU),<sup>16</sup> as well as the latest energy-related developments in the Eastern Mediterranean<sup>17</sup> indicate. Most importantly, at the level of public perceptions, which is this article's special interest, Greek Cypriots tend to perceive Turkey as the main threat to their national security, not the 'TRNC' or Turkish Cypriots.<sup>18</sup> Greek Cypriot perceptions of threat emanate not only from the traumatic experience of 1974, but also from the continuous deployment of vast Turkish military forces in the northern part of the island which, along with the small distance that separates Cyprus from Turkey, provides military advantages over the Greek Cypriot National Guard and the Hellenic Force of Cyprus in the south.<sup>19</sup> These two elements combined, in conjunction with well-established beliefs about foreign interference in Cyprus,<sup>20</sup> have fostered the formation of a post-1974 'defeat syndrome' among Greek Cypriots. Similarly, Greek Cypriots developed the idea of a 'just cause' to 'liberate Cyprus', emanating from a sense of victimisation<sup>21</sup> and the unlawful nature of the

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Publishing, 2005); Clement Dodd, *The History and Politics of the Cyprus Conflict* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010); Heinz A. Richter, *A Concise History of Modern Cyprus: 1878-2009* (Ruhpolding: Peleus, Verlag Franz Philipp Rutzen, 2010).

<sup>16</sup> George Kyris, 'The European Union and the Cyprus Problem: A Story of Limited Impetus' (2012) 3(1) *Eastern Journal of European Studies* 87-99; Nathalie Tocci, 'Unblocking Turkey's EU Accession' (2010) 12(3) *Insight Turkey* 27-31.

<sup>17</sup> Michalis Kontos and George Bitsis, 'Power Games in the Exclusive Economic Zone of the Republic of Cyprus: The Trouble with Turkey's Coercive Diplomacy' (2018) 30(1) *The Cyprus Review* 51-70.

<sup>18</sup> Constantin Adamides, *Securitization and Desecuritization Processes in Protracted Conflicts: The Case of Cyprus* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), 90-91; Emiliou Solomou and Hubert Faustmann, 'Lessons from the Past for the Future' (2017) 29(1) *The Cyprus Review* 217-239, 221.

<sup>19</sup> Aristos Aristotelous, 'The Military Situation in Cyprus' *The Cyprus Center for European and International Affairs*, 2015; Zenonas Tziarras, 'Turkish Foreign Policy and Security in Cyprus: Greek-Cypriot Security Perception' *PRIO*, PCC Report 06/2018, 12-13.

<sup>20</sup> Kontos (no 12).

<sup>21</sup> Adamides (no 17) 109.

Turkish invasion.<sup>22</sup> The idea of a Greek Cypriot's just cause as part of the public discourse on the Cyprus Problem is often associated with symbols of the past and stories of Cypriot heroism against foreign rulers and is often reflected in the State narrative, i.e. in school history textbooks.<sup>23</sup>

Therefore, the post-1974 public discourse on the Cyprus Problem has generated concepts and beliefs, as well as historical interpretations and narratives that often take distinct and conflicting directions. Being an intractable conflict,<sup>24</sup> the Cyprus Problem has contributed to the formation of well-established societal beliefs, with profound political ramifications. As the institutional supervisors of the communal and State policies on the Cyprus Problem, Greek Cypriot Presidents of the RoC with different views regarding the negotiations strategy have played a paramount role in the formation and transformation of these beliefs.<sup>25</sup> A core issue in this discourse has been the feasibility and viability of the negotiated settlement, while issues like bi-communal relations and national security priorities have also gained impetus from time to time. The construction of societal and partisan identities, narratives, and material interests has largely been based on these views.

Under given historical circumstances, these ideological trends have also generated civil society movements. Some of them have been based on a concept of bi-communal, local patriotism, in contrast with the 'nationalist attachment to motherlands', like the New Cyprus Association<sup>26</sup> or Famagusta for Cyprus.<sup>27</sup> Others, like the Pancyprrian Citizens Movement,<sup>28</sup> were founded to express purely ethnic Greek Cypriot concerns against an 'unjust settlement' of the Cyprus Problem. Despite their temporal significance, these movements failed to gain broad popular appeal (except for the Pancyprrian Citizens Movement during the negotiations on the Annan Plan, in

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<sup>22</sup> Iacovos Kareklas, 'International Law and Diplomacy on the Turkish Military Intervention of Cyprus' (2011) *ELIAMEP*, Working Paper no 18.

<sup>23</sup> Yiannis Papadakis, 'History Education in Divided Cyprus: A Comparison of Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot Schoolbooks on the "History of Cyprus,"' PRIO Cyprus Centre, Report 2/2018.

<sup>24</sup> Daniel Bar-Tal, 'Societal Beliefs in Times of Intractable Conflict: The Israeli Case' (1998) 9(1) *International Journal of Conflict Management* 22–50.

<sup>25</sup> James Ker-Lindsay, 'Presidential Power and Authority in the Republic of Cyprus' (2006) 11(1) *Mediterranean Politics* 21–37.

<sup>26</sup> Neophytos Loizides, 'Ethnic Nationalism and Adaptation in Cyprus' (2007) 8(2) *International Studies Perspectives* 172 – 189.

<sup>27</sup> <https://famagustafortcyprus.org/>, last accessed 15 June 2022.

<sup>28</sup> Christiana Alexandrou, 'The Days that Shocked Cyprus: An Evaluation of the Campaigns on the Annan Plan' (2006) *ISCHYS*, 62; Michális S Michael, *Resolving the Cyprus Conflict* (London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).



2003-2004). However, they all embraced beliefs and political ideas with broad public appeal and remarkable resilience in the Greek Cypriot post-1974 public discourse.

In the next part, I will examine the main drivers of the public discourse on the international dimension of the Cyprus Problem among Greek Cypriots. To this end, I will outline a theoretical framework that will help the readers understand how these drivers have culminated in the formation of appealing public beliefs and political ideas.

## **Power-Related Issues in Greek Cypriot Public Discourse**

### *A Theoretical Framework*

The apparatus of ideology offers a useful tool that could help us understand how Greek Cypriots process information stemming from the international environment. After all, ideology constitutes a widespread intellectual mechanism in public political thought and action. Fine and Sandstrom offer ‘an approach that is theoretically “agnostic” in regard to the modern, rational, and discursive bases of ideology.’ They define ideology as ‘a linked set of beliefs about the social or political order, whatever the nature of the link and the beliefs.’<sup>29</sup> Dagger and Ball add that ideology ‘serves as a guide and compass through the thicket of political life,’ thus underlying its function as a guide to understanding and interpreting incoming information related to politics.<sup>30</sup> Kalmoe stresses the importance of interaction among political actors in the context of ideology’s role in politics by approaching ideology ‘as cohesive organizations of interdependent political views, with some elements exerting causal force on other elements in the belief system.’ He also pays attention to the inclusion of ‘views on issues, leaders, parties, symbols, and broad values’ in ideological beliefs.<sup>31</sup> So, different approaches agree that ideology constitutes ‘a set of beliefs’, a ‘guide and compass’, a broad ‘belief system’ in politics. Ideologies are inherently normative, as they tend to organise political thought and action according to pre-existing figures. As Fine and Sandstrom put it, ‘[f]ascism, communism, and classical liberalism are quintessential examples of belief systems that explicitly claim a social judgment and a

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<sup>29</sup> Gary Alan Fine and Kent Sandstrom, ‘Ideology in Action: A Pragmatic Approach to a Contested Concept’ (1993) 11(1) *Sociological Theory* 21–38, 23.

<sup>30</sup> Richard Dagger and Terrence Ball, *Political Ideologies and the Democratic Ideal* (New York: Longman Higher Education, 1991) 1-2.

<sup>31</sup> Nathan P. Kalmoe, ‘Uses and Abuses of Ideology in Political Psychology’ (2020) 41(4) *Political Psychology*, 772.

proposed solution: they are self-conscious ideologies.’<sup>32</sup> Or, according to Levi, ‘beliefs refer to ideas about what reality is’.<sup>33</sup>

How can these concepts serve this article’s purpose? One possible method would be to outline several generic ideologies in the Greek Cypriot political system and connect them to respective beliefs on the international dimension of the Cyprus Problem. Obviously, this approach would follow the pattern of Greek Cypriot political parties (at least the mainstream ones), considering them as institutional bearers of respective ideological traditions. However, this would contradict the fact that Greek Cypriot standpoints on the Cyprus Problem do not necessarily coincide with pre-existing ideological or partisan frameworks: an external observer who lacks in-depth knowledge of Greek Cypriot history and politics could easily mix-up Marxist with liberal views on the Cyprus Problem, as well as centrist with far-right ones.<sup>34</sup> Political narratives of the Cyprus Problem can only partially be aligned along partisan lines, while to a large degree they cross them.

An alternative approach is to de-construct ideology as a political function and keep only its most useful elements: while institutionalised ideological depictions are not helpful to this article’s purposes, approaching ideology as a belief system at the individual level of analysis could work much better. To this end we need a bottom-up theoretical approach that would include a mechanism to examine and evaluate generalisable individual beliefs. Robert Jervis’ theory offers an excellent analytical framework. In his influential treatise titled *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (1976), Jervis examines the issue of consistent beliefs vis a vis actors and political phenomena, particularly in the realm of international politics. He argues that ‘consistency can largely be understood in terms of the strong tendency for people to see what they expect to see and to assimilate incoming information to pre-existing images.’<sup>35</sup> Jervis explains the way people think about other countries, their policies, and their intentions towards their own countries. He points out that

[w]e tend to believe that countries we like do things we like, support goals we favor, and oppose countries we oppose. We tend to think that countries that are

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<sup>32</sup> Fine, Sandstorm (no 28) 24.

<sup>33</sup> Werner Levi, ‘Ideology, Interests, and Foreign Policy’ (1970) 14(1) *International Studies Quarterly* 1–31, 4.

<sup>34</sup> Solomou, Faustmann (no 17).

<sup>35</sup> Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976) 117.

our enemies make proposals that would harm us, work against the interests of our friends, and aid our opponents.

Jervis refers to 'rational' and 'irrational' consistency. By rational consistency he means

those ways of interpreting evidence that conform to the generally accepted rules of drawing inferences. Conversely, irrational methods and influences violate these rules of the 'scientific method' and would be rejected by the person if he were aware of employing them.<sup>36</sup>

Jervis' cognitive consistency model comprises a very useful analytical framework for attempting to explain the way in which perceptions of foreign actors affect Greek Cypriot politics in relation to the Cyprus Problem. Greek Cypriot perceptions of Turkey, great powers, the United Nations (UN), the European Union, or, generally, the 'foreigners' and their past actions inevitably affect what the Greek Cypriots believe in relation to their future intentions as well. As Jervis argues,

the process of drawing inferences in light of logic and past experience that produces rational cognitive consistency also causes people to fit incoming information into pre-existing beliefs and to perceive what they expect to be there. (...) We ignore information that does not fit, twist it so that it confirms, or at least does not contradict, our beliefs, and deny its validity. Confirming evidence, by contrast, is quickly and accurately noted.<sup>37</sup>

Jervis offers a framework that bridges different theoretical approaches and facilitates observations at the individual level of analysis. Since examining political parties or other forms of institutionalised belief systems does not fall within the scope of this article, I will focus on ideological stereotypes at the level of civil society. The hypothesis that will be tested below is that these ideological stereotypes stem from original perceptions and/or misperceptions and eventually become part of a self-reinforcing ideological vicious circle through the effect of rational cognitive consistency.

### *Cognitive Consistency in Greek Cypriot Perceptions*

As explained above, post-1974 Greek Cypriot perceptions on the international aspect of the Cyprus Problem are subject to a pre-existing 'defeat syndrome' due to the events of 1974, as well as to the belief of a 'just cause'. These two sets of perceptions have often served as starting points to the deployment of stereotypes associated with

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 119.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 143.

power-related issues like Turkish ‘greatness’ vis-à-vis Cypriot ‘smallness’, as well as with a concept of balance of power that involves more international actors. The first one has been generating fatalistic approaches that take seriously into account the relative weakness of the RoC. Fatalism, coupled with an opposition towards hardline approaches that have been associated with ‘lack of pragmatism’ or ‘our own crimes of the past’ contributes to the formation of views favoring a conciliatory approach on the Cyprus Problem that should avoid maximalist demands and assertiveness, even if this would entail painful concessions on the part of the Greek Cypriot side. The second one usually generates views that urge political leadership to overcome the ‘defeat syndrome’ and opt for a more assertive stance in the negotiations. While ‘pragmatists’ urgently desire a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus Problem, ‘hardliners’ usually reject the idea of a swift settlement and prefer to wait for a better opportunity in the future instead of making ‘unacceptable concessions’ now.

These two approaches have been associated with two former Presidents of the RoC, with diametrically different views on the Cyprus Problem. The first one was Giorgos Vassiliou. Vassiliou won the presidential elections in February 1988 and became the first President ever to embrace the ‘pragmatist’ approach. After the end of a meeting with the British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher in March 1988, Vassiliou made a statement that was considered a breakthrough in Greek Cypriot politics. He stated that ‘we want a solution yesterday’,<sup>38</sup> thus expressing a sense of urgency and resoluteness for making all necessary concessions to reach an agreed solution with the Turkish Cypriot community. The second one was Tassos Papadopoulos. Papadopoulos took office in February 2003, amidst negotiations on a UN plan for a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus Problem that was submitted by UN Secretary General Kofi Annan in November 2002. Although Papadopoulos accepted the Annan Plan in principle as a starting point for further negotiations, he was very much skeptical, since the Plan did not meet his red lines. At the end of the negotiations process, in a highly emotional televised speech in April 2004, Papadopoulos asked the Greek Cypriots to reject the Annan Plan in the upcoming referendum, even though Greek Cypriot ‘pragmatists’ and several foreign governments advised that the plan was the ‘last chance’ for a settlement.<sup>39</sup> Papadopoulos preferred to avoid signing a solution

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<sup>38</sup> Giorgos Vassiliou, *Pragmatism vs Populism*, Vol. 1 (*Πραγματισμός vs Λαϊκισμός*) (Nicosia: Ellinika Grammata, 2007) 32 (in Greek).

<sup>39</sup> Giorgos Kentas, *2003-2008. The Preservation of the Republic of Cyprus and the Accession to the European Union and the Eurozone (2003 – 2008, Η Διάσωση της Κυπριακής Δημοκρατίας και η Ένταξη στην Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση και στην Ευρωζώνη)* in Petros Paparolygiou (ed.), *Tassos Papadopoulos*

before the accession of the RoC to the EU, which was set to take place a few days after the referendum, believing that the accession would increase the negotiation power of the Greek Cypriot community in pursuit of a better settlement.<sup>40</sup>

In these two approaches we see different perceptions in relation to issues like power, systemic limitations, and timing. Both are reasonable and rational, though from totally different viewpoints. To a large extent, they derive from different ideological backgrounds and express conflicting inferences. Both can be critically evaluated based on elements that they may have defied, either by choice or imperfect information. For sure though, if someone examines the political history of these two former Presidents, they will conclude that most of the time, their political decisions or views expressed on similar issues were placed in the same context of thought. In other words, they both followed a pattern of cognitive consistency. In the last part, I will implement this model to explain and critically evaluate appealing perceptions and arguments on the international aspect of the Cyprus Problem, expressed in the context of the Greek Cypriot public discourse. More specifically, I will test their validity against contextual variables, aiming to highlight the distorting impact of ideology and misperceptions on related assessments.

## **A Critical Evaluation of Appealing Perceptions and Arguments**

### ***The Greek Cypriot Framing of the Cyprus Problem***

Since 1974, the Cyprus Problem has provided a political and societal framework for the development of policy-related perceptions and stereotypes. The related literature examines several aspects of Greek Cypriot public perceptions on the Cyprus Problem from various theoretical angles. A significant part of the literature focuses on intra-ethnic or bi-ethnic political and societal affairs and highlights the peculiarities that stem from the combination of domestic and broader international factors. For example, Kitromilides examines the ideological heritage of colonialism and its impact on independent Cyprus,<sup>41</sup> as well as the bicomunal ideological boundaries

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*los: Archive (Τάσσος Παπαδόπουλος: Αρχείο)* (Nicosia: Tassos Papadopoulos Research Center, 2021) (in Greek).

<sup>40</sup> Theophanous (no 14) 65-66, 106.

<sup>41</sup> Paschalis Kitromilides, 'The Ideological Context of Cyprus' Political Life: A Critical Evaluation' ('Το Ιδεολογικό Πλαίσιο της Πολιτικής Ζωής της Κύπρου: Κριτική Θεώρηση') in Giorgos Tenekidis, Yiannos Kranidiotis (eds), *Cyprus: History, Problems and Struggles of its People (Κύπρος: Ιστορία, Προβλήματα και Αγώνες του Λαού της)* (Athens: Estia, 2009) 449-471 (in Greek).

and prerequisites for reconciliation.<sup>42</sup> Several authors like Peristianis,<sup>43</sup> Mavratsas,<sup>44</sup> Stavrinides,<sup>45</sup> and Loizides<sup>46</sup> discuss extensively the impact of ethnic nationalism in Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot political thought and particularly the attachment to ‘motherlands’ vis-à-vis ‘Cypriotism’ as part of domestic ideologies.

In terms of inter-State power distribution and, particularly the small size of Cyprus and its policy implications, we can find some interesting approaches set forth by international relations experts. Some of them have applied the concept of ‘small States’ to deal with related issues. Evaghorou takes a systemic approach to examine Cyprus’ security options as a small State in an anarchic international system.<sup>47</sup> Pedi and Kouskouvelis focus on strategies that Cyprus, as a small State, may employ in pursuit of its own status in a complex regional environment.<sup>48</sup> The accession of Cyprus to the EU has also provided room for research on how small States may utilise their participation in a ‘rules-based’ supranational institution to gain international impact.<sup>49</sup>

When it comes to bottom-up analysis of Greek Cypriot perceptions of Turkey and its role in Cyprus, not much attention has been paid. There has been some increase of interest, however, because of the accession of Cyprus to the EU, the structural changes

<sup>42</sup> Paschalis Kitromilides, ‘Fifty Years Republic of Cyprus. Ideological Preconditions for an Agreement between the two Communities’ (‘Η Πεντηκονταετηρίδα της Κυπριακής Δημοκρατίας και οι Ιδεολογικές Προϋποθέσεις της Συμφωνίας των Δύο Κοινοτήτων’) (2011) 31 *Hellenic Political Science Review* 5-16 (in Greek).

<sup>43</sup> Nicos Peristianis, ‘Left-Right, Greekcentrism-Cyprocentrism: The Pendulum of Collective Identifications After 1974’ in N. Peristianis, G Tsaggaras (eds), *The Anatomy of a Metamorphosis. Cyprus after 1974: Society, Economy, Politics, Culture* (Η Ανατομία μιας Μεταμόρφωσης. Η Κύπρος μετά το 1974: Κοινωνία, Οικονομία, Πολιτική, Πολιτισμός) (Nicosia: Intercollege Press, 1995).

<sup>44</sup> Caesar V. Mavratsas, ‘The Ideological Contest between Greek-Cypriot Nationalism and Cypriotism 1974–1995: Politics, Social Memory and Identity’ (1997) 20(4) *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 717-737.

<sup>45</sup> Zenon Stavrinides, ‘Greek Cypriot Perceptions,’ in Clement H. Dodd (ed.), *Cyprus: The Need for New Perspectives* (Huntington: The Eothen Press, 1999) 83-85.

<sup>46</sup> Loizides (no 25).

<sup>47</sup> Evaghoras L. Evaghorou, ‘Small States’ Strategy in the International System: The Case of Cyprus’ (Τα Μικρά Κράτη και η Στρατηγική τους στο Διεθνές Σύστημα: Η Περιπτωσιολογική Μελέτη της Κύπρου) (2007) 12 *Institute of Defence Analysis* 61-72 (in Greek).

<sup>48</sup> Rebecca Pedi, Ilias Kouskouvelis, ‘Cyprus in the Eastern Mediterranean: A Small State Seeking for Status’ in Spyridon N. Litsas, Aristotle Tziampiris (eds), *The New Eastern Mediterranean: Theory, Politics and States in a Volatile Era* (Cham: Springer, 2019) 151-167.

<sup>49</sup> Roderick Pace, ‘Cyprus in the EU: A Small State Perspective’ in Constantin Stefanou (ed.), *Cyprus and the EU: The Road to Accession* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005) 238-258; Cetta Mainwaring, ‘Small States and Nonmaterial Power: Creating Crises and Shaping Migration Policies in Malta, Cyprus, and the European Union’ (2014) 12(2) *Journal of Immigration and Refugee Studies* 103-122.

that the Justice and Development Party and President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's rule have brought about in Turkish politics, as well as energy-related developments over the last 20 years. For example, Tziarras examines Greek Cypriot security concerns and perceptions of threat in relation to Turkey's policy on Cyprus, both at the official (state) and non-official (societal) levels, and offers some interesting categorisations and distinctions between the two levels.<sup>50</sup> In a similar framework, Bryant and Yakinthou take a multidirectional approach to examine established perceptions related to Cyprus Problem among Greek Cypriots, Turkish Cypriots and Turks, in an effort to identify their drivers and set forth ideas for breaking the negotiations' deadlock.<sup>51</sup> In the most comprehensive work of this kind, Adamides employs the securitisation theory to examine Cyprus as a field of protracted conflict and how this environment stimulates the production of negative perceptions on the 'enemy other'.<sup>52</sup>

Below, I will focus on the two aspects that fall within the scope of this article's interests: Greek Cypriot perceptions of balance of power and 'Turkey's greatness' vis-à-vis 'Cyprus' smallness'. I will review some publications on Greek Cypriot stereotypes related to the balance of power, particularly how great powers and intergovernmental organisations impact on the overall power distribution around the Cyprus Problem. Furthermore, I will examine some stereotypes related to State 'greatness' and 'smallness', which constitute the most under-researched area of interest to this article.

### *On the Balance of Power*

When it comes to issues pertinent to the balance of power, lines of distinction between 'pragmatists' and 'hardliners' are not always clearly visible. However, students may clearly observe the appeal of 'just cause' perceptions. Such issues and, particularly, Greek Cypriot perceptions of foreign interference with Cyprus-related affairs, have been analysed in Kontos et al.<sup>53</sup> Among other issues, this volume examines the Greek Cypriot stereotype of the 'Anglo-American factor', an over-simplified concept applied by Greek Cypriot opinion leaders to imply that US and British policies on Cyprus are identical, without considering potential differences (or even conflicting interests) that may have emerged from time to time. This set of perceptions involves beliefs that refer to a historical pro-Turkish bias on the part of both the United King-

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<sup>50</sup> Tziarras (no 18).

<sup>51</sup> Rebecca Bryant and Chrystalla Yakinthou, *Cypriot Perceptions of Turkey* (Istanbul: TESEV Publications, 2012).

<sup>52</sup> Adamides (no 17).

<sup>53</sup> Kontos (no 12).

dom and the United States and date back to the 1950s and the 1960s. Greek Cypriots also tend to blame London and Washington (particularly the latter) for providing Turkey with the ‘green light’ to invade Cyprus in 1974. This perception has been boosted by public discussion and some published works on Secretary of State Henry Kissinger’s controversial role, as well as the role of the Greek military junta in designing and executing the coup d’état against Cypriot President Makarios and its relations with Washington.<sup>54</sup> At the same time, though, other analysts often emphasise the harsh treatment that Ankara received from Washington (particularly the US Congress) right after the invasion,<sup>55</sup> a matter that is systematically omitted from the Greek Cypriot public discourse.

Further on the role of great powers as pillars of a broader balance on Cyprus-related issues, Greek Cypriot perceptions of Russia offer one more interesting case study. Russia enjoys popularity among Greek Cypriots, across the ideological spectrum. Even at times of widespread anti-Russian sentiments in Europe, in the outset of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, this bias remained high. As revealed by a Eurobarometer study in May 2022, when asked whether they agree that ‘Russian authorities are responsible first and foremost for the current situation,’ only 21% of Cypriot respondents agreed, while the overall EU 27 average was 52%.<sup>56</sup> This bias can be explained by a combination of factors. After the end of the Cold War, Russian-Cypriot relations flourished on several fields. Economic relations were boosted due to Cyprus’ accession to the EU in 2004,<sup>57</sup> which rendered Cyprus an attractive business partner to Russian businesspeople, while, according to some observers, Nicosia was placed in a position to act as Moscow’s ‘Trojan horse’ in Brussels.<sup>58</sup> Russian investments have vastly contributed to the growth of the Cypriot economy in the post-Cold War era.

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<sup>54</sup> Indicatively, see Gene Rossides, *Kissinger and Cyprus: A Study of Lawlessness* (Washington D.C.: American Hellenic Institute Foundation, 2014); Costas Venizelos, Michalis Ignatiou, *Kissinger’s Secret Archives (Τα Μυστικά Αρχεία του Χένρι Κισσιντζερ)* (Athens: Livanis, 2002) (in Greek); Alexis Pappachelas, *A Dark Room 1967-1974 (Ένα Σκοτεινό Δωμάτιο 1967-1974)* (Athens: Metechmio, 2021) (in Greek).

<sup>55</sup> James Goode, *The Turkish Arms Embargo: Drugs, Ethnic Lobbies, and US Domestic Politics* (Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky, 2020).

<sup>56</sup> ‘EU Response to the War in Ukraine,’ (May 2022) *Flash Eurobarometer 506-Ipsos European Public Affairs*, available at <https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/detail/2772> (last accessed 17 June 2022).

<sup>57</sup> George Christou, ‘Bilateral Relations with Russia and the Impact on EU Policy: The Cases of Cyprus and Greece’ (2011) *Journal of Contemporary European Studies*, Vol. 19(2), 225-236.

<sup>58</sup> Mark Leonard, Nicu Popescu, ‘A Power Audit of EU-Russia Relations’ (2007) *European Council on Foreign Relations* (policy paper) 27-31.



The business activity conducted by (and related with) the Russian offshore companies registered in Cyprus comprises a significant part of the Cypriot GDP, and it was enhanced after 2013 by a scheme-launched by the Cypriot government as a measure to tackle the financial crisis for granting Cypriot (thus EU) citizenship to foreign investors. This trend was partially reversed after a revision of Cypriot policy on shell companies in 2018, following pressure by the United States and the EU.<sup>59</sup> When it comes to relations in the fields of defense and diplomacy, Russia provided the RoC with a valuable source of arms sales in the 1990s, while a US embargo was in place. The agreement on the purchase of an advanced Russian anti-aircraft system in 1996, which provoked a vehement reaction on the part of Turkey and, to a large degree, the United States and European countries, is the most notable benchmark.<sup>60</sup> Furthermore, being a UN Security Council permanent member, Russia has often provided the RoC with diplomatic support. Probably the most marking moment for the Greek Cypriots was Russia's use of its veto right in April 2004: in that case, Russia made use of this extraordinary tool to block a resolution that aimed to outline new UN security arrangements that would take effect in Cyprus three days later, in case the Greek Cypriots and the Turkish Cypriots approved the Annan Plan in separate referendums.<sup>61</sup> The Greek Cypriot majority perceived this as an act of support to their objectives, given that President Papadopoulos had publicly rejected the Annan plan. Another influential field of bi-lateral exchanges is religion. The Greek Orthodox Church of Cyprus and the Russian Orthodox Church have been historically involved in multiple levels of interaction.<sup>62</sup> In this context, the first commemoration of the Ukrainian Church Metropolitan Epiphanius in October 2020 by late Archbishop Chrysostomos II was harshly disputed as being disruptive of Russian-Cypriot ecclesiastical relations, as the Ukrainian Church's autocephaly (autonomy) is considered schismatic by Mos-

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<sup>59</sup> Michalis Kontos, 'Cyprus and the Great Powers: An Evaluation of Russian-Cypriot Relations in the New Eastern Mediterranean Environment' (2019) 21 *Journal of Law and Administration* 17-27, 21-22.

<sup>60</sup> Michalis Kontos, Andreas Karyos, 'The Threat of Use of Force under Conditions of Power Asymmetry: The Case of the S 300 Crisis' ('Απειλή Χρήσης Βίας σε Συνθήκες Ανισοζυγίου Ισχύος: Η Περίπτωση της Κρίσης των Πυραύλων S-300') in Emilianides, A. K., Ioannou, C., Sotiropoulos, Y. (eds), *Struggle for Survival. Aspects of Cyprus History after 1974 (Αγώνας για Επιβίωση: Πτυχές της Κυπριακής Πολιτικής Ιστορίας μετά το 1974)* (Nicosia: Nea Hestia/Hippasus/University of Nicosia, School of Law, 2021), 95-111 (in Greek).

<sup>61</sup> Edith M. Lederer, 'Russia Blocks UN Cyprus Resolution' *Associated Press* (21 April 2004), available at <https://archive.globalpolicy.org/security/veto/2004/0421blocks.htm> (last accessed 12 July 2022).

<sup>62</sup> Kontos (no 59) 23-24.

cow's Patriarchate. The Archbishop's action divided the Holy Synod of the Church of Cyprus, as several influential pro-Russian bishops refused to follow suit.<sup>63</sup>

These three pillars combined can explain the Greek Cypriot pro-Russian bias. A significant part of Greek Cypriot society believes that, contrary to London and Washington, Moscow shares Greek Cypriot 'just cause' perceptions. At the same time, this belief defies indications of Russian inactivity on issues of high priority for the RoC. An indicative example is Moscow's refusal to rescue the Cypriot economy right after the rejection of Eurogroup's original bail-in proposal by the House of Representatives, in March 2013.<sup>64</sup> Even actions that could be considered detrimental to Cypriot interests may be defied, like the construction of a controversial, Russian-made nuclear plant in southern Turkey, only a few kilometers away from Cyprus' shores.<sup>65</sup>

When it comes to intergovernmental organisations, an interesting field of study is Greek Cypriot perceptions of the UN and its role in Cyprus talks, in conjunction with what Greek Cypriots think this role should be.<sup>66</sup> In this context, there is a widespread view among Greek Cypriots that the role of the UN in Cyprus should be to focus on imposing or supervising the implementation and respect of International Law. This viewpoint clearly reflects the original perception of 'just cause', which predisposes every initiative on the Cyprus Problem according to the idea of Greek Cypriot victimisation and Turkish illegal aggression. However, it defies the fact that the UN role, as described in the mandate of the UN force in Cyprus (UNFICYP), is one of peace-keeping and mediation.<sup>67</sup> Obviously, a mediator seeks impartiality. Instead, Greek Cypriots tend to perceive this impartiality as an indication of pro-Turkish bias and unfairness which transforms the balance of power at their expense.

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<sup>63</sup> Jonathan Gorvett, 'Russia's Battle for the Orthodox Soul' *Cyprus Mail* (29 November 2020), available at <https://cyprus-mail.com/2020/11/29/russias-battle-for-the-orthodox-soul/> (last accessed 8 July 2022).

<sup>64</sup> Ian Trainor, Josephine Moulds, Miriam Elder, Howard Amos, 'Cyprus Bailout Deal with EU Closes Bank and Seizes Large Deposits' *The Guardian* (25 March 2013), available at <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/mar/25/cyprus-bailout-deal-eu-closes-bank> (last accessed 12 July 2022).

<sup>65</sup> Sinem Koseoglu, 'Turkey's Nuclear Power Dilemma' *Al Jazeera* (10 March 2021), available at <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/3/10/turkeys-nuclear-dilemma> (last accessed 12 July 2022).

<sup>66</sup> Constantinos Adamides, Michalis Kontos, 'Greek Cypriot Perceptions of the United Nations' in Michális S. Michael and Yücel Vural (eds), *Cyprus and the Roadmap for Peace: A Critical Interrogation of the Conflict* (Camberley Surrey: Eduard Elgar Publishing, 2017) 145-154.

<sup>67</sup> UNFICYP Mandate, available at <https://unficy.unmissions.org/unficy-mandate> (last accessed 12 June 2022).

### *On 'Greatness' and 'Smallness'*

As explained above, the memory of the Turkish invasion, as well as the extensive Turkish military presence in the northern part of Cyprus, constitute the bedrock upon which Greek Cypriot perceptions of Turkey are based. On Turkey-related issues, 'pragmatists' and 'hardliners' have from time to time developed distinctly different views that highlight their opposing ideological origins.

An example of this tendency is the different approaches taken by columnists on how the government should deal with Turkey's revisionist stance on the RoC's quest for offshore natural gas discoveries. Following the first natural gas findings offshore Cyprus, in 2011, Turkey implemented a gradually escalating strategy of coercive diplomacy that aimed to force the RoC to terminate its offshore drilling program and persuade its partner international oil and gas companies that no such projects could be brought to fruition without Ankara's consent.<sup>68</sup> In the framework of this strategy, Turkey and the 'TRNC' signed a 'continental shelf agreement', thus rejecting Greek Cypriot actions as 'unilateral' and claiming 'sovereign rights' on a significant part of the RoC's exclusive economic zone (EEZ). Based on this agreement, Turkey has dispatched research vessels since 2014 and drillships since 2018 in the Cypriot EEZ to drill in search of natural gas reserves.<sup>69</sup> The RoC, which had declared and delimited its EEZ through bilateral agreements from the outset according to the provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), stresses that these moves violate its own sovereign rights.

Columnists who have been traditionally expressing 'pragmatist' views, have generally applied a narrative that denounces Turkish revisionism but at the same time blames the Cypriot government for not doing enough to solve the Cyprus Problem and, therefore, optimise perspectives for exploiting Cypriot natural resources.<sup>70</sup> This

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<sup>68</sup> Kontos and Bitsis (no 16).

<sup>69</sup> George Psyllides, 'Cavusoglu: Greek Cypriots Act as if Cyprus Belongs to Them' *Cyprus Mail* (1 September 2018), available at <http://cyprus-mail.com/2018/09/01/cavusoglu-greek-cypriots-act-as-if-cyprus-belongs-to-them> (last accessed 2 September 2018).

<sup>70</sup> Dionysis Dionysiou, 'Natural Gas: Who Buried Cyprus' Hopes in the Mediterranean Depths?' (Φυσικό αέριο: Ποιος Έθαψε τις Ελπίδες της Κύπρου στα Έγκατα της Μεσογείου;) *Politis* (20 February 2022), available at <https://politism.com.cy/politis-news/fysiko-aerio-poiios-ethapse-tis-elpides-tis-kyproy-sta-egkata-tis-mesogeioy/> (last accessed 12 February 2022) (in Greek); Kyriacos Pierides, 'The Natural Gas Curse' (Η Κατάρα του Φυσικού Αερίου) *Politis* (18 December 2021), available at <https://politism.com.cy/apopseis/analyseis/i-katara-toy-fysikoy-aerioy-toy-kyriakoy-pieridi/> (last accessed 12 February 2022) (in Greek); Makarios Droushiotis, 'So, We Grayed the Whole Eastern Mediterranean' (Έτσι Καταφέραμε και Γκριζάραμε Όλη την Αν. Μεσόγειο) *To Vima* (22 August 2020), available at

view is based on a reasonable assumption: Cyprus is too small to mess with Turkey; therefore, a conciliatory approach would be the only way to solve the Cyprus Problem. In the same vein, they argue that Turkey will find ways to hinder Cypriot natural gas projects as long as the Cyprus Problem remains unsettled, while such encounters increase the risk of military deterioration. However, this approach usually fails (or chooses not) to consider the long-term risk of having Turkey's strategic control extended all over the island, given its geographic position and massive power advantage.<sup>71</sup> This point corresponds to the 'hardliners' worst nightmare, as they continuously underline that exceeding (what they perceive as) red lines in the negotiations could render Cyprus a Turkish satellite.

On the other hand, some columnists with 'hardline' views pay much attention to the RoC's lack of sufficient military means to deter (or meet) Turkish naval moves offshore Cyprus. As a matter of fact, Cyprus does not have military naval means that could be used to protect offshore investments. Columnists who express these views have been preoccupied with the issue of defense since the aftermath of the Turkish invasion, urging for sufficient public expenditures to create a credible deterrent force. In this context, they believe that Turkey's activity in the Cypriot EEZ, where the RoC enjoys exclusive sovereign rights, could have been avoided or sufficiently met had Cyprus developed a credible military naval force;<sup>72</sup> or they argue that the RoC could enhance its power sources by participating in alliances with more powerful States, based on their common interests on energy-related affairs.<sup>73</sup> They often evoke Thucydidean realist thinking and dynamics of power politics to support their views. However, they usually distort the notorious dictum that the 'strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must'. Although (as stressed above) history and theory often dispute this assumption, in the case under examination its explanatory value is

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<https://www.tovima.gr/2020/08/22/opinions/etsi-kataferame-kai-gkrizarame-oli-tin-an-mesogeio/> (last accessed 12 July 2022) (in Greek).

<sup>71</sup> Petros Savvides, 'The Security Question of the Cyprus Problem: Strategic Implications,' (October 2017) 11 *Eastern Mediterranean Policy* 2.

<sup>72</sup> Savvas Iacovides, 'How Cypriot Natural Gas Is Protected from the Predator' ('Πώς Προστατεύεται το Κυπριακό Φυσικό Αέριο από την Αρπακτικό') *Simerini* (10 February 2018), available at <https://simerini.sigmalive.com/article/2018/2/10/pos-prostateuetai-to-kupriako-physiko-aerio-apo-ten-arpaktiko/> (last accessed 12 February 2020) (in Greek).

<sup>73</sup> Michalis Ignatiou, 'Greece and Cyprus are Becoming the United States' "Strong Cards" in Eastern Mediterranean Gambling' ('Ελλάδα και Κύπρος Εξελίσσονται στα "Δυνατά Χαρτιά" των ΗΠΑ στο Σκληρό Πόκερ στη Μεσόγειο') *Hellas Journal* (10 June 2018), available at <https://hellasjournal.com/2018/06/ellada-ke-kypros-exelissonte-sta-dynata-chartia-ton-ipa-sto-skliri-poker-me-ti-rosia/> (last accessed 12 February 2022) (in Greek).

high: on the one hand, it would be extremely difficult for the RoC to deal with Turkish naval superiority in the open sea, where, contrary to narrow battle environments, numbers really matter. On the other hand, alliances are based on mutual defense clauses. Since the RoC does not have the military means to support other countries in case of need, how could it expect them to agree that they will come to its defense, particularly given the tremendously unfavourable power equilibrium vis-à-vis Turkey? While ‘pragmatists’ tend to over-emphasise the inherent drawbacks of State ‘smallness’, ‘hardliners’ often undermine them.

## Conclusions

This article focuses on how Greek Cypriot civil society and opinion leaders in post-1974 divided Cyprus deal with power-related affairs, and how they incorporate them in their own beliefs and assessments. I presented some sets of perceptions of Turkey and other foreign actors involved in the Cyprus Problem that take into account the unfavourable power distribution. In this framework, I set forth the hypothesis that ideological stereotypes stem from original perceptions and/or misperceptions and eventually become part of a self-reinforcing ideological vicious circle through the effect of (what Robert Jervis defines as) cognitive consistency.

To elaborate on the main argument in a structured manner, I focused on two different fields of relevance to Greek Cypriot power-related perceptions: the concept of the balance of power, as well as these of ‘greatness’ vs. ‘smallness’. Furthermore, I assumed that two original sources of Greek Cypriot beliefs, namely the post-1974 ‘defeat syndrome’ and the perception of ‘just cause’, may be considered the starting points of a remarkable array of Greek Cypriot power-related stereotypes. I also observed that these beliefs may drive stereotypes towards two potential directions: a ‘pragmatist’ approach and a ‘hardline’ approach. I tested my hypothesis by investigating how fixed perceptions affect Greek Cypriot public views in these fields. On the issue of the balance of power, I examined the stereotype of the ‘Anglo-American factor’, the pro-Russian bias, as well as perceptions on the role of the UN in Cyprus. In relation to the concepts of ‘greatness’ and ‘smallness’, I examined conflicting views on how the RoC should deal with Turkey’s reaction to the Cypriot offshore natural gas project.

The analysis in the last section showcases a clearly observable predisposition to interpret incoming information according to pre-existing beliefs. These beliefs are defined by established perceptions that relate to the ‘defeat syndrome’ and/or the perception of ‘just cause’. For example, on the role of external actors, Greek Cypriots

tend to believe that these may play a significant role in the overall balance of power. However, they often evaluate this role through the stereotypical lens of ‘just cause’ that creates fixed and hardly-changing perceptions of who may be regarded as friends and who as foes. When it comes to Cyprus’ quest for natural gas findings and Turkey’s reaction, ‘pragmatists’ often express views that over-emphasise the inherent drawbacks of State ‘smallness’, while ‘hardliners’ undermine them, in both cases with reference to particular sets of beliefs on the history and politics of the Cyprus Problem. In all these cases, significant contextual variables that stem from the international environment are either defied or distorted.

Ideology, perceptions, and misperceptions can explain a wide range of political predispositions in all political systems and societies. It seems that in Cyprus they are characterised by some special historical and political attributes that reflect heavily on civil society and, particularly, on domestic public discourse. These attributes are directly associated with the small size of the country, particularly so when systemic interactions with bigger and more powerful opponents are in place. Furthermore, some characteristics of the case under examination highlight some intervening variables that seem to act as an impactful catalysts: Apart from Cyprus’ ‘smallness’ vis-à-vis Turkey’s ‘greatness’, the trauma of 1974 and the vast military presence of Turkey in the northern part of Cyprus also constitute crucial explanatory factors for the causal links described above. These variables are essential in the exclusive historical framework of the divided, *de facto* Greek-dominated RoC.

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