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The Cyprus Conflict: A World Society Perspective

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Abstract

This study suggests analyzing the Cyprus conflict from a world society perspective –in particular Stanford School and Modern Systems Theory- in order to trace both the structural origins and the self-activating dynamics of the conflict. After briefly discussing the limitations of the existing scholarship, the paper will advance possible contributions from Stanford School and Modern Systems Theory to the analysis of the Cyprus conflict.



Contents

Introduction	2
A World Society Perspective	3
Origination of the conflict: Stanford School & world society	3
Institutionalized Conflict and Failed Interventions: Modern Systems Theory & Conflict communication	6
Concluding Remarks	8
REFERENCES	9
About the Royal Holloway Department of Politics and International Relations Working Paper Series	11



Introduction

The conflict on the eastern Mediterranean island of Cyprus is generally defined as a sovereignty conflict between two different ethnic communities (Markides 1977). Since 1964, the United Nations (UN) has maintained a peacekeeping force (UNFICYP) in Cyprus in order to prevent violence. With the end of the Cold War, a new international 'actor' – the European Union (EU) – has emerged and following the Greek Cypriot administration's membership application to the EU, it claimed a 'catalytic' function in bringing long-lasting peace to the island. Hence, the EU accepted the Greek Cypriot candidacy on behalf of the Republic of Cyprus (RoC), which had been de facto non-existent since the proclamation of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, in 1983.

The conception of the EU as a 'catalyst' in Cyprus has generated much debate in both academic and political circles (Christou 2002, Zervakis 2004). Initially, a general optimism prevailed; there was a widely-held belief that two key actors, Cyprus and Turkey, would compromise in favour of an UN-led solution in Cyprus in order to become EU members. Accordingly, in 2002, the UN submitted a reunification plan – known as 'Annan Plan' after the name of the UN Secretary General of the time- officially backed by the EU. The general expectation was that the plan would be embraced by the conflict parties until May 2004, the official date of EU membership for Cyprus. As expected, Turkey and the Turkish Cypriot community have supported the Annan plan but to the surprise of many, a Greek Cypriot majority rejected it in a referendum and acceded to the EU by leaving the Turkish Cypriot community outside as 'uncontrolled territories of the RoC'. Finally, Turkey refused to interact with the new Cypriot member of the EU despite the EU pressures. This has led to the partial suspension of the accession negotiations in 2005.

Since then, the EU has been accused of 'catalyzing' the intercommunal separation instead of reconciliation. Indeed, in Cyprus studies, there is a general tendency to emphasize particular actors for sustaining the conflict. Before the EU, these have included Cypriot communities and external actors such as Turkey, Greece, and the UK, which are the 'guarantor powers' under the London-Zurich agreements founding the RoC, as well as the UN and the US. However, overemphasizing the role of one actor over others in a conflict is rather problematic in the sense that such long-lasting conflicts as Cyprus are very complex and 'both external and internal factors, both psychological and contextual, have played an influential role in the creation and the perpetuation of the conflict' (Hadjipavlou 2007:349).

There are particular two main limitations within the existing scholarship on Cyprus. First, the heterogeneity of the conflicting camps within themselves is often overlooked because identity is generally considered as pre-determined and static. However, this

static approach to identity is increasingly contested in social sciences, in particular by social constructivist scholars who emphasize the 'constructed' nature of social identities (Jepperson et al. 1996). Hence, the bicommunality in Cyprus, which is defined in terms of ethnic differences, could be seen as a mere strategic discourse (rather than a reality 'out there') that aims to reinforce the image of homogenous communities and thus, the authority of the existing governing actors. Constantinou (2007:266) stresses the existence of hybrid identities in Cyprus and concludes that 'individuals tactically ... mobilize different aspects of their identity'. In summary, parties to the conflict do not constitute homogenous, unified camps. This is shown by the fact that business actors played an important role in transforming Turkish Cypriot public opinion in favour of the UN reunification plan whereas the local media had opposite effects between 2002 and 2004 (chapters 2 and 3 of Diez & Tocci 2009). The second limitation relies upon deterministic approaches to the role of external actors in the Cyprus conflict. Although transnational dimensions of conflicts – such as the external supply of resources from diaspora and external low-intensity interventions (Salehyan et al. 2008) – are crucial, it would be misleading to overlook the internal dynamics such as the intercommunal mistrust in Cyprus (Fisher 2001). For instance, Turkey which maintains a military force in Cyprus since 1974 has often been considered as the key actor in the conflict. However, the recent change in Turkish official attitude in favour of a solution in Cyprus has not been sufficient to resolve the problem. Another 'scapegoat' has been Turkish Cypriot leader Rauf Denktas, who has been severely accused of being pro-status quo. His replacement by the elected pro-EU Mehmet Ali Talat in 2005, however did not solve the problem either.

The involvement of the U.S., which considers the Cyprus issue as a part of the eastern Mediterranean security, should not be exaggerated either as it never claimed to replace the UN as a mediator on the island (Güney 2004). Currently, the most popular 'scapegoat' is the EU, which is accused of having reinforced both the identity divisions and the physical borders between the Cypriot communities by allowing the accession of the RoC. Until the membership of Cyprus in 2004, the EU's role has been seen positively as providing mainly economic incentives and encouraging intercommunal exchanges. However, this incentive-based approach limits the Cyprus conflict to mere material/economic interests and overlooks the underlying concerns associated with 'societal security' (Diez 2002). Besides, it could not explain the current resistance of Turkey to the expansion of the EU customs union to Cyprus even at the expense of its own EU membership. Furthermore, the societal reach of intercommunal exchanges has remained very limited (Diez & Tocci 2009:297).



Finally, Diez and Tocci (2009:296) rightly highlight that the mandate of the EU was never forging peace but rather, accession. The EU has never contested the role of the UN as the only legitimate mediating actor in Cyprus. Hence, an overemphasis on the EU's 'catalytic effect' is misleading. Lastly, the effect of the UN is also limited by the perceptions and attitudes of the Cypriot communities and leaders (Fisher 2001). In sum, the role of the external actors is very crucial in the Cyprus conflict but there is a need to avoid deterministic and normative accounts.

In light of these limitations, this study suggests analyzing the Cyprus conflict from a world society perspective in order to trace both its structural origins and the self-activating dynamics underlying its perseverance. A World Society approach would help to consider the global context without remaining within deterministic and normative readings of the role of the external actors in the Cyprus conflict. Secondly, it would allow for both an ontological openness to go beyond the state-centric realm, and the inclusion of the much needed societal element into the analysis of the Cyprus conflict.

A World Society Perspective

Two world society theories, namely Stanford School and Modern Systems Theory (MST) of Niklas Luhmann, could be applied to the study of the Cyprus conflict. They are mainly sociological in their origin but their application to International Relations would be compatible with the increasing recognition of the usefulness of sociologically-informed models in explaining the contemporary global era (Clark 2007). Although world society theories do not particularly focus upon international conflicts, they provide valuable insights into the structural origins and the dynamics of social conflicts (Albert 2008).

In particular, Stanford School provides two main variables that could explain the origination of the conflict: uneven world society structuration and different locations of the parties to the conflict vis-à-vis world society. For the purposes of this paper, it is suggested to study 'desecuritization' as a key element of world society in relation to the Cyprus conflict. Stanford School explains the discursive and formal shift towards desecuritization in Turkey and Cyprus between 2002 and 2004. However, it cannot grasp the Greek Cypriot rejection of the UN reunification plan and Turkey's recent refusal to expand the customs union to the (Greek) Cypriot member of the EU. Modern Systems Theory is useful to understand the internal communicative dynamics that limit and transform the effect of the external interventions. Accordingly, it problematizes the role of the EU in the conflict and its relationship to the UN.

Origination of the conflict: Stanford School & world society

Stanford School emphasizes the *world society structuration* and the *strength of connection to world society* as the main determinants of increasing standardization (isomorphism) across national societies in the global era (Meyer et al. 1997). In summary, the main processes structuring the world society are found in the codified norms of the UN and on the agenda of INGOs (Boli & Thomas 1999). So, in line with these processes, the institutionalized global scripts lead to cognitive shifts in national societies.

The degree of connection to world society is generally operationalized as the number of multilateral treaties and meetings that a state attends as well as the number of scientific and professional communities, which are the 'receptor sites' (Frank et al. 2000a, Jang 2003). This determines the location of the states within the world society. The states which have significant linkages to the world society are thus closer to the 'core' of the world society and are expected to embrace new global scripts more quickly than the rest.

Stanford School's emphasis on the rising worldwide isomorphisms has paved the way for critics arguing that it neglects the conflictual processes inherent in politics as well as the contestation of global norms within local contexts (Finnemore 1996:340). Indeed, Stanford School offers valuable insights for those seeking to understand conflicts through its advancement of the concept of 'decoupling', essentially implying an inherent inconsistency between formal structure and policy (Albert 2008). Accordingly, although global scripts are formally adopted, local practice is usually decoupled from these global scripts (Meyer & Rowan 1977). Furthermore, decoupling implies that world society is heterogeneous and dynamic rather than integrated. Therefore, the world culture promoted by a decoupled world society includes inconsistent and even contradictory scripts, which lead to conflicts in local arenas.

In summary, from the perspective of Stanford School, conflicts arise for two main reasons; firstly, the institutionalization of contradictory scripts at world society level, and secondly, the uneven presence of global scripts at national level.

When the former is the case, the world society offers conflicting models of legitimate behaviour and thus, Stanford School predicts the emergence of hybrid models, which could end confusion at domestic level. An example is the clash between capitalistic development and environmental standards; although these norms provoke conflicts within and between societies, those conflicts are likely to be ended in the long-term by compromise, creating hybrid models such as 'sustainable development' (Frank et al. 2000b:126).



Concerning the latter case, conflicts emerge between states that are at different locations in the world society. To put it differently, the core and periphery states have usually different conceptions of self-interest. Thus, these different conceptions of interest lead to contradictions between core and periphery. However, Stanford School optimistically predicts that over time peripheral states would conform to the new globally legitimized script and redefine their interests accordingly. Therefore, the harmonization of the interests between core and periphery states of the world society would terminate the existing conflicts (Frank et al. 2000b:125).

The main reason for these optimistic accounts offered by Stanford School rests upon its conception of 'actorhood'. In explaining states' motives for standardization, Stanford School argues that rather than articulating domestically determined cost-effective preferences, the 'actors' comply with the exogenous scripts of world society (Meyer & Jepperson 2000). In brief, they do what they are supposed to do in line with the socially recognized definition of actorness (Meyer et al. 1987:22). This account problematizes both the rationality and the interests of social actors. In this sense, conflicts are the outcome of exogenously determined interests and behaviour, and would end when the world society structuration develops more evenly at global and domestic levels. Challenging the approaches focusing on domestic cleavages such as ethnopolitics, Stanford School introduces a macro-phenomenological perspective by stressing on the global structural processes in the cultural domain. Culture here involves the definitions and standards without which actor and action would lose their proper meaning and legitimacy (Meyer et al. 1987:21, Meyer 2000).

Hironaka's research on civil wars is probably the most explicit account of conflict from the Stanford School perspective. In her seminal study, Hironaka (2005) emphasizes two exogenous structural processes that determine the length of civil conflicts, in addition to Cold War bipolarity.

The first process involves the *founding and the sustaining of the 'weak states'* -the states which lack the capacity to govern their people and territories- by the international community, which grants them both international recognition and aid. Many African states became independent as a result of the global campaigns of decolonization even though they were neither ready nor capable of governing themselves. Following Hironaka (2005:60), they suffered, from the beginning, from major structural weaknesses related to the lack of national integration within the society, lack of robust political institutions and identities (including rationalized bureaucratic and judicial structures), and lack of national resources to ensure domestic autonomy. Thus, unable to find efficient political avenues for placating their concerns over being excluded from political participation, people

in 'weak states' mobilize around ethnicity/identity and do not avoid conflict since the already weak military of the governing authority fails to intimidate them (Hironaka 2005:95-97).

The second exogenous structural process in modern conflicts involves inter-state interventions whose nature has been transformed under the globally institutionalized principle of non-aggression. The contemporary inter-state interventions are very different from the Great Powers' decisive interventions in the 19th century, which had put abrupt ends to many conflicts; the modern intervention is rather a 'dual-sided [low-intensity] intervention with infinite resources' (Hironaka 2005:142). To put it differently, both sides of the conflict find external – often covert - assistance, particularly in terms of arms and money supply, which at the end prolong the length of the conflicts (Hironaka 2005:154).

In summary, Stanford School provides two important findings to the analysis of the Cyprus conflict. First, regarding the origins of the conflict, it suggests looking both at the clashes between equally institutionalized global scripts and to the states' location within the world society. Second, structural weaknesses and the low-intensity inter-state interventions associated with the international state-centric system determine the length of the conflict.

In line with the second point, the role of the international community is significant in Cyprus, particularly in three ways. First, the 'Republic of Cyprus' is indeed a product of decolonization processes at the global level and even the negotiations over its founding constitution included external states such as Turkey, Greece, and the UK. The status of the new state of Cyprus as a 'weak state' was recognized from the beginning since three external states (Turkey, Greece, the UK) were granted the title of 'guarantor powers' and thus, the authority to intervene in Cyprus in order to restore order. Therefore, the sovereign independence of the RoC was already limited (Constantinou 2008).

Secondly, the issue of international recognition is central to the conflict as Cyprus is not a sovereign state, but 'an island with two governments' since 1974 (Hironaka 2005:64). Nevertheless, the Greek Cypriot administration in the southern Cyprus has been granted international recognition as the legitimate government of the Republic of Cyprus in spite of its lack of control over the northern territories of the island. Therefore, although TRNC could be deemed successful in controlling people and territory in northern Cyprus, it has not been granted international recognition, despite the efforts of Turkey. As a result, in contrast to southern Cyprus representatives, the Turkish Cypriot community, living in northern Cyprus, has not been represented at international forums and conferences.



Thirdly, the Cypriot communities have always been dependent on Greece and Turkey, and some groups within these communities even ask for alliance with these (motherland) countries rather than independence. In return, both Greece and Turkey have interfered several times in order to strengthen their respective Cypriot community. Greece supported the organization of the National Organization of Cypriot Struggle (EOKA) in 1950s and the National Organization of Cypriot Fighters (EOKA-B) in the 1960s which claimed 'enosis' (union) with Greece. For its part, Turkey has conducted a in the island in 1974 and has allegedly attempted to alter the demographic composition of the island by encouraging Turkish migration to Cyprus. At present, the claims for union have largely disappeared from the political agenda of the Cypriot communities. However, the dependency of these communities on Turkey and Greece in economic, social, and political domains still remains at a high level. Turkish military forces established in northern Cyprus still claim to provide the security of the Turkish Cypriot community. Besides, the Cyprus question has also become part of the bilateral sovereignty conflicts between Turkey and Greece. Consequently, inter-state intervention in Cyprus is not completely off the agenda and this might further prolong the conflict.

Consequently, it is necessary to incorporate the global context into the analysis of the Cyprus conflict. How would Stanford School be useful for understanding a political conflict such as Cyprus? Is the stalemate on the island the result of contradictory global scripts or the uneven distribution of particular scripts across societies?

In particular, this paper seeks to explain the failure of the UN, the role of the EU, and the current uncompromising stance of the conflicting parties. Primarily, it is crucial to investigate both the degree of world society structuration and the location of the conflicting parties (including Turkey and Greece) in the world society.

Concerning the *world society structuration*, it is plausible to suggest studying the concept of 'desecuritization' as the major global script with regard to the Cyprus conflict (Diez et al. 2006). Desecuritization could be defined as the deconstruction of the perception of existential threats (Huysmans 1998). It consists of a voluminous agenda including the respect for diversity, democracy, peaceful resolution of conflicts, human rights, and the retreat of the army from the socio-political spheres of life. The general assumption is that the adoption of the desecuritization norms by the conflicting parties would help them change their uncompromising attitudes and thus, end the existing conflict.

Following Stanford School, the clash between two contradictory global norms is a source of conflicts. In the case of desecuritization, it is difficult to claim that desecuritization faces rivalry from an equally

institutionalized contradictory norm. Although it could be argued that global terrorist attacks such as September 11th have reinforced further securitization practices in the modern era, there is no strong tendency to institutionalize securitization as a global norm at the UN and INGO contexts. An evidence is the 'naming and shaming' of states' securitization acts, including powerful states as the US by the international community (eg. Guantanamo Bay). In this sense, rather than focusing on the clash of global scripts, it is suggested to concentrate on the degree of institutionalization of desecuritization norms at the world society level.

It is remarkable that there are at least three types of exogenous rationalization processes associated with desecuritization in Cyprus. Firstly, there are the UN and non-governmental organizations efforts to establish a linkage between desecuritization in Cyprus and the collective well-being of humanity. Secondly, the US sees securitization in Cyprus as a challenge to the NATO security system since the Cyprus conflict could provoke a conflict between Turkey and Greece, which are important members of NATO's southern flank. Therefore, desecuritization in Cyprus is expected to enhance NATO members' interests in eastern Mediterranean security. Thirdly, the EU has established a link between desecuritization in Cyprus and EU membership (thus, national interests) for both Turkey and Cypriot communities.

In this context, it is important to note two things. Firstly, the discussed world society processes – at least, rhetorically - reinforce each other. For instance, the EU and the UN cooperated in the drafting of the Annan Plan, which aimed at reunifying the Cypriot communities, and the US supported them at the UN Security Council by proposing to monitor the implementation of the Annan Plan (albeit vetoed by Russia). In this sense, it is plausible to argue for the existence of a shared framework for desecuritization in Cyprus, which could strengthen its further institutionalization.

Secondly, among these processes of world society structuration, the EU has become the most influential actor from 1993 to 2004 due to its membership conditionality on Cyprus and Turkey. The parties to the conflict avoided further securitization in order to maintain the prospects for membership (Diez et al. 2006). The primacy attributed to the EU among other actors demonstrates that national interests prevail over other types of collective interests (be it humanity or NATO). This does not contradict Stanford School. On the contrary, Stanford School argues that world society constitutes the realm of international relations in terms of the primacy of the nation-state system and national interests (Meyer et al. 1997).



Given a strong degree of world society structuration vis-à-vis desecuritization, the *location of the conflicting actors in the world society* could help to predict their respective attitudes towards desecuritization in Cyprus. Accordingly, core societies which are strongly connected to world society are expected to adopt more quickly the desecuritization scripts whereas the peripheral ones would take longer time to do so.

Both the quality/quantity of non-governmental activity and the quality/quantity of the interaction with the EU could help to reveal the strength of connection to world society. For its part, the EU could be an indicator of state connection to the world society because it is mainly composed of the 'core states', and the EU institutions promote a universalistic understanding of human rights, individual rights, rational and scientific analysis (Manners 2008, Meyer 2001). Furthermore, with its funding programs, the EU supports non-governmental organizations and activities with a desecuritization agenda (Diez et al. 2006). In this sense, it could be argued that becoming closer to the EU means becoming closer to the world society.

From this framework, it could be deduced that being an EU member since 1981, Greece is the closest to the core of the world society in comparison to the other conflict actors, i.e. Cypriot communities and Turkey. Thus, Greece is expected to embrace and enact desecuritization earlier than the rest. Indeed, throughout the peace negotiations in the 1990s and 2000s, the official discourse of the Greek government has been in compliance with the general desecuritization agenda and the 'enosis' argument disappeared from the Greek discourse a long time ago. Nevertheless, it should also be kept in mind that Greece is at the periphery of the EU and is backwards in terms of compliance with the desecuritization norms in comparison to the EU's first rank members (Featherstone & Papadimitriou 2008).

It is possible to estimate Turkey's location within world society by demonstrating the intensity of its interactions with the external environment, such as its participation at international conferences and multilateral treaties on desecuritization. Additionally and more importantly, through its increased interactions with the EU (eg. screening since 1999, accession negotiations since 2005), Turkey gets closer to the core of world society and is expected to observe desecuritization norms. Indeed, particularly following the officialization of its EU candidature in 1999, Turkey has started to criticize its own traditional official discourse and approved – at least rhetorically- the need to desecuritize Cyprus.

There is a need to locate the Cypriot communities separately within the world society, as only one of them – the Greek Cypriot administration - is internationally recognized. In this sense, it is more connected to the world society than its non-recognized Turkish Cypriot counter-part. It is thus expected to see Greek Cypriot attitude in better harmony with global desecuritization norms. Furthermore, both Cypriot communities have been targets of the EU civil society programmes since the introduction of the UN Plan in November 2002. Therefore, the EU effect (in shifting their location closer to world society centre) explains the rise of the protests against the traditional securitization discourse of the ruling elite in northern Cyprus and the increase in desecuritization efforts between the Cypriot communities such as the opening of the borders in April 2003.

Despite its success in explaining the desecuritization efforts in Cyprus, Stanford School is of rather limited use in accounting for the rejection of the reunification plan by the Greek Cypriot community in a context defined by strong pressures from the international community. Moreover, it cannot explain Turkey's resistance to expand the customs union to Cyprus even at the expense of Turkey's EU membership prospects.

It is particularly problematic to see that these two developments occurred in spite of the increasing bi-communal non-governmental activities and the accession negotiations with the EU, which assumedly must have shifted both the Greek Cypriot community and Turkey closer to the centre of the world society. In this respect, a different theoretical perspective, which is informed by MST and focuses on the internal conflict dynamics, might be useful.

Institutionalized Conflict and Failed Interventions: Modern Systems Theory & Conflict communication

Institutions are generally thought a solution to conflicts as they maintain or restore the societal order through the mediation of existing hostilities (Sambanis 2005:308-9). Yet, conflict is also an institution per se, which self-activates and perpetuates itself through conflict communication (Messmer 2007:103). Correspondingly, conflict could even be interpreted as a social system à la Luhmann, which establishes and reinforces its own semantics, elements, properties as opposed to an environment it constructs (Messmer 2007). Therefore, conflict is not the outcome of the conflicting interests, but rather a social conflict precedes the motives, interests, actions, and identities of the conflicting parties (Messmer 2007:102). Hence, as against the mainstream scholarship that focuses on the individual motives and interests of the conflicting parties as the causes of social conflicts, Messmer (2007:102) shifts the focus to the structural dynamics of conflict development because a motive might provoke a conflict in one context but not in another one.



It is thus useful to look at the stages of the conflict communication in order to grasp the significant role of the self-referential mechanisms through which the conflict gains its own momentum (Schlichte 2007:65-66). In this context, the basic stages of the conflict communication could be analyzed according to the intensity of the 'securitization' discourse within the communication.

In summary there are four stages which are, from the weakest emphasis on securitization to the strongest one: (1) *Conflict episode* is limited in temporal context and allows for a maximum space for negotiation between the parties, (2) *Issue conflict* is limited to particular issues and is unlikely to disrupt the totality of the relationship between the parties, (3) *Identity (relational) conflict* involves the perception of threat to the 'self' and allows for only restricted space for negotiation between the parties, and (4) *Subordination (power) conflict* involves the perception of an existential threat, which would justify extraordinary protective measures and so, allows for a minimum space for negotiation (Messmer 2007, Diez et al. 2006).

The analysis of the Cyprus conflict from this perspective would help to explain why external interventions by the UN and the EU have failed to desecuritize the island so far. From the Stanford School point of view, Hironaka (2005:145-148) links the failures of the external interventions to the structural weaknesses of the states. The structural weaknesses would destabilize and corrupt each government of the 'weak states' and thus, the intervening powers would always risk facing the dethronement of the government they supported. Differently from an MST account, a critical dimension is introduced: it is suggested that one has to look at the conflict communication stages because the interventions are likely to yield different results depending on the stage of the conflict communication.

A review of the media in Cyprus, Turkey and Greece would demonstrate the stage of the conflict communication in Cyprus, and could explain the reasons for the actors' current uncompromising attitudes. It could be claimed that the Cyprus conflict fluctuates between the third (identity conflict) and the fourth (subordination conflict) stages of the conflict communication, as the communication between the communities had been continuously disrupted and even face-to-face meetings had been refused by the community leaders for a long-time.

More significantly, it is crucial to ask how the external interferences such as those of the UN and the EU, are interpreted within the communicative framework of the conflict. The external interventions become internal to the conflict communication system as they are translated into the systemic semantics or 'basal codes' by the conflict communication agents (Albert et al. 2008). Thus, external intervention could not affect the conflict independently from the existing

contextual communicative processes. Accordingly, the successful effect of an intervention is not really dependent on the intention of the intervening parties. It rather depends upon the stage of the conflict communication during the intervention or in other words, upon the reception/translation of the intervention by the conflicting parties.

Henceforth, the EU's interferences intended to support the UN-led reunification plan which failed to prevent the Greek Cypriot veto. Rather, the EU became a strategic tool at the hand of the Greek Cypriot administration which successfully connected its nationalistic agenda, particularly its political demands of unlimited mobility within the island, with the freedoms granted by the European Single Market: the free movement of people, goods, capital and services. So, despite the fact that the EU was ready to allow derogations in this domain under the UN plan (in order to appease Turkish Cypriots' concerns over being dominated by three times wealthier Greek Cypriots), the Greek Cypriot administration embraced a discourse of a 'European solution' in order to opt out from the UN-led negotiations on this issue (Diez et al. 2006).

Finally, in line with the Luhmannian approach, the World Society Research Group (WSRG) advances interesting insights into the conflict dynamics through its emphasis on the interrelationship between *trans-border society formation* and *community formation*, both simultaneously taking place in world society. Following Weber, community is distinguished from society in terms of the solidarity among its members, which reinforces the structuration of inclusion/exclusion patterns; and for its part, society implies a broader context in which the social actors unite strategically in order to pursue their diverse strategic interests (WSRG 2000:14). In this respect, the encounters between the rising particularism (community formation) and the rising universalism (society formation) tend to provoke conflicts, especially when the 'particular' perceives the processes of universalization as a threat (WSRG 2000:15).

For its part, the rise of particularism/communitarianization could also inhibit the universalistic processes of society formation (WSRG 2000:13). Consequently, Stetter (2007:47) argues that all regionalization processes such as European integration, involve dual processes of constituting borders at spatial level and establishing patterns of inclusion/exclusion at functional levels. Thus, conflicts are likely to arise 'if inclusion/exclusion patterns accumulate across various social spheres and affect specific social groups within a distinct spatial context' (Stetter 2007:48).

In this framework, the EU interventions in the Cyprus conflict could be conceived as part of the community formation processes whereas the UN efforts could be deemed as intending society formation in Cyprus. It is true that the conception of the EU as a community/society



formation is controversial when it is thought against the historically and normatively grounded Westphalian nation-state system (Albert & Brock 2001:42). However, if the variable 'Westphalian nation-state system' is controlled, in comparison to the universalistic logic of the UN, the EU is more like a community than a society. Moreover, as the Turkish parties to the Cyprus conflict are not members of the EU, it is difficult to perceive the EU efforts as part of an EU-led society formation process in Cyprus, at least from their perspectives.

Accordingly, the cooperation between the EU and the UN becomes problematic. Instead, the EU and the UN could be seen as mutually exclusive processes of respectively particularization and universalization. The rising influence of the EU over the Greek Cypriot community through membership has thus led to the formation of a sense of community excluding the Turkish Cypriots. Therefore, with the accession of Greek Cyprus to the EU, the demarcation line assumed as temporary by the UN has been further consolidated given the EU's inherently exclusionary policies of sustaining both its territorial and functional borders. This might in turn intensify further the community formation between Turkish Cypriots and Turkey.

Similarly, Sjørusen (2006) distinguishes two main orientations in the EU foreign policy-making: a *rights-based* foreign policy (in line with universalistic society formation) and a *value-based* foreign policy (in line with particularistic community formation). Given the relativistic nature of values, a value-based EU foreign policy might be seen as new colonialism and be counter-productive (ibid).

Accordingly, it is important to note that if the EU chooses to emphasize community formation in terms of particularistic values/interests, it would lose much of its global attraction and authority. Rather, if it stresses the promotion of world culture, it would be able to help the concerned parties involved in the conflict move towards the core of the world society and thus, desecuritization. In other words, the EU could contribute to the resolution of the Cyprus problem not as an actor but as an organizational carrier of the world culture.

Concluding Remarks

This study used Stanford School and Modern Systems Theory to analyze the Cyprus conflict from a critical and sociologically-informed perspective. Despite their potential valuable contributions to the field, these theories have been generally overlooked by the mainstream IR scholarship. Indeed, there is a significant basis for suggesting Stanford School perspective vis-à-vis the origination of conflict while the accounts of social conflict deduced from Modern Systems Theory research could enhance our understanding of the conflict dynamics and the effects of external intervention.

Therefore, in order to trace the origins of the Cyprus conflict, it is necessary to investigate the degree of world society structuration with respect to desecuritization. This could be done through a discourse analysis of documents published by the UN, the EU and the related INGOs. Secondly, in order to locate the conflict parties within the world society, it is suggested to both evaluate their location vis-à-vis the EU and conduct a qualitative review of their official discourse in order to investigate the centrality of the desecuritization norms.

Initial findings on the desecuritization discourses between 2002 and 2004 demonstrate that Greece has been the closest actor to the world society whereas the Turkish Cypriot community, which founded a non-recognized state in 1983, has been the more distant one. Turkey and the Greek Cypriot community have moved closer towards the EU due to their candidacy and thus, to the world society. However, the Greek Cypriot community constitutes an anomaly as it de-emphasized desecuritization while getting closer to the EU, and thus to world society. Furthermore, Turkey's recent refusal to interact with the new Cypriot member of the EU shadows its proximity with the EU and world society.

It is recommended to investigate how external interventions by the EU have been interpreted by the conflicting parties. The findings are to be evaluated within the interrelated contexts of society/community and inclusion/exclusion. At this initial stage, it can be argued that the external interventions to the Cyprus conflict are not autonomous from the existing conflict communication, which constitutes the framework in which external messages are received, rejected, and transformed.

Finally, there is no need to be pessimistic about the role of the EU in the Cyprus conflict. The discussions in this paper demonstrate that the EU as an 'actor' has had unintended and even counter-productive effects in the Cyprus conflict such as reinforcing the existing boundaries between the Cypriot communities. However, it could be able to transform the existing communication schemes through its promotion of world culture, in particular desecuritization norms. In this sense, it could be successful in catalyzing a viable solution in Cyprus not as an 'actor' but as an 'organizational carrier' of world culture.



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