An alternative governance to overcome the gap between local and global through power sharing: The Case of Cyprus

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Abstract

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Westphalia system recognized the sovereignty of nation-states, which still are the primary actors of international relations. However, there is a delicate balance between the sovereignty of the state and the rights of individuals or groups. The state is given the right to use any policies regarding these entities; such as assimilation and/or suppression. However, the norm of state supremacy contradicts with the realities on the ground today, like democracy or human rights. Thus, a more relevant system is required. Power sharing stands as an alternative to the current system, with emphasis on political recognition and representation, autonomy, coalition, veto and proportional representation. This alternative model provides a more democratic structure through the inclusion of the peoples and more local representation, thus overcomes the gap between the local and the global. It also provides peaceful coexistence of conflicting groups. This model is tested on one of the most difficult cases of a protracted conflict: Cyprus. The research is based on public opinion data (2009-2013) regarding the preferred governance model by the two conflicting communities - the Greek and Turkish Cypriots. This paper by utilizing conclusions from the Cyprus case offers alternative governing model for not only Cyprus but also other multi-ethnic states.
Introduction

The acceptance of nation-states as the main actor in international system, which has its roots in the Westphalia system and development of nationalism, can be regarded as problematic given the increase of separatist or identity/ethnic based conflicts all around the world. As the concept of “nation-state” tends to be equated by the right of majorities to rule, it mainly results in majoritarian governance models.\(^1\) Having the power and right of governance by a particular group, which is mostly equated with “the nation” of the nation-state, will result in the reaction of the other groups in the state.\(^2\) The majoritarian governance model of nation-states thus can be regarded as discriminatory against those who do not define their identities the same as the popularly accepted national identity of the state. This identity difference can be linguistic, religious or ethnic in nature. Even in the most liberal states, “the structure of culture” like the language, institutions, institutional heritage will be biased, favoring the culture of majority, putting the minorities in disadvantaged position.\(^3\) The discriminated groups often demand recognition of their identity and rights, and political representation.\(^4\) If the states ignore these demands, occurrence of conflicts become more probable.\(^5\) This shows

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\(^1\) Nye and Welch define nation-state as a state whose majority of citizens are members of a single nation, which they state as rare in contemporary world. In the following sections they define democracy as a system where the majority of population can decide. Joseph S. Nye, Jr., David A. Welch, Understanding Global Conflict and Cooperation: An Introduction to Theory and History, Pearson, 2012, p.50-51.

\(^2\) “Political authority tends to be monopolized by the dominant identity group or a coalition of hegemonic groups which use the state to maximize their interests at the expense of others.” This will in turn cause legitimacy crises of the state in the eyes of the other groups and it will result in conflicts. Oliver Ramsbotham, Tom Woodhouse, Hugh Miall, Contemporary Conflict Resolution: The Prevention, Management and Transformation of Deadly Conflicts, Cambridge, Polity Press, Second Edition, 2007, s.87. Adrian Guelke, Politics in Deeply Divided Societies, UK and USA, Polity Press, 2012, p.32.

\(^3\) Seymour makes a distinction between the structure of culture and the character of culture. He defines the character of culture as religious beliefs, values, traditions, customs, ends, understandings about the common good and views about the good life. In order to overcome the bias against the minorities, politics of recognition should be implemented. Seymour, “Introduction: Multinational Federalism, Questions and Queries”, p.5.

\(^4\) According to protracted social conflict analyses of Edward Azar, identity groups are the most useful unit of analysis and the core of the problem lies in the relations between these groups and the state. Ramsbotham, Woodhouse, Miall, Contemporary Conflict Resolution, s.84-85.

that, the governance of the nation-states should be re-evaluated in order to establish a more
democratic and plural model, which will provide positive peace rather than cause conflict.\(^6\)

The majoritarian governance models, although claiming to be compatible with
democratic norms, do not meet the demands of the identity groups they are comprised of. That
causes the problem of lack of representation for the groups which are not part of the
proclaimed “nation” in a given nation state. Majoritarian systems create absolute majorities
and permanent minorities, who do not have much probability to participate in the
government.\(^7\) This problem is more likely to cause conflict in the states which are composed
of more than one ethnicity or religion and where at least one of these ethnic groups demands
political representation rights. Considering the fact that many nation-states are indeed
composed of more than one ethnic group, that is of great importance for almost all the states
in the world.\(^8\) Therefore, this paper claims that in order to prevent future conflicts in multi-
ethnic or multi-religious states or regulate the current conflicts, the governance model for the
nation states–should be reevaluated and revised according to consociational principles that are
power sharing, autonomy, proportionality and veto right, which incorporate group rights into
the democratic system.\(^9\) This discussion will have outcomes for both conflict regulation and
democracy studies. The aim is to provide some meaningful suggestion for the need to revise
the current understanding of democracy. In this paper we first overview the main principles of
consociational democracy and then discuss it as a new model of governance for inclusion of
peoples, local representation, and peaceful coexistence of conflicting groups. After this
theoretical analysis, a case study on Cyprus is conducted based on public opinion data (2009-
2013) to see the public attitude towards this model. Thus, this study aims to offer an
alternative, a more plural, democratic, representative model to the current majoritarian logic
of nation-states.

\(^6\) Johan Galtung, “Forward a Conflictology: The Quest for Transdisciplinarity”, s.515, içinde: \textit{Handbook of
Conflict Analysis and Resolution}, J.D.Sandole, Sean Byrne, Ingrid Sandole-Staroste, Jessica Snehi (Eds.),

\(^7\) Nordlinger, \textit{Conflict Regulation in Divided Societies}, p.35-36. Guelke, \textit{Politics in Deeply Divided Societies},
p.114.

\(^8\) As Resnick mentions, “There can be no simple overlap between state and nation, whatever the mainstream
literature on the nation may suggest”. Philip Resnick, “What Theorists of Nationalism Have to Learn from
Multinational States”, p.75, \textit{Multinational Federalism: Problems and Prospects}, Michael Seymour, Alain-G.
Gagnon (eds.), pp.69-82.

Regulating the representation demands of minority groups: Consociational democracy as a model for accommodation

In order to provide an answer to the recognition demands of the minority groups, states may respond through different policy options that range from assimilation to consociationalism.10 These policy options, which are considered as conflict regulation methods, aim to prevent conflicts either through accepting the demands of the groups or to eliminate these demands. The most frequently used methods can be grouped into two as assimilation and accommodation. The methods following the first approach lay their claims on the malleability of the identities. When the identities are considered as malleable or transformable, changing them into another identity is theoretically possible.11 Assimilation or integration seeks for creating an all-encompassing identity in the public sphere. Assimilation policy accepts and enforces the identity of the dominant group as the nation-state identity, turning a blind eye to the recognition demands of the other groups within the nation-state. On the other hand, integration policy recognizes the separate identities of the groups in the private sphere but ethnic or religious identities should neither be recognized nor supported by the state in the public sphere. The state does not give the groups political representation rights in the public sphere.12 Integration model is claimed to be successful to a degree in the immigration receiving states such as Canada or the USA, as the incoming immigrants are in desire to accept the new identity. However, the debates in these states regarding the rights of the communities and particularly the native nations, puts the validity of this claim into question.13

Accommodation, on the other hand, recognizes the existence of the groups and their distinct identities and gives them political rights to different extents. Different types of accommodation are put forward and implemented, such as the hegemonic control model of Ian Lustick, in apartheid South Africa or in Israel for Arab minority. According to control, the majority or hegemon group has the right to rule over the other groups in the name of stability. Given the human rights discussions on the mentioned cases, the control model, ethically cannot be defended.

Federalism is generally discussed as another accommodation method. Even though federalism can answer some of the demands of the groups by increasing decentralization and power sharing, it gives a broad framework of governance. It can either be a pluralist, democratic and representative or a more majoritarian and integrationist model depending on how it is used. Federations can be national, multi-national or pluri-national. A national federation like Germany or the USA, which follows an integrationist policy will not satisfy the demands of some of the groups, therefore it cannot be perceived as a method of accommodation. Federalism is a model for political organization but it does not necessarily manage problems that arise from “multinationality within a state”. Thus, it can be said that a federation cannot guarantee the rights of the groups unless it incorporates consociational principles, of which power sharing and autonomy are the supreme ones. Consequently it can be said that, consociationalism is the most promising governance model for democracy, representation and group rights among different accommodation types.

Consociational democracy

Consociational democracy is a method for accommodating differences by accepting pluralism, aiming to protect the identities and rights of communities both in state and local levels with social, economic and political aspects. This theory is developed by Arend Lijphart in the late 1960s where a model is proposed to sustain peace and stability in deeply divided societies. Later it has been developed with the output from the cases like 1917-60 Netherlands, 1943-75 Lebanon, 1955-69 Malaysia, 1960-63 Cyprus, 1970 Belgium, and 1974 Northern Ireland. The lively discussions in the literature between integrationist and accommodationist political scientists helped the development of the theory. Later on, new contributions enriched the theory, particularly regarding the importance of territorial autonomy and relations with external actors coming from John McGarry and Brendan O’Leary as the late doyens of the theory.

Consociationalism has been developed as a conflict regulation method for deeply divided societies and its main aim was to conclude the ongoing conflict, create a stable political situation and finally establish a peaceful system. In time, consociational practices proved to be necessary to enable different, usually conflicting groups, in living together within the same state. Thus, consociational principles create the necessary accommodation of the groups in the state. Without these, mutual coexistence in the state will prove to be difficult and has the risk to turn into conflictual practices or at least unease among the different ethnic/religious groups.

Consociational democracy rests on four main principles. These are grand coalition, autonomy, proportionality and veto right. In order to call a system consociational, all of these four principles should be realized. In his early research Lijphart stresses the importance of all four principles and their altogether existence. However, in time with the changes in theory,
two principles came out to be more vital. Among these four, grand coalition (or power sharing) and autonomy are accepted as fundamental for a stable, functioning democracy.\(^{23}\)

The grand coalition, which is a way of power sharing, can be a coalition government, a rotating presidency or a joint committee. The importance of this structure is that it has to contain the representatives of the main or all communities in a society. Thus, accommodation can be reached within this structure, between the representatives of the communities. It works as a coalition, where the state power is shared and decisions are taken with special procedures that will enable even smaller communities to protect their rights and have a say in the matters that are related to them. The second principle, autonomy, basically gives different ethnic/religious groups a right to take and implement decisions regarding them and to proportionally participate in the taking and implementation of the common decisions regarding the whole community of the state.\(^{24}\) Autonomy can be territorial if the communities are territorially concentrated like the Catalans in Spain, Quebecoise in Canada, or can be non-territorial/cultural if they are geographically mixed like it was in 1960 Cyprus. Although this principle reminds of federalism, there is an important distinction. In consociational democracy, the aim of autonomy is to enable the communities to rule themselves. Meanwhile in federalism, territorial adjustments do not necessarily carry the aim of providing autonomy of communities. In multi-national federations, autonomy of the communities is considered important and therefore it is implemented. However in national federations, the state draws the state borders just for administrative purposes without considering the autonomy demands of the groups. In national federations, the creation of states can even carry the aim to prevent a minority nation to be majority in a particular region. For this purpose, the borders are drawn to divide the group into more than one state, making it a minority in each state. That was the policy in Pakistan before the secession of Bangladesh. In Pakistan, the state borders were drawn in order to prevent the Bengals to be majority in any state but instead to provide the Punjabi to be the majority in each and every state. As a result the Bengals resented the system in which they could not have an equal status and struggled for independence.\(^{25}\) Therefore, federalism is not adequate to provide the groups to have rights. On the other hand, autonomy

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\(^{23}\) In his later studies, Lijphart gave more importance to these two principles among the four. Arend Lijphart, “Constitutional Design for Divided Societies”, *Journal of Democracy*, Vol.15, N.2, April 2004, pp.96-109, p.97.

\(^{24}\) Lijphart, *Democracy in Plural Societies*, p.41.

in the consociational perspective, is a tool for the minorities to have more rights on their own governance and affairs. It can include federalism, but is more than that.

The proportionality principle rests on the sharing of power and resources among the communities of a state according to their proportion of the total population. Thus it is supposed to prevent majoritarianism or hegemonic control. With specific election methods and constitutional designs, the communities are enabled to be represented in the legislative, judicial and executive organs of the state according to their proportion, which will compliment power sharing mechanisms. Proportionality is also significantly important for minority groups to have a proportional share of the public resources through proportional allocation of public funds or jobs.26

The last principle, minority veto, can be seen as an additional safeguard to protect minorities’ rights in the power sharing mechanisms, particularly in the grand coalition. In order to prevent simple majority rule in the decision making, the decisions and rights of the outnumbered minorities are secured by veto or concurrent majority rule. The rule can apply for every decision. However, in order to prevent deadlocks and enable a more efficient functioning, it is mostly applicable only for the decisions that the minorities have a direct interest or stake in.

Consociational democracy as an alternative governance model

It is important to see the main logic behind consociational democracy and its difference from the majoritarian democratic model, which has been perceived as the regular implementation of democracy in the nation-states.27 Beginning from the acceptance of nation-states as the constituent forms of international society, the power and governance rights of the states are granted to the accepted “nation” of the particular states. These groups that are accepted as representing the whole nation are sometimes the majority of the population like Sinhalese in Sri Lanka. But in other times they constitute a group which has more possessions or power like the whites in apartheid South Africa.

In nation-states, majoritarian democracy will be perceived as the governing norm as the state is supposed to belong to the accepted “nation”. However, majoritarian democracy is a conflict inflicting system when used in divided societies with multi-ethnic, multi-linguistic or multi-religious characters, as it does not meet the needs and demands of the different

27 Majoritarianism rests on Lipset’s claim that general interests of the society are prior to the group interests. Seymour Martin Lipset, Political Man: The Social Bases of Politics, Garden City, NY, Doubleday, 1960, p.81.
communities in the state equally. On the contrary, when denying representation of differences, majoritarian model can cause conflicts. As Edward Azar correctly states, the absence of acceptance of separate identity, security of culture and effective political participation is the main reason of protracted social conflicts. When not formally recognized, protected and given representation, the minority communities can feel alienated. They can feel their identities in danger and these will result in loss of legitimacy of and loyalty to the state. As a result, inter communal peace, trust and security will be more difficult to sustain and conflict can become more probable. Therefore, considering that most of the states are composed of different ethnic groups and increasingly face representation demands, majoritarian democracy cannot be accepted as the governing norm in contemporary world. The groups, communities or nations that define themselves different from the “nation” can feel discriminated against or suffer from lack of representation with their different identities. Consociational model offers broader representation for the different communities living in a state. Thus, it can not only regulate conflicts that occur between different groups and the state but also provide broader representation rights that will create more democratic governance in the states. Therefore, consociational model is a more representative democracy model, particularly for multi-ethnic/multi-religious states.

In order to sustain peaceful and stable democratic system in the plural societies, consociational democracy provides a better alternative by recognizing and giving protection and representation rights to different communities within the state. When given representation rights, communities rather use the mechanisms of the system rather than resort to violence that leads to conflict. In majoritarian systems, the state becomes identical with the majority group as “the nation”, but in a plural state with power sharing, the state becomes the common

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As can be seen from the four main principles of consociational democracy, it aims at creating a more equal system for majorities and minorities alike within the state. It tries to realize this through bringing guarantees for minority representation and rights. Meanwhile it tries to prevent majority rule as majoritarian democracies allocate all power and sources to the majority communities of the state, even in cases where they are only slightly more populated than the second large group. In a fragmented society, a group of only 30 percent of the population shall rule over the whole society as it was in 2002 elections of Turkey, where the party that had 34 per cent of the votes got 363 seats in the 550 seat parliament whereas the party of 19 percent of the votes had only 178 seats. The proportion of the votes versus seats is neither equal nor fair, as majoritarian democracy gives the majorities more power than they are actually voted for. Similarly, in a polarized society where the communities make 51 to 49 percent of the population, a very slight difference shall turn to an unjust representation for the slightly smaller community. Against this system, consociational democracy seeks for a more just system with special mechanisms that are developed to protect minorities and to protect the functioning of the system.

Although consociational democracy has been criticized for being state centric and not democratic enough as it gives the primary role to the state elites, with the more recent contributions to the theory, it became more liberal and democratic.\footnote{Donald L. Horowitz, \textit{A Democratic South Africa?}, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1991, p.197. John McGarry, Brendan O’Leary, “Introduction: Consociational Theory and Northern Ireland”, p.13, in: \textit{The Northern Ireland Conflict, Consociational Engagements}, John McGarry, Brendan O’Leary (Eds.), Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2004, pp.1-61.} Moreover, consociational democracy became more all-encompassing as it incorporated different levels of analysis and took into consideration the societal level as well as the state level arrangements. In this regard, particularly the contribution of McGarry and O’Leary is significant with their emphasis on the transitional provisions for conflicts such as integration of former paramilitaries, demilitarization, justice processes, economic reconstruction, re-evaluating of the symbols, re-designing of the important institutions like the police and security forces, and including extensive human rights guarantees to the system.\footnote{Christalla Yakinthou, \textit{Political Settlements in Divided Societies: Consociationalism and Cyprus}, p.13.} With these provisions, consociational democracy aims to provide an understanding of equality, non-
discrimination and protection of human rights to state and society relations. Even though these provisions may seem secondary, they are necessary and beneficial for the peaceful coexistence of different groups as they have direct influence on the daily lives of the people. Small changes in the daily lives can have bigger impacts as they will change the perspective of the people in a positive way, towards each other and towards the state.

Last but not the least; territorial autonomy is a significant aspect of consociational democracy, which not only sustains more democracy by the inclusion of people to the governance in the lower level, but also it overcomes the gap between the local and global through diffusing power to lower levels. As McGarry and O’Leary suggests, the ethnic groups give more importance to autonomy than any other provision.34 With the right of territorial autonomy, groups can have right to control and run their own administration over their territorial area. Besides having cultural autonomy through rights in the administration of education, cultural and religious affairs, with territorial autonomy, it will be easier for the groups to run economic and financial matters like taxation and administrative matters like running their own municipalities. This will help the groups to connect with the state through their own local administration. It will also enable them to connect with the global affairs as they will be an administrative entity themselves.

When territorial autonomy is used, consociational principles should be implemented in the local levels too.35 As the territorial entities will have minorities among their borders, the rights of these minorities should be protected in the local level. It appears that, consociational democracy puts forward the idea to share power in whatever level there is. In any level, human rights should be protected, both group and individual rights alike.36 It is fair to say that consociational democracy proves to be a more pluralist, multicultural and representative model than majoritarian democratic systems that are applied in nation-states today.

Cyprus case

After eighty-two years of British colonial rule, Cyprus became a bi-communal republic based on consociational principles in 1960. However, due to the ethnic nationalist desires of both communities, which aim to be united with their kin-states, Greece and Turkey, the inter-communal relations deteriorated and an inter-communal conflict erupted in 1963. From then on, international community, mainly the UN, the US, and lately the EU, took incentives as the third parties for the resolution of the conflict. The intercommunal talks, which began in 1968, are still going on, within the framework of a bi-communal and bi-zonal federal state under the auspices of the UN. Lately, both Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot sides agreed on a one page joint declaration in February 2014, in which the bi-communal and bi-zonal federation, in other words consociational democracy, is still the accepted framework of a possible solution.

With the physical and territorial division of the two communities in 1974, each group became a predominant majority, respectively Greek Cypriots in south and Turkish Cypriots in north parts of the island. In 1977 and 1979 High Level Agreements, the two communities agreed to reflect this territorial situation to a future solution by accepting a federation that will not only be bi-communal with regards to the constitutional aspects but also bi-zonal with regards to the territorial aspects. All negotiations have been conducted under this framework of bi-communal and bi-zonal federation acknowledging the territorial division of the communities and constitutional power-sharing provisions. The greatest hope for peace was when the Annan Plan, which was a win-win scenario, was put to referendum in 2004. As a comprehensive solution, sticking to the bi-communal and bi-zonal federation model, the plan tried to reach a solution based on accommodation of the two communities. However it was voted down by the Greek-Cypriots with 76%, while a majority of Turkish-Cypriots said yes with 65%.

The possible solution is discussed under the framework of a federal system since the second half of the 1970s. However, the bi-communal and bi-zonal federal state with political equality reflects a model that is more than a mere federation but a consociational federation.

The bi-communal character of the supposed system means that the power should be shared among the communities so it is a constitutional power sharing, protecting the rights of the two communities in all state and societal levels with constitutional guarantees. The bi-zonal character means that there will be territorial autonomy and the federal state will be composed of two territorial entities. Moreover, there will be a shared sovereignty and political equality of the two communities. This framework is similar to 1960 consociational system in bi-communal character, but 1960 model was missing the territorial dimension, which was not possible considering the fact that the two communities were living interspersed during that time. Therefore, the currently negotiated system brings forward a more workable structure than the 1960 system.

The fact that there has been no major violence between the two communities since 1974, does not change the fact that the Cyprus conflict stands as a protracted international conflict, which is ongoing for more than fifty years and still looks unresolvable. The reason of the conflict to seem unresolvable does not stem from the public preferences. On the contrary, the public opinion remains positive to a power-sharing federal solution, even though it is the second choice of each community. According to the public opinion survey conducted by the Cyprus 2015 Initiative in both communities, majority of the people in both communities do not have any hope for a comprehensive solution to Cyprus problem. 65% of Greek Cypriots and 69% of Turkish Cypriots do not believe that the Cyprus problem will be solved. These high percentages show that the people of each community do not have any hope for a comprehensive solution to come in the close future.

41 Azar, “Protracted International Conflicts: Ten Propositions”, p.28.
Graph 1. “Do you have any hope for that the Cyprus problem will be resolved with a comprehensive solution?”

On the other hand, the pessimism about the possibility of a solution does not come from unwillingness for a solution. On the contrary, a majority in both communities declare that they desire seeing a comprehensive solution to the Cyprus problem with 68% and 65% from Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots respectively.

Graph 2: “Do you desire that the Cyprus problem will be resolved with a comprehensive solution?”

Despite the hopelessness of the people, they desire to see a solution. At that point, it is important to see what kind of solution the people of each community desires. Finding out the preferences of solution for each community, it will be possible to evaluate the chances of success for the bi-zonal and bi-communal federation.

The Greek Cypriot first preference for a solution in Cyprus is a unitary state and central government, which means a majoritarian system. At least 66% of Greek Cypriots support this maximalist option. The second choice is bi-zonal and bi-communal federation,
which means a consociational model. 21% of Greek Cypriots favor it, however when the people who find it “satisfactory” and “tolerable if necessary” are added, the ratio increases to 74%, which makes this option valuable to think. The other policy options, which are the continuation of the current situation, two separate and internationally recognized states, and confederation of two sovereign states, find very little support from the Greek Cypriots.

Graph 3: Regarding the overall framework of a Comprehensive Settlement, and considering each of the alternative settlement models presented below, how acceptable or unacceptable, in principle, do you consider each of these general models? (Greek Cypriots)

The Turkish Cypriot public opinion shows a similar tendency towards supporting the maximalist policy option as the first preference. Two separate and internationally recognized states is the most preferred option for Turkish Cypriots finding at least 62% of support. Two states solution will mean two nation-states with majoritarian democracies. The bi-zonal and bi-communal federation is the second favorable choice for the Turkish Cypriots, as it is for the Greek Cypriots. 36% of Turkish Cypriots support the consociational model, where a total of 76% will be in favor including the people who find it “satisfactory” and “tolerable if necessary”. The least favorable option for the Turkish Cypriots is the maximalist policy option of the Greek Cypriots; a unitary state with central government, which will mean a minority status for the Turkish Cypriots.
Graph 4: Regarding the overall framework of a Comprehensive Settlement, and considering each of the alternative settlement models presented below, how acceptable or unacceptable, in principle, do you consider each of these general models? (Turkish Cypriots)

Analyzing the public opinion of both communities, the first preference of both Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots is their maximalist policy preferences or majoritarian democracies in their own nation-states. This is not surprising given the history of negotiations with no breakthrough for almost half a century. The interesting point is that, both communities find consociational democracy favorable to take it as their second preference. That is an important input for the possible success of the consociational model, if it finds opportunity to be implemented.

Comparing the results that are presented until now, both communities desire a comprehensive solution for the Cyprus problem but do not have any hope that it will be soon resolved. And if it is resolved, they prefer to see their maximalist positions to be realized, but if not, they will be satisfied with consociational democracy. Given these results, the chances of success for a consociational model seem high. Then why did the Annan Plan fail in the referendum in 2004? The answer can be found in the relatively high ratio on undecided people in both communities.
When asked about the vote preference in a potential future referendum, only 14% of Turkish Cypriots and 31% of Greek Cypriots declared that they would certainly vote “no”. These relatively low percentages show that the potential of an affirmative result to a future referendum can be expected, given circumstances. As important as the low level of negative vote in a future referendum is the high level of undecided people. 43% of Turkish Cypriots and 35% of Greek Cypriots are undecided and as likely to vote “yes” as to “no”. This fact directs the attention to the role of stimulating the public opinion.

The negotiations have been conducted in the Track-1 level diplomacy so far, as appropriate with the elite based perspective of consociational democracy. Consociational democracy, by accepting the political elite the main actors of policy making with the power to influence their communities, rests on the accommodation and coalition of the elites.\textsuperscript{44} In accordance with this, the top leaders of both communities conduct the negotiations in Cyprus, with support from their specialist team when required. However, resting only on the elite level has problems. Elites can abuse the negotiations in order to get more power or sustain their position.\textsuperscript{45} They can fuel nationalist policies in order to sabotage the negotiations or they can

\textsuperscript{44} Lijphart, \textit{Democracy in Plural Societies}, p.1.

delay a final settlement as long as it is not for their stake. Moreover, when conducted only between the elites, the agreement cannot be truly absorbed by the communities and it can cause the system to fail due to lack of support from the public.\textsuperscript{46} Therefore, if establishing a more durable, long-lasting peace is targeted, following a multi-track diplomacy for the resolution of the conflict will be more effective. Different stakeholders can be involved in the process like the business elite, cooperation can be enhanced to different areas such as in the transportation sector, and most importantly public involvement in and awareness of the process can be created.\textsuperscript{47} Involvement of the grass-roots to the peace process through civil initiatives, developing civil society, and implementing such as UN or EU projects will make the peace more attainable.\textsuperscript{48}

When the public is more informed and involved in the peace process, it can increase the chances of an agreement and long-lasting peace as the people will not vote in the referendum for something they neither know nor participated. As the public opinion poll results show, both communities desire a solution to the Cyprus problem but there is lack of hope. If the public is involved in the process, be a part of the peace that is trying to be built, then their hope will increase as well. “Othering” of the other community creates prejudices. Being in contact through civil society projects will break these prejudices and give a chance for the people to believe in peace. At least, the high number of the “undecided” people in each community will decide whether to vote “yes” or “no” in a future referendum through actual practices, rather than being open to manipulation from the political elite.

Conclusion

The main argument of this paper rests on the perception that the nation-state conception and its coupling with majoritarian democracies are conflict stimulating, considering that the states contain different ethnic, religious and linguistic groups and these groups have demands for recognition of their distinct identities and cultural rights, political representation and sometimes autonomy. When groups are denied of these rights, they can feel discriminated against or alienated so legitimacy of and loyalty to the state will diminish and in turn this can cause protracted social conflicts. Therefore, the authors suggest that the


\textsuperscript{47} Sözen, “A New Holistic Multi-Track Peacebuilding Design for Cyprus Conflict”, p.9.

governance norms of the states should be re-evaluated according to consociational principles that are power sharing, autonomy, proportionality and veto right. With the implementation of these principles, accommodation of different groups will be sustained and a peaceful mutual coexistence can be realized.

Consociational democracy recognizes the identities of the groups, provides protection and gives representation rights thus enabling them to share power. Therefore a more equal and just system is established for the minorities. With territorial autonomy, when applicable, groups can exercise power in the local level and even connect with the global world as local entities. Consequently, consociational democracy provides a more pluralist, multicultural and representative model than majoritarian democracy.

In the light of these assumptions, consociational democracy is a more appropriate form of governance for multinational states, particularly for bringing peace to deeply divided societies, than majoritarian democracy. Therefore, it should be evaluated as a comprehensive solution alternative to the protracted conflict in Cyprus. Even though consociational democracy was tried in 1960, the implementation had significant differences from the current UN plan of a bi-zonal and bi-communal federation.

The public opinion polls show that both of the communities desire a solution but there is a lack of hope. The public preferences for a model of solution give the maximalist targets as the first choices. Both communities prefer majoritarian governments, in which their community will be the majority. However, that requires two separate states, which is not accepted neither by the Greek Cypriots nor the international community. If the solution will be a state of both communities, this is going to be a multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-linguistic state. Therefore, the viable option is the bi-communal and bi-zonal federation. This option, a consociational federation, takes the second place in preferences of both communities. That shows the possibility of success for this model in a future referendum.

Given the results of the public opinion polls and viability of the options, within the current negotiations under the auspices of the UN, a solution to Cyprus conflict is designated within a bi-zonal and bi-communal federation. Sözen calls this “Belgium-ization of Cyprus”. In Belgium, frequent and serious political crises are occurring and separation is under discussion. However, the federation keeps on going inspite of the problems. It can be related with having Brussels as a third territory or having the headquarters of the EU within it.

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Nevertheless, a similar arrangement can be organized for Nicosia where it will host all the federal institutions, making it a third and autonomous territory within the federation with some free trade area or inviting the EU or the UN offices in. Moreover, the EU membership, which creates more interdependency, can sustain the relations.

In order to reach a bi-communal and bi-zonal solution, a more comprehensive strategy rather than elite negotiations should be followed. Most importantly, a multi-track diplomacy is required; not only elites but also grassroots and civil society should be a part of the solution. Thus, the whole process will not be left only to elites but the peoples of the communities will be integrated into the process. Common projects in the grassroots level will help to develop mutual relations and trust, which are missing in inter-communal relations. Economic cooperation and civil society dialogue can have a spill-over effect and influence the negotiations in a positive way. These policies can be realized through confidence building measures. These measures should be implemented by the unilateral action of the UN, apart from the framework of the negotiations, thus overcoming the nationalist and maximalist tendencies of the political elites.

Once being a part of a federation, the benefits for both communities will increase and leaving the federation will have a cost, thus making it more difficult. Even in time, a common Cypriot identity can develop. Although it is difficult to talk about a common Cypriot nationalism or identity right now, a shared citizenship can be a substitute for it, through overcoming a “friend-enemy distinction” and “learning to live together with civility”.

And in case a bi-zonal and bi-communal federation is established, it will be a priceless precedent for the other conflict areas in which there are multi-ethnic, multi-religious communities like in Syria, Iraq, Egypt and etc. Therefore, “Belgium-ization” can be a better alternative for the divided societies, rather than “Syria-ization”, where violent conflict takes place.

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50 Besides low expectations for the success of negotiations, the public sceptisim and mutual distrust are also high. Sözen, “Heading Towards the Defining Moment in Cyprus”, p. 120.
51 Resnick, “What Theorists of Nationalism Have to Learn from Multinational States”, p. 76-77.