

Yet another spatio-temporal turn in the Turkey-EU relations: The continuing saga of the “Cyprus problem”*

N. Nilgün Öner Tangör

Corporate Communications Office, METU, Ankara

e-mail: oner@metu.edu.tr

ORCID: 0000-0002-0984-4555

Galip L. Yalman

Department of Political Science and Public Administration, METU, Ankara

e-mail: yalman@metu.edu.tr

ORCID: 0000-0002-6144-5666

Abstract

The temporality of the Turkey-EU relations, coupled with the “state of affairs” of the Cyprus problem, reflected the “linkage politics” as initially opposed by Turkey. 2024 was the 30th anniversary of the so-called “Europeanisation of the Cyprus Problem” when the Republic of Cyprus (RoC) was included in the EU enlargement process in the 1994 Corfu Summit without the resolution of the problem. Cyprus became an EU member state as a divided island on May 1st 2004 whilst RoC was considered as the sole representative of the island on behalf of both the Greek Cypriot and the Turkish Cypriot communities despite the lack of the latter’s representation. The current political stalemate on the island and the lack of a constructive dialogue between Turkey and EU unveiled the linkage between Turkey’s prospective EU membership and the solution of the Cyprus problem. In this regard, the trajectory of the Turkey-EU relations evolved into a new temporality under geopolitical contestation in which Cyprus conflict is coupled by the hydrocarbon economy developing in the Southeastern Mediterranean. Although a new political economy dimension has been added with the rise and fall of the hydrocarbon agenda, the whole process can be best summed as “*plus ça change, plus c’est la même chose*”.

Key words: Cyprus problem, temporality, Europeanisation, carbonization, linkage politics.

* Submitted/Geliş: 10.11.2024, Accepted/Kabul: 09.12.2024

1. Introduction

The Cyprus problem still remains as one of the stumbling blocks for the future of Turkey-European Union (EU) relations. The never-ending, self-repeating process of bilateral negotiations created both an attraction as well as a disdain towards the problem for the researchers from different backgrounds. Professor Atila Eralp had been one of the key observers of the Cyprus problem, who studied it not only from the perspective of the international relations discipline in a historical perspective (Eralp, 1997, 2009, 2010; Arisan and Eralp, 2016) but also as the chairperson of the METU Center for European Studies which had conducted a series of research projects in the North Cyprus from the late 1990s onwards¹. This study will purport that the “temporality and interaction” perspective Atila Eralp put forward for “understanding the process of Europeanisation in Turkey and explaining the ups and downs in the long-lasting relationship” (Eralp, 2009) is no less salient for the analysis of the Cyprus problem. For this perspective pointed to the importance of the “time” as a key component for the analysis of the consequences of the interaction between the agencies in a temporal, contextual comparison. Therefore, it is pertinent to underline the saliency of temporality as a key concept. For temporality should be understood not as a ‘linear progressive conception of time’ but rather in terms of ‘multiple temporal levels’ which, in turn, allows to take into account ‘the plurality of conflicting times’. In this regard, it is also helpful to make a distinction between ‘duration’ and ‘epoch’ as two types of temporality (cf. Filippini, 2017: 105-107).

From this perspective, the “ups and downs” in the Turkey-EU relationship could not be posited in a linear trajectory. Rather, they should better be analysed as manifestations of plural temporalities, notwithstanding attempts to interrupt the continuity of the duration by constituting it as an epoch, that is, entailing new transformative changes in the relationship concerned. While the intensity of the interaction between Turkey and the EU changed over time, duration can serve as a key *explanan* for the volatile trajectory of the Turkey-EU relationship as well as for the continuing saga of the Cyprus question which would be entangled with it. Put differently, “temporality politics” can be instrumental to account why the interrelated sequences of cooperation (convergence) and conflict (divergence) in the protracted saga of Turkey’s quest for the EU membership could not be surmised as an epoch. It will also help to grasp the alternative modes of association for the future of the aforementioned relationship that are foreboded by uncertainty since 2005, i.e., privileged partnership, strategic partnership, and/or transactionalism.

¹ A series of research projects, including a longitudinal study- Avrupalılařma Sürecinde Kıbrıs’ta Deęişim-, TÜBİTAK, Proje No. 105K263., were conducted by the members of the Centre for European Studies in the Middle East Technical University, Prof. Dr. Ali Gitmez, Prof. Dr. Atila Eralp and Assoc. Prof. Dr. Galip Yalman between 1999-2016, joined by N. Nilgün Öner Tangör in 2012.

By the same token, the cyclical sequence of the negotiation process between the representatives of Turkish and Greek Cypriot communities creates an illusion of linear progression of time and the “state of affairs” on the island. This is partly because the Cyprus problem has long been under the scrutiny of the international relations discipline, mainly under the domain of the security and international law studies on the one hand, and to the extent that it has been perceived as an ethnic and religious conflict by the identity-focused studies on the other. The security perspective focused on the spatial dimension of the Cyprus problem, the territory issues, statehood and the guarantees, as they had been the critical topics since the onset of the conflict. No doubt, it is also important to take into account institutionalist approaches with their emphasis on path dependencies and concern for institutional change as a potential way out of the predicament that the prolonged nature of the Cyprus conflict seems to signify.

In the post-cold war context of the 1990s, there had emerged an increasing focus on the capacity of the institutions to determine the behaviour of the actors as the agencies of change and transformation, as part of the debate between rival schools of historical/sociological institutionalism on the one hand, and rational choice institutionalism, on the other. In particular, the neo-institutionalist conceptualisation of “Europeanisation” gained significance to account for the ways in which European integration process leads to domestic change or lack of it. It was in this sense that Eralp (2009) underlined the importance of “temporality and interaction”. As there has also been an emphasis on “discursive institutionalism” to understand the transformative power of discourse in the context of EU policy-making agenda (Schmidt and Radaelli 2004), “Europeanisation” discourse dominated the majority of the mainstream academic output regarding the European Integration process between 1999-2004, ignited by the political momentum and enthusiasm to extend the western type of liberal order to the Eastern European countries.

However, as it has been noted by a seasoned observer of the process in question, “in the academic literature Europeanisation has been typically analysed in its EUisation form” (Tocci, 2004b). Put differently, Europeanisation and “EU-isation” has been dealt with as complementary processes and/or synonyms (Flenley and Mannin, 2018). This meant that ‘EUisation as a particular brand of Europeanisation’ entailed a ‘binding baggage of the EU *acquis*’ in the form of conditionalities as reflected in the political and economic criteria adopted in the Copenhagen Summit of 1993 for the prospective members of the EU. Yet, the so-called fifth enlargement in 2004, encompassing 10 countries mostly from Eastern Europe plus Malta and Cyprus did not necessarily reflect full compliance with the *acquis* (cf. Tocci, 2004b).

The present study would try to convey a critical reading of the temporal dimension of the EU-Turkey relationship from a historical perspective since 1994, that was, at least partly, conditioned by the changing “state of affairs” regarding the Cyprus problem. Yet, it is no less salient to contemplate the changing states of affairs in different periods in terms of multiple temporalities so as to alleviate the challenging task of contextualizing the patterns of change and continuity in this protracted problem.

Moreover, the notion of multiple temporalities is also illuminating from a critical political economy perspective so as to come to terms with what has been dubbed as ‘spatio-temporal fixes’ (Harvey, 2003). That is to say, the ways in which the expanded reproduction of capitalist relations of production being experienced on ‘multiple temporal levels’, give rise to institutional and spatio-temporal fixes that could have provided it with some partial, provisional, and albeit temporary, stability (Jessop, 2014). More pertinently, as it was already noted, there has been a lacuna in the related literature on the nature of relationships between Turkey and the EU from a critical political economy perspective that focuses on the linkages between Turkey’s EU accession process and the Turkish experience of neoliberal restructuring (Yalman and Göksel, 2017). Concomitantly, the Cyprus problem demonstrates that it is impossible to isolate the political/security dimension of this protracted conflict from the economic interests of the agencies involved, hence temporality gains significance once again for undertaking a political economic analysis of the changing states of affairs in different periods on the island.

2. “Europeanisation” of the Cyprus problem: From 1994 Corfu Summit to the EU membership of the Republic of Cyprus in 2004

Whether or not “Europeanisation” had a transformative impact on the domestic institutions of the prospective members, it has been attributed yet another role as a catalyst of conflict settlement and/or conflict resolution (Tocci, 2004a). This perception was prominent due to rising expectations for a federal solution in the wake of the announcement of the Annan Plan in Cyprus in the early 2000s. This had already gained critical importance with the granting of candidate status to Turkey at the Helsinki summit in December 1999, as part of the “linkage politics” upon the resolution of the Cyprus problem, notwithstanding the official rejection of such a linkage on the part of the Turkish foreign policymakers. Yet, it has also been acknowledged that there were limits of the EU’s role in conflict resolution. That is to say, as it has been manifested in the case of Cyprus, it has not always paved the way towards the resolution of the dispute and/or compliance with the EU conditionality (Kyrus, 2013; Tocci, 2004a). Rather ‘the Europeanisation of conflict resolution’ turned out to be a short-lived perception which demised in less than a decade as the EU lost its impartiality in this particular dispute once the Republic of

Cyprus (RoC) became a member state. Indeed, it has been contended that the accession of Cyprus into the EU not only failed to become a catalyst for the resolution of the island's dispute, but it has also pinpointed the reinforcement of partition, and institutionalized the already existing domestic asymmetry of power between the two sides of the conflict (cf. Kyris, 2013; Lefteratos, 2024).

It is worth reminding that “the Europeanization of the Cyprus question” was a joint political strategy on the part of the Greek and RoC governments which led the RoC government to apply for full membership in the European Community on July 3, 1990 in the name of the entire Cyprus (Zervakis, 2002). While some European leaders stated at the time that they would not accept Cyprus's membership without a resolution of the conflict, a critical shift in the EU's stance would become apparent at the Corfu Summit in June 1994 when the European Council noted that ‘the next phase of enlargement of the Union will involve Cyprus and Malta’. It would also reaffirm the Council's position that ‘any solution of the Cyprus problem must respect the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and unity of the country, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions and high-level agreements.’²

The summer of 1994 would also witness another path breaking development in terms of EU's approach to Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) in particular. A decision of the European Court of Justice on 5 July 1994, which declared direct imports from the TRNC to the EU to be illegal, would be consequential. For it had a devastating effect on the local economy in general, and export-oriented food and textile industries in particular, thereby deepening the isolation of the TRNC economy, thus making Turkey its dominant trading partner (Balkır and Yalman 2009; Öner-Tangör, 2021: 153).

Meanwhile, as it would be indicated in the same the European Council statement, the post-Maastricht EU was, in fact, proposing a new relationship with Turkey with no prospect of full membership in the form of a customs union relationship. The Custom Union (CU) that would come into effect from 1996 onwards was decided by the EC-Turkey Association Council on the 6th of March 1995 in accordance with 1963 Ankara Agreement and Additional Protocols.³ President Denktaş of TRNC had opposed and harshly criticized that decision, as it would mean further economic isolation of his country, by putting TRNC to the third country position in terms of the CU agreement. In fact, the CU was seen as a tool to accelerate the radical economic changes that Turkey had been experiencing since the early 1980s. Thus, it was intended that CU could be instrumental in enhancing the competitiveness of the Turkish economy. Nonetheless, and curiously, as Eralp (2000) put it, “the Turkish governing élite are geared to a close linkage between the

² https://www.europarl.europa.eu/summits/cor1_en.htm

³ Decision No 1/95 of the EC- Turkey Association Council of 22 December 1995.

customs union relationship and full membership”. Hence, the Turkish policymakers continued to perceive the CU as a step toward full membership to the EU as well as ‘an opportunity for Turkey to utmost benefit from advantages of globalisation’ (Yalman and Göksel, 2017).

The Luxembourg European Council (12–13 December 1997) confirmed “Turkey’s eligibility for accession to the European Union”, yet Turkey was excluded from the next round of enlargement. It was clear by then that Cyprus would become a member state with or without the solution of the Cyprus problem as the accession negotiations started between the EU and RoC in 1997. The Commission’s opinion in the Presidency’s conclusions pointed to the “hope” that “the accession of Cyprus should benefit all communities and help to bring about civil peace and reconciliation”⁴. Turkey on the other hand, was advised to support “a political settlement in Cyprus on the basis of the relevant UN Security Council Resolutions”⁵ if it wants to strengthen its “links” with the EU. This opinion marked the beginning of the linkage politics that determined the critical instances shaping the EU-Turkey relationship in the forthcoming years. Ironically, the relations between Turkey and RoC would further deteriorate by the late 1990s due to the attempt of the RoC government to deploy the Russian S-300 missiles in the south of the island.

Granting of candidate country status at the December 1999 Helsinki Summit not only raised hopes for Turkey’s eventual full membership, but the Turkish government would also aspire to fulfil the Maastricht criteria, while it had been diligently implementing the three-year IMF stand-by agreement, it had signed in December 1999. Ironically, Turkish economy would experience a typical case of “twin crises” during November 2000-February 2001, in which a balance of payment crisis triggered by capital outflows takes place simultaneously with the crisis of the banking sector, while it undertook the three-year IMF stand-by agreement. It turned out that the 2001 crisis was going to be celebrated for paving the way for a new phase of neoliberalism in Turkey with the adoption of a new three-year IMF stand-by agreement in the wake of the crisis. Through the implementation of ‘regulatory reforms’ in the wake of a severe and prolonged crisis, a restructuring of the state in line with the requirements of a globalized market economy was finally considered within reach of a ‘pro-reform’ constituency emboldened by the promise of an accession to the European Union (Bedirhanoğlu and Yalman, 2010).

In that context, the protracted saga of Turkey’s quest for the European Union (EU) membership provides a highly illuminative case to articulate the ways in which the EU emerges as a key player which changes the rules and the structures of policy-making for the member states as well as for others aspiring to be full members

⁴ Luxembourg European Council 12 and 13 December 1997 Presidency Conclusions. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/summits/lux1_en.htm, (retrieved on 07.07.2024).

⁵ Ibid., “A European strategy for Turkey”.

(Yalman, 2016a). Indeed, the EU's Accession Partnership for Turkey, which is said to clarify "a road map", would circumscribe its "economic criteria" with the implementation of the structural reform programme agreed with the IMF and the World Bank. In that sense, the crisis management strategies of the Bretton Woods institutions implemented in the first half of the 2000s, were also considered as being functional for enabling Turkey to fulfil the Copenhagen economic criteria (Yalman and Göksel, 2017).

While Turkey was eventually granted the candidate country status, TRNC had already been living through its own banking crisis that broke out during the winter of 1999/2000. The imposition of a stabilisation package by the Turkish government on its Turkish-Cypriot counterpart in the autumn of 2000, similar to the one imposed on itself by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) a year earlier, had left a bitter taste for the Turkish Cypriot community, thereby galvanizing an opposition to the Denktaş regime (Balkır and Yalman, 2009). This provides a clue to understand why the prospective EU membership for the whole island, as envisaged by the Annan Plan, was considered as an opportunity on the part of the Turkish Cypriot opposition for a new 'state of affairs' that would put an end to the seemingly intractable nature of the conflict. However, as one senior member of the opposition had contended when the Annan Plan was put forward, Turkey would not be prepared to accept such an eventuality, unless and until Turkey itself would become a full member.⁶ In fact, as stated by the UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, this was the official position of both the TRNC and Turkish governments that 'the accession of Cyprus to the European Union was illegal, as long as Turkey was not a member and as long as the Turkish Cypriots had not consented to it'. This was, however, duly 'rejected by the EU'.⁷ While the Denktaş regime was opposed to the Annan Plan, the Turkish Cypriot opposition was equally adamant to avoid the "velvet divorce" as an alternative to the Annan Plan.⁸

Yet the solution of the Cyprus problem would gradually become a *sine qua non* for Turkey's full membership. The "linkage politics" discourse established a kind of conditionality between Turkey's EU membership and the solution of the problem. Until the referenda on the Annan Plan on both sides of the island in 2004, there had been a disavowal of any linkage politics on the part of the Turkish foreign policymakers. However, the rejection of the Annan Plan by the Greek Cypriots, whilst the Turkish Cypriot community voted for it, maintained the *status quo ante*, albeit invoking a new 'state of affairs'. That is, RoC became one of the ten new EU members, despite the fact that the Greek Cypriots rejected the Annan Plan. This

⁶ Mr. Özker Özgür, former chairman of the Republican Turkish Party (CTP), Interview with the members of the METU Center of European Studies Cyprus research project, 30 November 2002.

⁷ Report of the Secretary General on his mission of good offices in Cyprus, 1 April 2003, S/2003/398.

⁸ Kutlay Erk, (Mayor of Lefkoşa) Interview with the members of the METU Center of European Studies Cyprus research project, 30 November 2002.

seemed to have happened to the chagrin of the European Commission, since those in charge of the EU enlargement policy felt ‘cheated’ by the Greek Cypriot side whom they believed would be in favour of the resolution strategy entailed in the Annan Plan (Balkır and Yalman, 2009).

3. The EUization of the Cyprus problem: From 2004 Annan Referenda to 2011 hydrocarbon discoveries in the Southeastern Mediterranean

Having initially supported the Annan Plan at the expense of the tension thus created with the Denktaş Presidency in the TRNC, the newly elected Justice and Development Party (AKP) government had continued to take steps towards reconciliation with the EU. In fact, in December 2003, AKP government had announced that Turkey would abide the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR)’s ruling in the Loizidou case to pay damages to the Greek Cypriot owner. Turkey’s maneuver raised the hopes that the property issue would eventually be resolved by providing direct compensations to the first owners. In 2006, the Turkish Cypriot Immovable Property Commission (IPC) was established to broker practical solutions for property claims in the north⁹, and to stop the influx of thousands of Greek Cypriot claimers to the ECHR. This positive atmosphere gave the newly elected TRNC government and the TRNC President the much-needed time to recover from disappointment of the post-referenda process and consolidate its new leadership role during the upcoming bilateral negotiations. However, the downslide in the Turkey-EU relations and the suspension of the *acquis* in the north caused the slowdown of the bicomunal talks. The EU gradually lost its credibility as a “catalyzer” in the north, and in terms of financial sustenance EU funds fell short to establish the EU as a key financial actor in the north *vis-à-vis* Turkey, due to the complex bureaucratic process to attain them and mistrust towards the EU after 2004.

After 2004, Cyprus Problem became an integral part of the tailspin in the Turkey-EU relationship. The 2004 EU Council Progress Report on Turkey was a blow to the fledgling relations and what deepened the rift between Brussels and Ankara was the fact that the report came despite the Turkish government’s support for the Annan plan. Although the report praised the macroeconomic stability and the disinflation goal of the Turkish government, it underlined Turkey’s obligation to extend the terms of the Customs Union to the RoC and other new members. In response, the Turkish governments repeatedly stated in the following years that “the Additional Protocol would not be implemented as long as the isolation of the

⁹ Immovable Property Law (No. 67/2005), in accordance with the rulings of the European Court of Human Rights, to “establish an effective domestic remedy for claims relating to abandoned properties in Northern Cyprus”, <https://tamk.gov.ct.tr/en-us/>.

Turkish Cypriot community continued”¹⁰. The accession negotiations were opened with Turkey in October 2005, yet this deadlock manifested the beginning of a new era in which the Cyprus issue would be instrumental to block Turkey’s steps towards membership, hence our emphasis on duration as a key *explanan* of the protracted nature of the conflict.

EU’s aid to the TRNC was introduced by the promulgation of the Green Line Regulation of the Council in 2004 (866/2004) in an attempt to enhance trade, which remained modest in the long term. The EU became the new financial actor on the island as both the Greek Cypriot and the Turkish Cypriot communities were expecting that the EU funds would finally bring some relief to the economic stagnation caused by 40 years of political conflict. Yet the funds were largely destined to flow to the south¹¹, and although by the end of 2023 a generous 688 million Euro were allocated by the Commission to the north¹², the impact of the funds were limited when compared in terms of the economic benefits they ignited in the south. The Commission avoided the TRNC Government as a correspondent for the management of the EU funds as the north of the island was considered by the Commission in 2003 as the “the occupied area of the island, in the areas in which the Government of the Republic of Cyprus does not exercise effective control”¹³. Since the north was the so-called “non-governmental” part of the island, the implementation and the control mechanisms of the funds were more complicated for the TRNC due to the lack of expertise on how to use them as well as to channel them to be used pertinently. The complicated bureaucracy for the use of funds in the north discouraged the potential beneficiaries to apply for the projects in the first place. Although a major goal of the assistance was to enhance bicomunal relations, regarding the fact that the north’s economy was already in a disadvantaged position prior to the EU involvement, it widened the gap in terms of economic development. The Council’s decision to bypass the TRNC government by suspending the *acquis*, also suspended the Europeanisation as a “process” in the north, hence the prospects for the convergence of the national structures and policies with the EU ended simultaneously in TRNC (Öner-Tangör, 2021: 184).

¹⁰ Republic of Türkiye, MFA, No:123-July 29th, 2005, Press Statement Regarding the Additional Protocol to Extend the Ankara Agreement to All EU Members (Unofficial Translation), https://www.mfa.gov.tr/_p_no_123---july-29th_-2005_-press-statement-regarding-the-additional-protocol-to-extend-the-ankara-agreement-to-all-eu-members-_unofficial-translation__p_en.mfa.

¹¹ “Until the end of 2021, Cyprus is a net recipient of approximately 461 million euro”, <https://knews.kathimerini.com.cy/en/news/cyprus-received-%E2%82%AC461-million-euros-in-eu-funding-since-accession-used-80>.

¹² Directorate-General for Structural Reform Support, 4 July 2024. https://commission.europa.eu/news/eu-assistance-increases-trade-and-free-movement-cyprus-supporting-islands-reunification-2024-07-04_en.

¹³ EU legislation is suspended in the North, in line with Protocol 10 of the Accession Treaty 2003 (OJ L 236 – 23.9.2003).

The EU funds as well as the Green Line regulation brought some relief to the north by the movement of persons, goods and services across the Green Line and brought two communities closer. More importantly, the number of Turkish Cypriot workers commuting to south have been on the rise, mainly thanks to the fact that the Denktaş administration had lifted in April 2003 entry restrictions on Greek Cypriots to the north for the first time since the division of the island. However, the Turkish Cypriots were disappointed by the fact that they were being left outside of the EU's customs and fiscal territory despite voting in majority (%65) for a federal solution. Although the Turkish Cypriots became EU citizens, it came with some restrictions. RoC citizenship would be obtained if their residence dates back to 1974, and nationality of both parents are Turkish Cypriot. Moreover, while the EU funds came with bureaucratic hassles, Turkey's financial support was "unconditional" in the sense that the shrinking of the public sector in the north was still not the precondition for the direct aid to the TRNC¹⁴. After 2004, the EU gradually lost its popularity in the north and in Turkey. According to Eralp (2009: 168), "Turkish political elites became less and less sensitive about the reform process and the relevant commitments and deadlines". He also pointed out that the membership of the Republic of Cyprus without a solution of the problem contributed to the downturn in the Turkey-EU relationship.

Initially, Justice and Development Party (AKP) government had taken decisive steps towards the shrinking of the public sector, kicking-off the privatizations, fostering foreign direct investment, broadening the civil society dialogue and speeding up the political reform process in line with its commitment to the EU accession process. All these steps and economic recovery were appreciated by the Commissions yet, "better exploitation of the potential of the Custom Union", "normalization of bilateral relations with Cyprus" would be pinned to the opening of every progress report after 2004. In the 2006 Council decision, it was made clear that negotiations will not be opened on eight chapters due to Turkey's refusal to extend the additional protocol to Republic of Cyprus, and no chapter will be provisionally closed until Turkey implements the Additional Protocol to the Association Agreement.

In 2006, the AKP government initiated a restructuring program for the TRNC economy for the 2006-2009 Economic Association Protocol to be signed with the TRNC government. This protocol enforced structural reforms in the north for the shrinking of the public sector, social security system, local administrations. The Turkish Cypriot economy was introduced to the transnational capital via the privatizations: The privatization of the Turkish Cypriot State Economic Enterprises (SEEs) included the KTHY (the Turkish Cypriot Airlines) and the TEKEL (General

¹⁴ The 2007-2009 financial protocol signed between TRNC and Turkey tied the use of financial aid to the shrinking of the public sector.

directorates of Tobacco, Tobacco Products, Salt and Alcohol Enterprises) followed by many others which were sold gradually to joint venture partnerships such as British American Tobacco (BAT) which had taken over the TEKEL in Turkey so as to dismantle its cigarette factories.

The 2006-2009 Economic Association Protocol highlighted the criteria for the release of the aid from Turkey to TRNC, that was underlined in a similar way in the European Commission's Turkey 2005 Progress Report under the heading "progress in privatizations" for "the block sale of TEKEL's alcohol production facilities and the public offerings of Turkish airlines"¹⁵. The TRNC Government under Republican Turkish Party (CTP) refused to sign it initially due to pressure from the trade unions, however it was later signed which led to the resigning of the government in 2008. The opposition, National Unity Party (UBP), eventually won the 2009 general elections followed by the victory of its candidate Derviş Eroğlu in the 2010 presidential elections. After the 2006-2009 financial protocol signed with TRNC government the major steps for privatization of the Turkish Cypriot SEEs were taken, and Turkey gradually became the neoliberal anchor of the TRNC economy. Turkey's widening current account deficit despite the structural reform packages was followed by the current account deficit in the TRNC's economy.

While Turkey's rejection to extend the additional protocol to RoC increased the Greek Cypriot government's unease towards Turkey's membership, the bicomunal relations were flourishing considerably especially in terms of trade and border mobility. In February 2008, Demetris Christofias of AKEL (the Progressive Party of the Working People) won the presidential elections, which reignited the hopes for a federal solution on the island. Demetris Christofias was a pro-federation president, yet his term was marked by a series of national/international level socio-economic downturns. On 1 January 2008 the RoC had joined the Eurozone, which coincided with the onset of the 2007-2009 global financial crisis. Between 2004-2008, the Greek Cypriot economy was bolstered by generous amounts of household lending and spending; average real wage remaining constant, the private consumption was approximately 20 percent higher when compared to the 2004 level (Trimikliniotis, 2013). Despite the positive atmosphere after the EU membership, the Greek Cypriot economy was already under pressure to cope with the adjustment policies even before joining the Eurozone in 2008.

In parallel to the positive political atmosphere, the expansion of credits supported by capital inflows resulted in large household and business indebtedness. As the public debt rose sharply from 48% to 75% of GDP 8% to 75%. "By 2012, Cyprus was deep into the trap of mutually reinforcing sovereign and banking risks" (Sarris, 2015: p. x). The financial crisis which augmented from 2007 to 2012,

¹⁵ European Commission, Brussels, 9 November 2005, SEC (2005) 1426. "Turkey 2005 Progress Report". p. 49.

involved the exposure of Cypriot banks to the Greek debt crisis, the downgrading of the Cypriot economy to junk status by international rating agencies and the loss of access to international credit markets (Iordanidou and Athanassios 2014). There would be a bailout for RoC later in 2013, involving the international lenders so as to avert Cyprus's exit from the Eurozone. The terms of the deal, required the country's second largest bank, The People's Bank of Cyprus, to be closed down, and turned out to be rather costly for the Greek Cypriot community because of the austerity policies it imposed upon them. When the economic crisis hit the Greek Cypriot economy, the hopes of the Turkish Cypriots for a solution under EU aegis dimmed furthermore as this crisis eventually faded the pro-EU narratives and weakened the class alliances that were established for bringing "change" to the political and economic structures in the north.

4. Carbonization: from the financial crisis in the RoC to the 2017 Crans Montana Meeting and Beyond

The discovery of vast amount of natural gas in the basin of the Southeastern Mediterranean (SEM) resulted in the development of a series of accounts on the economic "benefits" of a political settlement (Faustmann, Gürel and Reichberg, 2012; Gürel, Mullen and Tzimitras, 2013; Faustmann, 2015). The entry of major oil/gas companies to the region, whose CEOs are members of the European Round Table of Industrialists (ERT) such as French-Italian consortium Total/Eni, later joined by Shell and BP, raised hopes for providing economic incentives for brokering a European solution under the mediation of the transnational elite. However, in less than a decade, the hydrocarbon discoveries was ensued by the proliferation of militarization in the SEM, resulting in a "war of navtexes", followed by the "carbonization" of the Cyprus problem i.e., solidification of the conflict rather than its resolution (Öner-Tangör, 2021: 259). In this regard, the limits of "Europeanisation" as a transformative process for conflict resolution, and the impact of economic incentives without a political solution were tested in the case of Cyprus. "EU as a catalyst" discourse for existing/potential political conflicts bring forward this transformation capacity as one of the merits of the EU, yet the Cyprus case illustrated that without associating effective conditionality in the process, it had a counter-effect on the peace building efforts (Ker-Lindsay 2007). The critics pointed to EU's diplomatic failures for conflict resolution (Kyris 2015) and rather reckoned EU as a "perilous catalyst", specifically in regard to the impact of the accession of Cyprus without reaching a solution (Richmond 2001), and others had warned about not only the deadlock it would bring to the Turkey-EU relationship but to the future of the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) (Yiangou, 2002).

The RoC government had been signing maritime exclusive economic zone (EEZ) agreements with its neighbors since the early 2000s, with Egypt on 17

February 2003 and with Lebanon on 17 January 2007 and with Israel in 2010. Turkey, not a signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), rejected these bilateral agreements signed by RoC government concerning maritime jurisdiction areas with the neighbours in the SEM, on the grounds that they neglect the rights of the Turkish Cypriot community. Moreover, the RoC-Israel rapprochement came at a time when the Turkey-Israel relations were at loggerheads due to the Mavi Marmara incident in 2011, causing further disdain from Turkey towards the bilateral talks. These developments left President Christofias little room for approximation with the TRNC side and restart the bicomunal talks for unification, and the bilateral talks were overshadowed by the developments in the SEM and the financial crisis in the south.

Although there were efforts under UN auspices to bring the leaders together between 2011 and 2013, the soaring public debt and the bail-out proposal of the Troika was the priority of the RoC government, and the bicomunal relations were halted in due course. The RoC government had signed a licensing agreement with the US contractor company Noble Energy back in 2008 for the exploration of natural gas reserves in the SEM. In December 2011, the company finally announced that it discovered a large reserve of natural gas in Block 12, estimated around 5 trillion to 8 trillion cubic feet, in the area covering the south east of Cyprus to Israel. In the midst of the scandalous outbreak of the financial crisis, the RoC government was relieved hoping that the off-shore resources would remedy the bail-in emergencies, and leverage Cyprus as a key actor in the regional and global markets. The RoC government gave impetus to the exploration activities by signing drilling agreements with other companies. The Turkish government reacted by issuing a warning Navtex and sending warships to follow the on-going activities. The RoC government soon announced that it would block Turkey's membership talks with the EU in retaliation and the resulting tension between Turkey and RoC halted the bicomunal talks.

The TRNC government's initiatives to be included in the process for the exploration activities was rejected by the RoC government who announced that it would launch a second round of licenses for off-shore explorations. The economic crisis as well as the hydrocarbons agenda resulted in the increase in Greek Cypriot nationalism which widened the gap between two communities that tended to close after the opening of the Green Line in 2003. Despite the hydrocarbons' boosting effect, the financial crisis deepened by 2013, making the economy the primary concern of the Greek Cypriots. The unification of the island was no longer the priority for the election campaigns of the presidential candidates in 2013, which resulted in DISY's Anastasiades' victory against pro-federation AKEL's Christofias. The number of Turkish Cypriots passing the Green Line to work in the south gradually decreased, signaling the weakening of bicomunalism on the island, which had made a promising start during the Annan Plan process.

Consequently, the hydrocarbon discoveries changed the direction of the negotiations from substantial issues, such as guarantees, to a discussion on delimiting the EEZs and sharing the energy revenues in collaboration with the global capital (Öner-Tangör, 2021: 280-295).

Turkey continued to issue statements against the drilling operations carried out by the oil companies that would participate in the exploration activities without Turkey's and TRNC's consent. The tension accelerated when it became public in 2013 that Turkey was excluded from regional plans for "sharing the revenues" via the EastMed pipeline, that was to connect Greece, the RoC, and Israel. The tension expanded towards the north and Navtexes were began to be issued in the Mediterranean between Turkey-Greece after 2011. Under these circumstances, President Anastasiades and President Eroğlu made a joint declaration on 11 February 2014, agreeing on seven principles for the continuation of the negotiation process, albeit without any reference to the surmounting hydrocarbons issue. However, later in October 2014, President Anastasiades decided to halt the talks, accusing Turkey for aggression and for starting its test-drilling activities off-coast in SEM, where Cyprus had licensed Italy's Eni and South Korea's Kogas on blocks 2 and 3, followed by France's Total in block 9.

The intercommunal talks, that were expected to revive after the discovery of the hydrocarbon resources in the SEM in the early 2010s, came to an impasse in 2014, and the hydrocarbons issue counteracted the negotiation process despite the initial optimism for its potential to act as a "catalyser" for unification. After Mustafa Akıncı, who pledged to reunite the island, won the Presidential elections in 2015 in TRNC, the optimism in the north for the unification of Cyprus increased. However, Turkey-EU relations were turning to negative due to the developments in SEM. Although the hydrocarbons were never officially on the negotiation table, Akıncı, who was skeptical of the "hydrocarbons as a catalyzer" discourse, made several attempts to establish a joint committee for the exploration activities with the Greek Cypriots, which was always rejected by the RoC government.

The idea that a "functionalist approach" towards the hydrocarbons would expand "opportunities" and bring the sides closer to a solution was prevalent until 2017. In late 2015, leaders from both the Greek Cypriot Community and the Turkish Cypriot Community, as well as the United Nations, requested World Bank technical assistance on the economic aspects of the ongoing reunification negotiations. The contributions made by the World Bank to the Northern Cyprus consist of guidelines and detailed reports about its economy¹⁶. SABER report (Systems Approach for Better Educational Results) was prepared, an EU-funded survey was carried out in

¹⁶ Dirk Reinermann, "On the Economic Impacts of Reunification in Cyprus". World Bank opinion, June 23, 2017, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/opinion/2017/06/23/qa-analysis-of-economic-impacts-of-reunification-in-cyprus>. Retrieved on 17.09.2024.

December 2018 by the World Bank. In parallel to this, in 2015, a delegation of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) visited the island for the preparation of cost and sustainability of the solution of the Cyprus problem. The delegation under the presidency of IMF Mission Chief Rachel Van Elkan was received by the TRNC Minister of Tourism Faiz Sucuoğlu, announcing that they have decided to work together on ways in which IMF might contribute to country's tourism sector¹⁷. However, the attempts to raise the visibility of the TRNC economy in regards of the global financial authority were ineffective without a comprehensive settlement. The IMF reports were only available for the years 2015 and 2016 with the specific agenda on the financial aspects of reunification and growing tension in the SEM after 2017 rendered the inscription of future reports futile.

Accordingly, the 2016-2018 Structural Reform Program was signed between Turkey and the TRNC that aimed to shrink the public sector, and strengthen the financial sector. The “Structural Transformation Plan”, was a comprehensive privatization program including the harbors, telecommunication, electric sector as well as the re-structuring of the judiciary and the central planning organization and the shrinking of the public sector in the north. The Structural Reform Program was in line with the 2014 “Indicative Strategy Paper” for Turkey prepared by the Commission for the period 2014-2020, to help Turkey meet the accession criteria.¹⁸ The Commission urged Turkey to “accelerate the implementation of its comprehensive structural reform program”, to be able to “cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the EU in the medium term”¹⁹.

Meanwhile, the hydrocarbon drillings of the Total–ENI consortium in Block 11 continued despite TRNC government's and Turkey's opposition. On February 2018, the tension escalated when the Turkish navy stopped Italian energy company Eni's Saipem 12000 drilling ship, *en route* to the southeast of Cyprus, where Turkey was conducting a military exercise. Anastasiades reacted promptly, accusing Brussels for “silence” towards Turkey in order not to jeopardize the migration agreement and blaming the Turkish side for the escalation of the tension in the SEM. The President of the European Council, Donald Tusk urged Turkey to end its drilling activities in the “EEZ of Cyprus”, arguing that these activities were harming the negotiation process between the Greek Cypriots and the Turkish Cypriots, however

¹⁷ <https://pio.mfa.gov.ct.tr/en/sucuoğlu-received-imf-delegation/>

¹⁸ European Commission Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations, “Indicative Strategy Paper for Turkey (2014-2020)” Adopted on 26/08/2014. p. 7.

¹⁹ European Commission Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations, Indicative Strategy Paper for Turkey (2014-2020) Adopted on 26/08/2014. P. 7.

Anastasiades put pressure for specific and effective sanctions from the EU over the ships in the disputed exploration areas²⁰.

President Anastasiades openly targeted the EU-Turkey Joint Action Plan that was signed in 2015 between Turkey and the EU in order to stop the flow of irregular migration via Turkey to Europe. The Commission had proposed a voluntary humanitarian admission scheme for Syrian Refugees in Turkey and in 2016, EU-Turkey statement was announced according to which all new irregular migrants and asylum seekers arriving from Turkey to the Greek islands and whose applications for asylum have been declared inadmissible should be returned to Turkey. This agreement once again signalled the fact that Turkey-EU relations were gradually and decisively evolving towards a policy-based partnership. This agreement, which assigns Turkey as the border keeper of the EU, sparked a heated debate in Turkey as well as in the EU. Facing the backlash, the EU Parliament also “recalled that outsourcing was not a credible long-term solution to the problem and called the Members States for more solidarity in welcoming refugees”²¹. However, the call of the Parliament for more solidarity was particularly difficult as the exclusionary policies and perspectives in Europe was on the rise since the financial crisis, which weakened the inclusionary federalism principle that inspired the European cooperation in the 1950s and 1960s.

Despite the tenacity of Greek Cypriot position on the issue, President Akıncı’s repeated calls for the establishment of a joint committee for the exploration of the hydrocarbons gets rejected by President Anastasiades, which made it clear that the RoC President would keep the issue off the table. However, the growing discontent between two sides resulted in a surprising outcome in the 2017 Crans-Montana meetings in Switzerland, during which the issue of hydrocarbons was not officially a part of the negotiation agenda. President Anastasiades left the talks unexpectedly for an unbeknown reason at the time and it was revealed only later that he hastened to leave the room when he learned that Turkey agreed to revise the guarantees and security issues, that were long anticipated by the Greek Cypriot side (Grigoriadis, 2017). Shortly after 2017, he announced his version of a two-state solution in 2018, and called it “decentralized federation” as an alternative to the federal solution, yet its substance was not provided to the public. The vagueness of President Anastasiades’s alternative proposal made it crystal clear that the Greek Cypriot side would not agree with the political equality principle under a federal model, even if Turkey was ready for revising the *status quo* (Drousiotis, 2020). In response, TRNC Prime Minister Tatar declared in 2019 that preferred option is “velvet divorce”. The

²⁰ On 11 November 2019, the Council adopted Decision (CFSP) 2019/1894 for restrictive measures regarding Turkey’s “unauthorized” drilling activities in the Eastern Mediterranean, consisting of asset freeze and travel ban for the involved people and companies.

²¹ EU-Turkey Statement & Action Plan, 2015, <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/legislative-train/theme-towards-a-new-policy-on-migration/file-eu-turkey-statement-action-plan>.

two-state propositions, which would receive a backlash from the Turkish Cypriot opposition two decades ago, would become the new political agenda once Tatar won the presidential elections in the TRNC in 2020. The opposition in the north, the societal forces, trade unions and the business groups, who played a critical role for initiating “change” of the *status quo* on the island under a federal solution in the early 2000s, had gradually lost their momentum to propel unification after the privatizations weakened the trade unions in the north *vis-à-vis* the forces of the transnational capital.

After 2017, the federal solution was off the table and the bilateral relations were frozen. The three major issues between Ankara and Brussels were stopping the flow of irregular *migration* via *Turkey to Europe* from war zones, the Visa Liberalization Dialogue and the containment of the tension in the Mediterranean. The hydrocarbon reserves created a lucrative opportunity for the gas/oil companies and resulting competition in the region was intensified by the RoC Government’s unilateral action to sign agreements with the companies for the exploration activities around SEM. As members of ERT, Total, Eni, Shell and BP were among the companies that were engaged in for the extraction and the exportation of the offshore resources of SEM. This process was in tandem to the ongoing privatizations on both sides of the island, that lured the global capital for having a share from the hydrocarbon resources. The financial-political crises on the island were instrumental for the “carbonization” of the Cyprus problem in parallel to the restructuring of the capital accumulation strategies in the region after the discovery of the hydrocarbons in the SEM.

5. In lieu of a conclusion

With the onset of the neoliberal agenda, the neo-institutionalist conceptualisation of “Europeanisation” has enticed considerable attention, purportedly, with strong implications for the candidate countries as well. We problematized it as a “process” (Radaelli, 2004) rather than a “solution” or an “end-state” within the context of the Turkey-EU relations, from the Corfu Summit of 1994 to the carbonization of the Cyprus problem during the last decade. Since the RoC government is being recognized as the representative of the whole island and has acquired the full support of the EU, the “EU as a catalyst” myth is over. Nonetheless the linkage politics is still determining the Turkey-EU relations, which deepened the distrust between the EU and Turkey. As Eralp (2009) had pointed out, “Temporality Politics” is determinant over the Turkey-EU relations in the case of Cyprus i.e., the rise and the fall of the Europeanisation and the hydrocarbon agenda together with the prospects of full membership. Coupled with the neoliberal reform process after 2004, the hydrocarbon economy determines the “state of affairs” of the Cyprus problem rather than the substantive issues such as power-sharing and guarantees,

which are subsided by the destructive process of “carbonization” and the rise of new imperialism in the region. The bicomunal struggle over statehood was devised into a new scheme over the exploitation of the off-shore resources in the SEM. The contemporary wars in the region alert us that Cyprus Problem is the “weakest link”, not only playing part for the atomization of the Turkey-EU relations, but also for the expansion of the hydrocarbon economy via new imperialism in the SEM region.

The sudden entry of the transnational hydrocarbon capital and incremental developments in the SEM after 2011 simultaneously reduced the significance of geopolitics (state) and “space” i.e., the national borders/interest, as well as the role of the local agency i.e., the societal forces, *vis-à-vis* the reconstruction of time and space by the forces of global capitalism. In other words, new temporalities are poised through the deconstruction of embedded power relations/capital and their reconstruction by the external forces and their network of globalist capitalist relations. After the RoC government practically abandoned the UN’s federal solution, the TRNC decided to react by opening Varosha gradually, the city that was once the pearl of the Cypriot tourism industry, but was closed since Turkey’s 1974 military intervention. This maneuver demonstrated that the TRNC side was getting ready for a velvet divorce by omitting the UN Resolution 789/1992, regarding opening of the gated city as one of the “confidence building measures” on the island. Now that a federal solution appears not to be the main concern of the parties concerned, unilateralism seems to be on the rise.

With the developments since October 7, 2023 from Palestine to Syria, the strategic significance of Cyprus may be on the agenda again. The mind-boggling speed of military conflagration with political consequences yet to be manifested, might imply, in fact, a shift from a duration to an epoch for the region as a whole. It is worth noting that the RoC Government stated that it had no control over the British bases and their use in the airstrikes against Gaza in response to the criticisms that it was “allowing Israel to use the sovereign British bases for military exercises”. More pertinently, the Biden administration has in fact adopted a new foreign policy towards RoC which entailed a partial lifting of the US arms embargo that had been in effect since 1987.²² This would set a precedent for the signing of a bilateral defence cooperation roadmap with RoC government in September 2024. And this was followed by joint military exercises in the SEM and the deployment of US troops launching of the new Barak MX air defense system in the south, signalling the escalation of tension and the rise of militarization in the region.²³ Consequently,

²² W. Munchau, “Cyprus - the US gun against Turkey”, <https://www.eurointelligence.com/>, 20.9.2022.

²³ CNN, Natasha Bertrand and Alex Marquardt, September 25, 2024, “US troops deployed to Cyprus as fears of wider Middle East war intensify”, <https://edition.cnn.com/2024/09/25/politics/us-troops-cyprus/index.html>.

Haaretz, Avi Scharf, Dec. 5, 2024, “Cyprus Buys Israeli-made Advanced Barak-MX Air Defense System”, <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/security-aviation/2024-12-05/ty->

there is mounting speculation that the NATO membership of Cyprus is on the agenda.

Despite the rising tensions, “the hydrocarbons as a catalyst for peace” discourse is still used as a shield for the deconstruction/reconstruction of the new temporalities that are “work in progress” in order to ensure the transnational capital that the opportunities are greater than risks in the region. Indeed, when the RoC President Christodoulides addressed the 79th UN General Assembly on September 25, he argued that the recent developments should be regarded as an “opportunity rather than a threat” for the peoples of the region.²⁴ As Arrighi (2003) had observed “*the states have been key protagonists of the struggles through which old spatial-temporal fixes are destroyed and fixes of greater geographical scope are attained*”.

This new emerging spatio-temporal fix makes it increasingly difficult, if not impossible, to contextualize the future of the Turkey-EU relations and the solution of the Cyprus problem within the “Europeanisation” agenda. Although it has gained a new dimension with the rise and fall of the hydrocarbons, the whole process can be best summed as “*plus ça change, plus c’est la même chose*” (Yalman, 2016b:128). Unfortunately, this observation made a decade ago still seems to be relevant for the foreseeable future: that is to say, the cycles of rising expectations for a possible resolution of the conflict to be followed by disenchantments as the hopes for that resolution failed to materialize. This has been the pattern over the last half century or so since the collapse of the power sharing system between two communities in 1963, set up by the 1960 Constitution. The return of the “geopolitics discourse” back in and the re-positioning of Cyprus as a “geo-strategic” island in the SEM would risk bringing the security issues to the top of the agenda, notwithstanding the attempts to revive the bilateral negotiation process under the auspices of the UN Secretary General.

article/.premium/cyprus-buys-israeli-made-advanced-barak-mx-air-defense-system/00000193-9719-dac2-add3-b75bd7660000.

²⁴ Reuters, September 25, 2024. “Cyprus leader says he is ready to resume peace talks 'today'”, <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/cyprus-leader-says-he-ready-resume-peace-talks-today-2024-09-25/>. Retrieved on Sept. 25 2024.

References

- ARISAN, N. and ERALP, A. (2016), "Critical Juncture in Cyprus Negotiations", Paper prepared for the Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI), May 2016.
- ARRIGHI, G. (2003), "Spatial and Other "Fixes" of Historical Capitalism." Paper presented at the Conference on Globalization in the World-System: Mapping Change over Time. University of California, Riverside, February 7-8, 2003. <https://irows.ucr.edu/conferences/globgis/papers/Arrighi.htm>. Retrieved on Sept. 25 2024.
- BALKIR, C. L. and YALMAN, G. (2009), "Economics and Politicization of the Civil Society: The Turkish-Cypriot Case", in Diez, T. & Tocci, N. (eds.) *Cyprus: A Conflict at the Crossroads*, Manchester University Press.
- BEDİRHANOĞLU, P. and YALMAN, G. L. (2010), "State, Class and Discourse: Reflections on the Neoliberal Transformation in Turkey", in A. Saad-Filho & G. Yalman (eds.) *Economic Transitions to Neoliberalism in Middle Income Countries*, London, Routledge.
- REINERMANN, D. (2017), "On the Economic Impacts of Reunification in Cyprus", *World Bank Opinion*, June 23, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/opinion/2017/06/23/qa-analysis-of-economic-impacts-of-reunification-in-cyprus>. Retrieved on 19.08.2024.
- DROUSIOTIS, M. (2020), "The Cyprus issue was resolved in Crans-Montana, but the public was never told." *Cyprus Mail* February 9, 2020, <https://archive.cyprus-mail.com/2020/02/09/anastasiades-got-his-way-in-crans-montana/>. Retrieved on 19.08.2024
- ERALP, A. (ed. 1997), *Türkiye ve Avrupa*, Ankara: İmge.
- ERALP, A. (2000), "Turkey in the Enlargement Process: From Luxembourg to Helsinki". *Perceptions*, V (June-August 2000), 1-9.
- ERALP, A. (2009), "Temporality, Cyprus Problem and Turkey-EU Relations", *Centre for Economics and Foreign Policy Studies*, Discussion Paper Series - 2009/02.
- ERALP, A. (2010), "The Last Chance in Cyprus Negotiations and the Turkey-EU Relationship". *ELIAMEP Thesis* Feb. 2010 1/2010.
- FAUSTMANN, H. (2015), "Hydrocarbons Can Fuel a Settlement" in J. Ker-Lindsay (Ed.), *Resolving Cyprus. New Approaches to Conflict Resolution* (pp. 74-82). I.B. Tauris.
- FAUSTMANN, H., GÜREL A. and Reichberg G. M. (eds. 2012), "Cyprus Offshore Hydrocarbons: Regional Politics and Wealth Distribution." *PRIO Cyprus Centre Report*: 1. Nicosia: PRIO Cyprus Centre.
- FILIPPINI, M. (2017), *Using Gramsci*, Pluto Press, London.
- FLENLEY, P. and MANNIN, M. (2018), Introduction. In P. Flenley & M. Mannin (Eds.), *The European Union and its eastern neighbourhood: Europeanisation and its twenty-first-century contradictions* (pp. 1-6). Manchester University Press. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv18b5nv3.8>.
- GRIGORIADIS, I. N. (2017), "Cyprus negotiations thwarted by issues on security and guarantees: how can the peace process be revived?", <https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-55016-9>, SWP Comment, Social Science Open Access Repository (SSOAR), 28/2017, ISSN 1861-1761.
- GÜREL, A., MULLEN F. and TZIMITRAS, H. (2013), "The Cyprus Hydrocarbons Issue: Context, Positions and Future Scenarios", *PRIO Report*: 1. Nicosia: PRIO Cyprus Centre.
- HARVEY, D. (2003), *The New Imperialism*, Oxford University Press.
- IORANIDOU, S. and ATHANASSIOS, S. (2014), "Financial crisis in the Cyprus Republic", *Javnost - The Public*, no.4· December, 63-76.

- JESSOP, B. (2014), "Political Capitalism, Economic and Political Crises, and Authoritarian Statism", *Spectrum Journal of Global Studies*, Vol.7, Issue 1.
- KER-LINDSAY, J. (2007), "The European Union as a Catalyst for Conflict Resolution: Lessons from Cyprus on the Limits of Conditionality". Helen Bamber Centre for the Study of Rights and Conflict, WORKING PAPER SERIES No. 1. <https://eprints.kingston.ac.uk/id/eprint/5596/1/Ker-Lindsay-J-5596.pdf>. Retrieved on 19 Sept. 2024.
- KYRIS, G. (2013), "Europeanisation and Conflict Resolution: The Case of Cyprus", *IBEI Working Paper*, 2013/39.
- KYRIS, G. (2015), *The Europeanisation of Contested Statehood: The EU in Northern Cyprus*. Routledge.
- LEFTERATOS, A. (2024) "The Unintended Consequences of the EU's Engagement in Contested States: the Case of Cyprus", *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, DOI: 10.1080/14683857.2024.2324555.
- ÖNER TANGÖR, N. N. (2021), Statehood Struggle Within the Context of a Protracted Conflict; Political Economy of the Turkish Cypriot Case. PhD. Thesis, Middle East Technical University.
- RADAELLI, C. (2004), "Europeanisation: Solution or Problem?" *European Integration online Papers* (EIoP). 8.
- RICHMOND, O. P. (2001), "A perilous catalyst? EU accession and the Cyprus problem", *Cyprus Review*, 13(2), 127-131.
- SARRIS, M. (2015), "Foreword" in Theodore & Theodore (2015) *Cyprus and the Financial Crisis: The Controversial Bailout and What It Means for the Eurozone*, Palgrave Macmillan.
- SCHMIDT, V. A. and RADAELLI, C. M. (2004), "Policy change and discourse in Europe: Conceptual and methodological issues". *West European Politics*, 27(2), 183-210.
- TOCCI, N. (2004a), *EU Accession Dynamics and Conflict Resolution: Catalysing peace or consolidating partition in Cyprus?* Aldershot, Ashgate, 2004.
- TOCCI, N. (2004b), "Conflict Resolution in the European Neighbourhood: The Role of the EU as a Framework and as an Actor", *EUI Working Paper RSCAS No. 2004/29*.
- TRIMIKLINIOTIS, N. (2013), "Cyprus: Is the Eurocrisis the Beginning of the End of the Eurozone?", *Descrifier*. <https://descrifier.co.uk/news/world/cyprus-is-the-eurocrisis-the-beginning-of-the-end-of-the-eurozone/>. Retrieved on 25 Sept. 2024
- YALMAN, G. L. (2016a), "Crises as Driving Forces of Neoliberal 'Trasformismo': The Contours of the Turkish Political Economy since the 2000s" in Alan Cafruny et al. (eds.) *The Palgrave Handbook of Critical International Political Economy*, Palgrave-Macmillan.
- YALMAN, G. L. (2016b), "Cyprus 'Conflict': Plus ça change, plus c'est la meme chose", Kaya, A. Y, Sabuktay, A, & Kaya, D.A. (eds.) *History, Culture and Politics in the Mediterranean*, Symposium Papers, İzmir Metropolitan Municipality Mediterranean Academy, 128-138.
- YALMAN, G. L. and GÖKSEL, A. (2017), "Transforming Turkey? Putting the Turkey-European Union Relations into a Historical Perspective", *Uluslararası İlişkiler Dergisi*, 14(56), 23-37.
- YIANGOU, G. S. (2002), "The accession of Cyprus to the EU: challenges and opportunities for the new European regional order", *JEMIE - Journal on ethnopolitics and minority issues in Europe*, 2, 1-13. <https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-62147>.
- ZERVAKIS, P. A. (2002), "The Europeanisation of the Cyprus Question. A Model for Conflict Resolution?" *Politička misao*, Vol. XXXIX, No. 5, pp. 156-173.

Özet

Türkiye-AB ilişkilerinde yeni bir uzamsal-zamansal dönemeç: Çözüm bekleyen Kıbrıs sorunu

Türkiye-AB ilişkilerinin zamansallığı ve Kıbrıs sorununun içinde bulunduğu “siyasi ve hukuki durum”, Türkiye’nin 1990’ların sonundan beri karşı çıktığı “bağlantı/ilişkilendirme siyaseti” kavramının özünü yansıtmaktadır. 2024 yılı, “Kıbrıs Sorununun Avrupalılaşması” olarak adlandırdığımız sürecin 30. Yıldönümüydü: Kıbrıs Cumhuriyeti, 1994 Korfu Zirvesi’nde AB’nin genişleme sürecine Kıbrıslı Türkler ve Kıbrıslı Rumlar arasında uzun süredir devam eden çatışmaya bir çözüm bulunmadan dahil edildi. Kıbrıs Cumhuriyeti, 1 Mayıs 2004 tarihinde bölünmüş bir ada olarak AB üyesi bir devlet haline gelmiş dolayısıyla Kıbrıs Rum Kesimi, Kıbrıslı Türkleri temsil etme hakkına sahip olmamasına rağmen, her iki toplum adına tüm adanın tek temsilcisi olarak kabul edilmiştir. Adadaki mevcut siyasi çıkmaz ve Türkiye ile AB arasında yapıcı diyalog eksikliği, Türkiye’nin olası AB üyeliği ile Kıbrıs sorununun çözümü arasındaki bağlantıyı ortaya çıkarmış oldu. Bu bağlamda Türkiye-AB ilişkilerinin gidişatı, Kıbrıs sorununun Güneydoğu Akdeniz’de gelişen hidrokarbon ekonomisi ile birleşmesiyle beraber ortaya çıkan jeopolitik çekişme gündemiyle yeni bir zamansallık boyutu kazandı. Her ne kadar hidrokarbon gündeminin yükselişi ve düşüşü ile birlikte Kıbrıs sorununa yeni bir politik ekonomi boyutu eklenmiş olsa da tüm süreç “*plus ça change, plus c’est la même chose*” şeklinde özetlenebilir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Kıbrıs sorunu, zamansallık, Avrupalılaşma, karbonlaşma, bağlantı/ilişkilendirme siyaseti.