

Settlers and Mobilization in Cyprus
Antinomies of Ethnic Conflict and Immigration Politics

By

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ABSTRACT

The article aims to resolve tensions between legal, humanitarian and pragmatic considerations in the evaluation of settler questions in contested territories, looking primarily at populations relocated from Turkey to Cyprus after 1974. The presence of Turkish settlers complicates mediations for a federal settlement in the island and constitutes a violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949. However, in sociological terms, the Turkish settlers meet the profile of an immigrant population more interested in welfare and daily survival issues than in politics. In contrast to other contemporary or historical cases of settler colonialism, what is particularly puzzling in Cyprus is the absence of mobilization and politicization among settlers despite perceived discrimination and fears of relocation following a negotiated peace agreement. Moreover, the increasing presence of settlers in the island has triggered domestic insecurities and native discourses emphasizing Cypriot identities and interests. However, for the most part, both Greek and Turkish Cypriot leaderships have attempted in various ways to accommodate the settler question in the negotiations. Aiming to link the actors' perceptions with the need for a negotiated federal settlement, the article examines a variety of possible arrangements and their potential consequences for settlers and the two communities in Cyprus.

Keywords: settlers, refugees, negotiations, immigration, mobilization, Cyprus

Introduction

In an era of nationalism, settlers and colonization serve as instruments of territorial expansion and control over contested territories. Colonization has been combined with ethnic cleansing of indigenous populations driven by beliefs that such demographic engineering will consolidate new irreversible ‘facts’ on the ground (Lustick, 1993; McGarry & O’Leary, 1993:10). Settlers are generally seen as accomplices to violations of international law and, therefore, are subject to little international sympathy or interest by social scientists who study vulnerable groups such as threatened minorities, displaced persons and refugees. Yet conflict processes often transform settler populations from alleged beneficiaries of colonization to potential victims of discrimination and violence (Laitin, 1998: ix; Pergher, 2009). More importantly, the presence of settlers is a crucial aspect of many conflicts, in some cases complicating peacemaking, and in others making conflict resolution impossible. For this reason, societies built on a settler/indigenous divide tend to be inherently unstable; indigenous resistance aims to reverse colonization before settlers establish facts on the ground while colonization frequently takes on a life of its own as settlers simultaneously confront indigenous resistance and attempts in their ‘home’ state for a peaceful withdrawal of their settlements (Lustick, 1985 & 1993; Haklai, 2007).

However, as this article argues, despite the huge problems colonization creates for a contested territory, settlers should not always be seen exclusively as a cause of controversy and conflict. The article argues that resolving conflict requires a complex diagnosis of the conflict’s sources including an analysis of the language, as well as

framing, and differentiation of settlers from those in overlapping categories, such as refugees or legal and illegal migrants (Navaro-Yashin, 2006; Lakoff, 2001: 187-189; Laitin, 1998: 265-268). Drawing on Ian Lustick's seminal work (1985, 1988, 1993), the article situates the experience of Turkish settlers in Cyprus within the general theoretical framework of settlers in contested territories. It examines how this framework relates to conflict resolution in the island, investigating in particular whether colonization has reached the point of 'no return', thereby ensuring the irreversible partition of Cyprus. It argues that this point has not yet been reached. Resolving the Cyprus problem is still possible, however a peace settlement will require a number of innovative arrangements, including asymmetrical citizenship, various compensation schemes and other mutually beneficial 'win-win' arrangements. The article presents the legal and humanitarian dimensions of the problem, the native discourses accompanying rapid demographic change and notes how the mobilization and politicization dynamics within the settler community in Cyprus affect the prospects for a settlement.

The settler issue in Cyprus presents an intriguing contrast between legal approaches to ethnic conflict resolution and sociological approaches focusing on migrants and immigration. On the one hand, colonization of occupied territories is a violation of international law. The Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, of which Turkey is a signatory, explicitly stipulates that 'the occupying power shall not deport or transfer parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies' (UNHCR, 1997).¹ The logic behind this clause is the protection of indigenous peoples against the will of more

¹ Turkey has opposed settlers and colonization on other occasions. For example, the Turkish government opened its Ottoman land registry archives for the first time in 2009 to help Palestinian lawyers prove that title deeds produced by settlers in East Jerusalem were indeed forged (Cook, 2009).

powerful nations who aim to create facts on the ground through expulsion and demographic engineering. In sociological terms, on the other hand, the settlers in Cyprus and potentially elsewhere could also be considered an immigrant population interested primarily in their personal and family advancement and much less concerned with confrontational politics of the core state. Kymlicka (1995) and more recently Laitin (2009) have argued that international migrants are less likely to mobilize for political reasons and are almost never implicated in civil war violence, even when they face numerous security and cultural threats in their host societies. From this perspective, Turkish settlers in Cyprus could be seen as migrants complicating the problem but not necessarily signifying its irreversible transformation. Yet there are also potential analytical distinctions between the categories of settler and immigrant.

Lustick (1985, 2005) distinguishes three types of settlers. First, *ideologically driven* settlers commonly justify their actions in ideological terms such as ‘keeping Ulster British’, ‘building a Jewish state in Judea and Samaria’ (West Bank) and ‘turning Algeria into a New France’. Second, *politically connected* settlers enjoy disproportionate political influence in the home country and profit economically from colonization (see also Haklai, 2007). Examples include shipyard owners in Ulster, commercial farmers in Southern Africa and in Cyprus, the casino and real estate industries who enjoy a lax legal status and access to ‘abandoned’ Greek Cypriot land. The latter might shift their influence in the peace process depending on the incentives and disincentives of a settlement. Finally, *underprivileged populations* immigrate for economic reasons, especially if they have been promised an easy life and access to ‘empty land’.

While the latter category might fit within the Kymlicka/Laitin general description of non-violent migrants, a number of qualifications have to be made before equating categories of settlers with immigrants. To begin with, viewing another population's homeland as 'empty land' or attempting to enjoy unlimited economic opportunity in a contested territory has problematic ideological underpinnings about rights of 'others' in that territory (Pedersen, 2005). Moreover, migrating in a contested territory where the potential of violence exists requires a commitment to core state nationalism strong enough to outweigh any personal risks this commitment might entail. Immigrants tend to avoid such risks, and as Laitin (2009:39) argues, they have a relatively cheap alternative to war: namely, exit to their own home country or a third place. Immigrants also tend to be urban and have skills that are transferable elsewhere in contrast to less mobile settler populations that are tied to homes and land claimed by former inhabitants. Core state disengagement and potential relocation could be more costly for them than for immigrants. Finally, settlers and migrants are viewed differently by the international community and indigenous populations, often creating self-fulfilling cycles of confrontation. As Freeman (1995) argues, criticizing progressive policies on immigration can lead to 'abusive' charges of racism in liberal democracies, while political programs aiming at the complete withdrawal of settlers and settlements can be validated through reference to international law and indigenous peoples' rights (UNHCR, 1997; Andreason, 2009)

In fact, the international community is itself divided on settler issues, often failing to resolve its internal tensions between legal principles, human rights and pragmatism. One school of thought advocates the centrality of justice and international law

mechanisms and argues for the application of widely acknowledged standards of law documented in the resolutions of international organizations such as the UN and the European Court of Human Rights (Leckie, 2003: 12). A particularly salient issue concerns properties illegally owned by settlers, which international legal bodies have demanded be returned to former inhabitants.² In the case of Cyprus, apart from UN resolutions, major decisions by the ECHR (*Loizidou vs. Turkey*) and the European Court of Justice (*Apostolides vs. Orams*) have confirmed the rights of former owners for both restitution and compensation (ECJ, 2009; Leckie, 2003:42).³ In *Apostolides vs. Orams*, the ECJ decision ruled that British courts must enforce the judicial decisions made in the Republic of Cyprus enabling refugees to sue EU citizens for contested ownership of property in northern Cyprus (ECJ, 2009). Advocates argue that no matter how long ago an injustice occurred, its subsequent legitimization could encourage other wrongdoing (Barkan, 2000: xxxiii; Leckie, 2003: 42), but mechanisms and standards which are not compromised by short-term political expediency and which assume a universal character may foster lasting peace in the long term.

An alternative approach emphasizes pragmatism and the context behind settler/native disputes. This approach assesses how people reconstruct their lives and prioritizes restorative justice and community rebuilding. It considers a wide range of factors, including the need for victim-offender mediation (Zehr & Mika, 1998), mutually agreed-upon compromises (Loizides & Antoniadis, 2009), local power dynamics and the

² Scott Leckie analyses Security Council Resolution 361, August 30, 1974, for Cyprus (UN, 1974) and compares resolutions of the Security Council on Yugoslavia (Kosovo), Georgia, (Abkhazia), Croatia, Iraq (Kuwait), and General Assembly resolutions on Palestine/Israel (Leckie, 2003: 12).

³ Other decisions by the same court imply that apart from restituting properties, compensations might become acceptable options in the future (ECHR, 2003).

human rights of non-indigenous groups, such as settlers and their descendants (Carens, 2000: 217). A key concern is the passage of time, notably, constraints in applying international legal principles and penalizing individuals for crimes committed decades earlier by their home states.

Balancing conflicting principles is often extremely difficult for mediators and international organizations as they could be easily be charged with tolerating ethnic cleansing or demonstrating racism and discrimination against a potentially vulnerable population. Even using the term settler to describe a particular population can be contested depending on the political context; in some cases, it has been eliminated from public discourse (Andreason, 2009).⁴ As a result, international institutions have dealt with settler issues in seemingly contradictory ways. In the Baltic Republics, the European Union has encouraged the naturalization of Russian settlers and implicitly made the amendment of citizenship laws a pre-condition for EU membership (Ozolins, 1999: 39). At the same time, the EU (at least formally) prohibits trade with the Jewish settlements in the West Bank, while the European Parliament delayed in 1995 the EU-funded Panam Project in Tibet, with the rationale that the ‘scheme aimed at feeding new Chinese settlers against the interest of the Tibetan people’ (European Parliament, 1995). Likewise, Kymlicka (2007:383) criticizes Article 27 of the UN’ International Covenant on Civil and

⁴ For instance the UN uses the term ‘settler’ in quotations in its Cyprus reports (UN, 2003 & 2004). Turkish Cypriot academics and members of the official negotiating team use the term settlers/immigrants (Sözen & Özersay, 2007; Yesilada, & Sozen, 2002). In northern Cyprus, the term commonly used in public is *Türkiyeliler* (Turks of Turkey) in contrast to *Kıbrıslı Türk* for Turkish Cypriots. In 2003 a settler organization used ‘KKTC Göçmenler Derneği’ which stands for ‘TRNC Migrant Association’ (Kıbrıs, 2003). The term *göçmenler* could be translated as both migrant and settler. At same time, the term settler appears in interviews by Nuri Çevikel Chairman of the association with international media (Smith, 2003). For an extensive discussion of terms and identity boundaries, see Navaro-Yashin (2006).

Political Rights for failing to cover cases of colonization within a state's jurisdiction.

Colonizing occupied territories violates international law while no legal issues could be raised for colonizing national minority territories such as settling thousands of Sinhalese farmers in the predominantly Tamil Eastern province (Liaras, 2009).

A multiplicity of contextual factors could explain the varied responses to contemporary colonization, including the passage of time, the ongoing nature of colonization/occupation and the continuous violations of native/refugee rights. In the case of Cyprus, the Council of Europe has prepared a number of reports on the settler issue, including a 2003 recommendation by the Parliamentary Assembly advocating a population census by the European Population Committee (CAHP), calling Turkey, 'as well as its Turkish Cypriot subordinate local administration in northern Cyprus, to stop the process of colonization by Turkish settlers' and proposing the creation of a European fund to assist the *voluntary* (emphasis added) resettlement of settlers back to Turkey (Parliamentary Assembly of CoE, 2003). Likewise, in 2000, the European Parliament noted in a resolution that the EU 'can help resolve the problem of the controlled return of refugees and the repatriation of the settlers' (European Parliament, 2000). After the 2004 failed reunification referendums in the island, EU bodies generally refrained from taking a position on settlers in Cyprus, noting that this issue should be resolved in the bilateral negotiations among Cypriots (Bellos, 2009).

The Conflict in Cyprus

Cyprus became independent from British rule in 1960 but power-sharing arrangements between the Greek and Turkish Cypriots lasted only for three years. Following the 1963-

64 bicomunal clashes, Turkish Cypriots were forced to settle in enclaves and to abandon their share in the government (Fisher, 2001: 310; Patrick, 1976). In 1974, Turkey invaded Cyprus, claiming a right of intervention under the Treaty of Guarantee and *de facto* dividing Cyprus into Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot sections. As a result, approximately 160,000 Greek Cypriots fled their cities and villages, while around 40,000 Turkish Cypriots living in the South were coerced or chose to abandon their houses and move to the North (Fisher, 2001, 311; Attalides, 1979; Kliot & Mansfeld, 1994; Necatigil, 1989).⁵ Turkish and Greek Cypriots developed uneven responses to their refugee experience; generally speaking, Turkish Cypriots aimed to consolidate their presence in the north, while Greek Cypriots retained a strong desire to maintain rights of return to their ancestral villages and towns in the north (Hadjipavlou, 2007; Loizos, 1981; Zetter, 1994, 1999; Kliot & Mansfeld, 1994).

In addition, successive Turkish governments actively encouraged tens of thousands of mainland Turkish citizens to settle in Cyprus. Exact numbers remain a ‘closely-guarded secret’ and even members of the Turkish Cypriot negotiating team have acknowledged privately that they are not aware of the accurate figures.⁶ Much of the confusion arises from the different types of settlers, including long-term residents naturalized by the Turkish Cypriot authorities, permanent and temporary residents, illegal workers, university students and members of the Turkish military and their families. Although there are no reliable statistical data, Mete Hatay estimates the number of naturalized settlers to have been around 16-18 per cent of the Turkish Cypriot electorate

⁵ The population of Cyprus in 2006 was approximately 660,600 Greek Cypriots and 265,100 Turkish Cypriots including settlers with permanent residency (Statistical Service of the Republic of Cyprus, 2006; TRNC Prime Ministry, 2007)

⁶ Taken from author’s fieldwork notes.

in 2005 (Hatay, 2005:viii) while Greek Cypriot estimates suggest that settlers constitute about 50 per cent of the population (Press and Information Office-Republic of Cyprus, 2007; Palley, 2005:67). The 2006 census in the northern part of the island found a population of 265,100 (citizens and other permanent residents). The census also found 178,031 TRNC citizens; of these, 42,572 had both parents born in Turkey. The figure for current TRNC citizens with at least one parent born in Cyprus is 132,635 (including those settlers whose ‘non-Cypriot’ parents were born in the island).⁷ Overall, these numbers have been used as a tool by politicians on both sides of the divide to foster their agendas, with head-counts serving as ammunition in public debates (Tezgor, 2003). Figures used to support arguments are usually exaggerated; some exceed half a million settlers, with no proper documentation provided to support facts (Charalambidou-Papapavlou, 2008). It is possible that both hardliners and moderates overestimate the number of settlers with the unintended effect of alarming risk-averse Greek Cypriots making a future settlement more difficult.

In his reports on the aborted 2001-4 Annan Plan, the UN Secretary General gives some revealing information about the position of the two sides and the number of settlers. During the negotiations, the Turkish Cypriot side tried to assure the Greek Cypriots that only 30,000 to 35,000 settlers had received the ‘TRNC citizenship’. The Greek Cypriots promised to change their initial position for repatriation of settlers to Turkey and to accept them as citizens provided that the Turkish Cypriot side provided a definite list of names. The Turkish Cypriot side acceded but failed to submit the list. The Turkish Cypriot leader slowly revised the number upwards to 60,000 but refused to give any

⁷ For more information on the Turkish Cypriot census see, TRNC Prime Ministry (2007)

details arguing that giving citizenship was part of the ‘exercise of sovereignty’ (UN, 2003: 22).

Settlers and Native Responses

Following the rejection of the Annan plan in 2004 and in light of negotiations since September 2008, the issue of Turkish settlers remains one of the most contentious issues in the Cyprus negotiations. Polls conducted among Greek and Turkish Cypriots the past few years have indicated convergence in the views of the two communities on many issues – but not on settlers (Lordos, 2006:14; Lordos, Kaymak, & Tocci, 2009). Official Greek Cypriot discourses describe the presence of settlers as a violation of international law and the Geneva Convention (Loucaides, 1995; Chrysostomides, 2000: 197-215), a view documented by frequent references to the reports of the Council of Europe (Cuco, 1994). In the official Greek Cypriot narrative, the presence of settlers is viewed as a threat to peaceful relations between Greek and Turkish Cypriots and the demographic structure of the country.⁸ According to former Minister of Justice of the Republic, Kypros Chrysostomides, the ‘settlers from the Turkish mainland have no rights to the land that they occupy and their settlement in Cyprus was a flagrant violation of international law. Any vacillation by the international community on this point would be taken as setting a most unfortunate precedent’ (2000:434).

Yet uncompromising discourses on settlers have not assumed a dominant hegemonic position in Greek Cypriot politics. For instance, in the 2008-9 negotiations, the Greek Cypriot side offered to accept 50,000 settlers as Cypriot citizens, the largest

⁸ For the official Greek Cypriot position on the issue and relevant international reports on the same issue, see (Press and Information Office-Republic of Cyprus, 2007).

number ever in bilateral negotiations (Hughes, 2008). The debate following this offer reflected two opposing framings of the settler issue among Greek Cypriot elites: one rejecting any compromise unless settlers migrated back to Turkey, and the other favoring a settlement to prevent future demographic shifts in the island.⁹ Those less inclined towards compromise reacted negatively to the proposed naturalization figures, arguing that war crimes and colonization cannot create human rights for settlers. In their view, compromises in negotiations under conditions of occupation merely add incentives for new waves of colonization quoting the growing numbers of settlers as evidence of Turkish untrustworthiness on the issue (Aggelides, 2007:21; Matsis, 2009).

Debating the settler issue in the Cyprus parliament, MPs have asked the government to make the withdrawal of settlers a precondition for Turkey's EU accession negotiations (Syllouris, 2005:22), citing the withdrawal of Israeli settlers and occupying troops from Gaza and parts of the West Bank as evidence of the efficacy of international law (Cleanthous, 2005: 46). Greek Cypriots moderates, meanwhile, have argued that showing flexibility on humanitarian grounds will make the Greek Cypriot side more credible in the eyes of the international community (Stephanou, 2009). More importantly, moderates have pointed out that only through a peace agreement will colonization cease to be an issue (Ibid. 2009). Addressing the Cyprus Parliament, Nicos Anastasiades, leader of the main opposition party, Democratic Rally, argued that each day without a settlement intensifies waves of colonization and brings the occupied territories of Cyprus

⁹ For a televised debate reflecting different views on the settler issue in the Greek Cypriot community, see program by Charalambidou-Papapavlou (2008) on Cyprus Broadcasting Corporation.

closer to ‘Taiwanization’ and irreversible partition.¹⁰ For Anastasiades, the continuation of the status quo will allow Turkey and the Turkish settlers ‘to dominate the north while Turkish Cypriots will return as partners to the south. This will lead to a further major retrenchment of Cypriot Hellenism’ (Anastasiades, 2007:6).

The Turkish Cypriot community is similarly divided on the settler issue.¹¹ For the most part, nationalist parties on the right have historically supported or tolerated the arrival of settlers, while pro-unification forces on the left have opposed it, seeing it as threatening the character of the community. Nonetheless, all major Turkish Cypriot political parties have maintained a balance between domestic fears of alienation and the need to attract new settler voters (Lacher & Kaymak, 2005; Vural & Rustemli, 2006; Navaro-Yashin, 2006). For instance in the past decade, the main pro-unification political party, Republican Turkish Party (CTP), played up an all-inclusive identity, combining the vision of joining the EU with equal citizenship for all – including settlers (Lacher & Kaymak, 2005: 159). This attempt was marked by alliances with settler politicians such as Bayram Karaman, and Nuri Çevikel, a university lecturer with a mainland Turkish background who founded the now defunct ‘TRNC Migrants’ Association’ to lobby for Turkish settler rights within a unified Cyprus (Hatay, 2005:56; Hope, 2005). Çevikel appeared in the Greek Cypriot media proposing the return of Greek Cypriot homes and properties with reciprocal naturalization of the settlers (Saoulli, 2003). Many settlers participated actively in the 2002-4 Turkish Cypriot demonstrations against the anti-deal

¹⁰ Taiwanization is a term used by Greek Cypriots politicians to describe the possibility of ‘TRNC’ coming closer to being *de facto* recognized internationally, like Taiwan.

¹¹ For debate reflecting different views on the settler issue in the Turkish Cypriot community (primarily on the Left), see debate organized by YKP, New Cyprus Party, (YKP, 2009).

policies of the Denktaş administration and according to estimates, 44 per cent of the inhabitants of predominantly settler villages voted for reunification (Hatay, 2005:46). Following the failure of the 2004 peace process, the Turkish Cypriot parties continued to rely on settler votes for their long-term political survival. For instance, in 2009, the CTP administration appointed Dr. Yusuf Suiçmez a settler from the Black Sea, as Director of the Religious Affairs Department (Kıbrıs, 2009).

At the grassroots level, a number of surveys show significant differences in how settlers and native participants relate to the civic component of identity (Cypriotness). According to a survey by Vural and Rustemli (2006: 344), among settlers, only 4.7 per cent gave 'Cypriotness' as the most important identity (35.8 per cent were native Turkish Cypriots), whereas 56 per cent identified themselves with 'Turkishness' (44 per cent native participants) followed by 'Moslemness' with 35.5 per cent (13.6 per cent Turkish Cypriot participants). In the past, NGOs pointed out that colonization severely interfered with the democratic representation of the Turkish Cypriots, resulting in the coming to power of those who 'feel indebted not to their people, but to Turkey, and who act as the civil servants of the Republic of Turkey, not as the representatives of the Turkish Cypriot people' (Cyprus Action Network, 2003). Human rights NGOs have also noted that the settler vote has prevented the pro-solution Turkish Cypriot opposition from winning elections (Ibid, 2003). Hatay (2005) has presented evidence countering this argument, while Vural and Rustemli (2006) show that settlers and native Turkish Cypriots differ significantly in their political views (see also Faiz, 2009).

Opposition to the settlers was more prevalent among leftist media during the 1990s. For example, Turkish Cypriot journalist Kutlu Adalı opposed colonization on the

grounds that settlers had affected the social structure, the ability to make decisions and the Cypriotism of his community. Such views were widespread among Turkish Cypriots who felt ‘under siege by the large inflow of mainland Turks’ (Güven-Lisaniler & Rodriguez, 2002: 187). Adalı, one of the most vocal critics of the Denктаş regime, was assassinated in 1996, likely by Turkish ultra-nationalists and/or criminal groups associated with the deep state in Ankara. During the recent Ergenekon investigations in Turkey, information became publicly available linking suspects of Adalı’s assassination with members of Ergenekon, a criminal gang plotting military coups in Turkey. The investigation revealed connections with politicians in Cyprus, including the fact that members of the gang had received ‘TRNC’ identity cards (Today’s Zaman, 2009). Both Lustick (1985, 1993) and Haklai (2007) emphasize the role of settler connections with the host state in the process of disengagement. As shown elsewhere such reactions to withdrawal from contested territories are not unusual, and consistent with Lustick’s analytical framework, Ergenekon was plotting a coup in Turkey to prevent the adoption of the Annan Plan in 2004. Such attempts were recorded in the diary of former Navy commander, Özden Örnek published in the now defunct weekly magazine Nokta (Today’s Zaman, 2008).

Politicization and Settlers

However, unlike settler cases elsewhere, those actions seem disconnected from the island’s settler grassroots. As a matter of fact, during past decades, no major episodes implicated settlers directly with incidents of political violence, and efforts to politicize settlers during elections have been short-lived and unsuccessful. Although settlers

constitute a significant part of the electorate, in the previous (as well as current) Turkish Cypriot assemblies, only two members among 50 were natives of Turkey. In the comparable cases of Israeli settlers (West Bank and Gaza), French settlers (Algeria) and Ulster Protestant settlers (Northern Ireland), there was overwhelming political activity and mobilization among settler populations seeking territorial disengagement from the core state (Lustick, 1993). Settler mobilization has prevented a two-state solution in Israel/Palestine, led to the partition of Ireland and forced massive war crimes in Algeria before French disengagement.

In Cyprus, low levels of politicization are generally attributed to the largely heterogeneous character of the settler population. In an interview, a settler politician argued that settlers differ not only in terms of ethnic and regional background (e.g. Kurds, Laz and Arab speakers) but also in terms of time and conditions of arrival in Cyprus, degree of assimilation and political affiliation.¹² The several peace plans in Cyprus have also weakened the settlers' position with respect to Ankara and the Turkish Cypriot authorities and divided the community between long-term residents who will stay after the settlement and the rest. On this issue, for instance, Dr. Çevikel broke the alliance with CTP when the latter decided to exclude him from the naturalization lists given to the UN during the negotiations. Even so, his association has remained defunct since then and subsequent attempts to mobilize settler vote have been unsuccessful.

Low politicization also stems from the nature of the original settlers. According to Lacher and Kaymak, war veterans and martyrs' families were given land and houses in northern Cyprus after 1974 (2005: 155). However, the overwhelming majority of settlers

¹² Taken from author's fieldwork notes.

opted to abandon their villages in Anatolia for economic reasons and not to serve ideological purposes (although ideology and nationalism might have played a significant role in some cases). Class and status is probably the most important factor in the lack of mobilization. In most other cases of settler colonialism, settlers were economically privileged, and repatriation to the home state meant the loss of status and relative ease of life. For instance, the *pied-noirs* in Algeria, although largely heterogeneous in composition, effectively transformed the local Muslim population into serfs (Lustick, 2005). Yet in personal terms, settlers in Cyprus will gain significantly after a settlement. They tend, therefore, to be less committed to the ideological tenets of Turkish nationalism for instrumental reasons or simply because they lack the resources for mobilization.

Also important are the divisions of Turkish nationalism clearly manifested in northern Cyprus and making settler politicization more difficult. The Turkish army, the embassy in Nicosia and the Turkish Cypriot authorities all control budgets through which they maintain spheres of patronage and influence among underprivileged settlers. Certain settler votes are controlled by the island's Turkish military and its extended network of influence and social support. For the most part, these votes go to anti-deal forces who openly oppose Turkish PM Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and the ruling AKP (Justice and Development Party) in Turkey. At the same time, settlers hailing from areas in Anatolia support either AKP or pro-Kurdish parties. Religious settlers who have retained their networks in Anatolia are more likely to follow AKP which, in the past, supported pro-unification forces in the Turkish Cypriot left. Kurdish settlers are also likely to oppose the Turkish military, particularly since many retain connections with their provinces. For

instance, a settler politician in Cyprus revealed to the author that his cousin is an MP with the pro-Kurdish DTP party in the district of Mardin, Turkey.

Indigenous discourses in the island often focus on the militaristic and colonialist aspects of the settler problem, downplaying other important aspects. A common argument among Greek and Turkish Cypriots is that living together with settlers will be extremely difficult in the case of a settlement, while reuniting the two communities will be significantly easier given the common elements uniting the Cypriots. This integrationist Cypriotist discourse appears in public and daily life, even bicomunal facebook groups among the youth advocating the involuntary repatriation of settlers (see also appendix Cartoon I). On this point, leading exponents of Cypriotism in the island warn against making racist demands of any kind (Durduran, 2009). In addition, the integrationist discourse often downplays the memories of conflict between Greek and Turkish Cypriots. It is imaginable that those individuals subjected to violence before 1974 might be more prone to nationalism than settlers who immigrated to Cyprus for financial reasons.

The experience of two villages in the north immediately after 1974 provides an illustrative example of this point. The Greek Cypriot inhabitants of Yialousa and Rizokarpaso were among the few to remain under Turkish Cypriot control in the northern tip of the island. Turkish Cypriots coming from the abandoned village of Erenkoy (Kokkina) settled in Yialousa, while nearby Rizokarpaso was colonized by settlers who came from different parts of Turkey. In both cases, the Greek Cypriots suffered harassment, physical violence and discrimination, as documented in numerous international reports and court decisions (ECHR, 2001). However, contrary to national

myths and expectations, the relationship between the Greek Cypriots and the settlers was less confrontational than between the two Cypriot populations. In Yialousa, Turkish Cypriot refugees forced out the Greek Cypriots, while in Rizokarpaso the remaining Greek Cypriots had a difficult relationship with the settlers nonetheless one that eventually allowed them to survive even in relatively small numbers. During the author's 2006 visit to the area, the former said they had taught the settlers their language, work skills and customs. For their part, settlers expressed positive sentiments towards their Greek Cypriot co-villagers.¹³

Lustick describes similar incidents among 17th century Protestant settlers, when the latter convinced Cromwell's son to spare Irish Catholics from the vigorous implementation of the original scheme entailing 'depopulation of Irish lands through execution, transplantation and transportation' (Lustick, 1985: 30). To explain the divergence of settler behavior, Lustick argues that settlers implanted in outlying territories as vehicles for the consolidation of state power develop autonomous interests aiming at the enhancement of their own local and political interests (Ibid). Moreover, he suggests that settler activism can move in different directions, often preventing a compromise. This could occur in Cyprus with the passage of time, especially if numbers change dramatically and more socioeconomically advanced settlers dominate the landscape. Some experts warn that this threshold is dangerously close (Faiz, 2009) while others indicate the complex power-relationship between settlers and Turkish Cypriots, with the former already having an effective control of the police in the north (Navaro-Yashin, 2006). Yet for the time being, the situation is manageable, and interests tend to

¹³ Taken from author's fieldwork notes.

sustain low levels of politicization and mobilization in Cyprus, suggesting the potential for a creative institutional design of community group rights.

Annan Plan and Alternatives

Previous plans proposed by the UN for Cyprus are particularly relevant in debating the way the international community understands settler issues. As mentioned above, UN mediators were confronted with a major discrepancy concerning the actual number of the settlers; the Greek Cypriot side suggested a figure of 119,000, while Turkish Cypriots claimed that the number was around 60,000 (UN, 2004b:15; UN 2003:22). In response, the UN suggested naturalizing 45,000 people, as well as everyone married to a Turkish Cypriot, and maintaining another 5 per cent of the Turkish Cypriot constituent state population as immigrants (UN, 2004a: 8-9; UN, 2004b:15). If the Greek Cypriot numbers were correct, the remaining settlers would have to leave Cyprus within five years of receiving a small compensation package of no less than 10,000 Euro for a household of four (UN, 2004a: 77).

For the Greek Cypriots, the plan was ambiguous as to the exact numbers of the settlers to remain in Cyprus; these could easily vary from a low of 45,000, to a high which included all established settlers in the island (around 90,000). For example, the number of settlers married to Turkish Cypriots was unavailable. Additionally, the status of the relatives of the 45,000 settlers to be naturalized in order of priority was unclear. And would the Turkish Cypriot side opt to exhaust its immigration quotas of around 15,000 people immediately to serve settler needs? It was also unclear whether universities in northern Cyprus would offer cover for illegal immigrants (as some schools in the South),

or if the new state would have the capacity or willingness to tackle illegal immigration from Turkey.

As numbers varied depending on interpretation, those who opposed the settlement chose to emphasize worst-case scenarios for their own side. During the negotiations, Greek Cypriot hardliners reiterated the danger that settlement posed for the quality of life of Greek Cypriots.¹⁴ Because of unconditional naturalization and provisions for power-sharing in the senate (comprised of equal numbers of representatives from the two communities), settler votes would have counted four times more than Greek Cypriot ones. To make things worse, Greek Cypriot refugees were, in some instances, deprived of voting rights in their places of residence. Also, as the poorer segment of the population, settlers would have received long-term aid from fellow citizens who had been deprived of their own ancestral properties. In case of the failure of the agreement, Turkey retained its right to intervene in Cyprus affairs. A final stumbling block for Greek Cypriots was the sequence of concessions and the fear of non-implementation. While immediately making concessions on issues involving settlers, security and power-sharing, Greek Cypriots were unsure about implementation of the limited rights granted to refugees or other arrangements favoring Greek Cypriots.

Several critiques in the literature suggest how difficult it is to legitimize power-sharing in divided societies and justify consociational arrangements in democratic terms (Horowitz, 1985). The aborted Annan Plan for Cyprus envisioned the creation of a consociational arrangement for Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots. It was a classic example of a consociational settlement with the exception of the settler question. In

¹⁴ Regardless of this discourse's racist overtones took (see author, 2009), it should be acknowledged that the proposed arrangement offered settlers more rights than had been demanded by some of their representatives.

divided societies the challenge of sharing power becomes even greater if one aims to include settlers in the power-sharing arrangements, especially when the legitimacy of their presence continues to be debated among natives (see appendix cartoon I). Donald Horowitz raises similar concerns in the case of many former Soviet states where ‘the recency of the Slavic immigration compounds the illegitimacy of the settlers’ claims’ (24).

The challenge in Cyprus is not simply to accept settlers as part of the *demos* but to accommodate natives and settlers in complex consociational arrangements with the concomitant danger of giving primacy to settler rights over native ones. There are however alternative arrangements that could minimize some of these challenges while maintaining the consociational logic of the settlement. Expanding the options on issues of citizenship and the negotiations in general often requires reconfiguring linkages among issues. This can be done by de-linking issues assumed to be interconnected in an attempt to decouple a complex problem into smaller components, or by drawing win-win linkages and tying together issues that are not apparently related in any functional sense (Raiffa, 1982; Lohmann, 1997; Lustick, 1993).

Delinkage strategies could take the form of decoupling property issues from citizenship or *de facto* rights of citizenship from citizenship itself. Asymmetrical citizenship could be an option that mitigates many problems listed above. Differentiated asymmetrical citizenship implies different rights and obligations for citizens based on their ethnic origins. For instance, the various proposals proposed for Cyprus before suggest clearly differentiated citizenship for Greek and Turkish Cypriots but not for settlers who are included in the Turkish Cypriot community. On issues of asymmetrical

citizenship for instance the Hungarian status law offered educational, medical and other employment benefits to non-citizens of ethnic Hungarian background (Deeds & Stroschein, 2005). One possibility is to develop a type of permanent residency with equal social rights for permanent residents as currently in Canada or a type of citizenship which allows new citizens voting rights in local elections but without participation in the running of the federal government.

Timing naturalization could be a related option. Settlers could be naturalized with time and their descendants receive citizenship at birth, as suggested for similar situations by Carens (2000). For the Greek Cypriots, the gradual naturalization of settlers is a better alternative than the immediate and unconditional naturalization of settlers proposed in *Annan V*, particularly if these naturalizations are tied to other concessions for Greek Cypriots. The contribution of settlers to the peace process will help Greek Cypriots see them in a more positive light, building a more sustainable relationship in the long term. Moreover, this approach gives more flexibility, allowing Turkish Cypriots to integrate settlers more gradually. In short, collective contribution to peace, integration into the Turkish Cypriot culture and the passage of time could be alternative paths leading to naturalization.

An alternative arrangement in managing settler conflicts involves linkage strategies for issues of major concern for natives, such as territory and refugee rights. In Cyprus, mediators have entertained the author's previously suggested idea of preparing a flexible map across the federal border with final territorial re-adjustment to be determined

on the basis of population movements among refugees and possibly settlers.¹⁵ The more settlers Greek Cypriots accept, the more land they will receive in the final adjustment of the border (see also Economist, 2008; Lordos, Kaymak, & Tocci, 2009). Likewise, for the Turkish Cypriot side (and Turkey) the more refugees actually return, the more land they will receive after readjustment. For instance, if 25,000 refugees actually return, the Turkish Cypriot federal territory would be delimited to 25 per cent, while if 100,000 choose to return, the territory would be readjusted to 30 per cent. All other scenarios fall into a middle ground.

Moreover, to maximize territorial concessions to each community, reserved lands could incentivize support among settlers, Turkish Cypriots and especially Greek refugees, if family houses with emotional value, holy places and schools are included in reserves designed specifically to attract Greek Cypriot returnees. On this point, Kymlicka emphasizes the critical importance of reserves and argues that history has shown that the most effective way to protect indigenous communities is to establish reserve territories where land cannot be alienated without the consent of the community as whole (Kymlicka, 1995:43).

Another arrangement proposed by the authors in the negotiations explicitly ties the numbers of settlers to be naturalized with the number of actual Greek Cypriot returnees opting to return under Turkish Cypriot administration. An agreement could postulate the return of 25,000 Greek Cypriots under Turkish Cypriot administration. If 25,000 opt for return, the Turkish Cypriot side will increase its quota for the naturalization of two additional settlers or will get equivalent credits towards another

¹⁵ Personal communication with members of the negotiating teams; For maps of post - 1974 Cyprus and in Annan V see appendices II & III.

issue. This formula combines a minimum number of Greek Cypriot returns to the Turkish zone with self-adjustable linkages and incentives for the Turkish Cypriot side to accept the rest. The approach has several advantages over previous UN-mediated provisions on refugee return. Greek Cypriots concessions, previously envisioned to secure a maximum refugee threshold, would not have to be made until refugees actually return. Turkish Cypriots (and Turkey) will be guaranteed majority status under all demographic scenarios even if all Greek Cypriots decide to return. Finally, refugee return will be perceived as less ‘threatening’ by the recipient communities and the settlers, thus contributing to a more secure return process for the refugees. These arrangements maintain the balance of the settlement and reduce demographic uncertainty with regards to settlers (for Greek Cypriots) and refugees (for Turkish Cypriots, settlers and Turkey).

A final possible arrangement concerns the granting of various forms of compensation to settlers willing to repatriate to Turkey. It is important to note that compensation schemes might often have unintended consequences or simply fail to work. In his seminal work on the security dilemma, Robert Jervis comments on unintended effects while debating the Rhodesian ‘safety net’ – guaranteeing compensations for whites leaving the country (1978: 174). The experience of international organizations in Bosnia and elsewhere suggest that trial and error strategies might be needed until the most optimal outcomes are reached (Dahlman & Ó Tuathail 2005).

Specifically, in the case of Bosnia, European governments offered refugees the ‘right to regret’, an option potentially applicable to Cyprus as well. Bosnian returnees living temporarily in the UK and France were given the option to return with the same status if their experience with repatriation to Bosnia proved negative (Black, 2001: 186-

87). In the case of Cyprus, settlers could be allowed to return to Cyprus after relocating in Turkey if they changed their minds and without losing their previous status. A similar arrangement could be offered to members of the large Turkish Cypriot diaspora living abroad as an incentive to return to Cyprus. At the moment, there is a sizeable Turkish Cypriot diaspora, most of whom live in the London (UK) area and who maintain close links to Cyprus (Østergaard-Nielsen, 2003).¹⁶ Turkish Cypriot émigrés have suffered from exile and loss of property – and until now, they have not been offered compensation for their losses. These compensatory arrangements could maximize the options for émigrés and settlers, with potential benefits for all communities in the island.

Conclusions

While colonization is a violation of international law and norms, so too is the massive and indiscriminate expulsion of settlers with their families, especially after the passage of decades. Carens describes just such a dilemma in the French colony of New Caledonia where the French government encouraged immigration, deliberately manipulating the principles of equal citizenship and majority rule to retain its hegemony over the island (Carens, 2000: 17). Carens cites other examples from Israel (West Bank), China (Tibet), USSR (Baltics) where governments have introduced large numbers of new settlers, hoping that with the passage of time, those who initially oppose the settlements will conclude that it is not morally permissible to uproot the descendants of the colonizers. Carens argues that ‘it seems problematic to penalize present generations for what their ancestors have done’ (Ibid. 217-218). Yet if we ‘simply accept the claim that the passage

¹⁶ Østergaard-Nielsen (2003: 687) estimate 80,000–120,000 Turkish Cypriots to reside in Britain only.

of time reduces the moral importance of the origins of a situation, we seem to create an (additional) incentive for those who do not care about morality to ignore it, namely, that over time those who care about morality will feel less inclined, indeed less entitled to try to do anything about the injustice that has been perpetrated' (Ibid). Thus, despite the humanitarian aspects of the settler issue, there cannot be a narrow focus on rights created by the passage of time.

More important is the balancing of settler rights with those of native populations through creative institutional design such as asymmetrical citizenship, linkage with native rights and efficient compensation schemes. The major normative and political challenge for Turkish Cypriots will be to balance their own rights for a federal homeland with the rights of others: Greek Cypriots who were the majority property owners and population in northern Cyprus before 1974 and Turkish settlers who might be the majority of the *de facto* population in the future. Stable ethnic relations in such a normatively complex setting will require creative institutional design and reciprocity across the communal divide. These conflict resolution mechanisms are particularly relevant for environments of low mutual trust where reciprocity and credible commitments are necessary to build public confidence.

In sum, the article demonstrates the humanitarian and immigration aspects of the settler question in Cyprus but cautions against treating an essentially political problem in exclusive sociological/immigration terms. For this particular reason theoretical frameworks built primarily on immigrants (Laitin, 2009) might not be directly applicable on settlers, nonetheless from a theoretical perspective comparisons with settler/migrant populations could help delineate or expand Laitin's argument on why newcomers to a

territory do not participate in civil wars. More specifically, in the case of Cyprus even if the Greek Cypriot public is convinced of the benign ‘immigrant character’ of the settler question, insecurities will remain because of the sheer number of Turkish settlers, fear of Turkish involvement and the potential for future uncontrolled migration from Turkey to Cyprus. Focusing on the antinomies of ethnic conflict and immigration politics in Cyprus, the article argues that the current situation in the island is still manageable given the low levels of mobilization among the settlers and the general propensities of both Greek and Turkish Cypriot political elites to accommodate large numbers of settlers. Creative institutions involving checks and balances can further stabilize group relations and ensure that no group is exploited by another, regardless of demographic shifts or uncertainty.

Finally, the article makes a broader contribution to the study of settlers in contested territories by treating Cyprus in comparative terms. What makes Cyprus different and potentially more dangerous than other cases of 20th century colonialism is that Turkish settlers have the demographic advantage and capacity to overwhelm both native communities. It is imaginable that settlers might attain a comfortable electoral majority in the north and challenge the Greek Cypriot majority status in the island as whole. At the same time, unlike historical cases where indigenous people have been unable to resist demographic reversals primarily due to genocide, disease and the lack of international norms, Greek Cypriots could use their political influence and veto in the EU to harm Turkey’s accession prospects. This could lead to a permanent deadlock in Cyprus or result in a Turkish decision to disengage from Cyprus (as in 2004 with the acceptance of the Annan Plan). However, a much larger settler population is likely to interrupt processes of peaceful disengagement by exercising its economic, political, ideological

and emotional appeal to the homeland (Lustick, 1985: 8). On this point, the comparative treatment of cases allows us to identify missed analytical opportunities otherwise neglected in public and academic debates. Two of the most vigorous democracies in modern European history, Britain in 1913 and France in 1958-1961 came close to civil war and the breakdown of democratic institutions when elites tried to relieve the burden of the Irish and Algerian question, respectively (Lustick, 1993). Turkey might follow a similar trajectory if settlers assume a dominant position in Cyprus consolidating the irreversible partition of the island and possibly the permanent exclusion of Turkey from European integration.

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Appendix Cartoon I:

“Power-sharing at the New State” (By United Pancyprian Association of Students, 2004)



UNITED PANCYPRIAN ASSOCIATION OF STUDENTS. (2004) The Annan Plan in Cartoons (Thessaloniki Charter).

Cartoon I below was distributed by a Greek Cypriot student organization during the Annan Plan V referendum. It presents a person dressed in “traditional Turkish clothing”

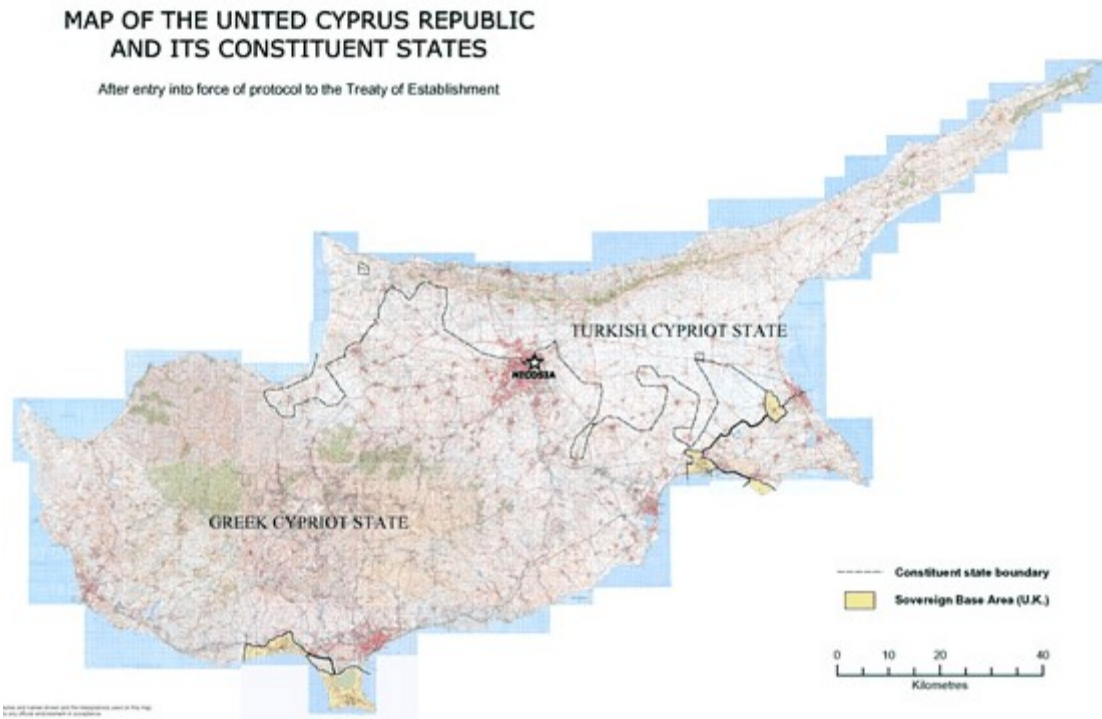
holding four votes while the Greek Cypriot holds only one. The Greek Cypriot asks “why do I have one vote?” and receives an answer that this is because of “political equality dude” (meaning political equality between the two communities).

Appendix II: Map of Post-1974 de Facto Partition of Cyprus



Source: <http://www.intute.ac.uk/sciences/worldguide/html/863.html>

Appendix III: Map of Territorial Adjustments in Annan V



Source: <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/data/DISPOLITIKA/KIBRIS/Cyprusmaxi.jpg>

