



SDE Analysis

Territory and Cyprus Question: A North Perspective

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Abstract

The issues of territory and citizenship from the beginning have had a central place in the Cyprus Question. This study aims to analyze the importance of territory for the Cyprus Question from the Turkish Cypriot perspective. In doing so, it examines firstly the Turkish Cypriots' claims over Cyprus from historical perspectives to have territorial rights, and secondly Turkish Cypriot government's policy of citizenship and migration in defining North Cyprus as a new national land. This has occurred after the 1974 Turkish intervention that led to the partition of the island into two administrative regions: Republic of Cyprus (RoC), internationally recognized (except Turkey), and Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), only recognized by Turkey. The border since 1974 has separated Greek and Turk communities both physically and mentally and defined Turkish Cypriot national space and society against the principal others, Greek Cypriots. All attempts to settle down the Cyprus Question have to face that reality. This study argues that the partition of the island makes the question of territory for both the Greek Cypriots and the Turkish Cypriots more complicated matter, and TRNC citizenship policy and the debate on migration influence the public opinion about the Cyprus Question in North Cyprus.

Key Words: Cyprus Question, Territory, Migration, TRNC Citizenship, Turkish Cypriot Perspective



Introduction

This study aims to analyze the relations between the issue of territory and Cyprus Question from the Turkish Cypriot perspective. In doing so, firstly, it examines the Turkish Cypriots' claims, from historical perspectives to have territorial rights, as well as the Greek Cypriots, over Cyprus. Secondly, in connection with the previous one, this study examines Turkish Cypriot government's policy of citizenship and migration in defining North Cyprus as a new national land. This has occurred after the 1974 Turkish intervention that led to the partition of the island into two administrative regions: Republic of Cyprus (RoC) which is internationally recognized except by Turkey, and Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) which is only recognized by Turkey.

The Greek Cypriots sought to realize enosis (union of the island with Greece), according to which Cyprus belongs to the Greek nation, as being Hellenic from the Ancient times.

The first part deals with the dispute over territorial issue in Cyprus, which was the basic reason behind ethno-national conflict in 1955-1974. The Greek Cypriots sought to realize enosis (union of the island with Greece), according to which Cyprus belongs to the Greek nation, as being Hellenic from the Ancient times. As a reaction, the Turkish Cypriots began to call for taksim (territorial partition of the island between two communities), emphasizing their rights over Cyprus as the heirs of the Ottomans.¹ The result was a separation of two communities both politically and physically. After the failure of 1960 RoC as a bi-communal state, real borders between two communities began to appear. By 1963 majority of Turkish Cypriots were concentrated into defended enclaves where they established their own separate administration. By 1974 there emerged a Turkish territorial zone in the north and the Greek one in the south, which became ethnically homogenized by the population exchange between the two regions in the following year. By then, the Cyprus Question has been discussed around a

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¹ For both Greek and Turkish nationalists, Cyprus is "the land of (their) forefathers" that provide attachments to and associations with it; here territory is constructed historically and symbolically as well as physically, to form ethno-national identities. For the relation between different forms of nationalism and territory see Smith (1991: 40).

greater extent with the issue of territory. For the Turkish Cypriot leaders, the intervention that provided necessary physical conditions in creation of a territorially divided federal state was a significant act to solve the Problem. However, the Greek Cypriot side viewed Turkey's intervention as "invasion" and as the starting point of the Cyprus Question by outlawing the "constitutional regime".

The second part deals with TRNC governments' policy of citizenship and migration by examining the efforts to define northern Cyprus as a new homeland of Turkish Cypriots and the nature of recent migration from Turkey to Cyprus since 1975. From the beginning, TRNC officials actively lunched to define the profile of TRNC citizens, but this has been a hot topic between right and left groups for debate inside. In that debate, the issue of Turkish immigrants has a special place. The first group of Turkish immigrants were encouraged to settle down in North Cyprus, mainly due to the political and economic reasons and partially with a goal of providing ethnic balance. Others have migrated after 1980 to find a better job, which forms the majority of Turkish immigrants. Moreover, their status and numbers have been debated in all inter-communal peace talks in order to set the Cyprus Question and also among many left groups and politicians in North Cyprus. These made their presence contingent and insecure.

This study has two broad purposes: (i) to illuminate the scope of the debate over territory regarding the questions of identity and diversity in Turkish Cypriots' perspectives; (ii) to look at the Cyprus Question from a north perspective by providing an accurate categorization of territory, diversity and citizenship for policy-implementation in its international dimensions. It argues that the de facto partition of the island makes the question of territory more complicated matter for both the Greek Cypriots and the Turkish Cypriots also TRNC citizenship policy and the debate on migration; influence the public opinion about the Cyprus Question in North Cyprus.

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The Development of the Cyprus Question and Territorial Separation

The question of territory in Cyprus came to the forefront with the question of diversity in 1950s. Until that time, two communities, Turkish and Greek Cypriots of Cyprus had lived together, even in some mixed villages and towns. This was settled down during the Ottoman rule (1571-1878) for the first time and ended with the annexation of island by the British Empire in 1878. In the era of the Ottomans, Venetians left the island and Muslims came from Anatolia. Two dominant communities, Orthodox Christians (Greek Cypriots) and Muslims, were organized as two separate communities on the basis of legal pluralism. And the relations between them were designed on the basis of the millet system according to which the Ottoman society, made up of Muslims (ruling nation) and non-Muslims (ruled one), was organized around religious differences and each religious community had an autonomy in the regulation of internal affairs. The Greek Orthodox and Turkish Muslim communities continued to exist together, but in a different vein. On the part of the Greek Cypriots the situation began to change when nationalist movement began to spread among the Greeks who achieved their independence from the Ottoman Empire in 1829 (see Mallinson, 2005).

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During the British rule (1878-1960)² the system relied on socio-cultural and political differences among two communities which was maintained to a greater extent. For linguistic and religious reasons, the Greek and Turkish schools of Cyprus had been separated before the British rule and remained so during it (Bryant, 1997: 56). During that time, although the members of the communities were living side by side in some mixed places or very close in neighboring places, inter-communal antagonism was increasing due to the fact that the British failed to create a harmony from

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² The Ottoman administration, by the Cyprus Convention, gave the control of Cyprus to Great Britain in 1878, and then Britain annexed the island officially and made a crown colony in 1925.

separated Greek and Turkish identities and gradual spread of nationalist feeling among the members of two communities. Under the British rule, the Greek Cypriots deepened their ties with the mainland, Greece, and strengthened their idea of Greek-Helen nationalism. Their ultimate aim was to realize enosis (the union of Cyprus with Greece). By the 1930s, they rapidly developed and revealed much more loudly that demand, but the British administration and the Turkish Cypriots were strongly against it. Without the support of Turkey, Turkish Cypriots preferred to be in close cooperation with the British administration against the Greek Cypriot majority and their demands. The administration took some measure to prevent the Greek Cypriots' enosis movement (see Mallinson 2005 and Hitchens 1997). By the rise of nationalism first among the Greek Cypriots and then among the Turkish Cypriots, the question of "who is going to control the territory?" became dominated in the political scene in Cyprus. The Greek Cypriots came to the fore with historical claims over Cyprus as being Hellenic since ancient times and later it was followed by the Turkish Cypriot claims to have right over the island as much as with the heirs of the Ottoman Empire who were their counterparts.³

After the Second World War, the Cyprus British administration faced with two major political problems. The first was about the rising demand of the Greek Cypriot nationalists for enosis, which gradually turned into a kind of armed struggle. The second was the rising reaction of the Turkish Cypriots against the Greek Cypriots' quest for enosis, and, responding to enosis, they began to call for taksim (the partition of Cyprus into two sovereign regions or states). It gradually became the motto of Turkish Cypriot nationalism that already took its shape under the influence of Kemalist secular nationalism of the mainland. It was a defensive movement as a defensive contra-nationalism against enosis demands. Unlike the Greek Cypriot one, it was not led by a religious authority.⁴ The first affective organization against enosis, KATAK (Cyprus Turkish Minority Association, Kıbrıs Adası Türk Azınlığı Kurumu) was founded in 1943. Fazıl Küçük became the unique leader of the Turkish Cypriot community and his main purpose was to attract the attention of Turkey into the island. Progressively, it became more difficult for the British to keep the two antagonistic communities in harmony.

By 1955 the Greek Cypriot nationalists created EOKA (National Organization of Freedom Fighters, Ethniki Organosis Kyprion Agoniston) led by Colonel George Grivas, coming from Greece, with a goal of enosis. Its leaders launched and directed an effective campaign escalating violence against the colonial power and also the Turkish Cypriots. The violence

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³ In such a conflict over territory history is usually applied to justify the nationalist claims (Evans, 2003:7).

⁴ For the evaluation of Turkish Cypriot nationalism see Kızılyürek (2005: 230-231).

acts of EOKA continued in a rising tide until 1959. Around the idea of enosis there was a coalition of the Church, Greek Cypriot nationalist intelligentsia and EOKA (Draft, 2003: 304). By the late 1950s, the Turkish Cypriots started to respond in kind to the Greek Cypriot ethnic attacks and thus an armed struggle between the two nationalist groups began. They set up their own counter-resistance organization called the TMT (Türk Mukavemet Teşkilatı, Turkish Resistance Organization) with the goal of taksim. During this period, Greece and Turkey also got involved into the question. By the late 1950s this escalation of violence helped to pave the way to the complete separation of the two communities both politically and physically. Turks who lived in some of mixed villages migrated to the villages and some neighborhoods of towns where the Turkish Cypriots were dominant.

This conflict determined the fate of the 1960 Cyprus Republic as a bi-communal state of the Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities. By the 1959 agreement aiming at ending the conflict and prohibiting both enosis and taksim, the draft of new state constitution was already prepared and Greece and Turkey along with Britain were appointed as guarantors of the island's integrity and the constitution of the new born Republic. In 1960, Republic of Cyprus became an independent state by virtue of a constitution and three treaties, the Treaty of Guarantee, the Treaty of Alliance, and the Treaty of Establishment. Archbishop Makarios III, a religious and political leader, was elected as the first president of the RoC.

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The seeds of the emergence of two politically autonomous communities became more apparent with RoC in 1960. Its consociation structure gave higher priority to sustain an “ethno-cultural” balance rather than to majority rule, and so the ratios of population determined power-sharing between two ethno-national groups. Although the constitution defined Cyprus citizenship both legally and politically, it does not emphasize a Cypriot nation or public, it rather mentions about Greek and Turkish communities. It was based on a form of “territorial understanding” that emphasizes the significance of citizenship with a goal to develop territorial identity. According to RoC Constitution (Article 2-1 and 2-2), while the Greek community comprised “all citizens of the Republic who are of Greek origin and whose mother tongue is Greek or who share the Greek cultural traditions or who are members of the Greek-Orthodox Church”, the Turkish community comprised “all citizens of the Republic who are of Turkish origin and whose mother tongue is Turkish or who share the Turkish cultural traditions or who are Moslems”. There thus existed many practices of two ethno-national identification processes. These linked the divided communities to the “motherlands”, namely Turkey and Greece. The official languages were Greek and Turkish; Greece's and Turkey's flags con-

tinued to symbolize two communities, though there was one rarely flown national flag. National holidays of the motherlands were also celebrated as a constitutional right. Moreover, as determined in the constitution (Article 108-1 and 108-2), each community has the right to receive subsidies and professional personnel (e.g. teachers) from its own mainland government for institutions of education, culture, athletics and charity.⁵ These practices were exercised via two communal chambers that fulfilled different functions ranging from educational to sportive activities, religious to economic organizations.⁶ These gradually turned into two “small nation-state” organizations before the Republic of Cyprus effectively passed into Greek Cypriot hands after December 1963. These practices gradually turned into means of a “small nation-state”, especially for the Turkish Cypriots, when the RoC became a de facto Greek Cypriot state by 1963.

Nevertheless, neither the 1960 constitution nor the 1959 agreement provided cooperation between the Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities. The Greek Cypriot leadership argued that the mechanisms introduced to protect Turkish Cypriot rights in the constitution were obstacles to efficient government. They wanted to monopolize the government. So, especially kicked off by the Greek Cypriots’ claims, both sides continued to the violence. Earlier in 1963 President Makarios insisted on a series of constitutional amendments that removed the bi-communal nature of the regime. These amendments “removed almost all the props to their claim to be the ‘co-founders’ of the Republic and demoted them to the status of a minority” (Kyle, 1983). For Makarios, having higher percentage state employment quotas in the state for The Turkish Cypriots than their actual population size was not acceptable. The Turkish Cypriot leaders rejected these regulations seeing in the Greek favor as a first step for enosis. The dispute over the distribution of state resources according population size was an important reason for the rise in inter-communal conflict and violence by 1963. Turkish Cypriots in Larnaka and Lefkoshe/Nicosia were attacked and some Turkish villages were destructed.⁷ “Some around 20,000 refugees”, writes Kylie, “fled from them, many of them taking refuge in Kyrenia and Lefkoşa/Nicosia. Food and medical supplies had to be shipped in from Turkey” (Kyle, 1983). A Canadian observer, Richard A. Patrick, who was in Cyprus during the violence lasting throughout 1963 and 1964, reported that “the majority of Turkish refugees fled only after killings, abductions and harassments of Turkish Cypriots by Greek Cypriots in their neighborhoods” (Patrick, 1976: 78). In 1960, 126 villages and towns were mixed, but in 1970 only 48 of the 602 Cypriot settlements could be classified as mixed (Kliot and Mansfield, 1997: 499). This process resulted in the collapse of the RoC. At the end, especially the forced migrations that

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5 See The Constitution of the Republic of Cyprus, Article 108-1 and 108-2.

6 For the constitutional and cultural aspects of the RoC see Kyle (1983).

7 For some cases see Borowiec (2000: 56)

brought these changes about, within Cyprus, were keys to the effective transformation of 1960 RoC into a Greek Cypriot unitary state. At that time, by the proposal of Makarios, a cease-fire in Lefkoşa, an exchange of hostages, and the establishment of the “Green Line”, a neutral zone between the Greek and Turkish areas in the capital were put into practice. This line became a first real border between the north and the south and has existed until today.

By 1974, around 20.000 and 25.000 Turkish Cypriots (almost one-fourth of total Turkish Cypriot Population, 104,320 in 1960) had been displaced (Patrick, 1976: 45-76). Most of the Turkish Cypriots were concentrated in the defended enclaves that occupied only three percentage of the island. They moved in there by giving up their land and houses for security reasons. Within and between these enclaves established all over the island, the Turkish Cypriots established their own separate legal, political and other institutions.⁸ At that time Greek Cypriot rulers claimed that “most Turkish Cypriots were fleeing under their leadership’s directions in order to prepare the ground for eventual partition. This was denied by Turkish Cypriot leaders, who averred that members of their community fled without any prior planning to the nearest refuge because they were frightened” (Hatay, 2007: 1). The RoC Government imposed an economic blockade on the enclaves, which was modified with the UN and Red Cross pressures to let in quotas of food. When restrictions on the enclaves began to be little bit eased in 1967, few Turkish Cypriots returned their villages. These experiences between 1963 and 1974 deepened the tension between the two ethnic groups. Life in the enclaves was frequently impossible so many Turkish Cypriots left for a better life abroad, migrating to Australia and Britain, but some settled in Turkey.

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These enclaves, in practice, were arms of a fledgling Turkish Cypriot state having legislative, executive, and judicial institutions that effectively defended “borders”, provided “public services”, and enabled some “luxuries like a Football Federation” (Stavrínides, 1975: 55).⁹ Thus, through the late 1960s, the island included two autonomous and national political bodies with separately controlled territories and identification processes. Turkish Cypriot enclaves made it possible for their rulers to separate the Turkish Cypriots from the Greek Cypriots as a partition of the island along ethno-national line. To put it in another words, enclaves with defended borders helped them to develop and disseminate their own ethno-national identity that was the main outcome of territorial boundaries. This situation was obvious in terms of citizenship status of both the Greeks and Turks; the Turkish residents of Greek-controlled areas could not exercise full citizen-

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⁸ For these enclaves and their social and political results see Asmussen (1999).

⁹ The Turkish Cypriot Football Association was already founded in 1955 following the suspension of the Turkish Cypriot FCs by the Pancyprian FA.

ship rights such as the right to vote in the elections, so all Turkish Cypriots identified themselves with the “unofficial” Turkish-run quasi-State (Stavrinides, 1975: 56). It means that effective citizenship in both sides was determined by the competing ethno-nationalities which were partly based on their two intermittently antagonistic histories. “Nationalist Cypriot Hellenism” idealized Cyprus as a Hellenic homeland that had resisted “barbaric invasion” of the Turks. The Turkish Cypriot nationalism defined itself as a movement of “resistance to enosis” by emphasizing on a new territorially-based federal state that would recognize Cyprus as the homeland of the Turks as well as the Greeks.

Physical and political separation of the two communities after 1963 also occurred on the basis of a certain economic rationalism that have an effect on the rise of ethnic conflict (Mehmet, 2010: 22). This is based on the fact that “political institution building came later, well after the mobilization of elites and the grass roots for financial, social, and economic institution” (p. 23). Before political institutionalization, there already emerged the Turkish Cypriot economy that is too vulnerable compared with the Greek one.¹⁰

In 1974, the Greek Cypriot army, the National Guard, with the support of Athens to annex Cyprus to Greece overthrew the existing Greek Cypriot Government; it was done under the control of Greek officers. However, in July, Turkey stopped this by intervening militarily as was its obligation under the provisions of the 1960 Treaty of Guarantee. Thus, Cyprus was divided into the Turkish Cypriot zone in the north and the Greek Cypriot zone in the south. The Turkish Cypriots were rescued from their besieged enclaves and concentrated them in a physically more secure larger territory in northern Cyprus and archived a “state” of their own. While before the two distinct political bodies were more territorially fragmented, now each controls its own unified territory. The populations of these two zones became almost ethnically pure as well, with the result of population exchanges that were arranged the following year. Through the population exchange, around 142.000 Greek Cypriots were displaced to go to the south and around 45.000 Turkish Cypriots moved to the north.¹¹

The outcome of the 1974 Turkish intervention was the emergence of two distinct, ethnically homogenized, political bodies with their own state mechanisms. After that, the Greek Cypriots in the south continued to control the internationally recognized RoC (except by Turkey). In the north, the Turkish Cypriots called their own state the Turkish Federated State of Cyprus (TFSC) in 1975. The term “federated” left the door open to the

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¹⁰ The Turkish Cypriots achieved control of evkaf (foundations) (1950s), and established their own cooperatives (1950s) and chamber of commerce (1958), set up their own first bank (1901) and their own trade unions (1920s) (Mehmet, 2010: 24).

¹¹ For the numbers see Gürel and Özersay (2006: 3).

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Turkish Cypriots rejoining the institutions of the RoC. Such a development having been firmly rejected by the Greek Cypriots, the Turkish Cypriots declared independence as the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) in 1983. However, this new state has been recognized only by Turkey. Since then, there has been a war of words between two states in Cyprus, the RoC in the south and the TRNC in the north.

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Citizenship, Migration and Territorial Understanding in TRNC

Both sides had to redefine their own position after 1974 intervention, while each state continuing to elaborate its own historically prevalent nationalist ideology. For the Turkish Cypriot leaders, the 1974 Turkish intervention was not only necessary but legally valid as an attempt to guarantee the RoC by making it a territorially divided federal state (Scott 2002: 108). It is an important step to solve the Cyprus Problem, which means the realization of Turkish Cypriot nationalism's motto, taksim. In contrast, the Greek Cypriots viewed Turkey's intervention as an "invasion" and as the starting point of the Cyprus Problem. In fact, the intervention resulted in an identity crisis for Greek Cypriots who gave more importance the Greekness of the island and gradually shifted their focus to establish a territorially united Cyprus instead of enosis.¹² Up till today, there has been an embedded war between two states of Cyprus, the RoC in the south and the TRNC in the north. Each side became dominant by its own ethnocentric vision with its patriotic narratives.

In all peace talks, Turkish Cypriot leaders have emphasized the significance of having a territorial sovereignty based on the principle of bizonality. As one of the main aspects of Turkish Cypriot position, "the principle of bizonality ... means preserving as much as possible in the post-1974 de facto situation on the island." Also, status of TRNC and its territory is another main aspect: "The TRNC is a separate and independent state, representing the right to self-determination and sovereignty in northern Cyprus of Turkish Cypriots. The Northern Cyprus is a territory in which the only responsible authority is the Turkish Cypriot government". (Özersay and Gürel, 2008: 292). Thus, a piece of territory in Cyprus that just belongs to the Turkish Cypriots has an ultimate importance for TRNC officials to

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¹² For the development of Greek-Cypriot nationalism and official narrative after the "partition" see Mavratsas (1997).

survive on the island.

The status of TRNC citizenship is clearly defined in the 1985 Constitution that sets the TRNC as a democratic and secular Republic and a Turkish state. The right of acquiring citizenship was granted to the individuals, who are already acquired 1960 RoC citizenship, acquired TFSC citizenship before 1983 and were ordinarily resident in TRNC on the 15th November, 1983.¹³ The impact of memories of pre-1974 period on the northern part of the island can be traced on the TRNC citizenship law.¹⁴ The identity of Turkish Cypriot citizens is determined as Turkish by merging Turkish Cypriot history and culture with Turkey's ones. Accordingly, 1985 TRNC Constitution highlights that the Turkish Cypriots are indivisible part of the great Turkish nation.

Nevertheless, in TRNC, in the definition of Turkish Cypriot identity and citizenship and the attitude towards immigrants, there have been two dominant perspectives. The first is of Turkish nationalists who ruled the country from 1975 to 2003 and from 2009-present, and second, of Cypriot nationalists who had been dominant in TRNC politics from 2003 to 2009. The former has been represented by the center-right National Unity Party (Ulusal Birlik Partisi, UBP), the main ruling party from 1983 to 2003 and from spring 2009 to present, and the first president Rauf R. Denktaş (1983-2005) and the current president Derviş Eroğlu (2010-present). The latter has been represented by the left-wing Republican Turkish Party (Cumhuriyetçi Türk Partisi ve Birleşik Güçler, CTP-BG), the ruling party from 2003 to 2009, and the president Mehmet Ali Talat (2005-2010).

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In the discourse of the Turkish nationalists, Turkish Cypriots are an organic part of a greater Turkish nation. Here Turkishness has a central place. In evaluating the presence of Turks on the island, they put a strong emphasis on the heroic resistance to EOKA, which took an important place in the formation of Turkish Cypriot identity. This has revolved around the accentuation of the TMT memories and ceremonial celebration of some important events in the “national” resistance. In the Turkish Cypriot view, EOKA and the struggle for enosis are regarded as the causes behind making the Turkish Cypriots victims. In general, in the official discourse, commemoration of şehitler (who sacrificed themselves for the causes of survival of Turkish Cypriots), and the Turkish army's arrival called as the “Peace Operation”, and 1983 “Declaration of Independence” paved the way for the appear-

¹³ See *TRNC Constitution*, Articles 67/1a and 67/1b.

¹⁴ “Persons who have made investment ... and have performed or likely to perform, extraordinary services in science, politics and cultural sectors; ... who have taken part in 1974 Peace Operation and their spouses and children; and the widows and children of those killed in the Peace Operation; ... who have rendered services after 1 August 1958 in the cadres of the Turkish Resistance Organization in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus” become citizens of the TRNC without requiring the satisfaction of conditions such as residence, good conduct under previous paragraphs. See *TRNC Citizenship Law*, Article 9/1.

ance of “new and free life” for the Turks on the island.

The Turkish Cypriot nationalists uphold two types of forgetting processes; the first is to forget the southern part of the island and highlight today’s part as the home of the Turkish Cypriots. The second is about forgetting the previous coexistence of two communities. Although the Greek Cypriot leaders have claimed to be the owner of the whole island throughout history, in terms of defining territorial boundaries, the Turkish nationalist leaders acted pragmatically in the sense that they tried to attach the Turkish Cypriots to the TRNC’s boundaries. What was prior for Turkish Cypriot rulers was to survive in the island in any way. Now the Turkish Cypriot state’s strategies have reformulated existing Ottoman-Islamic remnants in the north to establish “Turkishness” of North Cyprus. In addition to that formation of the North Cyprus as a homeland of Turkish Cypriots, the attempts to tie them to the mainland, Turkey, continued. That’s why, the state continued to celebrate some national holidays of the mainland as a part of TRNC official nationalism to identify with the Turkish national identity.

The Turkish Cypriot nationalist leaders used their own view of the past and national events to activate a “collective memory” for and cultivate national self-consciousness among the Turkish Cypriots in a context of international isolation, political, economic and even cultural embargoes. The goal was to produce, re-produce and spread Turkish Cypriot identity with the emphasis on the Turkishness.

One of the pillars of the Turkish Cypriot nationalism is the rejection of being minority in possible- future united state on the island (Samani, 1999). This is clearly seen in all efforts to find a settlement on the basis of equal partnership. The rejection of minority status by the Turkish Cypriot nationalists seems to be directly related with the idea that, although the Greeks are a majority on the island, they are small minority in the region, for the Turkish Cypriot which gave Turkey a geographical closeness and power. Thus, for the authorities of the TRNC and for their counterparts in Turkey migration from Turkey to the island until the early years of the 2000s was a normal development.

The migration of Turkish nationals to the north cannot be therefore separated from the issue of population with its rising significance. After 1974 intervention, joint settlement policy of Turkey and Turkish Cypriot administration was put into practice. As part of that policy, approximately 20,000 Turkish nationals came to the island from 1975 until 1979. Around 15,000 of those were successfully settled; and the 2006 census shows that “11,925 TRNC citizens of Turkish origin declared that they arrived in Cyprus before 1979” (Hatay 2007: 42). The main goal of this policy was presented

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as to strengthen the North Cyprus by increasing the Turkish population and creating a workable economy (İnanç 2007: 77-80). But, the number of immigrants who are TRNC citizen is not high as it is claimed by the Greek Cypriot authorities. According to the 2006 TRNC census, the total number of TRNC citizens who were born in Turkey is only 23,565.

In the official discourse under the right-wing rulers, the connection between these immigrants and Turkish inhabitants of the island was established in terms of unification of two peoples of the Turkish nation. Thus, it is obvious that migration from Turkey to TRNC was welcomed and seen as part of these processes. Until recent times, Turkish Cypriot citizenship had been defined, redefined and disseminated on ethno-national bases, although it is depicted in the constitution with civic terms, and northern part of Cyprus is redefined as a new and real homeland of the Turkish Cypriots (Çolak, 2004). Thus, relying on its policy of citizenship, the statistics of the TRNC governments under the nationalist UBP, until 2003, called the majority of TRNC's population as Turkish Cypriot.¹⁵ Here all immigrants from the Turkish mainland were considered by the TRNC state elite and nationalist groups as an organic part of Turkish Cypriot community. Nevertheless, majority of left groups in TRNC developed counter arguments by making the naturalization of immigrants as subject to a political debate.

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By the rise of Turkish Cypriot left during the last decade, the question of "Turkish immigrants" has become one of the most debated issues in TRNC's political life. This is also to some extent related to the development that Cyprus membership to the EU gained much more importance for the life of two communities and even settlement of the Cyprus Question.¹⁶ The left groups and the political parties in TRNC, questioning the position of the immigrants from Turkey, developed an alternative vision to Turkish Cypriot nationalism and emphasized the idea of a shared homeland, Cyprus, with the Greek Cypriots on the basis of Cypriotism (Çolak 2008b). In that vision the main claim is that some of the past experiences and co operations at grass-root and social level differences between two communities show that two communities can co-exist and live peacefully. The Turkish immigrants and Turks of Turkey, implicitly being emphasized the obstacle for this coexistence, which appeared as the main other of Cypriotism. Thus, from the beginning, the Cypriots in the North Cyprus have questioned the presence and the position of the Turkish immigrants as TRNC citizens.

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¹⁵ See *Facts about Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus*, 99.

¹⁶ The Greek Cypriots joined the EU in April 2004 on behalf of the whole island. The EU accepted the whole Cyprus as a member, but with the provision that the laws and membership benefits –applied to the Greek Cypriot south– will not extended to Turkish Cypriot north until after reunification.

In the North Cyprus, the EU accession process and bad structural, especially economic, problems led some left groups to expand their critics over existent state affairs and gain more and more place among the Turkish Cypriots. As a result, in 2003 and 2005 parliamentary elections, the CTP-BG achieved the electoral majority and became the main party in the coalition governments. In April 2005, the leader of the CTP-BG was elected as the President with overwhelming majority. Behind that transformation there were three main reasons: 2001 economic crisis, hopes to join the EU and, perhaps most importantly, the support of Turkey's new ruling party, the Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, the AK Parti). Its government initiated a new Cyprus policy to take leading initiatives regarding to the Cyprus Question and then supported the Annan Plan, which challenged Turkey's establishment (Çelenk, 2007).

At the end, Turkish Cypriot led by the CTP-BG found a suitable atmosphere to launch its perspective as TRNC's new official policy. Their view is to shape an ideological perspective called Cypriotism in a large extent. Here, too much emphasis is placed on the idea of "Cypriotness" rather than Turkish identity in defining a profile for Turkish Cypriots. According to the Turkish Cypriot left's Cypriotism, the Turkish and Greek Cypriots can co-exist under a federal state structure; for that goal, the TRNC might be abolished. It is mentioned as one of the main principles of the CTP-BG's program (see www.ctp.com). In addition to that, one of the main mottos of the program is that "the CTP is against any foreign (Turkish mainland) interference into TRNC internal affairs... and struggling to stop such interference, and also against eliminating Cypriot identity by population transfer (from Turkey) and struggling to stop this process." About "population transfer", it is underlined that "population transfer hinders the realization of Turkish Cypriot Community's will and puts its existence in danger. Granting citizenship status to those people, which threatens our social entity, is not acceptable. The CTP-BG envisions that migration of illegal workers should be stopped immediately, and necessary work force should come to the island for certain period and within certain rules." According to the program, such "population transfer" from Turkey implemented by the right-wing government is also paving way to the migration and erosion of Cypriot population in the north. In that formula, Turkey and Turkish immigrants appears to be projected as the main other of Cypriotism. When the CTP-BG came to power, all these principles determined its policy toward migrants and quest workers from the Turkish mainland.

The CTP-BG's perspective finds its clear expression as a vehicle for social and political mobilization in the emergence of the "This Country is Ours" Platform (Bu Memleket Bizim Platformu) in which left political parties and civil societal organizations participated. As the motto of social and

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political mobilization in TRNC, the phrase “This Country is Ours” implies that it is not “theirs” which belongs to the Turks of Turkey and Turkey itself. Cypriots in the North Cyprus began publicly to state their identity by separating themselves from Turks of Turkey and migrants from Turkey, and, in turn, to refuse Turkish tutelage over the island. In separating from Turkey, they didn’t define themselves with ethno-national terms, but as a distinctive group having a unique Cypriot culture. Such culture of Cyprus makes Turkish Cypriots totally different from the “strangers”, Turks of Turkey.

The CTP-BG put into practice a form of “Cypriotization policy” especially in two areas: i) Cypriotization of state-led institutions; ii) new policy towards immigrants from Turkey. Regarding to the first one, the Eastern Mediterranean University (EMU) and Cyprus Turkish Airlines (CTA) set two good examples. EMU, state-led foundation university and managed by government-appointed persons, is the oldest and biggest university in TRNC.¹⁷ By the early 2004 EMU entered into the process of Cypriotization.¹⁸ As a result of this policy, more than 50 academics from the Turkish mainland left and gone to Turkey (some of them forced to leave, and some of them fired). Another one is the “nationalization” of CTA. It was set up and developed as a joint cooperation with Turkey’s Turkish Airlines (TA), but its administration and control was in the hands of TA’s staff to a large extent. After the CTP-BG-led government came to power, the structure of CTA was questioned and it was propagated that it should pass into the hands of Turkish Cypriots. Then TA sold CTA to TRNC government. That event was celebrated as “Cypriotization” of CTA.

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Moreover, CTP-BG’s Cypriotization policy is clearly seen in its new migration policy. In accordance with the CTP-BG program, the government launched a new migration policy to stop “population transfer or flow”. First regulation was that all entrance to TRNC with Turkish ID card is limited with three months, in most cases with one month, as tourists, and also those who enter with their ID cards are not allowed to work in TRNC. Those who want to work should enter with a passport and pass through a process of health and security checks. This policy started to be implemented by the early 2005 and thousands of the people from the mainland were forced to go in a limited time to Turkey. If they did not go in defined time, they had to pay money as punishment or would not be allowed to come to TRNC again. Except tourists and university students, all workers had to be registered, and, in this way, they are turned into a kind of “guest

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¹⁷ EMU was founded in 1986 and maintained with the academics from Turkey. It had grown through the 1990s and became a university with the 15,000 students in 2003.

¹⁸ That is clearly expressed in a report prepared by the EUA in May 2007: “In 2004, the “Cypriotisation” of EMU could be envisaged, with the aim of turning the institution... into a centre of learning for Cyprus as a whole... This meant investing in foreign students and foreign staff in order to balance the Turkish influence that had presided over EMU beginnings” (*EUA Evaluation Report*, May 2007: 6).

workers”. At the beginning, most of illegal workers were registered. But, unexpectedly, the number of the registered workers began to increase, due to two developments: the first is that, the bomb in construction sector causing the need for work force and the second is that, around ten thousands Turkish Cypriots started working in the south after opening the cease-fire line called the Green Line.

The issue of “population transfer” was heatedly discussed after the release of the results of TRNC 2006 Census. Underlining the rising number of immigrants from Turkey, some intellectuals and columnists in dailies, especially in Yen Dozen known as the CTP-BG’s newspaper, questioned the number of Turkish Cypriot natives. The negative attitude towards Turkish immigrants is clearly seen in the words of Conk Mutluyakalı, the leading columnist in Yeni Düzen. He expressed the results as “How Many Remained Are We! and Alienation”. For him, the presence of the Turks of Turkey in the TRNC leads to “degeneration” of TRNC population structure and resulted in that “Turkish Cypriots live their own country as “strangers”... by becoming alienated to their own land and people... We are taking our children, our bodies, ourselves far away from “a different people” (immigrants, YÇ)” whose presence “is spoiling and hurting our spirit and bodies” (Mutluyakalı, 2007). Such a racist tone seems to be dominant in the left groups’ attitude towards the immigrants.

When the CTP-BG was in opposition, it also questioned TRNC citizenship being easily given to the immigrants. Its leadership maintained their position, when they were in power. Even they cancelled citizenship status of 1,563 persons given by the previous government-led by the UBP.¹⁹ As we compare the previous years, under the rule of the new government just only limited number of immigrants has obtained TRNC citizenship, although there are many who meet the criteria mentioned in the Citizenship Law.²⁰

The migration of Turkish nationals to the north is thus directly related the rising significance of the issue and nature of population for the Turkish Cypriot administration after 1974. Turkish immigrants have come in two ways. First group of Turkish nationals, approximately 20,000, arrived in North Cyprus as part of Turkish and Turkish Cypriot governments’ joint policy from 1975 until 1979. Around 15,000 of those were successfully settled.²¹ Second group comprises those who migrated on an individual

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¹⁹ *Kıbrıs*, 19 April, 2007.

²⁰ According to the existing TRNC Citizenship Law, anyone who lives five years as a permanent resident in TRNC automatically has a right to apply for TRNC citizenship. CTP-BG’s new proposal extended duration period from five years to ten years (*Kıbrıs*, 19 April, 2007), but failed to realize it.

²¹ The 2006 census shows us that “11,925 TRNC citizens of Turkish origin” migrated before 1979. They were given empty Greek Cypriot properties and citizenship in the Turkish Cypriot state almost upon arrival (see Hatay 2007: 42)

and economic base to find a better job and life. While immigrants were arriving in the north after 1980 that constituted the majority of Turkish immigrants, they can be considered within this category, a category of economic migration. As mentioned above, just only 23,565 TRNC citizens were born in Turkey.²²

This new situation brought about a new question of diversity in North Cyprus, although it was expected that there would be an easy integration between the two groups because of same nationality and religion. The relationship between the Turkish immigrants and the Turkish natives on the island has developed in a totally different vein. The result was a division in a way that being Cypriot or not has gradually been a defining difference between two groups. The Turkish immigrants and the Turkish Cypriot natives signify two separate groups having different lifestyles and experiences (Rüstemli et al, 2000 & Navaro-Yashin, 2006). The natives have a relatively different culture due to living on an island context isolated from the mainland Turkey. Nevertheless, Turkish immigrants who came mostly from rural parts of Turkey had a traditional lifestyle with an inadequate education. In times, being Cypriot or not, became the main differentiating ingredient between immigrants and natives. Each group treats the other in a large measure in a negative way; that is, “in-group favoritism” is high among the members of both groups; coupled with the natives’ political and numerical majority and higher social status (Rüstemli et al, 2000). This results in both social and political exclusion of the Turkish immigrants. It seems to be clear that the low-status position of Turkish immigrants seems to be the main factor in determining their socio-economic position and identity in the TRNC society.

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In the columns of the prominent newspapers in TRNC, the journalists, columnists have dealt with the issue constantly. The newspapers like Kıbrıs, Yeni Düzen, Afrika, Halkın Sesi and Volkan had pressed different arguments about the “identity” in TRNC during 2004-2007. One of the most prominent discussions about identity was dealing with the layers or different parts of one’s identity; being Turkish, being Cypriot, being Muslim, or being a TRNC citizen. What did these all mean? According to the journalists from the left-oriented newspapers (Yeni Düzen and Afrika) and some from Kıbrıs, some people are distancing themselves from the idea of “Turkishness” and embracing “Cypriotness”, whereas some from Kıbrıs and all journalists from the right-oriented ones (Halkın Sesi and Volkan) are fully embracing the “Turkishness” as a part of being TRNC citizenship. The decision of placing oneself in one of the above mentioned stances relies partly on the fact that how one sees Turkey. Some of the Turkish

²² Total number of Turkish citizens (including migrants and their children who were born in TRNC, and those marrying with TRNC citizens) been made TRNC citizens is around 46,689, almost one-fourth of total number of TRNC citizens, disclosed by former minister of Interior Affairs, Mehmet Albayrak in 2003. See *Kıbrıs* (23 October 2003).

Cypriot natives seem to have a different perspective when it comes to the relations with Turkey compared to the immigrants. They mostly felt the need to prove themselves among their Turkish counterparts. And also, they were not happy about the way they think they are seen by Turkey. They feel that they are underestimated in their unique culture and the way of speaking. In addition, they frequently state that being treated as the burden for Turkey lead them to lose their dignity. On the contrary, the Turkish immigrants who now acquire TRNC citizenship have frequently (in more than 90 percent of the interviews) stated in the in-depth interviews that they do rely on Turkey for their existence in the island.

Turkish Cypriot natives' attitude might be explained with the notion of "islandness" that expresses a strong sense of local or island culture and identity (King, 2009: 57). According to the socio-demographic perspective, there are "relatively homogenous and intimate societies with a strong sense of common identity. Everyone knows everyone else, at least as an acquaintance or through common friends, and there is an equally close knowledge of the local environment" (King, 2009: 58) in many small islands. That, in the post-1974 period, is true for Turkish Cypriot society that became homogenous after the population exchange. It is coupled with having a state structure that propagates a Turkish Cypriot identity.

The presence of Turkish immigrants in TRNC constitutes one of the important issues in all inter-communal peace talks to settle the Cyprus Question, as well as being discussed inside. That is clearly seen in the last attempt, known as the Annan Plan that envisions granting citizenship status to certain number of the immigrants for both sides. As it is mentioned above left groups have debated their status and number as TRNC citizens. In the context where the left was in power, in 2007, MSC was conducted (Çolak 2008a). Its findings on the perception of Turkish immigrants on citizenship and identity show that immigrants have the feeling of both socio-economic and political exclusion. They have not socially and politically integrated in TRNC society. Although the second and even the third generation of the immigrants come to the fore on the island, the existing political and socio-economic structure in the North Cyprus fails to provide a secure environment for them to feel "at home". These, it may be argued, have increased the tendency among the immigrants to develop a totally different sense of identity from their local counterpart, though sharing same religion and ethnicity. Being Muslim and Turk is valued by the participants as an identity commonly shared among Turkish immigrants. Majority of the participants feel themselves as "being a second class citizen", neglected and excluded when compared to the native Turkish Cypriots. But their attitude towards citizenship as a tool for exercising rights and responsibilities illustrate their strong attachment to the TRNC state. Here, citizenship appears as an overarching identity that brings together two groups in North Cyprus.

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Borders and TRNC Citizenship: Concluding Remarks

The recent history of Cyprus has showed us a history of the debate on territorial partition of the island between Greek and Turkish communities since ethnic conflict began in 1955. This occurred around the historical claims of Greek and Turkish Cypriots over Cyprus. For the Greek Cypriot leaders, Cyprus has been Greek/Hellenistic from the ancient times. The Turkish Cypriot ones, on the other hand, claim that they have rights over Cyprus as the heirs of the Ottomans. For the Greek Cypriots it was the whole island, but for the Turkish Cypriots, some (northern) part of it. By the second half of the 1950s borders in Cyprus began to undergo significant transformations, when two communities which already had social and cultural borders gradually separated from each other with physical borders. Turkish Cypriot enclaves which emerged with the displacement of many Turkish Cypriots were the first structure with the borders. After 1974 there emerged two states with the defended border, the Green Line, a cease-fire line, dividing the island into two administrative and political units. The border has come to define Turkish Cypriot national space and society against the principal others, Greek Cypriots.

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After the Turkish Cypriot government opened the border between North and South for travel across the Green Line in 2003, the TRNC state find a chance to use effectively her border practices against her main other, the Greek Cypriot administration . It means that the Green Line that became de facto EU border by 2004 plays a determining role in redefining and reframing the Turkish Cypriots' national space. The Green Line is also significant to determine citizenship status on the both sides of Cyprus, just only being open for RoC citizens, Turkish Cypriot natives and other EU and Western citizens. After opening the border in 2003, it is estimated that around 70.000 Turkish Cypriots gain RoC citizenship that is defined as

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European citizenship. The Greek Cypriot administration does not allow Turkish nationals and immigrants to cross the border, claiming their presence “illegal” by entering Cyprus from “illegal ports/airport”.

On the part of the Turkish side, what is clear is that the TRNC state maintains border practices. These practices are “instrumental to make citizen/bodies visible, and thus knowable and governable” and so here “the border itself redesigns contemporary citizens and citizenship” (Muller, 2010: 77 and 85). The TRNC border with the RoC shapes her own citizenry. In this respect, crossing the Green Line is also making a group of TRNC citizen immigrants, visible and consolidates their status as “illegal settlers”. Among the left groups of the north, it is discussed that having RoC citizenship and crossing the border differentiates the Turkish Cypriot natives from immigrants considered as “foreign”.

Indeed, the creation of the border means for the Turkish Cypriot leaders to create a “national space” and “national society”. As in all nation-states, the Green Line that is the cease-fire line between South and North began to function as a checkpoint, which is necessary to define their homeland. It is “the external border” that bounds the Turkish Cypriot community and northern part of the island, but by 1975 there emerged “the internal borders” within TRNC society as a result of diversifying social structure after migration from Turkey.²³

Although the right-wing political actors call Turkish immigrants as the part of Turkish Cypriot community on the basis of shared Turkish identity as being the part of the great Turkish nation, they feel socio-economic and political exclusion due to the dominant “islandness” culture, closed for outsiders. Especially at the social level, being Cypriot or not, has gradually been a defining difference among the immigrants and the natives. As a result, all designs for the position of Turkish immigrants in peace talks and public debates inside are making their presence on the island insecure.

The social and political exclusion of the immigrants might be due to the fact that without the presence of the main Others, Greek Cypriots, immigrants became the outsiders for the native small, homogenous community. This is also related to the exercise of state power with controlled borders. They entered into the space of the natives across border, which make them as immigrant and guest workers. Thus, they have to live within the frame of “internal borders”. This should be considered by TRNC policy makers in developing and implementing policies on more integration of the immi-

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²³ Here the border comes to the fore not simply “about physical entrance and exit at the outskirts of national territory but problematizing presence before, during and after entrance” (Latham, 2010: 188; and also for the external and internal borders see p. 191).

grants and on the development of their social and economic position in the society. In this respect, the UBP which came to the power again in April 2009 might play a critical role in their integration in politics and society. This is because that majority of TRNC citizen immigrants voted for it. This trend continued in the 2010 presidential elections when their majority voted for PM Derviş Eroğlu, the leader of the UBP. Nevertheless, the existing structural reasons do not make us hopeful about their equal and fair integration in the system that is controlled by the natives to a large extent.

Because borders since 1974 have separated Greek and Turk communities both physically and mentally, all attempts to settle down the Cyprus Question have to face with that reality. When we look at the results of the polls carried out in both sides, most of the participants say that they want to live in two separate regions or states without getting mixed with each other. This is more strongly emphasized by the young people. This provides a strong mental barrier which seems to be the main reason behind a potential rejection of any plan in referenda between two communities.

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