

## Strengths and Weaknesses of Anthropology and Political Science in Observing Nationalism: The Case of Cyprus (1968-1977)

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**ABSTRACT** This paper reflects the results of a Political Science research that investigated the re-construction of Greek Cypriot national identity in 1968-1977. It utilized a qualitative methodology and conducted a documentary research. It also followed a deductive approach and tested the validity of theoretical approaches, arguing that national identities and nationalism politics are constructed based on economic and political interests. Even though the data gathered supported the validity of these approaches for the studied case, the research remained insufficient in accounting for the roles of language, ethno-symbols and collective memories in shaping national identities. The paper discusses its results based on the strengths and weaknesses of Political Science, and Sociocultural Anthropology, in studies of nationalism and national identity.

### INTRODUCTION

Nationalism constitutes an attractive phenomenon for the disciplines of Anthropology and Political Science. Due to its theoretical and analytical successes, Political Science merely outshined Anthropology in studies of nationalism and national identities in the last decades. However, a number of scholars tend to support an interdisciplinary framework which merges with Sociocultural Anthropology and Political Science for nationalism studies. Political Science focuses primarily on nation-building policies made by statesmen in nationalism studies, due to their disciplinary and theoretical differences. Nevertheless, Socio-cultural Anthropology investigates society's perception on its national identity. This paper evaluates the strengths and weaknesses of both disciplines, and concludes that an interdisciplinary framework which merges the two is beneficial for a more comprehensive understanding of nationalism and national identity. This research utilized the discipline of Political Science and investigated policies of Cypriot President Makarios via a documentary research and re-construction of Greek Cypriot national identity (in 1968-1977). The results of the research signalled that political leaders play crucial roles in re-constructing politics of ethnicity and nationalism. Their self-interests and their commu-

nity's political and economic interests, led political leaders to regulate their politics on nationalism. Nevertheless, the relevant research is manifestly inefficient in accounting for the perception of Greek Cypriots on their national identity. Thus, an interdisciplinary framework utilizing theoretical and methodological approaches of Political Science and Sociocultural Anthropology is rather advantageous in accounting for nationalism at political, as well as the social levels.

In his 'primordialist' approach, Geertz (1973), who was amongst the anthropologists theorizing the origins of contemporary nations, argues that the nations are racial extensions of their ancestors. Their identities, as well as their cultures, are 'given' to them by kinships, religious values, linguistic characteristics and social customs. Another anthropologist, Berghe (1981), generated the 'sociobiological' notion. According to the scholar, nations are 'sociobiological' entities, composed of races and ethnic groups. Berghe differed from Geertz on one specific aspect. While the first argues that the nations, ethnic groups and even races tend to imagine 'alleged kinships' in group formation, the latter argues that national identities are produced by the biological process in the nature, and an individual's ethnicity and nationality are determined by his or her 'primordial' origins. Gellner (1983) was another anthropologist theorizing the origins of nations. The scholar generated the 'Modernist' theory. He analysed the socio-cultural transformations of Industrial era, and concluded that the national cultures were productions of post-industrial (modern) societies. According to Gellner, the urbanization and industrialization processes of the

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modern era enabled and required societies to found nation-states. The nation-states constructed their own 'high-cultures' and national identities via nation-building policies and national education. Gellner's student, Smith (1986), based on the 'ethno-symbolist' approach, observed the 'ethnic origins of nations' and criticized Gellner's approach by arguing that the scholar underestimated ethno-symbols, ethno-cultural traditions and collective memories of societies. Smith also notes that, no national identity construction can be successful unless it is compatible with collective memories, and Gellner overestimated the policies made by governments.

Political Scientists Brass (1991) and Breuilly (1993), made significant contributions to the 'Modernist' theory, and analysed the politics of nationalism and nation-building. The two scholars argued that the ethnic and national identities, as well as ethnic and national political goals, are constructed by political leaders. According to the scholars, political leaders identify a nation and set up its national priorities based on their self-interests and their society's economic and political interests. At this point, national identity and ethnicity appear as instruments of policy making. The scholars assert that the national and ethnic identities are not static and prehistorical since they are constructed and re-constructed for political purposes.

Another anthropologist, Eriksen (2001), acknowledged that the framework used by political scientists suited well to nationalism studies. He approved that the national cultures and identities were, to a great extent, constructed by nation-states in post-modern era. He criticized Geertz's anthropological framework identifying nations as natural and biological evolutions of pre-modern societies. However, with reference to the states suffering due to ethno-cultural conflicts, he noted that the Modernist approach is not as powerful as considered by political scientists, since the self-affiliation of ethnic groups had started centuries ago and 'nothing comes out of nothing'. He recommended an interdisciplinary framework combining Socio-cultural Anthropology and Political Science for studies on nations and nationalism. In this decade, Smith (2013) stands out as a supporter of an interdisciplinary framework, merging Political Science and Sociocultural Anthropology, since the phenomenon covers a wide-range of socio-cultural and political elements such as language, ethnicity,

collective memories, language, customs, policy-making and interests. The number of interdisciplinary studies merging disciplinary aspects of Political Science and Sociocultural Anthropology on nationalism and national identities has so far been limited. Recent studies were inspired mainly either by Political Science (Caselli and Coleman 2013; Kipgen 2013; Drobizheva et al. 2015; Taras and Ganguly 2015) or by Sociocultural Anthropology (Gellner 2012; Burrell and Moodie 2015; Elbasani and Roy 2015; Jarret 2015), instead of a disciplinary combination of the two. This research concludes that, Political Science has limitations in accounting for some social aspects of nationalism and an interdisciplinary framework might shed further light on the relevant gaps.

## METHODOLOGY

This research conducted a qualitative documentary research. It followed a 'deductive' design and tested the validity of Brass's and Breuilly's theoretical assumptions with a case study on Cyprus. It questioned 'why and how' Cypriot President Makarios abandoned policies which favor the unification of Cyprus with Greece. It investigated the relevance of these policies with Greek Cypriot national identity. The analysis covered the period of time during which President Makarios abandoned pro-Enosis policies (1968-1977), since the relevant time period constitutes an appropriate sample to investigate the re-construction of Greek Cypriot national identity. It utilized the archives of British Foreign and Commonwealth Office, as well as the archives of Cypriot Press and Information Office. It analyzed President Makarios's self-interests, as well as Greek Cypriots' economic and political interests with relevance to politics of independence and unification with Greece. The research focused particularly on Greek Junta's policies on Greece and Cyprus, Greek Cypriot side's demands from Turkish Cypriot side in inter-communal talks, President Makarios's political statements and economic reports issued by the Central Bank and relevant ministries of Cyprus (Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Ministry of Finance).

Theoretically speaking, the research followed the line of Brass and Breuilly. It therefore investigated the relationship between Greek Cypriots' interests (as well as President's self-interests) and Makarios's pro-independence policies. The

research paid special attention to the observation on Makarios's political speeches. According to Billig (1995) and Wodak (2013), in construction (or re-construction) of national identity or politics of nationalism, political leaders might focus not only on 'who the nation is', but also 'what it has to do'. Thus, setting up national priorities and indicating political goals for the nation is another method of constructing or re-constructing the national identity. Prizel (1998) followed this methodology and analyzed political speeches of leaders in Russia, Poland and Ukraine with relevance to the political (national) goals that they emphasized. This research focused on Makarios's speeches and investigated what national priorities he indicated for Greek Cypriots. The diplomatic correspondences between Nicosia and Athens, Greek, Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot proposals in intercommunal talks are present at Foreign and Commonwealth Office archives while the Press and Information Office provides accession to Makarios's public speeches and the reports issued by the Central Bank and relevant ministries.

## RESULTS

The data that were gathered indicated that President Makarios, in his public speeches, repeatedly expressed to Greek Cypriot people that unification with Greece was 'desired' but not 'feasible'. Even though he was the leader of Greek Cypriots' nationalist movement aimed to unify Cyprus with Greece (during the Colonial era), in 1968-1974, he became the leader of another nationalist movement which aimed at keeping Cyprus as an independent state. In the inter-communal talks, the President asked Turkish Cypriots to abolish the bi-communal power-sharing assured by the veto rights. Thus, his purpose was to render Turkish Cypriots a minority which is adopted into the political will of Greek Cypriot majority. Nevertheless, in his political relations with Greece, Makarios apparently tried to discourage Athens from dictating policies to Cypriots. He constantly refused to accept Greece's manipulations regarding Cyprus's security and domestic affairs. In his policies abandoning the pro-Enosis (unification) line, with his stance in inter-communal talks and by his political speeches, Makarios indicated the maintenance of Cyprus's independence as the main national goal of Greek Cypriots. When Greece and Turkey used

military force in Cyprus in 1974, the one-third of Greek Cypriot population became refugees and the one-third Cypriot territory remained under Turkish army's control. In 1974-1977, the distortion of power balances in favour of Turkish Cypriots forced Makarios to quit his demands to abolish Turkish Cypriot veto rights. Additionally, in his post-1974 speeches, Makarios constantly accused the Greek Junta and Turkey for the partition of Cyprus.

Regarding Makarios's self-interests and Greek Cypriots' economic and political interests, the evidence gathered revealed that in the case of unification with Greece under a military regime (1967-1974), Makarios was likely to lose his political power since he could no longer remain as the President of an independent state (Cyprus). On the other hand, the data gathered also revealed that there have been systematic violations of human rights in Greece under the Junta, and unification with an anti-democratic regime was hardly preferable when Greek Cypriots' political interests were taken into account. Additionally, the annual reports issued by Central Bank of Cyprus showed that there has been a significant increase in Greek Cypriots' total exports, Gross Domestic Product and living standards. The Cypriot economy, particularly the sectors of Tourism, Banking, Manufacturing, and Agriculture, recorded noticeable growth. Cyprus was a member-part of the Commonwealth. In the reports issued by the Central Bank and the relevant ministries, the trade preferences provided by Commonwealth membership played a vital role in the growth of Cypriot economy. Makarios himself had explained in some of his speeches that the unification with Greece was likely to terminate the Commonwealth preferences enjoyed by Greek Cypriots.

Based on the data gathered by the research, President Makarios re-constructed Greek Cypriot national identity by setting up a new political goal as a national priority for Greek Cypriots: Securing Cyprus's independence. It has been verified by the research that, independence was beneficial for Makarios's self-interests, as well as Greek Cypriots' political and economic interests. Thus, the national identity designed by Makarios had characterized Greek Cypriots as an entity that had to have a political destiny different and independent from Greece. Henceforth, Brass's and Breuilly's theoretical approaches have been proved to be valid for the Cyprus case (1968-1977) by this research.

## DISCUSSION

The results of this paper have successfully approved the validity of Brass's and Breuilly's theoretical approaches on nationalism and national identity. However, the lack of Anthropological (particularly Sociocultural Anthropological) perspectives left the results on some aspects of Greek Cypriot national identity in the dark. Firstly, this research explored the national identity design of Makarios in political dimension; however, the reflections of national identity in Greek Cypriots' socio-cultural values were neglected. Secondly, the data gathered by this research revealed that Makarios had identified Greek Cypriots as an entity that had to have political differences from Greece, however, the extent to which Greek Cypriot community characterized itself differently from mainland Greeks was overlooked.

The research focused on political and economic interests of Greek Cypriots and Makarios. In a way similar to this research, some other Political Science researches on nationalism (Caselli and Coleman 2013; Kipgen 2013; Drobizheva et al. 2015; Taras and Ganguly 2015) have indicated that political and economic interests are important variables motivating political leaders to reconstruct ethnic identities, national identities and politics of nationalism. Nevertheless, researches having more methodological connections with Sociocultural Anthropology, in their narrative analyses and ethnographies, indicated that the way nations (or ethnic groups) perceive their identities is strictly tied to ethnic origins, language, ethno-symbols, customs and collective memories (Gellner 2012; Burrell and Moodie 2015; Elbasani and Roy 2015; Jarret 2016). However, in these studies, the role of economic and political interests in construction (and re-construction) of national identities and politics of ethnicity and nationalism were essentially overlooked due to the disciplinary frameworks of the scholars.

The researches which conducted ethnographies and narrative analyses on Greek Cypriots' national identity (Papadakis 1998; Papapavlou 1998; Mavratsas 1999; Loizides 2007; Peristianis 2008; Roudometof and Christou 2016), concluded that Greek Cypriot community regards itself different from mainland Greeks due to their ethno-cultural values such as the Cypriot dialect (linguistic value), the Cypriot flag (ethno-symbol), the Martyrs of struggle against British,

Greek Junta and Turkey (ethno-symbol) and the social trauma of 1974 (collective memories). These researches had methodological and theoretical connections with Sociocultural Anthropology. They noted that, Greek Cypriots' perception on their difference (in relation to dialect, collective memories and shared ethno-symbols) from mainland Greeks reached to the peak not only in 1968 when Makarios abandoned pro-Enosis policies, but also in post-1974 when the community experienced a deep social trauma. Nevertheless, the attention they paid to the influence of economic and political interests in relation to the political transition from pro-Enosis to pro-independence line remained limited.

As mentioned in the introduction, Eriksen (2001) and Smith (2013) argued that Political Science is rather advantageous in observing the politics of nationalism; however, the discipline remains inefficient in accounting for the role of sociocultural elements in shaping and perceiving the national identity. Socio-cultural Anthropology combined with a methodological framework including ethnography and narrative analysis is capable of investigating national identity's relationship with ethnic origins, collective memories, ethno-symbols, language and other ethno-cultural elements. Therefore, the results of this paper are sufficient in illuminating Greek Cypriots' national identity "as a form of politics" (using Breuilly's term), however, they failed to account for national identity's relationship with society's perception and socio-cultural elements.

## CONCLUSION

The data gathered by this research and the 'discussion' section of this paper indicated that the Political Science discipline focuses primarily on policy-making and political leaders. Therefore, it is not as advantageous as Socio-cultural Anthropology in observing the sociocultural nature of nationalism and its perception by the society. Likewise, the studies inspired by methodological backgrounds connected to Sociocultural Anthropology tend to neglect the political and economic calculations of policy-makers (or political leaders) in constructing (or re-constructing) national and ethnic identities. As regards to Greek Cypriot national identity, this research illuminated for the economic and political interests beyond the re-construction process. Nevertheless, it remained inadequate in illustrating

the way Greek Cypriots perceive their national identity, since it neglected the role of language, ethno-symbols and socio-cultural attachments of the community. On the other hand, some other researches inspired by Sociocultural Anthropology and utilized narrative analysis and ethnography as basic research methods have neglected the political and economic aspects of reconstruction of Greek Cypriot national identity.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Nationalism and national identities are likely to remain as attractive topics for Political Science and Anthropology. So far, the researches of both disciplines on the topic have indicated that nationalism has political as well as sociocultural aspects. Political Science is advantageous in accounting for the roles of economic and political aspects in politics of nationalism while Sociocultural Anthropology has noticeable virtues in illuminating the role of collective memories, language and ethno-symbols. For future studies, an interdisciplinary approach merging the two disciplines might be useful in observing nationalism and national identities within a wider conceptual and methodological framework. A methodology which utilizes documentary research, narrative analysis and ethnography is likely to fulfil the requirements of such an interdisciplinary understanding and to shed further light on nationalism and national identities.

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