

**The Reflections of Identity in Cyprus: Claims and  
Perspectives on Eastern Mediterranean Hydrocarbons**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO  
MASTER OF SCIENCE IN POLITICAL SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL  
RELATIONS  
OF  
MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY, NORTHERN CYPRUS  
CAMPUS**

**BY**

**SERPİL İŞLEK**

**IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS  
FOR  
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SCIENCE  
IN  
THE DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL  
RELATIONS**

**JANUARY 2016**

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# **The Reflections of Identity in Cyprus: Claims and Perspectives on Eastern Mediterranean Hydrocarbons**

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## **Abstract**

The aim of this thesis is to analyse the in-between perceptions of identity in Cyprus and the relation to the arguments over natural gas and hydrocarbon reserves in the Eastern Mediterranean Sea. In this regard, this thesis looks at the impacts of the natural gas activities and arguments on escalating nationalism and on the Cyprus Problem.

The debates and perspectives on nationalism, identity, the dispute of sovereignty and ownership constitute the main factors for the Cyprus Problem and for the relations between Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot communities on the basis of political power matters. Therefore, this study sheds light on the politics of identity and national narratives/imaginings within ‘Cypriot society’ which rises from the simultaneous existence of similarities and differences between two communities, and the ethnic and territorial discussions on the identification of national identity by focusing on the changing relations and characters of nationalisms in the island – that is the discourse of motherland nationalisms (ethnic nationalism) and of Cypriotism (civic nationalism). Moreover, what kind of impacts external and internal conditions and relations have had on identity formation, and on the perspectives and perceptions of both Cypriot communities, the sense of belongingness and ownership are studied. Considering all these arguments, this thesis focuses upon the reflections of politics of identity over the claims of natural resources since the intertwined relation of identity, nationalism, the Cyprus Problem and geopolitical relations has revealed itself in the arguments and perspectives about natural gas and hydrocarbon reserves in the Eastern Mediterranean Sea.

**Key words:** Identity, nationalism, sovereignty, Cyprus, hydrocarbons, exclusive economic zone

# **Kıbrıs'ta Kimlik Yansımaları: Doğu Akdeniz Hidrokarbonları Üzerine Tartışmalar ve Perspektifler**

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## **ÖZ**

Bu tezin amacı Kıbrıs'taki kimliğin arada kalmışlık algılarını ve bunun Doğu Akdeniz'deki doğal gaz ve hidrokarbon rezervleriyle ilgili argümanlarla olan ilişkisini analiz etmektir. Bu doğrultuda, bu tez, doğal gaz aktivitelerinin ve argümanlarının milliyetçiliğin artması ve Kıbrıs Sorunu üzerine etkilerine bakmaktadır.

Milliyetçilik, kimlik, egemenlik ve sahiplik sorunu üzerine tartışmalar ve perspektifler, siyasi güç meseleleri temelli Kıbrıs Sorunu'nun ve Kıbrıslı Türk ve Kıbrıslı Rum toplumları arasındaki ilişkilerinin ana faktörlerini teşkil etmektedir. Dolayısıyla, bu çalışma iki toplum arasındaki benzerliklerin ve farklılıkların eşzamanlı varlığından çıkan 'Kıbrıs Toplumı' içindeki kimlik siyaseti ve ulusal anlatılara/düşümelere ve ulusal kimlik tanımlanması üzerine etnik ve ülkesel (teritoryal) tartışmalara adadaki değişen ilişkilere ve milliyetçiliğin karakterlerine odaklanarak – ki bunlar anavatan milliyetçiliği (etnik milliyetçilik) ve Kıbrıslılık (yurttaşlık milliyetçiliği) söylemleridir – ışık tutacaktır. Dahası, kimlik oluşumu üzerine ve iki Kıbrıslı toplumun perspektif ve algıları, aidiyet ve sahiplilik duyguları üzerine iç ve dış durumların ve ilişkilerin ne çeşit etkileri olduğunu çalışır. Tüm bu argümanları göz önünde bulundurarak, bu tez, kimlik politikalarının doğal kaynaklar hakkındaki talepler üzerine yansımalarına odaklanır; çünkü kimlik, milliyetçilik, Kıbrıs Sorunu ve jeopolitik ilişkilerin birbirine dolanmış ilişkileri, Doğu Akdeniz'deki doğal gaz ve hidrokarbon rezervleri hakkındaki tartışmalar ve perspektiflerde kendini göstermiştir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Kimlik, milliyetçilik, egemenlik, Kıbrıs, hidrokarbon, Münhasır Ekonomik Bölge

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*“Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow,  
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,  
To the last syllable of recorded time;  
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools  
The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!  
Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player,  
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,  
And then is heard no more. It is a tale  
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,  
Signifying nothing.”*

— **William Shakespeare,**  
**Macbeth (Act 5, Scene 5)**

*To My Family ...*



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First of all, I would like to present my sincere thanks to my supervisor Assist. Prof. Dr. Luciano Baracco for his guidance, his useful and constructive comments throughout my writing process. I am also thankful for the time he has spent for the draft of chapters and of the thesis. Furthermore, I would like to thank Assist Prof. Dr. Nur Köprülü and Prof. Dr. Recep Boztemur for their participation in the examining committee.

I would like to thank all my instructors since the beginning of my METU - NCC adventure for their contribution to my academic knowledge, helpful and friendly attitudes. Especially, despite the fact that he had to leave the campus, I would also like to express my appreciation to Assoc. Prof. Dr. Julian Saurin for his inspiring and extraordinary perspectives both academically and personally as this has enriched my way of looking at problems, situations.

I would like to express my greatest appreciation and thanks to my dear colleagues in the Directorate of Social and Cultural Affairs; Enise Işıkgün, Handan Zengi Coşkun and İpek Cem Ağınlı, and to our manager Nazile Küpeli as we have been together since my undergraduate years beginning from 2010. I am really grateful for their continuous support, motivational words, sisterly love and their endless faith in me, especially during the hard days of thesis writing. Glad to have you in my life and have the chance to work with you, the perfect team!

I am also deeply grateful to my dearest friends for their continuous support, faith in me, love, for encouraging me during this process, for bearing with me in bad times, and for the good motivational times that we have spent together; Nejla Yakupođluları Tokmak, Burcu Ermeydan, Seval Avkan, Furkan Ercan, Fadıl Karaosman, Shahab Miri, Akif Cem Özkardeş.

The last but not the least, I would like to present my gratitude to my mum, my brother and my uncle. They have never stopped supporting, encouraging, loving and above all trusting in me in each period of my life, for all the decisions I have made. They are the reason which has given me patience to finish this work. Therefore, this thesis is dedicated to them, especially to my mother.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

**AKEL** – Progressive Party of Working People (Anorthotikó Kómma Ergazómenou Laoú)

**EEZ** – Exclusive Economic Zone

**EOKA** – National Organisation of Cypriot Fighters (Ethnikí Orgánosis Kyprion Agoniston)

**EU** – European Union

**ICJ** – International Court of Justice

**MFA** – Ministry of Foreign Affairs

**NATO** – North Atlantic Treaty Organization

**NAVTEX** – Navigational Telex

**RoC** – Republic of Cyprus

**TMT** – Turkish Resistance Organisation (Türk Mukavemet Teşkilatı)

**TPAO** – Turkish Petroleum Corporation (Türkiye Petrolleri Anonim Ortaklığı)

**TRNC** - Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus

**UN** – United Nations

**UNCLOS** – United Nations Convention on Law of Sea

# INTRODUCTION

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The aim of this thesis is to analyse the in-between perceptions of identity in Cyprus and the impacts of the arguments and claims about hydrocarbon activities in the Eastern Mediterranean Sea in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) and territorial waters of the island. In this regard, this thesis focuses upon the impacts of the natural gas activities and arguments on escalating nationalism and on the Cyprus Problem. This thesis also looks at nationalism and identity arguments as these constitute the main factors for the Cyprus Problem and for the relations of Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot communities. Although the Cyprus Problem is seen as an inter-communal dispute, it has always had an international character not just because of the parties involved in (Turkey – Greece – United Kingdom – Turkish and Greek Cypriots – the United Nations and European Union) but also because of sovereignty and recognition disputes between two Cypriot communities as this involves the third party interventions (such as the UN and the EU)<sup>1</sup>. Therefore, in this thesis, I will be looking at the intertwined relation of identity, nationalism, Cyprus Problem and geopolitical relations. In this regard, the hydrocarbons

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<sup>1</sup> This was also mentioned, in an interview with EU News, by Ivailo Kalfin, Bulgarian member of the Committee on Budgetary Control of European Parliament. He states that 'in finding a solution to the Cyprus Problem, the UN should be more active. Neither Turkey nor Greece can solve this on their own. The Problem has international dimension. [...] There are several actors involved. It has been unresolved for half a century. The one to solve the Cyprus Problem can be given a Nobel Prize.' Kıbrıs Postası, 8<sup>th</sup> December, 2012. 'Kalfin: The one to solve the Cyprus Problem can be given a Nobel Prize'.

case is chosen particularly as this intertwined relation has revealed itself on the basis of sovereign rights and ownership claims to these resources.

The main purpose of the study is to analyse the intertwined relation of identity, nationalism, the Cyprus Problem and the hydrocarbon discussions. In order to understand this intertwined relation and the reflections of these factors in the hydrocarbon issue, on the explorations and ownership claims, this study shall focus on the emergence of nationalist ideologies, changing relations and characters of nationalisms in the island – that is the *discourse of motherland nationalisms* (ethnic nationalism) and *of Cypriotism* (civic nationalism); on the impacts of these nationalist ideologies on the identity formation and consciousness of people of Cyprus; on what kind of impacts external and internal conditions and relations have had on identity formation and perceptions of people within each community.

Following the main research purpose, the thesis examines the development of nationalist ideologies and identity formation process; how has the British Colonial period, inter-communal conflicts and partition of the island as a result of Turkish intervention in 1974, and establishment of Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus affected the role and character of nationalisms and identity formation?; how has the internationalised status of the Cyprus Problem affected this process of identity formation?; what kind of role has *recognition* and *sovereignty* had on the identity perceptions of Turkish Cypriots? What are the hegemonic discourses of Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots about identity? Furthermore, as a result of internal and external factors, we see ethnic and civic types of nationalism and identity (these factors



and types will be discussed in detail in the following parts). Therefore, the impacts of the simultaneous existence of ethnic and civic/territorial identity on the position and political strategies of Cypriots is the main argument in this research.

As I mentioned earlier, I will focus upon evolvement of identity disputes, perceptions and standpoints in Cyprus. One of the reasons is that we have relatively less studies particularly on the ethnic and civic nationalist perspectives together and on the 'in-between status of ideologies' within the island. Moreover, studies on Cyprus mostly focus upon inter-state relations and political perspectives and influences of the Cyprus Problem<sup>2</sup>. The literature on *Cypriot* identity and types of nationalisms in Cyprus is not very extensive; because studies mostly argue about negotiation process, nationalisms of the two Cypriot communities, problems of international law and violations, sovereignty and recognition, and in the recent decade, discussions on the Annan Plan and European Union membership of the Republic of Cyprus and its reflections on the Cyprus Question for integration ideas as a possible solution. We have a gap in terms of comparative studies on nationalisms in

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<sup>2</sup> See, Bryant, R. (2004). *Imagining the Modern: The Cultures of Nationalism in Cyprus*, London: I.B Tauris.; Calothchos, V. (1998). *Cyprus and its People: Nation, Identity and Experience in Unimaginable Community, 1955-1997*, Boulder: West View Press Crawshaw, N. (1978). *The Cyprus Revolt: An Account of the Struggle for Union with Greece*. London: George Allen & Unwin.; Ertegün, N.M. (1984). *The Cyprus Dispute and the Birth of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus*. Nicosia: K. Rustem and Brother.; Camp, G.D. (1980). 'Greek-Turkish Conflict over Cyprus', *Political Science Quarterly*, 95(1), pp.43-70.; Hasgüler, M. (2007). *Kıbrıs'ta Enosis ve Taksim Politikalarının Sonu*, İstanbul: Alfa Yayınları.; Kızılyürek, N. (2002) *Milliyetçilik Kıskaçında Kıbrıs*, Ankara: İletişim Yayınları.; Peristianis, N. (2006). Cypriot Nationalism, Dual Identity, and Politics. In Y. Papadakis, N. Peristianis & G. Welz (eds.) *Divided Cyprus: Modernity, History and an Island in Conflict*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. pp. 100-121. Stavrides, Z. (1999). *The Cyprus Conflict: National Identity and Statehood*, Nicosia: CYREP.

Cyprus that argues about motherland nationalisms, ethnic nationalisms and Cypriotism as a distinct form of nationalism. Therefore, this thesis will contribute to the literature on nationalisms in Cyprus. Additionally, nationalisms – especially Cypriotism – have different process, meanings and motivations. For instance, if we take the Turkish Cypriot side as an example, because of the international status of the Northern Cyprus, because of being internationally unrecognised, Turkish Cypriots have been exposed to duality and hybrid identity conflicts between the discourse of motherland nationalism and of Cypriotism. Especially with the effects of opening the border gates in 2003 and re-establishment of interaction between Turkish and Greek Cypriots as internal factors; and the effects of the EU membership of the Republic of Cyprus and globalised relations as the external factors, civic nationalism has become a challenging standpoint in opposition to ethnic nationalism. In other words, for Turkish Cypriots the idea of taking part in European politics has become to be seen as a tool to end their half a century isolation and reintegrate into international politics.

Besides analysing different types of nationalism, this study will contribute to the recent topic of the hydrocarbons and EEZ disputes because it focuses upon the impacts of the natural gas activities and arguments on escalating nationalism and on the Cyprus Problem. Therefore, the significance of this comes from this mutual relation as it shows the relation of a recent topic with the old but long-lasting domestic problem of the island. To put it in other way, this thesis presents an assessment of the intertwined relation between

identity arguments, nationalist ideologies and the Cyprus Problem in relation to the sovereignty dispute.

Consequently, as mentioned above, this case is important because it is a new dispute (though actors and ideologies are not new) and involves the political arguments of nationalism and identity issues in conjunction with external and domestic relations (with Cyprus Problem and geopolitical relations). When the activities regarding the hydrocarbons were revealed, the hydrocarbons issue was regarded as a hope for unification. However, it has transformed into a dispute and resulted in, for a while, the break-up of the negotiation process for reaching a solution to the Cyprus Problem. Involvement of international factors/actors, and arguments on who owns the right to explore and benefit from the natural resources have been important factors in this transformation. On the one hand, while the Greek Cypriots accept that the Turkish Cypriots have a right to share natural resources after a settlement, under the framework of a federal united Cyprus<sup>3</sup>, they do not discuss any aspect of hydrocarbons with Turkish Cypriots, mainly because of sovereignty issues and political equality arguments. On the other hand, Turkish Cypriots argue that initiatives concerning Cyprus' offshore hydrocarbons should wait until a political settlement is reached and a bicomunal federal authority is established. Their argument is that the Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots mutually possess the exercise of *sovereign rights*

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<sup>3</sup> Lisa M. Buitenheim, Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Cyprus, stated in the Transcript of Remarks after the meeting of Cyprus Leaders, UN Protected Area, Nicosia, that 'It should be understood that natural resources, if they are discovered, would be for the benefit of all Cypriots—Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots—under the framework of a federal united Cyprus'. (16 September 2011).

at the international level (such as giving licences for hydrocarbon prospecting and exploration as well as authorizing exploration and drilling operations offshore) because they are also the equal constituent communities under the 1960 Constitution of the Republic of Cyprus (RoC). But the contradictory point here is that since the division, the Republic has not represented both communities, but it has only represented the Greek Cypriot identity. In short, the most important concern of Turkish Cypriots in their claims over natural gas is related to sharing sovereignty<sup>4</sup>.

In the light of all these arguments, in order to understand and assess nationalisms in Cyprus (ethnic nationalisms and Cypriotism/Cypriotness), it will be useful to benefit from a conceptual framework which strengthens nationalist ideologies. Nationalist ideologies mainly argue that people are to be united around a common history, culture and understanding. Therefore, they mostly emphasise historical myths, collective memories, idea of the *nation* as territorial and political entity, cultural values and daily practices. Most importantly, they are able to create emotional and psychological bonding for nationhood and/or statehood which allows these ideologies and their actors to easily control people through political aspect of identity formation. With regard to nationalism arguments, the conceptual framework includes; state, nation, national identity, citizenship, collective memory, historical myths, invented traditions, ethnicity or ethnic culture, commonalities and othering (*us-them*

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<sup>4</sup> There is an important distinction between sovereignty right and sovereign rights under international law. This is disregarded in most of the arguments about explorations and EEZ for the sake of political interests. These will be discussed in the third part of the thesis.

division)<sup>5</sup>. As a result of my research in the literature, I have found using different ideas and arguments by some significant scholars<sup>6</sup> more useful rather than choosing one of the approaches/typologies of nationalism to assess the nationalism and identity issue in the case of Cyprus. For instance, we see different perspectives in different times of history. That is to say, identity formation in Cyprus is a process shaped by experiences, practices, conditions, interests and outside forces. Therefore, we see a duality of identity which refers to the coexistence of ethnic and civic national identity and the adoption of these identities according to circumstances<sup>7</sup>. Consequently, it is not possible to use one approach of nationalism; otherwise, we can miss elements to assess the perceptions of nationalisms and identity formation.

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<sup>5</sup> Breuilly, J. (1993, 1994). *Nationalism and the State*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.; Guibernau, M. (1996). *Nationalisms: The Nation-state and Nationalism in the Twentieth Century*. Cambridge: Polity Press.; Özkırımlı, U. (2000, 2010). *Theories of Nationalism: A Critical Introduction*. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.

<sup>6</sup> The scholars I will be mostly using ideas from are Ernest Gellner, Anthony Smith, Elie Kedourie, Benedict Anderson, Eric Hobsbawm, Stuart Hall and Michael Billig. The viewpoints and concepts they are using will be more useful for Cyprus case since just one approach of nationalism will not be efficient to assess.

\*Anderson, B. (1983, 1991). *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso.; Billig, M. (1995). *Banal Nationalism*. London: Sage.; Connor, W. (1994). *Ethnonationalism: The Quest for Understanding*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.; Gellner, E. (2006). *Nations and Nationalism*. Oxford: Blackwell.; Hall, S. (1996). Who Needs 'Identity'? In S. Hall & R. du Gay (eds.) *Questions of Cultural Identity*. London: Sage. pp. 1-17.; Hobsbawm, E. (1994, 2008). *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.; Kedourie, E. (1986, 1993). *Nationalism*. USA: Blackwell.; Smith, A. D. (2009). *Ethno-symbolism and nationalism: A Cultural Approach*. USA, Canada: Routledge. Smith, A. D. (1998). *Nationalism and Modernism: A Critical Survey of Recent Theories of Nations*. London: Routledge.

<sup>7</sup> An, A. (1998). Kıbrıslılık Bilincinin Geliştirilmesi, Lefkoşa: Galeri Kültür Yayınları.; Hasgüler, M. (ed.) (2008). Kıbrıslılık. İstanbul: Agora Kitaplığı.; Mavratsas, C. (2000). Elen Milliyetçiliğinin Kıbrıs'taki Yönleri. Lefkoşa: Galeri Kültür Yayınları.; Peristianis, N. (2006). Cypriot Nationalism, Dual Identity, and Politics. In Y. Papadakis, N. Peristianis & G. Welz (eds.). *Divided Cyprus: Modernity, History and an Island in Conflict*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. pp. 100-121.; Şahin, S. (2011). Open Borders, Closed Minds: The Discursive Construction of National Identity in North Cyprus. *Media, Culture & Society*. 33(4). pp. 583-597.

The structure of this thesis can be divided into four parts in addition to introduction and conclusion parts.

After the introduction, in the first part, theoretical and conceptual framework will be given. In this chapter, the main approaches to nationalism and concepts which strengthens the nationalist ideologies and identity formation will be presented in detail. In this respect, elements of ethnic and civic nationalisms will be discussed. As a result, these arguments will help me to analyse the simultaneous existence of ethnic and civic nationalism, the process of identity formation and reflections of identity issue on the discourses of people in North Cyprus.

In the second part, historical background on the identity formation and changes in the perceptions of Cypriots will be given. Moreover, development of and changes in the nationalism arguments – that is the motherland nationalisms and Cypriotism – will be analysed.

In the third part, I will provide information about the disputes over natural gas and hydrocarbon reserves in the Exclusive Economic Zone of the island. In this regard, this chapter will include international law aspects of the case and the development of the dispute. These reserves have been seen as a hope for unification; however, at the same time, they have become an area of competition and conflict.

In the fourth part, the main research topic will be discussed. I will try to analyse the intertwined relation of identity, nationalism ideologies, the Cyprus Problem and the hydrocarbon case in the Eastern Mediterranean, within the

Exclusive Economic Zone of the island. In this respect, the sovereignty dispute and the impacts on the Cyprus Problem will be the main focus in this part. What the role of identity is in these disputes on the resources will be studied.

Last part will be the conclusion part in which there will be a brief evaluation of the case.

## CHAPTER I

### THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

---

This part presents the main discussions and concepts on nationalism and identity formation. It aims to give a theoretical and conceptual overview of different perspectives and arguments on identity and nationalism so as to have a better elaboration of the Cypriot case. In general terms, it focuses on ethnic and civic nationalisms as approaches to nationalism revolve around either ethnic elements or civic elements in their arguments.

Identity, ethnicity, nation, nation-state and nationalism are mutually related concepts as each has an effect on the other/s or a cause for the other/s. Therefore, these will be the conceptual framework of this study and chapter. In the light of these concepts, primordialist, modernist and ethno-symbolist approaches to nationalism will be discussed in this part.

Nationalism is a particular way of seeing and interpreting the world, a frame of reference that helps us make sense of and structure the reality that surround us, as Özkırmılı argues<sup>8</sup>. Moreover, Calhoun also states that 'nationalism is a rhetoric for speaking about too many different things for a single theory to explain it<sup>9</sup>. Therefore, it is hard to understand through the

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<sup>8</sup> Özkırmılı, 2005: 30.

<sup>9</sup> Calhoun, 1997: 21.



lenses of one theory or approach. However, the perspectives in the literature generally present two main different approaches to nationalism either labelled as *ethnic* and *civic* nationalism or *primordialism* and *modernism*. The ethno-symbolist approach can be regarded as an in-between approach as it embraces elements from both primordialist and modernist approach.

Before moving to these approaches, in order to understand the relations between identity construction and nationalist ideologies and the reflections of these two over the practices, behaviours and strategies of people, first, we need to look at how nation and identity are defined by different scholars.

Some argue that it is ethnicity that creates nations and states. Anthony Smith, argues that 'the most latter day nations are constructed around a dominant ethnies, which annexed or attracted other ethnic communities into the state it founded and to which it gave a name and a cultural character'<sup>10</sup>. The word *ethnie* has Greek origins and means *people*, historical human groupings in a given society. In this respect, as Hastings states, an ethnic group is a group of people which has shared cultural identity and spoken language<sup>11</sup>. Smith advocates that ethnic identities and communities have generally been regarded as the basis of the nation; for the formation and persistence of the nation, for national survival and unity<sup>12</sup>. For Smith, ethnicity is the one factor which pervades the social and cultural life of antiquity, not nationality<sup>13</sup>. In other

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<sup>10</sup> Smith, 1991: 38-39.

<sup>11</sup> Hastings, 1999: 3.

<sup>12</sup> Smith, 2009.; Wan and Vanderwerf, 2009.

<sup>13</sup> Guibernau, 1996: 50.

words, he emphasises ethnics/ ethnicity rather than nationalism and nationality.

In this respect, for Smith, a nation is;

a named and self-defining community whose members cultivate myths, shared memories, symbols, traditions and values, inhabit and are attached to historic territories or 'homelands', create and disseminate a distinctive public culture, and observe shared customs and standardised laws.<sup>14</sup>

Moreover, Connor argues that ethnicity is a step in the process of nation-formation<sup>15</sup>. Ethnicity and ancestry are useful and powerful instruments to unify groups. For Connor, the nation is defined as 'a self-differentiating ethnic group'<sup>16</sup>. That is to say, nationhood should have 'a popularly held awareness of belief that one's own group is unique in a most vital sense. In the absence of such a popularly held conviction, there is only an ethnic group'<sup>17</sup>. Therefore, he uses the concept of *ethnonationalism*. In this respect, nation is generally defined as the organised action of groups to form an entity by emphasising the sense of belonging in line with its common language, race, culture and religion<sup>18</sup>. As Connor emphasises:

it is the group-notion of kinship and uniqueness of one's group that is the essence of the nation, and tangible characteristics such as religion and language are significant to the nation only to the degree to which they contribute to this notion or sense of the group's self-identity and uniqueness.<sup>19</sup>

For Connor, identity does not draw its sustenance from the facts but from perceptions; not from chronological, factual history, but from sentient, felt

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<sup>14</sup> Smith, 2009: 29.; Smith, 1991: 14.

<sup>15</sup> Connor, 1994: 13.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 42.

<sup>17</sup> Connor, 1994: 42.

<sup>18</sup> Kedourie, 1993: 67.; Kohn, 2005: 10.

<sup>19</sup> Connor, 1994: 104.

history<sup>20</sup>. Thus, psychological elements of national identities are very much important for nationhood. Moreover, he also acknowledges the complexity of nations and the multiple identifications within the national groups as a result of these psychological elements. As a consequence, this brings us to the 'us' and 'them' differences within a community. Connor argues that the self-awareness which is the sine qua non of the nation should also embrace knowledge of non-members of one's own unique group<sup>21</sup>. In short, in the light of all these, we can say that loyalty to nation comes first, compared to loyalty to state. According to the loyalty to state, the idea of nation aims at self-determination through politicising identity and establishing this belongingness to a political entity. Therefore, it means that nations and nationalisms are modern understandings.

In contrast to ethnicity-focused perspectives, Gellner does not see ethnic characteristics/ ethnicity as essential for the emergence of a nation, nation-state or nationalism. He argues that nationalism is a product of modernity and came into being as a result of the transition from agrarian society into an industrial one. Moreover, he advocates that nations did not make states or nationalism, states and nationalisms created nations<sup>22</sup>. According to Gellner, the nation depends upon political and intellectual elite imposing a shared culture on the whole population in a territory particularly through the national education system<sup>23</sup>. In this way, all the members of the nation have minimum flexibility to fulfil a variety of roles. The most important

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<sup>20</sup> Connor, 2004: 45.

<sup>21</sup> Connor, 1994: 48.

<sup>22</sup> Gellner, 2006: 1.

<sup>23</sup> Işıkşal, 2002: 5.

element is the *will to form a political unit*. Moreover, nationalism affects or produces the *standardisation/ homogenisation of culture* through intellectuals. Gellner argues that cultural differentiation, in which a higher class of rulers and social stratification exists, is most likely to result in mobilisations for self-determination, for having their own state<sup>24</sup>. Since 'industrial society has a complex division of labour and interdependence internally', the communication and social gap between high culture and low culture should be negligibly small and insignificant<sup>25</sup>. Gellner argues that homogeneity of culture was an unlikely determinant of political boundaries in the agrarian world<sup>26</sup>. In this respect, transition from Agraria to Industria is also the transition from a world in which high (literacy and education-linked) cultures are a minority accomplishment and privilege to a world in which they become the pervasive culture of society as a whole<sup>27</sup>. The main reason for this pervasiveness is that modern society needs everyone to possess skills, a level of literacy and sophistication provided through prolonged schooling<sup>28</sup> in order to become a member, part of that political, social, economic order. Therefore, for Gellner, nationalism is primarily a political principle which holds that the political and national unit should be congruent<sup>29</sup>. That is to say, it is a political movement seeking or exercising state power and justifying such actions with nationalist arguments<sup>30</sup>.

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<sup>24</sup> Gellner, 2006: 9-10.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 112.

<sup>26</sup> Gellner, 2005. *Nationalism and Modernity*: 44.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 44.

<sup>28</sup> Gellner, 2005: 46-47.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>30</sup> Breuilly, 1994: 6.

With regard to this, Gellner advocates that the essence of nationalism is the close relation between state and culture<sup>31</sup>. Nationalism is the 'new form of social organisation, that is based on deeply internalised, education-dependent high cultures each protected by its own state'<sup>32</sup>. As we can understand, for Gellner, identity of individuals is shaped by the education system and the culture. Hence, the key feature in nationalism and identity formation becomes 'the media, communication and culture' to emphasise the idea of community, shared values and collective consciousness, to homogenise society. However, in this sense, it is highly possible that nation and national belonging create a false consciousness. A nation can be easily regarded as a constructed myth in order to classify people, to unite people under a political entity – the state – which uses nationalism to restrain ethnic differences, antagonisms.

Benedict Anderson is another important scholar and defines the nation as 'an imagined community': 'It is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion'<sup>33</sup>. It is an imagined community because the nation is always perceived as a deep and horizontal comradeship<sup>34</sup>. With regard to this, he argues about the emotional commitment of people, the attachment that people feel for the inventions of their imaginations. In this respect, he emphasises the

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<sup>31</sup> Gellner, 2006: 97.

<sup>32</sup> Cited from Gellner (1983).. in Işıksal, 2002: 7.

<sup>33</sup> Anderson, (1983, 1991): 5-6.

<sup>34</sup> Anderson, 1991: 7.

role of print-capitalism and languages since these provide the power to spread ideas and sustain national imagining through print media instruments. 'Readers were connected through print media formed the embryo of nationally imagined community<sup>35</sup>. Since nationalism and national consciousness are supported by literacy and intellectuals, print capitalism and education become very important tools. He argues that nationalism is a consequence of the convergence of capitalism and print technology.

The convergence of capitalism and print technology on the fatal diversity of human language created the possibility of a new form of imagined community, which in its basic morphology set the stage for the modern nation.<sup>36</sup>

In short, Anderson sees nations and national identities as self-defined consciousness, a self-defined community with individual's own imagination through literary devices. This mediated communication through print capitalism – with its new technologies – provides a solidarity of a single community.<sup>37</sup>. Despite the fact that it is not possible to have knowledge of all individuals in this imagined community, this print capitalism establishes the sense of fraternity. In other words, for Anderson, both nations and the feeling of solidarity are constructed notions.

However, Anderson also argues that 'so often, in the nation-building policies of the states, one sees both a genuine, popular nationalist enthusiasm and a systematic instilling of nationalist ideology through the mass media, the educational system, administrative regulations, and so forth'<sup>38</sup>. In this respect,

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 47.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 46.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 27.

<sup>38</sup> Anderson, (1983, 1991): 113-114.

we can say that each particular nation has its own imagination and an understanding of nationalism based upon its own materials and stories. Therefore, in order to reach national consciousness, to construct themselves and become meaningful, people in this nationally imagined community also needs to imagine an *Other*, an outsider. In this way, people can realise their differences and can identify that they are separate and distinct from others. Moreover, in this process of *Othering*, in the development and spread of nationalist ideology, in the construction of identity, the media, education system and intelligentsia has important roles. They present the popular sentiments within the community which strengthen the sense of belonging and loyalty. This is generally why nationalism is a very strong ideology and has many supporters.

Another scholar, Hobsbawn, claims that *national consciousness* through *social engineering* and *invention of traditions* is an important factor for the emergence of nations and nationalisms. Therefore, he sees nationalism as an invented ideology and as a false consciousness that legitimates the capitalist order<sup>39</sup>. He identifies the concept of *popular proto-nationalism* in order to define the commonalities of human groups, which make people come together or feel the sense of belonging<sup>40</sup>. Among these commonalities and symbols for creating national identity, he conceptualises the nation, common myths, historical memory and ethnic culture. Nevertheless, unlike Smith who takes these concepts and symbols to explain the unique culture and fate of

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<sup>39</sup> Hobsbawn, 1992.

<sup>40</sup> Hobsbawn, 1992: 77.

ethnic community and identity, he uses these to show the invented and constructed nature of nations and nationalism. He emphasises that proto-nationalism has no necessary relation with the unit of territorial political organization which is a crucial criterion of what we understand as a nation today because it is the modern state which mobilizes proto-nationalist symbols and feelings<sup>41</sup>. In other words, 'proto-national communities do not aim the creation of a sovereign state' whereas modern political nationalism exists for this mission<sup>42</sup>.

Similar to Gellner, Hobsbawm argues that nations are not the only products of the territorial state; they can only come into being in the context of a particular stage of technological and economic development<sup>43</sup>. At the same time, he also criticises Gellner for focusing on high culture and its expectations. Hobsbawm emphasises that:

'nations and nationalism are dual phenomena, constructed essentially from above, but which cannot be understood unless also analysed from below, that is in terms of the assumptions, hopes, needs, longings and interests of ordinary people, which are not necessarily national and still less nationalist.'<sup>44</sup>

Even though he is a modernist scholar, Hobsbawm criticises other modernist scholars as they follow a top-down understanding of nations, nationalism and identity. He tries to emphasise the national symbols and invented traditions as part of everyday life.

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 47. ... For Hobsbawm, it is not the nations which make states and nationalism, but the other way around (Ibid., 1992:10).

<sup>42</sup> Smith, 2001: 27.

<sup>43</sup> Özkırmılı, 2005: 96.

<sup>44</sup> Hobsbawm, 1990: 10.



In addition to all these, Guibernau's definition of nation can be a good reference point because he defines nation '*as a human group which is conscious of forming a community, sharing a common culture, attached to a clearly demarcated territory, having a common past and common project for the future and claiming the right to rule itself*'<sup>45</sup>. He emphasises the political character of nationalism which tries to create a homogenised community through symbols and epic history<sup>46</sup>. To put it another way, we can shortly say that the *nation* embraces five aspects which are cultural, territorial, psychological, historical and political.

## **On Nationalism**

In the light of the above definitions of the nation, nationalism mainly refers to the sentiment of belonging to a community whose members are identified with a set of symbols, beliefs and a way of life. In addition to this and most importantly, these members of the related community have the will and desire to decide their common political destiny and future. However, we cannot have a successful understanding of today's nation-states only by adopting one approach. They are not adequate as they ignore certain dimensions while focusing on either ethnic or civic elements in maintaining and sustaining

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<sup>45</sup> Guibernau, 1996: 47.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 46.

identity. For instance, while some emphasise ethnicity for identity formation, some other approaches consider psychological and emotional attachments, sense of belongingness, and cultural elements for constructing or imagining identities. Moreover, some focuses on the relations of class, state and culture, industrialism and transformation of societies into modern entities, some others prioritise continuity, shared values, common history and collective memory.

As I mentioned, in general terms, we can categorise perspectives of nationalism as ethnic and civic nationalisms. The ethnic approach of nation-building and nationalism takes the ethnicity and ethnic groups as the basis for the community membership, ascriptive identity<sup>47</sup>. This ethnic identity is acquired at birth. On the other hand, civic nationalism basically takes the territorially defined community into account rather than a social boundary among groups within a territory. It needs to have 'a structured set of political and social interactions guided by common values and a sense of common identity'<sup>48</sup>. In other words, civic nationalism is more inclusionary since ethnic nationalism clearly excludes people who do not share the same ethnic origin and features within the society. Civic nationalism presents the opportunity for individuals to choose their groups regardless of given features at birth.

Additionally, these two approaches also have different perspectives based on their different definitions and perceptions of nationalist elements and their origins. There are primordialist, modernist and ethno-symbolist

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<sup>47</sup> Keating, 2001: 4.

<sup>48</sup> Keating, 2001: 6.

approaches to nationalism in which they argue whether the nation is natural or constructed.

The primordialist approach claims the existence of nations as old as human history. Moreover, it states that ethnic identities are deep-rooted and the cause of mobilisation for nationalist ideology<sup>49</sup>. This approach basically argues that nations have ancient roots and the identity of people is fixed as they are given it by birth. In other words, it is the nation, ethnic identities and culture which create states because these legitimise the political character of nations and their political claims. Therefore, the nation is regarded as a cultural community which has survived from time immemorial and maintained political recognition for itself in its historical homeland<sup>50</sup>. Nevertheless, this primordialist approach presents us an ahistorical perspective. Thus, it puts great emphasis on ethnicity, fixed identity and reduces the complex relation among social, political and economic in nationalism and identity arguments.

In contrast and as a response to primordialists, modernists argue that nations are modern phenomena. The nation and states are a result of transformation of communities together with the effects of industrialisation and modernisation process on social and cultural understandings and structures<sup>51</sup>. Industrialisation movement have brought more complex kind of division of labour than in pre-modern societies characterised by agrarian and peasant communities. Economic, political and sociocultural factors and interests have

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>50</sup> Smith, 1998: 22-23.

<sup>51</sup> Guibernau, 2007: 14.; Smith, 2000: 2; Gellner, 2006: 6.

become more important in the understanding of nationalism and national identity. Thus, this transition into a modern industrial society has changed people's understanding and definition of their ideologies. Gellner, Anderson and Hobsbawn are selected as the representatives for modernist approach since they advocate this modern character and constructed nature of the notion of nations, nationalisms and identities. Moreover, although they emphasise overwhelmingly one aspect of nationalism in their arguments, they are of few scholars who gives place to the role of media and sociocultural intellectual factors in their analysis.

As another important approach to nationalism, the ethno-symbolist approach, as I said earlier, is an in-between perspective - between primordialist and modernist approaches. It argues that nations and nationalisms are constructed entities and are the product of historical and social progress. This approach emphasises the role of *memories, values, myths and symbols*. This means that nations and nationalism have 'historical' bonds and an 'ethnic basis' which are supported by these elements<sup>52</sup>. They have shared memories and traditions in which intellectuals play a major role in spreading and transferring these collective pasts. This emphasises the relation between shared memories and cultural identities; because shared memories are essential for the survival of collective identities<sup>53</sup>. It is the commonalities that help develop a national identity. Hence, for Smith, nationalism is seen as an ideological movement for attaining and maintaining identity, unity and

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<sup>52</sup> Smith, 1999: 10.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 10.

autonomy of a social group some of whose members deem it to constitute an actual and potential nation<sup>54</sup>. In brief, he argues that nations are not only political entities or economic outcomes; they also embrace social, cultural and historical components for unifying people and national survival. These factors of historical ethno-symbolism and their repetition are the ones which make nationalism that much stronger<sup>55</sup>. These factors legitimise the reason for the willingness of people to sacrifice their lives for their nation.

With regard to this definition, we can admit that nationalist ideology mainly focuses upon maintaining a common history, culture and a future among a distinctive group of people. Therefore, its aim is to strengthen the bonds of people by emphasising geographical, cultural, historical and emotional features and psychological attachments. By doing so, it creates the 'us' and 'them'. As Barth argues, 'groups always define themselves when they encounter with the *other* group which is different from itself'<sup>56</sup>. To put it in other way, *the other* is an essential part of identity construction of the self since the defining criteria of identity are 'continuity over time' and 'differentiation from others'<sup>57</sup>.

Here, we need to highlight that nationalism and national identity are the most effective instruments within and among societies in both constructive and destructive ways. Identities can both allow fragmentation and solidarity. Since it creates and maintains a sense of *belonging* and also provides people the

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<sup>54</sup> Malešević, 2006: 19.

<sup>55</sup> Canefe, 2007: 173-174.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 49.

<sup>57</sup> Guibernau, 2001: 76.

opportunity for authenticity, historical continuity and rootedness in a common territory, nationalism can be regarded as constructive. Nevertheless, it can also be destructive; because it has a very high possibility of ending up signifying differences among people and thus result in conflicts. The studies of identity and nationalism show that the formation process has a double face. On the one hand, it aims to define uniqueness, the right to difference from others; on the other hand, it tries to provide unity, solidarity, sense of belongingness and social cohesion so that it can tackle with greater degrees of distinctiveness through recognition of the right to difference. The main and most obvious reason for this conflict is that nationalism and national identity creates the separation between 'us' and 'them' by emphasising different characteristics and views of us and them groups<sup>58</sup>. This division between '*us*' and '*them*', '*self*' and '*the other*' in creating and understanding nations, national identity and nationalist ideology is the common point among almost all definitions and perspectives. This provides the sense of entitlement for the members of a group while undermining the rest of it. Despite seeing different elements and factors for the basis of nationalism and national identity, discussions generally agree on the fact that one defines and becomes aware of itself when it encounters with the *other*.

Nationalism and identity-formation have been affected from the developments in political, economic and social sphere with the changes in national and international relations. Nationalism has become a political tool

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<sup>58</sup> Connor, 1994; Billig, 1995; Hall, 1996; Guibernau, 2007.

after the French Revolution, with the political eternal triangle of state-nation-people in order to standardise and homogenise people. Nationalism became more related with patriotism and the ethnic emphasis was lessened. Moreover, the problem is that there are nations and states without ethnic background, with multiple ethnic groups, such as the United Kingdom, the United States and France. In this respect, we do talk about two main types of nationalisms – *ethnic and territorial/civic nationalism*<sup>59</sup>. With these two ways of understanding of nations and nationalisms – ethnic or civic nature, nationalism and national identity definitions had different dimensions, interpretations and meanings in different historical periods. If we take the shared practices and commonalities of people into account when we are trying to define a nation and identity, it mostly involves diverse ethnic and national groups because the important point is how people do and adopt certain practices in that society regardless of class, gender, origin. However, if we consider and prioritise ethnic origin, it will just be the ones who share and possess common descent. As a result, this brings us to the point that ‘no single, universal theory of nationalism is possible’<sup>60</sup>.

Despite all the arguments about its character and essential elements, nationalism remains an important political issue both among nations and states, and within societies. The reason for this is that it has become naturalised, internalised and politicised within society. Therefore, it is the ‘practices, experiences and intellectual technical forms’ which construct the identity of human being by *subjectification* and through their ‘relations to

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<sup>59</sup> Smith, 1991: 82-83.

<sup>60</sup> Hall, 1995: 8.

themselves' and 'to others'<sup>61</sup> . As Guibernau states, the search for identity requires the discussion and assessment of the relation between the individual and the community<sup>62</sup>. With regard to this statement, the triangle of nation, people, state comes to the front because generally it has become the role of nationalism as an apparatus of state-power to operate the relation between society and state. The state can maintain hegemony over civil society and homogenise society in line with its ideology. As a consequence, the emphasis and use of culture, ideology, classes and modernity has just become to hinder this hegemonic relation between the political unit and society<sup>63</sup> – that is, between the more dominant identity group and the rest in order to keep the order and sustain their ideology within the society.

In the light of this power relation, nationalism could be expected to be successful only when it is understood and adopted together with its political character and its crucial role in creating and constructing identity. What this political character refers to is primarily the sovereignty and territory of the nation-state together with its recognition. Therefore, common political and economic interests play a very important role for the effectiveness of nationalist ideas among people. Here, we need to point out the questionable nature for such a type of nationalist mobilisation; because, as Gellner argues, 'it might be difficult to imagine two large, politically viable, independence-worthy cultures cohabiting under a single political roof, and trusting a single political centre to maintain and service both cultures with perfect or even adequate

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<sup>61</sup> Rose, 1996: 129-131.

<sup>62</sup> Guibernau, 1996: 127.

<sup>63</sup> Breuilly, 1993: 1-24 & 69-70; Kedourie, (1986, 1993): 9-19.



impartiality'<sup>64</sup>. In this respect, a high culture comes to play a central role in providing the skills and identity for such a society. This high culture pervades the whole society, defines it and needs to be sustained for a homogeneous culture which is produced by a monolithic, state-driven education system<sup>65</sup>. It is the nationalist ideology and national interests which have increased the importance of the political dimension of national consciousness. The political consciousness of modern societies is one of the most important things for bringing the nation to the international stage<sup>66</sup>. Consequently, the most substantive modernist critique about all primordial approaches is that 'nationalism involves a new form of group identity or membership; it demands internal homogeneity throughout a putative nation, rather than gradual continua of cultural variation or pockets of sub-cultural distinction.'<sup>67</sup>. In other words, national identities 'trump other personal or group identities (such as gender, family, or ethnicity) and link individuals directly to the nation as a whole'<sup>68</sup>. In this respect, Özkırmılı argues that nationalism should be seen beyond its objective or subjective, and political or cultural dichotomies. It should be taken as a discourse<sup>69</sup>.

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<sup>64</sup> Gellner, 2006: 114.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 140.

<sup>66</sup> Kızılyürek, 2005.

<sup>67</sup> Özkırmılı, 2010: 160-161.

<sup>68</sup> Calhoun, 1993: 229.

<sup>69</sup> Özkırmılı, 2005: 29.

## On Identity

The concept of national identity has been used commonly in order to refer to the cultural and social psychological aspects of the nation and to a presumed stability in the relations between the members of a culturally defined population<sup>70</sup>. Nevertheless, *national identity* is a complex concept to define. The main reason for this is that it is socially constructed, fluid, malleable and the outcome and product of particular situations. In other words, identity is not constant. In contrast, because history changes the individual's conception of itself, it should be seen as a process<sup>71</sup>. In this respect, Hall argues that identity is a strategic position which emerges as the meeting point of ideological discourses and practices that interpellate people as subjects and the processes in which subjects are formed and constructed<sup>72</sup>. Hall understands identity not as a constant state, but as a 'process' which is affected by the changing conceptions of people of themselves through history<sup>73</sup>. He states that:

there is no identity that is without the dialogic relationship to the Other. The Other is not outside, but also inside the Self, the identity. So, identity is a process, identity is split. Identity is not a fixed point but an ambivalent point. Identity is also the relationship of the Other to oneself<sup>74</sup>.

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<sup>70</sup> Cited from Harris, H. (1995). *Identity...* Dieckhoff, A. & Natividad Gutierrez (eds.), 2001: 21.

<sup>71</sup> Hall, 1996. Who Needs Identity. 345.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>74</sup> Hall, 1996. Ethnicity: Identity and Difference. 345.

Since it is a process of formation, deformation and reformation, this process is generally affected by outside forces. This process of identification is primarily based on the sense of belonging, being part of a community and being recognised as the part of that community<sup>75</sup>. Together with the increased interconnectivity and communication advances, individuals and communities have gained the opportunity to determine new meanings, values and ways of imagining the world, exchange of resources and reinforcing their identity<sup>76</sup>. Therefore, as Billig argues, the forces and mechanisms that foster a sense of belonging in the present are important for sustaining ideologies and identity perceptions<sup>77</sup>. We can claim that national identity is a tool, ideology, system of knowledge which is necessary in order to deal with the requirements of nation-state in its aim for standardisation, homogenisation and for unifying, limiting antagonisms. Identity means being, on the one hand, identical or similar to a group/ category; and, on the other hand, it also means being different from another group/ category<sup>78</sup>.

*Collective cultural identities* are multiple, porous and often overlapping; ethnic, regional, religious, gender and class identities slide into each other in given situations<sup>79</sup>. Everyday practices, habits and reflections of stories are important in identity formation and spreading and reproducing an ideology. Routine invocations of the nation' and 'daily, repeated celebration of identity'

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<sup>75</sup> Bizden, 1999: 7.

<sup>76</sup> Billig, 1995; Edensor, 2002; Appadurai, 2003: 25-48.

<sup>77</sup> Spencer, 2005: 13.

<sup>78</sup> Malešević, 2006: 15.

<sup>79</sup> Debate between instrumentalists and primordialists; ethnic ties are situational for instrumentalists. Eriksen, 1993: Chp. 2-3.

that is so largely unrecognised but very much effective symbols and elements should be given attention for nationalist sentiments<sup>80</sup>. In this respect, political speeches and mass media routinely reproduce a taken-for-granted world composed of sovereign, discrete nations<sup>81</sup>. *Identity entrepreneurs* are very much influential in the narrativisation of identities around ideologies and perspectives of certain actors, especially of political parties, media tools, civil society organisations and intellectuals. Hence, nationalist leaders mostly use nationalism as an ideology which emanates from people's emotional attachment to their land and culture, from their emotions of belonging to a particular group.

To sum up, there are different perceptions and definitions for the understanding of nations, nationalism and, in relation to these, identity formation. Nevertheless, as I mentioned earlier, we cannot successfully understand identity formation and nationalism, and their relations with each other by adopting one approach to these concepts. Therefore, despite the differences in their approaches, we can argue that people's awareness of culture, history, the sense of belongingness and territory are important elements for identity construction. Furthermore, although they are conflictual concepts, identity is affected and shaped by the mutual interaction between emotional, psychological attachments to traditional values and elements and the political features of modern understanding. That is to say, the consciousness of forming a community and strengthening the feeling of

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<sup>80</sup> Spencer, 2005: 13.

<sup>81</sup> Skey, 2009: 332.

membership, belongingness is maintained and sustained through the use of symbols and the repetition of rituals. The point is that these symbols and unifying elements are associated with the state itself and its institutions. Lastly, identity formation involves both self-recognition and the recognition of the other; so that, people reach consciousness level of the feeling of belongingness and membership to a community. In this process of identification, people's interests play a very important role. Therefore, modernist and ethno-symbolist approaches are chosen as the main frameworks as they help us to understand the simultaneous and complex relation of ethnic and civic elements for the development of national and collective identities and nationalist ideologies in Cyprus.

## CHAPTER II

### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

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#### **Different Nationalisms in Cyprus**

In this chapter, the main question on how internal and external factors have affected the idea of national identity will be argued. In this regard, the emergence and development of nationalisms in Cyprus will be analysed. Moreover, it will also look at how these different understandings and perspectives of nationalisms within and between Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot communities has affected their relationships and identity perceptions. As we can understand from the historical development, in Cyprus, it has been primarily the social and political environment that has affected and shaped the perceptions of identity.

In order to understand and analyse today's nationalism and identity arguments, and the Cyprus Problem which involves both domestic and external debates between the Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, we need to look at the origin and main reason for all these arguments. In its essence, when we read about the history of Cyprus, the creation of differences between two communities goes back to the Ottoman ruling period in Cyprus; in particular, it was the *Millet System* which caused the rise of nationalisms in

Cyprus. The Millet system was based on the religious affiliations of people, on the differentiation of Muslims and Non-Muslims in Cyprus in which Non-Muslims were subordinated to Muslims<sup>82</sup>. The second main reason for the creation of differences was related to modernisation. We could not see a modernisation process of these two communities in similar time periods. In those years, Greek Cypriots had developed better economic and social capabilities and advantages based on their commercial relationships with Europe. As a result, this brought along the emergence of economic, social and political inequalities between two communities which resulted in a conflictual relationship and demographic and geographical segmentation in Cyprus. In brief, as Morag also states that "internal and external realities and conditions played an important role in the eventual creation of these rival nationalisms" and different ethno-national identities in the island that caused ethnic and geographical partition among the Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot communities.<sup>83</sup> Following sections will be on these rival nationalisms and ethnonational identities. After giving information about the ethno-nationalisms in Cyprus, understandings of Cypriotism/ civic Cypriot nationalism in Turkish and Greek Cypriot communities will be presented.

As mentioned above, the Millet system provided the environment for differentiation among people as it allowed the co-existence of religious units. Moreover, the Ottomans gave economic and political privilege and opportunity to the Cyprus Orthodox Church to become the ruling power in the island by

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<sup>82</sup> Kızılyürek, 2002,2005. *Milliyetçilik Kıskaçında Kıbrıs*: 73.

<sup>83</sup> Morag, 2004. Cyprus and the Clash of Greek and Turkish Nationalism: 622.

regarding it as the *ethnarch*<sup>84</sup>. Following this and the independence of Greece in 1821, emerging Megali Idea constituted the origin of nationalist ideology among Greek Cypriots in Cyprus<sup>85</sup>. The Megali Idea aims for the unity of all Hellenic people under the Greek state. Therefore, for this aim, the Greek state started an intense political and cultural campaign to advance national awareness and tries to empower Hellenism in order to spread Hellenic nationalism<sup>86</sup>. This was also adopted by the Greek Cypriots in the island who were under Ottoman rule<sup>87</sup>. Beginning with British rule in the island in 1878, this idea transformed its character from 'passive ethnicity to active nationalism'. This constitutes a 'cultural conversion period' referring to 'politicising ethnic communities within the Megali Idea understanding and encouraging them for ENOSIS nationalism'<sup>88</sup>. During the British colonial period<sup>89</sup>, education and the development of print capitalism were the most effective mechanisms<sup>90</sup> so as to create Greek national awareness, to impose nationalist ideologies and gain supporters for Enosis nationalism. Muslim Turkish and Christian Greek Cypriots had separate schools.

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<sup>84</sup> Kızılyürek: 73. *Ethnarch* means the leader of the community.

<sup>85</sup> In fact, it has become the main reason and origin for both Turkish and Greek ethno-nationalisms in Cyprus since Turkish nationalism in the island emerged as a reaction, as a contra-nationalism against Hellen nationalism.

<sup>86</sup> Kızılyürek: 51-52.

<sup>87</sup> Megali Idea was accepted as a state doctrine in 1844 and in Cyprus, we see Enosis nationalism as a reflection of this idea among Greek Cypriots. See. Kızılyürek,, 93-94.

<sup>88</sup> Kızılyürek, 2002, 51-52.

<sup>89</sup> For the British administration, increasing literacy was an important aim for modernisation process of the island.

<sup>90</sup> Increase in the number of newspapers in Greek Language (in 1900 there were seven newspapers in Greek Language and approximately 4600 newspapers were sold), which endorsed Hellen nationalism was another important factor in the progression. (See Kızılyürek)



As a result of this common purpose and close ties to the motherland, Greek Cypriot nationalism was developed a century earlier than Turkish Cypriot nationalism. Therefore, it was mostly the Greek Cypriot community which struggled against the British colonial rule for decolonization of the island since the beginning of the development of Greek Cypriot nationalism; so that they could have reach their aim of unification with Greece. However, after the October 1931 uprising of Greek Cypriots against the British colonial administration, the oppressive measures adopted by the British administration prevented the political participation of Cypriots in order to suppress nationalist demands and to establish an autocratic British bureaucracy in the island.<sup>91</sup>

At this time period, the Turkish Cypriot community mostly appeared passive whereas Greek nationalism and Enosis campaigns were more active and intensifying their struggle for Enosis continually. Therefore, as the Greek Cypriot nationalists raised their nationalist campaign for Enosis and disseminated the feelings of mainland Greek nationalism in Cyprus, a section of the Turkish Cypriot elite also started to import mainland Turkish nationalism into Cyprus<sup>92</sup>. The main reason for this was Enosis being regarded as a threat against their own existence; thus, they started to embrace the Kemalist Turkish nationalism in response to nationalist campaigns of Greek Cypriots. In other words, The Turkish Cypriot community's turning its face towards Turkey was

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<sup>91</sup> Stefanidis, 1999. *Isle of Discord: Nationalism, Imperialism and the Making of the Cyprus Problem*:1.

<sup>92</sup> An, A. 2005. *Forms of Cypriotism in the Turkish Cypriot Community*.

intended to dissipate their concerns regarding their 'protection' and 'identity search'<sup>93</sup>.

As a consequence, on the Turkish Cypriot side, based on their ethnic closeness to the Turkish Republic, the identity of the Muslims in the island started to be replaced with ethnic character of 'Turkish' in line with the changes in Turkey. Bryant states that 'Turkish identity was self-consciously constructed for them by Atatürk in the republican period'<sup>94</sup>. With regard to this, it can be seen that the idea of *Turkishness* was a newly adopted ethnic concept within the Turkish Cypriot community, at the beginning of the twentieth century, along with the establishment of the Republic of Turkey and reformation movements in Turkey.

Furthermore, Greek nationalism has been more powerful and active since its emergence because the idea of Enosis and Hellenic nationalism and the Church have always been effective elements in the political life of Greek Cypriot people<sup>95</sup>. Therefore, they have been more dominant and active in terms of economic, political and socio-cultural relations within the island. On the other hand, the nationalist mobilization among Turkish Cypriots first began among the elite of the Turkish Cypriots meaning that it has spread with a top to bottom pattern<sup>96</sup>. They were mostly following a defensive nationalism.

Being influenced by the international environment during and after the World War II – decolonisation and self-determination, and the rise of

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<sup>93</sup> Kızılyürek: 220.

<sup>94</sup> Bryant, 2002. *The Purity of Spirit and the Power of Blood*: 525.

<sup>95</sup> Kızılyürek: 89.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*: 275.

communist, leftist ideologies – in Cyprus, anti-colonial movements and ideas also gained impetus. For instance, during the World War II, Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots fought and served together on the side of the British on various fronts and organized themselves in the same trade unions against difficult economic conditions<sup>97</sup>. As An states, the movement of the working people was getting strong after 1942 and both nationalisms were seen as a remedy to oppression of the working people by the British<sup>98</sup>. In this regard, it can be interpreted as that the British administration considered ethnic nationalism in Cyprus as a ‘less harmful than a common front of the Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot workers against British Administration’<sup>99</sup>.

Along with the establishment of the armed organization EOKA (National Organization of Cypriot Fighters) in the year 1955, Greek Cypriot nationalism reached its peak at this time. On the other side, the most effective method employed by the British administration in preventing a common Cypriot front, in dividing these two communities – implementing the divide & rule policy – was ‘using Turkish Cypriots as auxiliary police force against EOKA’. This caused the first confrontations between the Turkish and Greek Cypriots<sup>100</sup>. As a result, Turkish Cypriot nationalism was strengthened as a reaction to and as a struggle against Greek Cypriot nationalism. This, in the end, caused the emergence of the ideology called *Taksim* - that is the partition in the island and unification with Turkey –, and establishment of the Turkish Cypriot organization

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<sup>97</sup> An, Ahmet. 2002. The Perspectives of a Common Cypriot Awareness during the British Colonial Period and After.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid. An.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid. An.

<sup>100</sup> Kızılyürek: 227.

TMT (Turkish Resistance Movement) in 1957 as a counter movement for Enosis. In other words, the ethnic aspect of Turkish Cypriot identity gained strength with the influence of Kemalist Turkey. Nevertheless, in its essence, the transformation of nationalism into an active, mass movement with a political agenda was a result of the need of creating opposition to the Enosis campaign<sup>101</sup>. Ethnicity, thus, began to be politicized as the main identifying attribute<sup>102</sup>.

The establishment of the Republic of Cyprus in 1960 as a result of international initiatives for the sake of their own interests in the region and in order to prevent any kind of conflict and keep the balance among NATO member countries - Britain, Turkey and Greece. They did not want to see a Cypriot state free of their influences for their own interests. As An claims, 'that is why they still do whatever they can to prevent the internal political and cultural structure from developing independently'<sup>103</sup>. The republic forced them to live under the same roof with Turkish Cypriots and also to adopt Cypriotism 'in the form of ethnic community identification: Greek Cypriotism and Turkish Cypriotism, respectively'.<sup>104</sup>

However, sharing the administrative system with Turkish Cypriots who were a minority population in the island was an unexpected situation and not desirable for an Eastern type of nationalism which takes ethnic features as its basis (Greek Cypriot nationalism). In this sense, Greek Cypriots were not

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<sup>101</sup> Kızılyürek: 223-224.

<sup>102</sup> Mavratsas, Ceasar. 1996. Approaches to Nationalism: Basic Theoretical Considerations in the Study of the Greek-Cypriot Case and a Historical Overview.

<sup>103</sup> An, 2005.

<sup>104</sup> Loizides, 2007. Ethnic Nationalism and Adaptation in Cyprus: 174.

happy with living together with Turkish Cypriots and sharing the collective identity with Turkish inhabitants of the island because they had different languages, religions, culture and historical origins. In fact, the nationalist leaderships of both sides did not embrace or internalize the Republic. Denktas had stated that “There is no Cypriot nationality in Cyprus and the agreements did not create a nationality, they just brought a state”<sup>105</sup>. Similarly, Archbishop Makarios, the President of the Republic at that time, told to an Italian newspaper that the London Agreements created a new state, but not a new nation, and did not believe in the idea of creating a new Cypriot nation.<sup>106</sup>

As Mavratsas (1996) states, ‘the main internal opposition against Greek-Cypriot nationalism has come from what may be broadly called “Cypriotism”. In other words, the form of Cypriotism was constructed as a political ideology and cultural discourse that functions as a territorial nationalism with strong civic elements which puts the centre of attention on Cyprus rather than the Greek nation<sup>107</sup>. Hence, it can be argued that Cypriotism does not deny or ignore the Greek or Turkish ethnicity of the inhabitants of the island. It emphasises, however, that their ethnic identity and culture, have also acquired sui generis features which not only differentiate the Greek and the Turkish Cypriots from the Greeks and the Turks but also create some common ground between the two communities of the island<sup>108</sup>. On this issue, Kızılyürek also argues that (2005a), the case of Cyprus constitutes an

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<sup>105</sup> Denktas, 2002. *Rauf Denktasin Hatiralari*: 402.

<sup>106</sup> An, 2005.

<sup>107</sup> Mavratsas, C. 1996: 87.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid. Mavratsas.

*anomaly* because the new state of Cyprus and the newly constructed identity of Cypriotism showed that the case ‘has its own sui generis character and, thus, must be viewed as an entity which is independent from both of the motherlands of the two main communities of the island – from Greece and Turkey. However, neither community agreed with that idea<sup>109</sup>. Therefore, in the end, the Republic to create a civic society on the island has failed because of the historical differentiation among people in Cyprus; the differences were result of both uneven modernization and rising of class-related tensions which were overshadowed by ethnic hatred<sup>110</sup>. On the one hand, it can be argued that Greek Cypriot nationalism used the republic as a tool for their national aim; because Greek Cypriots reached their aim and the independent Republic of Cyprus became a symbol of Hellenic Nationalism<sup>111</sup>. Additionally, the Turkish were excluded from the governance of the state and moved into enclaves until 1974. On the other hand, in a way Taksim was also accomplished with the Turkish military intervention in 1974 that ended up with the creation of a separate Turkish Cypriot territory in the north<sup>112</sup>. Despite all the arguments on nationalisms and identity, the main turning point in the history of Cyprus and nationalisms has become the 1974 military intervention by the Turkish Republic to end the violent conflicts between the Turkish and Greek Cypriot communities. After a four centuries- long territorial and political coexistence of diverse communities in the island of Cyprus the internal territorial division separating the Turkish-Cypriot and Greek-Cypriot

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<sup>109</sup> Kızılyürek (2002, 2005); Mavratsas, 1996: 87.

<sup>110</sup> Kızılyürek: 212.

<sup>111</sup> Kızılyürek.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.: 280-281.

communities from one another on the basis of communal group membership has marked the process of identity formation since 1974<sup>113</sup>. After the partition, the meaning and the target of nationalist ideologies in both communities changed compared to pre-1974 year. For instance, junta government in Greece carried out a coup d'état against Makarios as he desired the self-determination of Cyprus and altered his strategy when Greece stated 'if Cyprus is Hellenistic then Athens is the centre of Hellenism and only Athens has a right to make decisions regarding Cyprus'<sup>114</sup>. However, Greek Cypriots were deeply hurt as the coup d'état, which also brought along the Turkish intervention, was organized by Greece. Mainland Greece had been a step-mother and it betrayed Greek Cypriots<sup>115</sup>. As a consequence, Greek Cypriots adopted the Republic of Cyprus in order to rule themselves rather than becoming a part of Greece. In 1975, the *New Cyprus Association* was established. Its motto was 'Cyprus belongs to Cypriots'<sup>116</sup>. It was arguing that cultural and political identities should have been distinguished. It was claiming that both Helens and Turkish could be Cypriots so that it was calling both Greek and Turkish Cypriots to protect their state. Later, the Cyprus flag was internalized by Greek Cypriots<sup>117</sup>.

For the Turkish Cypriot community, starting from 1970s, firstly the intellectual circles and the political left became preoccupied with the question

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<sup>113</sup> Lacher and Kaymak, 2005. *Transforming Identities: Beyond the politics of Settlement in North Cyprus*.

<sup>114</sup> Kızılyürek: 120.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid.: 134.

<sup>116</sup> Mavratsas, K. 2000: 68.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid. Mavratsas, 2000: 68.

of Cypriot identity commonly shared with the two ethnic communities of Cyprus.<sup>118</sup> The main reasons for the identity discussions and opposition for Turkish nationalism have been the settler immigrants from Turkey, unfair distribution of formerly Greek Cypriot-owned land and property after the division, and the Turkification and interference of Turkey in the economic, political and social affairs of the Turkish Cypriot governments. Especially since the declaration of “sovereignty” in 1983, a gradual disenchantment with their state and a growing sense of Turkish-Cypriot cultural distinctiveness have undermined the political and cultural bases of Turkish nationalism in North Cyprus.<sup>119</sup> It is argued that the immigrants having a different economic, cultural, traditional and language differences resulted in a culturally different ‘other’ and exclusivist rhetorical notion of *Türkiyeliler* (*people from Turkey*). With the developments and relations during the 1990s and 2000s, imagined Cypriot nations exists, through a careful selection of similarities and commonalities<sup>120</sup>. Especially with the European Union application of Greek Cypriots and gaining membership; future prospects of Turkish Cypriots for economic and political opportunities strengthened the campaigns of leftist parties and platforms.

Considering all these different time periods, experiences and ideological perspectives of both Cypriot communities, it is clear that the history of the island involves the contradiction between ethno-national identity

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<sup>118</sup> Ramm, 2006: 528... Denktas reacted aggressively to CTP (Republican Turkish Party) for emphasizing Cypriotism, Socialism, Peace and Federal solution. According to Denktas CTP has strong relations with AKEL and it was Greek oriented. (Kızılyürek:253.).

<sup>119</sup> Lacher and Kaymak, 2005: 149.

<sup>120</sup> Kızılyürek: 250.



(Turkishness/Greekness) and civic identity (Cypriotness/ Cypriotism). The former refers to the 'official' perspective on identity, stressing 'ethnic group membership', 'ethnic origin' and loyalty to the 'Turkish nation'. The latter represents an 'oppositional' or 'alternative' imagination of identity stressing 'territorial group membership' and loyalty to a territorial–political entity<sup>121</sup>. Although there had been transformation of collective identity from religious and ethnonational component to civic/territorial national one, they have not ignored or excluded the religious and ethnic components from their identification. To put it in other way, there have been the coexistence of two identities defined by both ethnic and civic nationalism. To exemplify it with the Turkish Cypriot case, it is 'the coexistence of Turkish Cypriot identity with Cypriot identity'<sup>122</sup>. This dual identity issue also reveals a condition of 'us' and 'them'<sup>123</sup>. In other words, the 'other' is seen as similar like 'us' while, at the same time, it is different from 'us'. We can understand from Şahin's findings in her media analysis – the coexistence of both identities – that identity is a *strategic and situational position* as I have mentioned in the beginning. As she states, in some cases, Turkish Cypriot identity has been constructed and used against Greek Cypriot encounters while sometimes they emphasise the cultural similarities between both communities so as to construct a common Cypriot identity<sup>124</sup>. This is mainly a result of both internal factors and external factors, that is the involvement of 'motherlands' in the country's affairs, has affected

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<sup>121</sup> Vural & Rustemli. 2006. Identity Fluctuations in the Turkish Cypriot Community: 344.

<sup>122</sup> Şahin, 2011. Open Borders, Closed Minds.: 594

<sup>123</sup> Creation of the other among Cypriot Turks works in two-fold process. One is against Turkish nationalism, another against Greek Cypriot nationalism; 'The other' for Cypriots includes Turkey, Turkish, illegal immigrants, Greece and workers.

<sup>124</sup> Şahin, 2011: 594.

the process of internal 'identity development'<sup>125</sup>. Hence, it is acknowledged that since the beginning of their relationships in the island, Turkish national identity was developed as a counter-nationalism in Cyprus, and was identified in its basis through the notions of *them* and *us*. It is clear from the long history of inter-communal conflicts in the island, and fair to argue that civic identity provides a unifying sense of belonging and that loyalty to an inclusive identity would provide an ideological basis for a 'single political Cyprus' comprising 'all' Cypriots without denying the existence of community identity and a system of political representation for communal entities<sup>126</sup>. Nevertheless, Cyprus always has been a political entity where continual political instability, political violence, territorial division and war have been defined with reference to the conflicting interests between the nationalisms of the two distinct communities<sup>127</sup>. As a consequence, official and revisionist historiographies on both sides also sustain and challenge divergent conceptions of political identity and community that are at the heart of the Cyprus problem<sup>128</sup>. The reason for this is that Greek and Turkish Cypriot identities are based on national memories containing the history of Greece and Turkey since the 19th century, including conflict and hostility. Both peoples in Cyprus celebrated the national holidays of their respective mother country, raising Greek or Turkish flags, and each community adhered to the image of the other as traditional enemy<sup>129</sup>.

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<sup>125</sup> Morag, 2004: 596.

<sup>126</sup> Vural & Rüstemli, 2006: 345.

<sup>127</sup> Kızılyürek.

<sup>128</sup> Lacher & Kaymak, 2005: 150.

<sup>129</sup> Volkan. 1979; Loizos, 1988: 645, cited in Kliot & Mansfield, 1997: 497.

## Cypriotism

“Civic identity is a constructed identity and ‘outsiders can become members of the civic community, but only by participating in the local practices and institutions and by slowly adopting the customs and even the modes of reflexive criticism’ as in the example of the constructed 1960 state of Cyprus.<sup>130</sup>

According to this perspective, it can be argued that since Cypriotism is a civic nationalism kind of ideology, it has an inclusive character. However, looking at the process in Cyprus, it is seen that it represents an ideology rather than an identity project and there exists different interpretations of Cypriotism in each Cypriot community.

Before moving on to the different understandings of Cypriotism/ Cypriotness ideology, the first use of the term *Cypriot* was at the beginning of the year 1927. Ronald Storrs, the British Colonial Governor of Cyprus, wanted to use the notion of Cypriot for the first time in the government offices<sup>131</sup>. In his report, dated 9 June 1932, he argues that the term “native” is degrading, humiliating<sup>132</sup>. Moreover, it is also argued that Cypriot patriotism should be created and emphasised in order to weaken Hellenic nationalism within the Greek Cypriot community<sup>133</sup>. However, with the formation of the Communist

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<sup>130</sup> Tempelman, Sasja. 1999. *Constructions of Cultural Identity: Multiculturalism and Exclusion*.

<sup>131</sup> Hasgüler. 2008. *Kıbrıslılık*: 2.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid. Hasgüler: 2; An, 2005.

<sup>133</sup> An, 1998. *The development of Cypriot Awareness*: 34.; An, 2005.; Hasgüler, 2008: 2-3.

Party of Cyprus in 1926 and their use of the notion of Cypriot against the British colonial regime caused the British Administration to fear from Cypriotism<sup>134</sup>.

*Cypriotness/Cypriotism* emerges as a response to ethnic-nationalism; as a political ideology which is in between Greek and Turkish nationalism. A fair definition of Cypriot, in that sense, is; 'Cypriot is somebody who puts the interest of Cyprus as a nation before the interests of the community from which they stem'<sup>135</sup>. For supporters of Cypriotness, the most important criterion had been the nationality of Cypriotness, not the ethnicity of Cypriot people<sup>136</sup>. Mainly Cypriotism is understood as independent statehood of Cyprus identified by Cypriot identity without referring to the motherlands<sup>137</sup>. As Vural and Rüstemli argue, 'Cypriotness' has been the territorial-civic component of collective identity, which was used by members of the Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot communities to separate their identities from mainland Greece and mainland Turkey respectively<sup>138</sup>. However, civic nationalism was not strong enough to challenge the hegemony of nationalist ideology which emphasised the ethnicity of being Hellenic or Turkish, the desire to see themselves as parts of these greater nations. In this regard, there were also attempts from both communities to ethnicise the newly established Republic<sup>139</sup>. For Greek Cypriot nationalists, Cypriotness is a dangerous idea jeopardizing the unity of Hellenism and eroding the Greek character of

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<sup>134</sup> An, 2005.

<sup>135</sup> Chaglar, A., January 2008. *The Cyprus Question: A Philosophical Answer*.

<sup>136</sup> Mavratsas, K., 2000: 61.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid. Mavratsas: 61.

<sup>138</sup> Vural & Rustemli. 2006: 332.

<sup>139</sup> Joseph, S.J. 1990. *International Dimensions of the Cyprus problem*: 23.

Cyprus<sup>140</sup>; whereas, for Turkish Cypriot nationalists, Cypriotness 'lacks any meaning in identifying the Turks of Cyprus'. Therefore, it is argued by opposite view points that 'sharing a common Cypriot state with Greek Cypriots is not possible mainly because of identity differentiations between the two communities'<sup>141</sup>.

The idea of Cypriotism is originally rooted in the political left, especially the communist party AKEL. In this regard, the ideology of Cypriotism corresponds to the political opposition between right and left in each community<sup>142</sup>. To put it another way, as Papadakis states, 'For much of the twentieth century another conflict persisted, this time within each ethnic group between forces of the right and the left, with its own record of violence against the left'<sup>143</sup>. For instance, while the right wing supporters among Turkish Cypriots were Turkocentrists who supported Turkishness, the leftist Turkish Cypriots were for Cypriocentrism who supported Cypriotism<sup>144</sup>.

Cypriotism within Greek Cypriot society starts with the strong bi-communal character and strong antagonism toward Greek Nationalism<sup>145</sup>. In this regard, 'Cypriotism ideology constitutes itself through the independent and sovereign state of Cyprus which also objects to Greek nationalism'<sup>146</sup>. The statement by the New Cyprus Association confirms this ideological intention;

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<sup>140</sup> Cited in Vural & Rüstemli.

<sup>141</sup> Vural & Rüstemli. 2006: 332.

<sup>142</sup> Mavratsas, 1996, p. 92

<sup>143</sup> Papadakis, 2008. *Narrative, Memory and History Education in Divided Cyprus*: 131.

<sup>144</sup> Kızılyürek, N. 2005b. *Doğmamış Bir Devletin Tarihi: Birleşik Kıbrıs Cumhuriyeti*.

<sup>145</sup> Hamit, M.. 2009. Cypriotism as an Ideology In-between Turkish and Greek Nationalisms. 52.

<sup>146</sup> Mavratsas, 2000: 57.

As Hellene's of Cyprus we might have similar cultural elements with Greece. However, we do not have similar political elements and the same vision. As Cypriots, we have our own constitution and independent foreign policy.<sup>147</sup>

In this regard, the new strategy was intended to rescue the island from the Turkish occupation and to unite the divided island coined as, 'Epanosis' (reunification). The interpretation of 'Epanosis' was saving the island from the Turkish occupation, living together with Turkish Cypriots under the roof of a federation.<sup>148</sup>

The main characteristic of the people living in Cyprus could be defined as Cypriotness. Cypriotness, differentiates the people of Cyprus from the others and as well from the Greek and Turkish people. Cypriotness was born from the combination of communal life, interaction of the societies and the historical process.<sup>149</sup>

Within Turkish Cypriot society, the Cypriotism approach started to have its signs during the 1970s as an opposition to the Turkish Cypriot leader Denktaş, who supported Turkish nationalism, and to the policies of Turkey towards Turkish Cypriots. This opposite standing was the main rhetoric of the Cypriotist discourse. From the early 1980's, Cypriotism has represented the antagonism toward the immigrants from Turkey. As the Turkish Cypriots did not feel that they belonged to the imagined Turkish society, they tried to keep and shield their Cypriot identity against Turkish assimilation. In other words, Cypriotism was an opposite point of view against nationalist government and also against the immigrant population from Turkey who came to be regarded

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<sup>147</sup> New Cyprus Association, 1980: 13

<sup>148</sup> Mavratsas, 2000, 136-137.... Moreover, downgrading bicomunal character of Cypriotism and its transformation to the *Greek Cypriot centric* 'Cypriotism' starts from 1980's government change in Greece. After the elections in Greece, Papandreou coming to power, government had populist and nationalist rhetoric again which led to Greek Cypriots increasing their relationship with their motherland.

<sup>149</sup> New Cyprus Association, 1980, Nicosia: 15 (cited in Mavratsas, 2000: 67.)

as a threat to Turkish Cypriot identity. Therefore, from early 1980's through early 2000's, Cypriotism within Turkish Cypriots had a bi-communal character and strong antagonism toward Turkish nationalism<sup>150</sup>. In one of his writings as a response to Denktaş' saying that; 'if you wish you can take passports from the Republic of Cyprus', Talat shows the aim of Cypriotism by saying that 'I want to be one of the two authorities to sign those passports'<sup>151</sup>. He also argues that solution represents political equality, human rights, not being under isolation and joining to EU<sup>152</sup>.

However, with the rejection of the Annan Plan by the Greek Cypriot community in the 2004 referendum, the bicomunal character of Cypriotism has lost its value within the Turkish Cypriot community and supported the status quo. They started to follow the vision and arguments for saving Turkish Cypriot from isolation. As it can be seen, the Cyprus conflict has been a 'conflict over statehood and the source of its persistence is a relatively recent mistrust rather than any "ancient hatreds"<sup>153</sup>. It has been the notions of *sovereignty, recognition, representation and equality of power* which have caused failure of agreement and solution attempts.

Since the 1950s, the Turkish Cypriot community has had problems regarding the collective identity issue. People in Cyprus have had a feeling of 'Cypriot identity' or 'Cypriotness' based on 'historical, cultural and social

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<sup>150</sup> Hamit, M., 2009: 53.

<sup>151</sup> Yeniduzen, M.A.Talat: Cozumsuzluk cozumdur politikasi guduluyor, 14 May 2003, Nicosia.

<sup>152</sup> Yeniduzen, Talat.

<sup>153</sup> Lacher & Kaymak, 2005:153.

dimensions<sup>154</sup>. For instance, the dominant concept of Greek Cypriot nationalism has frequently been challenged by ideas of national consciousness based on a common Cypriot identity<sup>155</sup>. Cypriotism emphasizes the common culture and tradition shared by both Greek and Turkish Cypriots and envisages a unified Cypriot citizenship in a bi-communal federation.

As it can be understood that the meaning and evolvement of Cypriotism within two Cypriot communities have different ways and perceptions. What is common to Cypriotism is that it is an ideology which came out as ‘the disjunction to the Greek and Turkish nationalisms’<sup>156</sup>. To put it in other way, Vural and Rustemli argue that “Cypriotness” has been the territorial-civic component of collective identity, which was used by members of the Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot communities to separate their identities from mainland Greece and mainland Turkey respectively. Cypriotism can be regarded as a representation of nationalist discourse which has its *imagined community*. In other words, it has been an ideological intention to treat ‘Cypriotness’ as the ‘inclusive’ element of the collective identity unifying both communities of Cyprus<sup>157</sup>. Nevertheless, it also has an exclusionary character. It excludes people who do not share common culture, common land, people exist in a particular, determined border. In both societies, it is also against Turkey and settlers. For instance, according to Turkish Cypriots, Cypriotism is an ideology for survival from the domination of Turkey. Additionally, depending

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<sup>154</sup> Faustmann, H. 2003. Cypriotness in Historical Perspective; Yaşın, M. 1988.: 43.

<sup>155</sup> Mavratsas, K. 1997. The ideological contest between Greek–Cypriot nationalism and Cypriotism 1974–1995: politics, social memory and identity: 15.

<sup>156</sup>Hamit, 2009: 51.

<sup>157</sup> Vural & Rüstemli. 2006: 332.



on the political power relations Cypriotism could also be seen as Greek Cypriot centric or Turkish Cypriot centric ideology.

Consequently, despite its bicomunal understanding, Cypriotism as an ideology, not as a national identity, has different meanings and has experienced a different development process in each community based on their interests. As a result, this contradictory condition for Cyprus has affected the attitudes, policies and international affairs of two Cypriot communities. As mentioned before, in a way the Greek Cypriot ideal of having authority for the whole island has been materialised since the Greek Cypriot government now enjoys the advantages of being recognised as the representative of Cypriot identity and government.

The contradictory and exclusionary character of nationalist ideologies are the basis of the Cyprus problem. This character has brought along sovereignty discussions which have been a result of the power relations and political struggle between the nationalist ideologies of two Cypriot communities. Despite the fact that Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots have been negotiating since 1968 under the auspices of the Good Offices of the UN Secretary-General to reach a mutually acceptable political settlement for the Cyprus Problem in line with the purpose of establishing a bizonal and bicomunal federal state, the political struggle of ideologies has never ended. In contrast, these political and nationalist ideologies have been reflected in the actions of both states in the island (RoC and TRNC). Recently, we see that discussions on sovereignty and sovereign rights of states at seas have been in a reciprocal relationship with the prolonged Cyprus Problem which have

been an ideological conflict. The Cyprus Problem has rapidly spreaded to the seas<sup>158</sup> and hydrocarbon discussions has complicated the relationship of the sides. The most important reason for this is that because hydrocarbons are being ‘viewed through the lens of existing conflictual relations’ which are based on political and nationalist interests of the sides. Therefore, in the light of these, the next chapter will analyse the case of hydrocarbons as it is a debatable issue for sovereignty and ownership matters on the basis of Cyprus Problem; especially in the ongoing negotiation period.

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<sup>158</sup> Sertaç Hami Başeren, 2013. Doğu Akdeniz Deniz Yetki Alanlarının Sınırlandırılması Sorunu: Tarafların Görüşleri, Uluslararası Hukuk Kurallarına Göre Çözüm ve Sondaj Krizi”. In S. H. Başeren (ed.). Doğu Akdeniz’de Hukuk ve Siyaset (The Law and Politics in Eastern Mediterranean), Ankara University, Faculty of Political Science, Ankara. :254.

## CHAPTER III

### DISPUTES OVER HYDROCARBON AND NATURAL GAS RESERVES IN THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN SEA

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On the one hand, it is generally a debated topic whether the existence of natural resources can lead to peace, cooperation or, in contrast, to conflict as these resources make the conditions more complicated; mostly, as a result of interests of the sides and their trying to dominate, control the resources, revenue and wealth. On the other hand, Eastern Mediterranean region involves geopolitical conflicts which can be resolved through peaceful ways and agreements. As it is known, one of these conflicts is the prolonged Cyprus Problem. Recently, the exploration activities and discoveries of hydrocarbons and natural gas reserves in the Eastern Mediterranean have escalated the nationalist contradictions and had impact on the Cyprus Problem. The development of the disputes on hydrocarbons, the nationalist positions of the sides and the Cyprus Problem are clearly reflected on the decisions and perspectives about these natural resources. In short, these two fields of problematic relations – natural gas and Cyprus Problem – have been reflected on each other.

Before moving on to the development of the case of Cyprus and disputes, it is useful to give the legal framework for the rights and actions of

states regarding the exploration and exploitation of natural resources under the sea. Then, the historical development of the hydrocarbons dispute and the perspectives, interpretations and claims of the sides will be observed. In my opinion, it is fair to argue that the main problem arises from the lack of conceptual descriptions and decisions in the international law; that is the distinction between *sovereignty right* and *sovereign rights*, and in relation to this, identifying borders and rights at sea under international law. This is disregarded in most of the arguments about explorations and Exclusive Economic Zone for the sake of political interests.

## **Legal Framework**

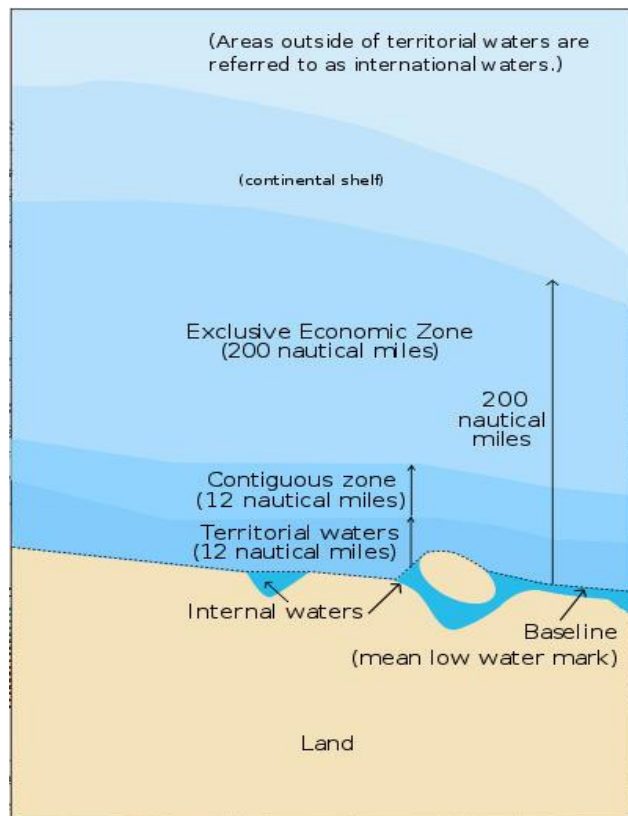
The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) is an international treaty which was concluded on the basis of various conventions regulating maritime zones and rights of states. (concluded as UNCLOS III, 1973-1982, ratified by over 160 states except Israel, Turkey, the USA and Venezuela who did not signed 1982 version and not a party to the UNCLOS). Nevertheless, certain provisions of the UNCLOS have gained 'customary international law' status which makes it binding on all states regardless of being a party to it or not, of having ratified it or not. Provisions on the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) have become a part of this customary international law

as a result of judgements and practices of the International Court of Justice (ICJ).

Under the UNCLOS<sup>159</sup>, Article 2 acknowledges that 'a state is sovereign over its territorial sea as it is over its land territory and this sovereignty extends to the air space over the territorial sea as well as to its sea bed and subsoil'. Moreover, Article 3 clarifies that 'every state has the right to establish its territorial sea up to a limit not exceeding 12 nautical miles'. In the case of delimiting the territorial sea between states with opposite or adjacent coasts, neither state is allowed to extend its territorial sea beyond the median line/ equidistance line. However, Article 19 of the Convention also acknowledges that the only restriction on sovereignty of a state over its territorial sea is the obligation to allow 'innocent passage' of foreign ships and to give warning for any navigational dangers within its territorial sea. (see Figure 1).

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<sup>159</sup> The United Nations Convention on the Law of Sea (UNCLOS), 1982.



**Figure 1:** United Nations Convention on Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), 1982 (retrieved from: <http://www.eoearth.org/view/article/156775/#gen0> )

In this respect, claiming maritime jurisdiction, by its very essence, is one-sided action because it is related to state's claims for offshore boundaries of territorial waters, contiguous zone or exclusive economic zone. Nevertheless, the delimitation of maritime jurisdiction requires consulting to and cooperation of related two or more coastal states whose jurisdiction areas clashes. In other words, it is not a one-sided action<sup>160</sup>. As a consequence, this maritime jurisdiction has become an important problem between states and

<sup>160</sup> Argued and interpreted by Prof. Dr. Sertaç Hami Başeren, based on the decision about the Delimitation of the Maritime Boundary in the Gulf of Maine Area, Judgment, I.C.J. Reports 1984, par. 112.

has created discussions on sovereignty and sovereign rights of states at seas<sup>161</sup>.

When we look at the legal and regulatory framework for hydrocarbon explorations in the case of Cyprus, since Cyprus is a full member state of the European Union, hydrocarbon and natural gas activities offshore Cyprus are subject to the European Union Directive on the conditions for granting and using authorizations for the prospection, exploration and production of hydrocarbons (Directive 94/22/EC)<sup>162</sup> and other relevant EU legislations. Additionally and most importantly, the RoC ratified the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS 1982) in 1988. With regard to the UNCLOS provisions, a number of agreements have been signed between the RoC and its neighbouring countries based on the median-line principle<sup>163</sup>. These laws and legal framework recognises that 'the ownership of hydrocarbons wherever they are found in Cyprus, including the territorial waters, the continental shelf and the exclusive economic zone of the Republic, shall be deemed to be and always to have been vested in the Republic'<sup>164</sup>.

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<sup>161</sup> Especially with the adoption of EEZ provisions; because EEZ provides more rights than continental shelf rights which envisages the exploitation of non-living resources. These rights will be discussed in the following paragraphs while analysing the Cyprus case.

<sup>162</sup> Directive 94/22/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on the conditions for granting and using authorizations for the prospection, exploration and production of hydrocarbons. 1994.

<sup>163</sup> In addition to international legal regulations, the hydrocarbon exploration and exploitation activities in the Republic of Cyprus are governed by Cypriot national laws; the Hydrocarbon (Prospection, Exploration and Exploitation) Law of 2007 (No.4(I)/2007) and the Hydrocarbon (Prospection, Exploration and Exploitation) Regulations of 2007 and 2009 (No.51/2007 and No.113/2009). Ministry of Energy, Commerce Industry and Tourism (RoC). Hydrocarbon Exploration: Legal and Regulatory Framework.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid. Ministry of Energy, Commerce Industry and Tourism (RoC).

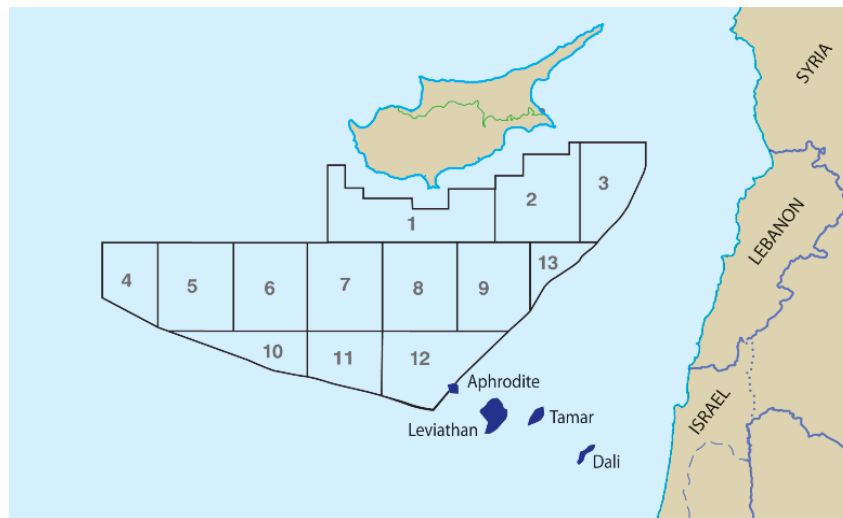
Based on these laws and legal provisions, the Republic of Cyprus (RoC) began prospecting for hydrocarbons in an exploration area of 51,000 sq km offshore Cyprus in 2006. The proclaimed EEZ of the RoC is divided into 13 blocks and the exploration area is just a part of the EEZ (see Figure 2 for the exploration area). The RoC signed EEZ delineation agreement with Egypt in February 2003; then with Lebanon in January 2007. Following these agreements and seismic exploration data, the RoC gave oil and gas exploration licences to international companies in February 2007. In this licensing round, eleven of the thirteen blocks were offered while Blocks 3 and 13 were excluded<sup>165</sup>. With regard to this, Noble Energy, was awarded a licence in Block 12 and a production-sharing contract was signed with Noble in October 2008. Furthermore, in December 2010, based on further seismic surveys, RoC signed an EEZ agreement with Israel. Following all these surveys and exploration actions, the first exploratory drilling began on 20 September 2011. Noble Energy was the first operator to discover natural gas resources offshore both Israel and Cyprus. (See Figure 3 for the Noble discoveries). It announced its discovery in the Aphrodite field in the Block 12 in December 2011<sup>166</sup>.

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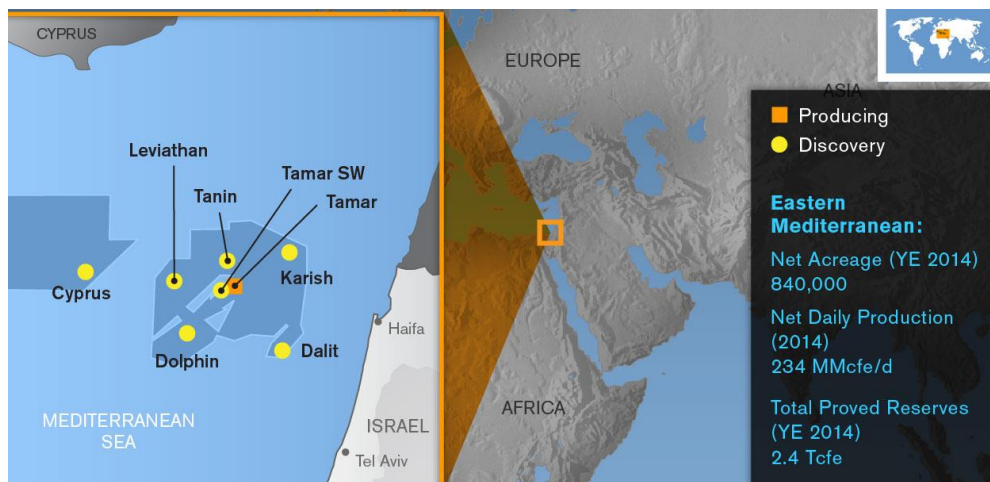
<sup>165</sup> Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism, Energy Service, Hydrocarbon Exploration, First Licensing Round.

<sup>166</sup> Noble announced that it had discovered an estimated 5 to 8 tcf 'with a gross mean of 7 tcf' (198 bcm). Noble Energy, Operations, Eastern Mediterranean; Noble Energy, Recent Discoveries; Zhukov, 23 September 2015. Egypt's Gift from God.





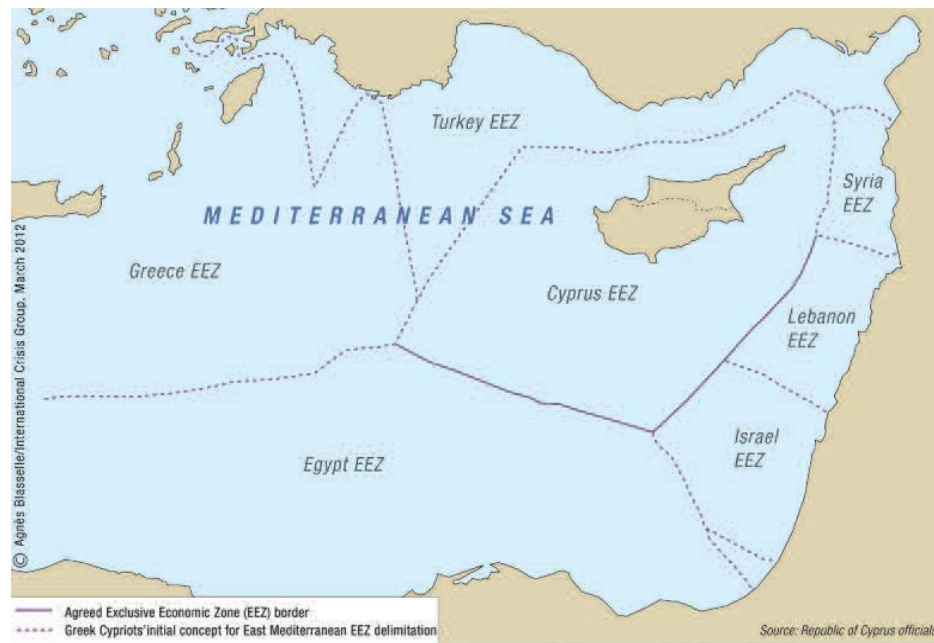
**Figure 2:** The RoC's present offshore exploration area (Source: Petroleum Geo-Services (PGS))



**Figure 3:** Noble Energy discoveries in the Eastern Mediterranean (Cyprus and Israel) (Source: Noble Energy)

As a response to the EEZ claims of the RoC and the delimitation and exploration agreements with coastal states in the region (see Figure 4 for claimed and agreed RoC EEZ borders), Turkey also delineated a maritime border between Turkey and the (“unrecognised”) Turkish Republic of Northern

Cyprus (TRNC) in September 2011. Turkey and Turkish Cypriot side argue that RoC does not represent the whole island and also the Turkish Cypriot people, neither legally nor physically. Therefore, it does not have the legitimate right to sign bilateral agreements. Turkey and Turkish Cypriot side do not recognise the EEZ delineation agreements with Egypt, Israel and Lebanon.



**Figure 4:** Turkish continental shelf and EEZ boundaries calculated as median lines as “proposed by the RoC and Greece”. (Source: International Crisis Group)

In addition to the discussions regarding the extension of Cyprus Problem to seas and claiming the representation and natural resources unilaterally by the RoC, Turkey also argues about violation of its own legal rights in the Mediterranean Sea (see figure 5 for border clashes). With regard to this violation Turkey states that as being a littoral state, it has *ab initio* and *ipso facto* rights based on the continental shelf regulations under international

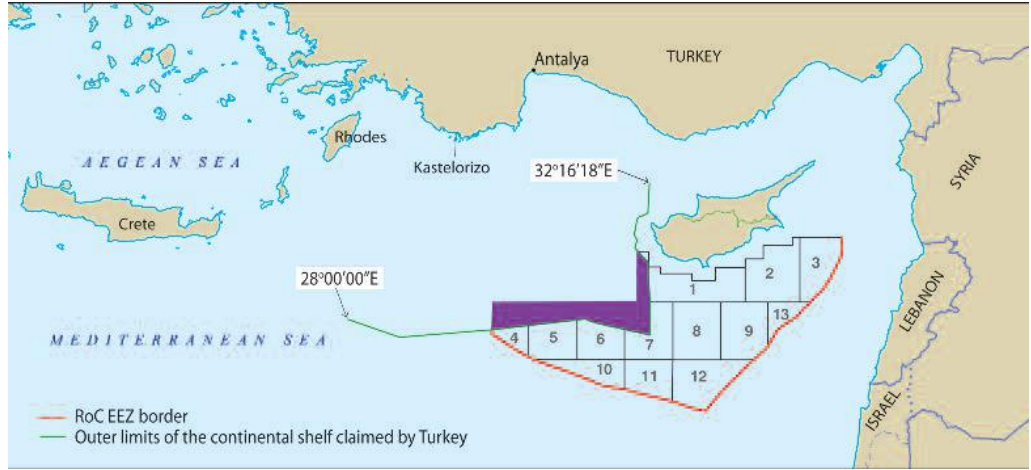
law of sea<sup>167</sup>. In Eastern Mediterranean, Turkey does not have a claimed EEZ but continental shelf. This continental shelf rights are inalienable and does not require to be claimed unlike EEZ rights. In other words, they are given to states by virtue of the law. In this regard, because Eastern Mediterranean is a closed sea and requires limitations on maritime jurisdiction of coastal states, the EEZ claims and agreements of RoC also interest Turkey<sup>168</sup>. For instance, Turkey objects to the RoC's EEZ delimitation agreement with Egypt because the area in question also concerned Turkey's sovereign rights. International laws and regulations clearly states that all affected states should be consulted to sign a delimitation agreement. However, Turkey was not consulted and Egypt regarded RoC as its equal and the representative of the island by concluding the agreement. In this respect, not being consulted, Turkey does not recognise the RoC - Egypt EEZ delimitation agreement<sup>169</sup>.

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<sup>167</sup> Başeren, 2009. Doğu Akdenizdeki Son Gelişmeler, (Conference on 'Recent Developments in Eastern Mediterranean'): p.2. (up to 200 nautical miles).

<sup>168</sup> Turkey argues that RoC claiming EEZ in the region violates the continental shelf rights of Turkey. (Also argued especially by Başeren and other Turkish experts in various conferences on the issue)

<sup>169</sup> This Turkish argument is rejected by the RoC... "Statement of the position of the Government of Republic of Cyprus, dated 28 December 2004, with respect to the information note by Turkey, concerning the latter's objection to the Agreement between the Republic of Cyprus and the Arab Republic of Egypt on the Delimitation of the Exclusive Economic Zone of 17 February 2003", *Law of the Sea Bulletin*: 124-125.



**Figure 5:** The overlap between the continental shelf claimed by Turkey and the RoC concession blocks in the south-west of the island. (Source: Erciyas (2012)<sup>170</sup>)

Turkey advocates that the understanding and claims of RoC and Greece for maritime jurisdiction is not acceptable on the basis of equitable solution and under international law provisions of access to open seas, Cyprus in the western coastal area and Greek islands beyond their territorial waters would not be given continental shelf. The reason for this is that if Greece gets its way on maritime delineation for islands, then Turkey would have a very small amount of access to the sea, as it can be understood from the Figure 4. Greece would have considerable access, as would Cyprus. Moreover, Turkey argues that, as the longer coastal states, Turkey and Egypt should be entitled to a greater proportion of the maritime areas and delimitation should be arranged between these two states on the basis of median line<sup>171</sup>.

<sup>170</sup> Gürel, et al. 2013, The Cyprus Hydrocarbons.

<sup>171</sup> For more detailed information and arguments on the positions and perspectives of sides in the region, see S. H. Başeren (ed.). *Doğu Akdeniz'de Hukuk ve Siyaset* (The Law and Politics in Eastern Mediterranean); Bilgesam. 2013. *Doğu Akdeniz'de Enerji Keşifleri ve Türkiye*; Cihat Yaycı, 2012. *Doğu Akdeniz'de Deniz Yetki Alanlarının Paylaşılması Sorunu ve Türkiye*.

## CHAPTER IV

### ANALYSIS: INTERTWINED RELATIONSHIP

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#### **Identity, Nationalism, the Cyprus Problem and Hydrocarbon Disputes**

In this part, the main research focus of this thesis will be studied. That is to say, the intertwined relation of identity, nationalism, Cyprus problem and the disputes on the hydrocarbon reserves will be analysed. As it can be understood and is argued in the historical background chapter, the contradictory and exclusionary character of nationalist ideologies, and sovereignty and ownership matters which have been a result of the power relations, political struggle between the nationalist ideologies are the basis of the Cyprus problem. They are inextricably linked. Hence, it is hard to examine and understand these separate from each other. Lately, this problematic relation and ideologies have been revealed once again with the hydrocarbon case.

The Eastern Mediterranean has historically been a central arena of strategic rivalry between powers that have come both from within it and from the outside with the ambition of organising the area for their own ends. Since 2009, the region has been experiencing debates and contradictory events because of the underwater natural resources which did not gain this much attention until Israel explorations ended up with foundation of natural gas in its sea blocks named as Leviathan and Tamar, and until the Republic of Cyprus (RoC) claiming its exclusive economic zone. Then, the EEZ delimitation agreements by RoC with the coastal states and explorations and the discovery of natural gas potential in the Aphrodite basin within its claimed EEZ have increased the oppositions and tension in the Eastern Mediterranean.

What is significant and at the same time usual in this hydrocarbon case is that, as an island and region which are full of political aspects and interests in terms of actions and policies, the hydrocarbon and EEZ disputes also have political character. It is an example for the historical, political and strategic uncertainties in the region. The Cyprus Problem and the development of hydrocarbon reserves within the Cypriot claimed waters are inextricably linked<sup>172</sup>. In other words, it is fair to argue that the exploration actions for hydrocarbon and natural gas reserves have escalated the nationalist contradictions and had impact on the Cyprus Problem. The essential character of hydrocarbon case is that it has brought along the sovereignty question between the two Cypriot communities in Cyprus and also Turkey; but this time

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<sup>172</sup> Pope, 2014. The Cyprus Problem Trumps Cyprus Hydrocarbons: 90.

on maritime jurisdiction and offshore resources, not on in-land political power and nationalist ideologies. The question now is who has the sovereign right to explore and exploit the natural resources in the exclusive economic zone of Cyprus. With regard to the hydrocarbon discussion and the Cyprus Problem, Hugh Pope argues that any exploitation of the potential wealth of these resources looks increasingly bound to 'a three-phase vicious circle' which has been a pattern similar to the historical experiences that Cyprus problem has passed through. He explains these phases of the cycle as follows:

- The first is the one where everything seems completely stuck with no solution in sight;
- The second where an event triggers a sense of real hope in an imminent resolution, often with much attendant fanfare;
- The third where that hope grows old but optimists set out lists of steps that would restore hope. And then it's back to phase one again.<sup>173</sup>

In the light of this vicious circle, the latest episode of the Cyprus Problem involves the disputes over the exercise of sovereignty at sea and the delimitation of sea zones. What we can understand from this is that the role of political machismo<sup>174</sup> has significant impact in the practice of sovereignty in terms of disregarding international law and further undermining prospects for a peaceful settlement of the conflict. To put it in other way, the Cyprus Problem has rapidly spreaded to the seas<sup>175</sup> and hydrocarbon discussions has complicated the relationship of the sides. The reason why is that because

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<sup>173</sup> Ibid. Pope, 2014.

<sup>174</sup> As Prof. Dr. Ahmet Sözen (Eastern Mediterranean University) also states in a speech, the Greek Cypriot ruling elites are acting in opposite way rather than trying to prepare the people live together. 22.11.2014.

<sup>175</sup> Başeren, 2013. Doğu Akdeniz Deniz Yetki Alanlarının Sınırlandırılması Sorunu: Tarafların Görüşleri, Uluslararası Hukuk Kurallarına Göre Çözüm ve Sondaj Krizi": 254.

hydrocarbons are being 'viewed through the lens of existing conflictual relations' which are based on political and nationalist interests of the sides. Consequently, hydrocarbons are also becoming a link in the existing 'chain of problems' which is related to the long-lasting Cyprus Problem<sup>176</sup>. As it is mentioned in Constantinou's article based on a speech at Home for Cooperation, 'clashing cartographies and ownership claims have begun circulating through the mass media. Natural-gas-speak is in the air. Accusations, protestations, veiled and naked threats abound...'<sup>177</sup>.

It can be clearly seen that it is the Cyprus Problem and in particular the legal status of the existing states in the island (the Republic of Cyprus and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus) what has made the hydrocarbon case more complicated. The RoC was established as a bicomunal state in which power was shared between the two constituent communities of the new republic – that were the Greek Cypriots and the Turkish Cypriots. Nevertheless, as a result of the violent inter-communal conflicts started in 1963 and lasted till 1974, Turkish Cypriots were not able to take their parts and rights in the RoC. With the partition of the island in 1974 intervention, Turkish Cypriots had established their own administrative governments in their territory in the north and lastly they have declared the independent Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) in 1983. The still existing TRNC is recognized only by Turkey. However, the declaration of the TRNC also contained statements

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<sup>176</sup> Gürel, A., Tzimitras, H. & Faustmann, H. (Eds.). 2014. *East Mediterranean Hydrocarbons: Geopolitical Perspectives, Markets and Regional Cooperation*: 1.

<sup>177</sup> Constantinou, 29 September 2011. *Escapades at Sea: Sovereignty, Legality and Machismo in the Eastern Mediterranean*.



that presents the commitment to achieving a bi-zonal federal settlement under the auspices of the UN Secretary-General<sup>178</sup>. Moreover, the declaration also states that the TRNC 'shall continue to adhere to the Treaties of Establishment, Guarantee and Alliance'<sup>179</sup>.

In the light of these, if two communities of the island would work together in equal terms in the exploration activities, this case could be a 'peace project'<sup>180</sup>. Nonetheless, the RoC has been acting unilaterally, by itself, on behalf of the whole island, the chance of hydrocarbon discoveries is possible to turn into a conflict which might be escalated on the basis of ethnic and religious differences<sup>181</sup>. Hydrocarbons and natural resources requires cooperation and good governance in order to benefit efficiently from them. In this respect, this brings us to the politics of natural resources, of discoveries and related activities at sea. In the following part, the sovereignty dispute in the Eastern Mediterranean will be discussed.

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<sup>178</sup> Gürel, A. & Mullen, F. & Tzimitras, H. 2013: 34.

Related Statements of the Declaration: Article 14; 'The Turkish Cypriot People are determined to live together; they are determined to protect their national identity, to govern themselves in a democratic manner. They are willing to reach just and peaceful solutions, on all issues, through negotiations on the basis of equality with the Greek Cypriot People.'... Article 16; 'The Turkish Cypriot People have earnestly strived for years for the reestablishment of an order which would be based on the equal partnership of the two peoples within a bi-zonal federal solution.' ... 'In the Summit Agreement of 1977, concluded between the leaders of the two communities, the establishment of a bi-communal, bi-zonal federation was accepted as the common aim. This aim was later confirmed in the 1979 Summit Agreement, in the Opening Statement of the UN Secretary-General of 1980 and in the UN Evaluation Document of 1981. In order to achieve this aim, direct negotiations between the two national communities, and on the basis of equality, under the auspices of the UN Secretary-General, have been accepted as the only valid method.' *The Declaration of Independence*, 1983.

<sup>179</sup> Cited in Gürel, et al. 2013: 34.

<sup>180</sup> Ergun Olgun, TEPAV Conference, 2012.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid. Ergun Olgun, TEPAV Conference, 2012.

## It's all About Politics!: The Sovereignty Dispute

From a legal perspective, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) states that in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ), the coastal state has exclusive rights, *sovereign rights*;

for the purpose of exploring and exploiting, conserving and managing the natural resources, whether living or non-living, of the waters superjacent to the seabed and of the seabed and its subsoil, and with regard to other activities for the economic exploitation and exploration of the zone, such as the production of energy from the water, currents and winds. (Article 56)<sup>182</sup>

The important point for the EEZ rights and regulations is that in order to establish an EEZ, a state has to proclaim and the EEZ can only be claimed up to 200 nautical miles. Moreover, vessels from every other state have 'freedom of navigation' and the right not to be hindered within another country's EEZ<sup>183</sup>. The point about the EEZ is that Article 74 requires states to seek agreement 'to achieve an equitable solution' on the basis of equidistance/median line in order to delimit the EEZ between states with opposite or adjacent coasts. The Mediterranean Sea is an example for such a delimitation requirement because entitled 200 nautical miles results in clashes between coastal states.

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<sup>182</sup> UNCLOS, 1982,

<sup>183</sup> UNCLOS Article 58: 'all States, whether coastal or land-locked, enjoy, subject to the relevant provisions of this Convention, the freedoms referred to in article 87 of navigation and overflight and of the laying of submarine cables and pipelines, and other internationally lawful uses of the sea related to these freedoms, such as those associated with the operation of ships, aircraft and submarine cables and pipelines, and compatible with the other provisions of this Convention.'

Nevertheless, unlike the EEZ, the rights of a coastal state over the continental shelf ‘do not depend on occupation, effective or notional, or on any express proclamation’ and are ‘exclusive sovereign rights for the purpose of exploring it and exploiting its natural resources’<sup>184</sup>. In other words, states are entitled to continental shelf rights<sup>185</sup> based on their sovereignty virtue even though they do not proclaim an EEZ; but the vice versa condition of EEZ without a continental shelf regulation is not valid.

In a statement on the disputes related to the Cyprus case, UN Special Adviser Espen Barth Eide also tried to state that ‘sovereignty’ and ‘sovereign rights’ have different meanings under UNCLOS<sup>186</sup>. With regard to the UNCLOS principles, sovereignty grants full rights, or supreme authority, to a country within its territorial waters, which stretch to 12 nautical miles, whereas sovereign rights within an EEZ refer much further out to sea and “no longer concerns all of a state’s activities, but only some of them”<sup>187</sup>. For instance, in the case of Cyprus, this would include the exploration and exploitation of the islands’ undersea natural resources – that is the hydrocarbons. Furthermore, maritime legal expert Anastasios Antoniou also argues in an interview that:

Sovereign rights are not rights deriving from sovereignty but rights of specific functional purpose. The phrase ‘sovereign rights’ in Article 56 of UNCLOS suggests Cyprus’ rights are exclusive, not preferential over other states. The same term is used in relation to the continental shelf regime and makes clear that Cyprus may not have sovereignty per se over its EEZ, but it

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<sup>184</sup> UNCLOS, Article 77.

<sup>185</sup> Continental shelf rights are ab initio and ipso facto rights. They are given rights based on their land sovereignty; not required to be claimed and announced.

<sup>186</sup> Christou, J. April 2015. ‘Sovereignty’ versus ‘sovereign rights’.

<sup>187</sup> Ibid. Christou, 2015.

does have all other exclusive rights necessary for the exploration and exploitation of its hydrocarbons.<sup>188</sup>

The Turkish Cypriot side object to all the RoC actions relating to maritime jurisdiction zones. These actions involve concluding agreements with third countries for EEZ delimitation or for joint development of cross-boundary resources, organizing international tenders to give licences for hydrocarbon prospecting and exploration as well as authorizing exploration and drilling operations offshore Cyprus<sup>189</sup>. These actions are international as it is based on the principles of the exercise of sovereign rights. In this respect, depending upon the virtue of being one of the equal constituent communities of the RoC established in 1960, the Turkish Cypriots regard any unilateral Greek Cypriot action in this field while the Cyprus problem is still not solved, as ignoring the legitimate rights and interests of the Turkish Cypriots. On this issue, Honorary Representative of the TRNC in Los Angeles, Mehmet Mustafaoğlu, argues in one of his articles in *The Hill* (one of the important political newspaper in the U.S.A) that although Greek Cypriot side pretends to be blind, Turkish Cypriot side is equal owners of natural resources of Cyprus and has the right to do offshore explorations<sup>190</sup>. Hence, opposite unilateral actions creates faits accomplis before a comprehensive settlement and off the negotiating table<sup>191</sup>.

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<sup>188</sup> Ibid. Christou, 2015.

<sup>189</sup> Gürel, et al. 2013: 45.

<sup>190</sup> Kıbrıs Postası, 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2015, 'Mustafaoğlu: "Kıbrıs: Değişken ve Garipçe Unutulmuş Donmuş bir Çatışma"'.  
<sup>191</sup> Gürel, et al. 2013: 45.; Gürel, A. & Le Cornu, L. 2014. Can Gas Catalyse Peace in the Eastern Mediterranean? :18.

The officially stated position of the Turkish Cypriots is that the two sides should suspend their on-going unilateral operations and plans in hydrocarbon case. If not, they should cooperate to bring them under the authority of a provisional joint (i.e., bicommunal) body which the two sides will specifically establish together for this purpose, and which will also decide about how the two sides will share the revenues. In this respect, the Turkish Cypriots made a proposal that it would be better the two sides to work together in developing Cyprus' offshore hydrocarbon resources. These proposals 'notably entailed obtaining the two sides' mutual consent on international agreements signed and exploration licences granted unilaterally by either side, and a joint decision about each side's share of the resources'<sup>192</sup>. This position was also stated, in 2007, in a letter from the Turkish Cypriot leader of the time, Mehmet Ali Talat, to the UN Security Council (distributed via Turkey);

[...] agreement signed by the Greek Cypriot Administration under its purported capacity as the "Government of the Republic of Cyprus" is null and void and is not, in any way binding on the Turkish Cypriot people or the island as a whole [...] the Turkish Cypriot people [...] who were the equal partners of the 1960 Republic of Cyprus and would again be the political equal of the Greek Cypriot people in a future comprehensive agreement [...] have equal right and say on the natural resources on the land and sea areas of Cyprus [...]<sup>193</sup>

We can see that he talks about the Turkish Cypriot people not the state representing them. This is in defence of the rights of the Turkish Cypriots, as

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<sup>192</sup> Ibid. Gürel & Le Cornu, 2014.

<sup>193</sup> The letter, referring to the EEZ delimitation agreement signed between the RoC and Lebanon... Letter signed by Mehmet Ali Talat as President and transmitted as 'Annex to the letter dated 2 February 2007 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General', UN Doc.A/61/727S/2007/54. cited in Mullen, 2014: 9.

the constituent partner on the basis of 1960 constitution of the RoC, for the matters which has relation to the prospective permanent state of affairs on the island. Consequently, it is seen that the main concern of the Turkish Cypriots is not about sharing wealth but acting together, sharing sovereignty. Thus, they are not primarily seeking a share of the prospective hydrocarbon revenues, be it before or after a settlement. Rather what they want is that the Greek Cypriots as well as the international community acknowledge their equal share with the Greek Cypriots in rights concerning maritime jurisdiction and hydrocarbon exploration and development, notwithstanding the lack of a negotiated settlement.

According to then the RoC government spokesman Stephanos Stephanou, the Turkish Cypriot proposal 'is seeking to downgrade a sovereign right of a UN and EU member state, namely the Republic of Cyprus, to a bicomunal matter. This cannot be accepted and it is rejected'. This shows that the Greek Cypriot government seems willing to consider sharing in principle the benefits with the Turkish Cypriots but rejects negotiating or suspending its sovereign right to exploit its EEZ. Nonetheless, the core objection of Turkish Cypriots is just to the Greek Cypriots' venturing to exercise this right all on their own and hence creation of faits accomplis vis-à-vis the prospective state of affairs after a settlement.

In an interview with the Turkish Cypriot New Agency, Kudret Özersay, then special representative of the Turkish Cypriot leader Derviş Eroğlu also argues about the perspectives of two communities.

The Greek Cypriot side's maritime jurisdiction- and hydrocarbon-related activities concern not only the future of the island but also the very foundations of the permanent order that will be created [ . . . ] Such moves serve to place the future of the island under Greek Cypriot domination. The maritime delimitation and licensing agreements that the Greek Cypriots signed here are directly related to the issue of sovereignty<sup>194</sup>, and may cause the creation of a permanent situation concerning the future of the island [ . . . ]

On the one hand, the two sides are conducting negotiations for determining a common future, while on the other, [one of the sides] the Greek Cypriot side, is trying to determine this future exclusively by itself [ . . . ] These sovereignty-related agreements undermine the rights and political will of the Turkish Cypriots and could create international undertakings concerning the island's natural wealth which belongs to both sides.<sup>195</sup>

He also argues that the support by the international community, and especially the EU, the Turkish Cypriot side had no option but to defend its rights by taking 'similar reciprocal steps of equal significance. Like the Greek Cypriots, the Turkish Cypriots will also go ahead unilaterally and sign agreements and start hydrocarbon exploration in the maritime areas of Cyprus as a whole'<sup>196</sup>.

As we can understand, the reasons and logic behind Turkish Cypriot exploration activities follows the principle of reciprocity. In this respect, the Turkish Cypriot government got underway their own hydrocarbons exploration, on 29 September 2012 in cooperation with Turkey. As a response to the EEZ

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<sup>194</sup> In 2010, Turkey protested the signing of a delimitation agreement between the RoC and Israel by issuing a press release that 'agreements of this kind are directly linked to the sovereignty issue which is one of the indispensable components of the ongoing comprehensive settlement negotiations and due to the agreement in principle, they have been left to the discretion of the new partnership government. By ignoring Turkish Cypriots' rights, Greek Cypriots' efforts for concluding such agreements, are highly untimely and raise questions as to their real intentions and sincerity regarding the settlement process.' (Turkish MFA 2010)

<sup>195</sup> The Turkish Cypriot news agency TAK. 17 August 2011.

<sup>196</sup> Ibid. The Turkish Cypriot news agency TAK.

agreements and activities by the RoC, a continental shelf delimitation agreement was signed between Turkey and the TRNC. This was the first step of the Turkish-Turkish Cypriot response to the Greek Cypriot exploratory drilling in Block 12. This agreement was signed on 21 September 2011.<sup>197</sup> It was ratified by the TRNC Parliament on 9 January 2012 and the Turkish Parliament on 29 June 2012.

Under the TRNC Territorial Sea Law, No. 42/2002, the breadth of the territorial sea is identified as 12 nautical miles.<sup>91</sup> In addition, there is the TRNC Maritime Jurisdiction Areas Law, No. 63/2005, which provides for the proclamation of the EEZ up to 200 NM as well as for its delimitation by agreement with neighbouring coastal states. In the same law, the continental shelf is defined, in accordance with international norms, as the seabed and the subsoil of the submarine areas that extend to the outer edge of the natural prolongation of Cyprus, or up to the continental margin or 200 NM, whichever is greater. This agreement draws a boundary between the northern coast of Cyprus and the southern coast of Turkey. This boundary is declared to be not a median/equidistance line but a line 'determined on the basis of international law and equitable principles'<sup>198</sup>. The signing of this continental shelf agreement also came as a reaction to the commencement of exploratory drilling authorized by the RoC government off the island's southern coast. Regarding

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<sup>197</sup> Agreement Concerning the Delimitation of the Continental Shelf in the Mediterranean Sea between the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus and the Republic of Turkey was signed between by then the Turkish Prime Minister, Erdoğan, and the Turkish Cypriot President, Derviş Eroğlu. Turkish Cypriot Newspapers.

<sup>198</sup> Turkish MFA 2011a.



to the agreement, then the Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayip Erdoğan repeated that:

We had previously brought to the international community's attention in a clear manner that if the Greek Cypriots started drilling, we would take a number of concrete steps together with the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus... To reflect this commitment, Turkey and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus today in New York signed a continental shelf agreement.<sup>199</sup>

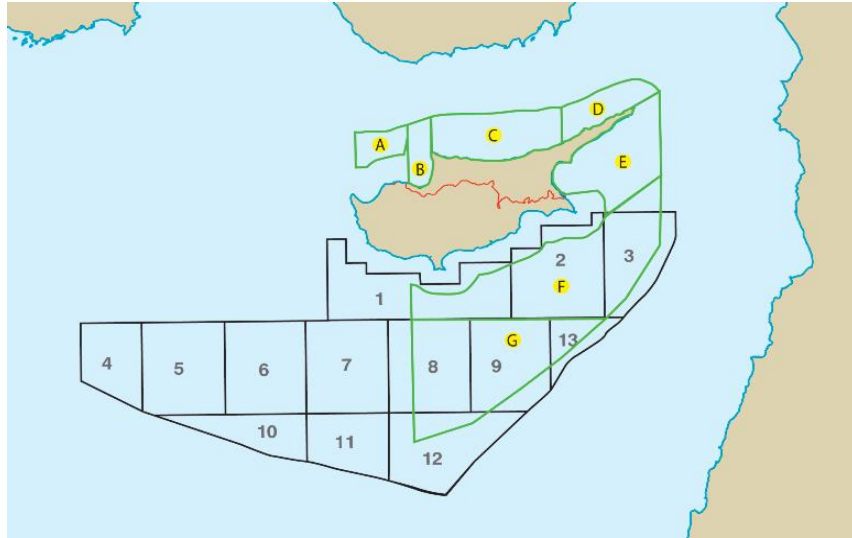
However, the RoC and Greece denounced the agreement as illegal and thus as invalid<sup>200</sup>. On 22 September 2011, the TRNC Council of Ministers decided to grant to the Turkish state petroleum company, TPAO, oil and gas exploration licences for certain sea areas in the north, east and south of Cyprus.<sup>201</sup> (see Figure 6 for the TRNC licenced blocks). All these actions and agreements by the TRNC in cooperation with Turkey could be argued to lack legal validity under international law because of the TRNC being internationally unrecognized. Nevertheless, it can also be argued that the agreement is appropriate depending on the fact that the parties who signed it (Turkey and the TRNC) recognise each other.

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<sup>199</sup> Burch, J., 21 September 2011, 'Turkey-North Cyprus gas deal set to raise regional tensions'.

<sup>200</sup>Gürel et al. 2013.

<sup>201</sup> Decision of the TRNC Council of Ministers, No. K(II)1195-2011, 22 September 2011. Cited in Gürel et al 2013: 65.



**Figure 6:** The TRNC licensing blocks overlapping with some of the RoC licensing blocks.  
(Source: Turkish MFA)

Furthermore, as part of the on-going negotiations for a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem, the two sides have established a 'treaties committee' whose purpose is to list all the treaties and agreements which both sides concluded with third parties in the pre-settlement period and which will be binding on the united Cyprus post-settlement. A ground rule of the said committee is the presumption that all such treaties and agreements will be included in the list, unless they are contrary to the provisions of the prospective settlement. In this sense, therefore, the Turkey-TRNC continental shelf agreement could come to have legal consequences within the scope of a future settlement just as the delimitation agreements concluded between the RoC and Egypt, Lebanon and Israel.

In a letter the Turkish government sent to the UN in 2007, it was argued that:

At the core of the problem stands the unlawful claim of the Greek Cypriot side to be the legitimate successor of the Government of “the Republic of Cyprus” of 1960. Since the adoption of Security Council resolution 186 (1964) which, in paragraph 4, recommended the creation, “with the consent of the Government of Cyprus”, of a United Nations peacekeeping force in Cyprus, the Greek Cypriot side has been portraying itself as the sole owner of the title of “Government of Cyprus” and is conducting day-to-day business in international forums as if it represented the island and its peoples as a whole.<sup>202</sup>

The general logic behind the Turkish Cypriot claim in this hydrocarbons case seems that the Turkish Cypriots have as much inherent right as the Greek Cypriots to explore in the maritime jurisdiction areas of the RoC. This right is based on the equal political status of Turkish Cypriots with the Greek Cypriots, as they are constitutional partners of the 1960 RoC, a status enshrined in the international accords of 1959-1960 which created the RoC. In this respect, The TRNC Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) made a statement and pointed out that;

The Turkish Cypriots had ‘equal and inseparable rights’ in the natural gas resources in the maritime areas of Cyprus and that they would not allow these to be usurped by the Greek Cypriots.<sup>203</sup>

The Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots still hold this sovereign right together as there has been no formal agreement as to its division between them. In fact, the two sides have been in negotiations since 1968 seeking

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<sup>202</sup> Turkey 2007.

<sup>203</sup> ‘Kıbrıs, 3 November 2012. Haklarımızın gaspına izin vermeyeceğiz... Additionally, the Turkish MFA statement supported the TRNC MFA’s statement and repeated an earlier Turkish warning that ‘those companies cooperating with the Greek Cypriot Administration will not be allowed to take part in new energy projects in Turkey’ (Turkish MFA 2012d).. For instance, then the Turkish Minister of Energy, Taner Yıldız, warned the Italian oil and gas company ENI on 2 November 2012. *Hürriyet Daily News*, 3 November 2012, ‘Turkey may “reconsider” local ENI investments over Greek Cyprus ties’.

agreement as to how to come together again in exercising such common rights<sup>204</sup>. Thus, as part of their promised reciprocal action, the Turkish Cypriots have issued exploration licences in the maritime areas around Cyprus regarding to the activities which the Greek Cypriots have done and are still in the process of doing at the moment.

With regard to this, we can clearly argue that the general argument is not just about the money, it is mainly about the unilateral actions of the Greek Cypriot side, about the exploration and exploitation of these natural resources together, jointly<sup>205</sup>. The main cause of this is that Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots are in an asymmetric relation and problem. The latter uses the advantage of being internationally recognised whereas the former is excluded and disadvantaged because of its international status. A statement, which refers to the explorations and preparations, by then the Turkish Energy Minister Taner Yıldız supports and confirms this idea that 'the political aspect of the current operations is more prominent'.<sup>206</sup> President Anastasiades noted that;

Cyprus did not need Turkey to point out that the Turkish Cypriots also had rights concerning the natural gas, as it was the Republic of Cyprus that was the first to acknowledge this, adding however that the Republic of Cyprus could not be expected to divest itself of its sovereign rights.<sup>207</sup>

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<sup>204</sup> The Turkish Cypriot news agency TAK. 2011. Interview with Kudret Özersay.

<sup>205</sup> Fiona Mullen. 2014. Cyprus Gas: Positions on Sovereignty and Latest Market Developments: 9.

<sup>206</sup> *Kıbrıs Postası*, 21 September 2011.

<sup>207</sup> Parikiaki. 2 November 2014. President: No participation in process that questions Cyprus' sovereignty.

As we can understand from the development of the disputes on hydrocarbons, the nationalist positions of the sides and the Cyprus Problem clearly are reflected on the decisions and perspectives about these natural resources. Greek Cypriots started and have continued activities unilaterally so as to show that they 'own' the right to take action in the name of the whole island; whereas Turkish Cypriots have begun to demand and defend themselves by arguing that at least a working group within the Cyprus settlement talks on the issue is needed. Working and managing it together would be more beneficial if two sides were indeed supposed to be politically equal partners in a future federal state. Moreover, Turkey have begun to make threats and protested the unilateral actions of the RoC which Turkey does not recognise (mostly uses 'Greek Cypriot Administration'). In this regard, Turkey signed new boundary arrangements with the Turkish Cypriots, and also initiated its own hydrocarbon exploration, moving naval ships not far from where the oil companies were working. While all these happening in the Eastern Mediterranean region, Greece stayed aloof as it has been dealing with its own economic and political problems, and also because of the Aegean dispute with the Turkey.

The PRIO Cyprus Centre's conferences and reports on this hydrocarbon issue reveals how much Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots will benefit economically as well as politically from a settlement and full normalisation. On the other hand, Özersay argues that 'cooperation on offshore hydrocarbons development, which everybody assumes will happen after a comprehensive settlement, is worth a try even before reaching a

settlement.<sup>208</sup> However, he also admits that the Greek Cypriot is not willing to 'cooperate and share revenues with the Turkish Cypriots as long as the Cyprus problem remains unresolved'. In short, the main interpretation could be that there seems to be an obvious reluctance to share political and economic power with the Turkish Cypriots. It is not stated openly what kind of realistic solution they wish to have. The Greek Cypriots only acknowledges that offshore natural resources of the island belong to both Cypriot communities and that the management of these resources will be under the federal competence reached through a comprehensive settlement which will reunite Cyprus<sup>209</sup>. Moreover, the Greek Cypriot side also state that the revenues from the resources will be shared with the Turkish Cypriots only within the framework of a united federal Cyprus.

So, what is the part and relation of identity in all these arguments about the hydrocarbons? The understanding and argument of identity in Cyprus is the historically embedded element of all nationalist arguments and positions, of the Cyprus Problem, and most importantly, of the *sovereignty* disputes. The main reason is the nationalist ideologies in the island since these ideologies create an exclusionary environment and distinction between the two Cypriot communities. This situation also leads to the problem of equal partnership and power sharing. Consequently, we end up with the essential problem of sovereignty and ownership. These arguments are also reflected in the discourses of most of the intellectuals. For instance, in a conference on the

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<sup>208</sup> Özersay, 2014. Cooperation for Stability in Cyprus and Beyond: 94.

<sup>209</sup> Gurel & Le Cornu. 2014. Can Gas Catalyse Peace in the Eastern Mediterranean.

'Hydrocarbon Policies in Eastern Mediterranean and Cyprus', it is stated by Ergun Olgun that the emotional obsession and political ideology of Cyprus being a Greek/Hellenic island still continues and the Greek Cypriot society is institutionalised along with this ideology<sup>210</sup>. In this respect, the church, education system and political parties have played very important role. As a result of this institutionalisation and hegemonic nationalist ideology, power sharing with the Turkish Cypriots has been a serious problem. In this regard, as Olgun also emphasises, negotiation table has been used as a tool for gaining time for their hegemonic desire for having the authority over the whole island<sup>211</sup>. This claim can be supported by the internationally recognised status and the EU membership of the RoC. Therefore, as mentioned before, in a way the nationalist Greek Cypriot ideal of having authority over the whole island has been materialised and the Greek Cypriot government now enjoys the advantages of being internationally recognised and being acknowledged as the representative of Cypriot identity and government within the international platforms (i.e. the EU). In these platforms, Turkish Cypriot side has been undermined and excluded<sup>212</sup>.

Historically, the Greek Cypriot side has been reluctant to share particularly political power with the Turkish Cypriots and not seen them as their equal partners. This is a reason why a settlement has not been able to be

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<sup>210</sup> Former Undersecretary of the TRNC Presidency and Coordinator of Turkish Cypriot Advisory Committee for Negotiations; Ergun Olgun, TEPAV Conference, 2012.

<sup>211</sup> Ibid. Ergun Olgun, TEPAV Conference, 2012

<sup>212</sup> Although the RoC has been accepted as a member state and being entitled as the representative of the whole island, European Union *acquis communautaire* is suspended for the Turkish Cypriot side until a political settlement of the Cyprus Problem. However, EU provides financial aid support to the TRNC for structural adjustment projects.

reached for almost fifty years (since 1968, the very beginning of inter-communal negotiations in the island). As argued in the historical background chapter, the Cyprus Problem is based on contradictory and exclusionary political and nationalist identity ideologies. In this regard, Cypriotism envisages a unified Cypriot citizenship in a bi-communal federation<sup>213</sup>. Thus, 'Cypriot may be regarded as somebody who puts the interest of Cyprus as a nation before the interests of the community from which they stem'<sup>214</sup>. Nevertheless, the Greek Cypriot side has rejected all the solution formulas<sup>215</sup> for the protracted Cyprus Problem offered by the UN and supported by the EU, the U.S.A. and Turkey<sup>216</sup>. Furthermore, all the recent arguments and perspectives on hydrocarbons and related activities in the Cyprus' Exclusive Economic Zone shows that political and nationalist perceptions are still the dominant ideology on the basis of the notions of *sovereignty, recognition, representation and equality of power*. With regard to hydrocarbon activities and on the basis of discourses and statements of sides, we can argue that Cypriotism has been a discursive ideological intention with its so-called inclusive character of collective identity unifying both communities of Cyprus. Mainly because of the asymmetric relation of two Cypriot communities and the coexistence of ethnic and civic nationalist identity approaches, the *other* possesses the right over hydrocarbons based on collective Cypriot identity and collective history, while,

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<sup>213</sup> The idea of bicomunal federation was agreed by the 1977/1979 High Level Agreements under the auspices of the UN Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim and his Good Offices.

<sup>214</sup> Chaglar, January 2008. The Cyprus Question: A Philosophical Answer.

<sup>215</sup> Pérez de Cuéllar proposals, Boutros Ghali set of ideas, Annan Plan were some significant solution proposals offered by the UN and rejected by the Greek Cypriot side.

<sup>216</sup> However, despite their oppositional behaviours, the Greek Cypriot side was rewarded with the EU membership and the embargoes on the Turkish Cypriot side still continue.



at the same time, it cannot have this right until a political settlement is reached for the Cyprus problem, until a solution is achieved with a result of bicomunal federal state.

Furthermore, in relation with Cyprus Problem, the general opinion on hydrocarbons has been that they can act as a game changer or a catalyst in efforts to resolve the problem as it presents political and economic incentives for cooperation, in potentially bridging the gap between the respective parties<sup>217</sup>. However, the Cyprus talks broke down after Turkey issued a marine advisory (NAVTEX) within the Cypriot EEZ which led the Greek Cypriots to temporarily withdraw their participation from the negotiating table<sup>218</sup>. As argued by Charalambous, for the Greek Cypriot side, 'the dispatch and incursion of the Barbaros<sup>219</sup> into Cyprus' EEZ provided a golden opportunity to disengage from the talks having in mind that these were heading nowhere and that 'presidential elections' are looming in the north, in April 2015'<sup>220</sup>. This kind of interpretations seems very reasonable on the basis of the historical experiences in the island in relation to negotiation process. Despite the fact that there have been some opportunities which were missed to resolve the Cyprus Problem and not been any violence in the long-lasting Cyprus 'Conflict'

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<sup>217</sup> Gürel, A. & Le Cornu, L. 2014.

'The problem of natural reserves may provide a window of opportunity for the readiness of the sides if the correct interventions are made by the mediators and third parties' Dr. Zeliha Khashman, 17 November 2014. Hydrocarbons and the Cyprus Mediation Process. *Hurriyet Daily News*.

<sup>218</sup> Charalambous, Y. 28 December 2014. What went wrong in 2014? *Cyprus Mail*.

For more detailed information on the development of the activities of the sides, PRIO Cyprus Reports on hydrocarbons present comprehensive collection of articles and analysis.

<sup>219</sup> Barbaros is the Turkish seismic survey/exploration vessel which operated in the offshore Cyprus after issuing maritime order (NAVTEX) in cooperation with TRNC. *Parikiaki*.

<sup>220</sup> Charalambous, 28 December 2014. What went wrong in 2014? *Cyprus Mail*.

(as also called), the main obstacle has been the lack of political will that turned it into a protracted political deadlock. It has always been a 'conflict over statehood and the source of its persistence is a relatively recent mistrust rather than any "ancient hatreds"'<sup>221</sup>. In this regard, when we have a look at the *Joint Declaration* agreed and announced by the leaders of Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities, Nicos Anastasiades and Derviş Eroğlu in February 2014.<sup>222</sup> In this declaration, it is agreed that 'neither side may claim authority or jurisdiction over the other'. That is to say, the domination of one ethnonationalist ideology and identity is prohibited so as to embrace single united Cyprus citizenship regulated by federal law. Nevertheless, what can be interpreted from the hydrocarbon activities is that Greek Cypriot side is using the advantages of the internationally recognised RoC and acts unilaterally as the sole representative of the island. In other words, the past and future partner, constituent state role of Turkish Cypriot side is being dominated and excluded by the Greek Cypriot partner.

In brief, it is the asymmetric identity and nationalist relations of two Cypriot communities which have caused failure of agreement and solution attempts. The Greek Cypriot ideal of having authority for the whole island has been materialised and the Greek Cypriot community enjoys the advantages of being recognised as the representative of Cypriot identity and government in the eyes of the international community and under international law. Despite

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<sup>221</sup> Lacher & Kaymak, 2005:153.

<sup>222</sup> This was the time of renewed negotiation process after the break up. This Joint Declaration has pointed out the main agreed principles for the federal framework and negotiation process... Cyprus Mail, 11st February 2014, Joint Declaration.

the Turkish Cypriots – as well as Turkey since it is the only country to recognise the TRNC – insist that the Greek Cypriots alone cannot legitimately represent the RoC as they were the constitutional partner (on the basis of the 1960 Constitution), the European Union membership of the RoC – regarding the Greek Cypriot government as the representative of the whole island – once more strengthened the asymmetric relation between Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots.

As it is mentioned before, the understanding and argument of identity in Cyprus is the historically embedded element of all nationalist arguments and positions, of the Cyprus Problem, and most importantly, of the *sovereignty* disputes. The nationalist identity ideologies in the island have created an exclusionary environment and distinction between the two Cypriot communities. This exclusionary and contradictory relations have been always reflected as political power struggles between Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot side. Despite the existence of ideological intention of having a common Cypriot understanding of identity, both sides have kept their dominant ethnic character and perspectives which has brought along the protracted Cyprus Problem. The essential problem was the asymmetric and exclusionary relation between the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot national identity ideologies.

## Conclusion

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As we can understand, Cyprus Problem is an important aspect of the hydrocarbon case, and vice versa. In this recent case of hydrocarbons, we see that an external factor has been reflected on the internal factor and relations with regard to the Cyprus Problem; and vice versa, a domestic problem has been reflected on the relations offshore Cyprus. Therefore, it can be argued that resettlement of the Problem could play an essential role in maintaining and sustaining peace and cooperation within the island as well as in the region. It could provide secure and peaceful environment for benefitting from hydrocarbon resources effectively in the energy market, and for the relationship of Turkey with Greece and the EU. Therefore, this requires cooperation and understanding of the sides (particularly Turkey, RoC and Greece) to decrease the tension in Eastern Mediterranean. Nevertheless, it has become another contradictory and exclusionary event in the history of the Cyprus Problem based on nationalist ideologies and political struggle.

In the light of these arguments, in order to understand the inextricably linked relation of the Cyprus problem, nationalist identity ideologies and the disputes over hydrocarbon reserves, we need to look at the historical development of this relation. It is hard to understand the disputes over hydrocarbons without studying the main elements which has brought these sovereignty and ownership arguments on the stage. These elements have been the nationalist ideologies and identity perceptions of two Cypriot

communities that have brought the political struggle on the basis of ethnic and civic approaches. Therefore, in the historical background chapter of this thesis, I have presented the development of the identity formation of Cypriot people and different types of nationalisms in the island based on either *ethnic* and motherland ties and elements, or *civic*, territorial and Cypriot elements and interests.

We see that in different time periods and under the influence of internal and external political conditions, both Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots embraced either ethnonational or civic values and identities. Ethnonational identity has mostly been used for their inter-communal positions and interests whereas civic identity of Cypriotism has been used as kind of unity against external powers on the basis of Cypriot interests. Nevertheless, what we see is that both ethnonationalism and Cypriot nationalism (Cypriotism) possess exclusionary character. Moreover, Cypriotism represents an ideology and has different perceptions in both Cypriot communities separately. Therefore, depending on the conditions and interests, we see the coexistence of two identities defined by both ethnic and civic nationalism. Besides, these two have different meanings and use within each society. In that sense, it can be argued that Cypriotism can be regarded as a representation of nationalist discourse which has its *imagined community*. To put it in other way, it has mostly been an ideological intention to treat 'Cypriotness' as the 'inclusive' element of the collective identity unifying both communities of Cyprus<sup>223</sup>. Nevertheless, it has

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<sup>223</sup> Vural & Rüstemli. 2006: 332.

also had an exclusionary character, as it is argued in the historical background chapter.

Because of these nationalism and political-interest based perspectives, it has been the notions of *sovereignty, recognition, representation and equality of power* which have caused an asymmetric relation between two Cypriot communities. To put it in other way, it is the political, exclusionary and asymmetric relation of two Cypriot communities/identities which have caused the failure of reaching an agreement and/or solution attempts for the Cyprus Problem. The Greek Cypriot ideal of having authority as the representative of the whole island has been materialised and the Greek Cypriots now enjoys the advantages of being recognised as the representative of Cypriot identity and government in the international arena whereas the Turkish Cypriots demanding their rights and try to develop a counter-action for the protection and preservation of their interests. Additionally, for instance, because the Turkish Cypriot side have been under international isolation and embargoes, there always have been strong relation between Turkey and Turkish Cypriots; but at the same time they have been looking for opportunities and alternatives to this relation and to eliminate their disadvantaged status by a federal solution. In this respect, it can be argued that the exclusionary character of Cypriotism has been instrumentalised hand in hand with the Cyprus Problem. In other words, it might also be interpreted as that Cypriotism and Cypriot identity have

been used to weaken the memories, ethnic relations, unity and solidarity with Turkey so that it would be in favour of RoC against Turkey<sup>224</sup>.

On the other hand, in the light of this asymmetric relation and paradox, there seems to be an obvious reluctance to share political and economic power with the Turkish Cypriots. Although the Greek Cypriots accept that the Turkish Cypriots have a right to share natural resources after a settlement, they do not accept the notion that the Turkish Cypriots have any say over how a sovereign state (in this case, the Republic of Cyprus) should exploit or manage its natural resources before, or in the absence of, a settlement. Despite the fact that the two sides are negotiating and trying to determine a common future under a unified federal state, the Greek Cypriot side, is acting unilaterally and trying to maintain this future exclusively by itself. It is this sovereignty dispute that undermines the rights and political will of the Turkish Cypriots. This reflects the historical struggle of the Greek Cypriots for their own ethnonational interests. Furthermore, this also shows the ever-existing the notion of *the other*, us- them division between the sides. In this regard, because of the asymmetric relation of two Cypriot communities and the coexistence of ethnic and civic nationalist identity approaches, the *other* (referring to the Turkish Cypriot side which has been regarded as the minority population, as *them*) possesses the right over hydrocarbons based on collective Cypriot identity and collective history (of the Republic), while, at the same time, it cannot have this

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<sup>224</sup> Especially it could be a tool to affect the Turkey's EU membership process as the Cyprus Problem have been presented as an obstacle for opening chapters in the way to the membership.

right until a political settlement is reached for the Cyprus problem, until a solution is achieved with a result of bicomunal federal state.

As David Koranyi argues, Cyprus being a land of missed opportunities, if the actors involved do not manage to build on the regional synergies, the opportunity cost would be very high in a commercial sense and, even more so, in a political sense<sup>225</sup>. Despite the fact that there have been some opportunities which were missed to resolve the Cyprus Problem, the main obstacle has been the lack of political will that turned it into a protracted political deadlock. Although the present negation process under the leadership of two Cypriot presidents – Mustafa Akıncı of Turkish Cypriot side and Nicos Anastasiades of Greek Cypriot side – has a good impression and improvement for the solution aim, if the Greek Cypriot side wants to re-unify the island and accept sharing the political power with the Turkish Cypriot side, sincerer attitudes are required on the negotiation table. Otherwise, it could lead to permanent division of the island and affect to Eastern Mediterranean hydrocarbon security. In this respect, all sides involved need to move away from a zero-sum game mentality to a win-win situation. This idea of zero-sum game still effective and characterizes the relationship of the sides, their perspectives and policies. Some creative diplomacy will be necessary in order to reach a viable compromise solution<sup>226</sup>. In short, political machismo is in full display over the

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<sup>225</sup> Koranyi, D. 2014. Where There is a Will There is a Way: Regional Cooperation on Hydrocarbon Development in the Eastern Mediterranean: 82

<sup>226</sup> Dokos, T. 2014. The Regional Security Environment in the Eastern Mediterranean: A View from Athens: 28.



hydrocarbons issue and the perspectives of the two communities as it has always been the case in the history of Cyprus and the Cyprus Problem.

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