

Rational Agent or Unthinking Follower?

A survey-based profile analysis of Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot referendum voters

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Abstract

Following the failed re-unification referendum of April 2004, a number of analysts have sought to explain why Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots chose to vote the way they did. An important aspect of the debate has been whether Political Party discipline was primarily responsible for the result, or alternatively whether individual voters privately balanced the perceived pros and cons of the re-unification Plan before personally reaching their decision. Most of these analyses, however, have so far been theoretical, with very little empirical evidence to support or oppose either of the competing theses. This paper – based on survey data collected in May 2005 with a sample of 1,000 Greek Cypriots and 1,000 Turkish Cypriots - presents a pair of statistical regression models that seek to explain the factors underlying the choices of Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots during the April 2004 referenda. Beyond this “post mortem” of the Annan Plan, an attempt is made to generalize the findings into a predictive model against which various possible future scenarios can be tested, in order to discover those conditions that will need to be satisfied to achieve a “double Yes” in a future referendum over a revised Plan for the re-unification of Cyprus.

Introduction

Ever since the failed re-unification referendum of April 2004, various commentators and analysts have sought to explain why the Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots chose to vote the way they did. Beyond the various academic papers and books that have been published regarding this matter (see for instance Attalides 2004; Bahcheli 2004; Coufoudakis 2004; Heraclides 2004; Jakobsson-Hatay 2004a; Jakobsson-Hatay 2004b, Palley 2005) a great number of journalists, politicians and diplomats have also come out explicitly or operate implicitly under their own assumptions of why the Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots voted the way they did.

The most common “bones of contention” in this ongoing debate have been whether the Greek Cypriot “No” vote was a rational decision on behalf of the voters based on a personal evaluation of the Plan, or whether instead they were deliberately misled into voting “No” by their political leadership; whether the Greek Cypriot vote should be seen as a “No” to the specific Plan, or as a “No” to the very concept of re-unification; and whether the Turkish Cypriot “Yes” should be

seen as a “Yes” to co-existence with the Greek Cypriots, or merely as a “Yes” to EU membership and economic development.

While most of the analysis that originates from politicians of the two communities tends to present the “other” community in the most unflattering light possible (*Greek Cypriots are against re-unification; Greek Cypriots were misled by their leaders into voting “No”; Turkish Cypriots don’t care about re-unification, the Plan gave them the EU and a two-state solution in disguise and that is why they voted “Yes”*), academic analyses have on the whole been more balanced and made allowances for a more complex picture and multiple motives. What all the hitherto mentioned analyses – academic and political - have in common, however, is a lack of empirical backing: Almost all the so far published literature on the subject boils down, essentially, to the personal opinion of the author.

While some first forays into an empirical understanding of the April 2004 Referendum have been made over the last two years (Webster 2005a, Webster 2005b, Lordos 2004, Lordos 2005a, Lordos 2005b), with some interesting findings, the literature still lacks a comprehensive statistical model that will serve to explain how various factors interacted to create the final referendum result. Based on extensive public opinion data collected in mid-2005, this paper will attempt to develop and present such a model.

The Surveys

For the purposes of this research, two surveys of public opinion were conducted during May 2005. In each community the sample consisted of 1,000 voting adults, and all responses were collected via face to face interviews with a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire itself was originally prepared in English, and then translated into Greek and Turkish accordingly. The content of the questions was thus identical on both sides of the Green Line.

The sample itself was selected according to the methodology of multi-stage random stratified sampling. Breakdown by district and by urban/rural area was designed to closely mirror that of the actual population, while accurate representation in age and gender responses was sought through the birthday rule (in each household, the adult who has most recently had a birthday was invited for an interview).

The interviews lasted 45 minutes on average, though cases were reported where the interview lasted over 1h30m, in cases where the interviewee was particularly meticulous over his/her responses. Questions that were asked ranged from underlying attitudes towards the other community, motives for desiring a Solution of the Cyprus Problem, views on the acceptability of various specific provisions of the Annan Plan, views on the acceptability of various alternative provisions in a revised Peace Plan, and also various standard demographics – such as age, level of income and education, voting patterns in recent elections etc.

All interviews took place within a two-week period, beginning May 10th and ending May 25th.

Construction of the Model

The dependent variable in both the Greek Cypriot and the Turkish Cypriot regression models was “Vote in April 2004 referendum”. In both models, a declared “Yes” vote was coded with a dummy variable (value=1), whereas a declared “No” vote was denoted with a null value. Those who declared that they did not vote, or those who did not wish to reveal their vote, were excluded from the analysis. In total, 10.4% of the Greek Cypriot sample and 3.1% of the Turkish Cypriot sample were excluded from the analysis for this reason.

The independent “predictor” variables that were used in the construction of the model can be classified in four major categories: Underlying Attitudes, Political Allegiance, Views on Specific Aspects of the Annan Plan, and of course Demographics. A complete list of all the predictor variables that were included in the model can be found in Annex I to this paper.

It should be noted at this point that, while the surveys on which the analysis was based provided a rich foundation of possible predictor variables, at the same time the limitations of the model should not be lost from sight. Not every predictor variable that one would in hindsight wish to include in the model was represented in the survey; for instance, there were no variables to represent such underlying values as social conservatism and risk aversion, level of social or economic despair, or expectations at the time of voting regarding future options that would later become available, or in contrast dangers that would loom, in the alternative scenarios of acceptance or rejection of the Annan Plan. Even so, the model which was constructed with all variables that were indeed available from the surveys was, as will be shown below, substantially

successful in correctly predicting the referendum vote in both communities despite the limitations cited above.

Because the dependent variable is dichotomous (either “Yes” vote or “No” vote), the standard linear regression model was not appropriate for the analysis – since one of its prerequisites is that the dependent variable should be continuous. Instead, the binary logistic model was used, a variant of the linear model, which posits a hypothetical dependent variable, denoted as “z”, which is then used to estimate the probability of a certain individual to have voted “Yes” or “No”. More specifically,

$$z = C + B1*X1 + B2*X2 + B3*X3 + B4*X4 + B5*X5 + B6*X6 + \dots$$

Where C is a constant, X1, X2, X3 etc. are the various predictor variables and B1, B2, B3 etc. are the coefficients linked to the predictor variables.

Having calculated this hypothetical “z” variable, the probability of having voted “Yes” is then calculated as follows:

$$p = \exp(z) / (1 + \exp(z))$$

If $p > 0.5$ then the model allocates the case as a “Yes” vote. If however $p < 0.5$ then the model allocates a “No” vote.

The model was created in accordance with a forward step-wise approach. Variables were added to the model one by one, with the most significant being added first, until there were no more significant variables to add. Criterion of significance was the Wald statistic, which is defined as the square of the ratio between the variable’s model coefficient (B) and the standard error of the coefficient (S.E). The higher the Wald statistic, the more certain we can be that the specific variable is a reliable predictor. Variables were only included in the model if the probability of them being significant predictors was greater than 95% ($p < 0.05$)

Model Findings – Greek Cypriots

With these introductory comments in mind, we can now proceed to present the first regression model, relating to the Greek Cypriots:

Predictors of “Yes” vote in April 2004 referendum (<i>Greek Cypriots</i>)	B	S.E.	Wald	Sig.	Sample Score
DISY Supporter	1,96	0,22	83,35	0,00	0,29
Annan Plan Security Provisions	1,30	0,24	29,76	0,00	0,33
Annan Plan Property Rights	0,64	0,25	6,76	0,01	0,32
Annan Plan Settlers Provisions	0,60	0,30	3,93	0,05	0,14
Annan Plan Legal Status	0,52	0,26	3,90	0,05	0,47
"I would not mind having Turkish Cypriot neighbours"	0,77	0,23	11,37	0,00	0,57
"Our side is also to blame for the current situation of the Cyprus Problem"	0,75	0,33	5,12	0,02	0,79
"The two communities should go their separate ways from now on"	-0,68	0,30	5,21	0,02	0,22
Famagusta District resident	1,58	0,40	15,34	0,00	0,05
Refugee Status	0,51	0,21	5,68	0,02	0,31
High Education (College+)	-0,60	0,25	5,60	0,02	0,25
Low family Income (less than CYP 750)	-0,66	0,25	7,08	0,01	0,30
Female Gender	-0,70	0,21	10,85	0,00	0,50
Constant	-3,94	0,60	81,23	0,00	

The model proves substantially powerful to correctly predict if someone voted “Yes” or “No” at the April 2004 referendum. Specifically,

	Predicted:		% Correct
	No	Yes	
Observed:			
No	677	35	95,1
Yes	97	87	47,3
			85,3

The model correctly allocates 85.3% of the sample cases into the appropriate category.

In interpreting the findings of the model, the most important value is the variable co-efficient (B). The higher the B co-efficient, the stronger the predictor effect of the particular variable. A negative B co-efficient means the particular variable is inversely related to referendum vote. “Sample Score” is also important for the interpretation of the model: Quite simply, “Sample Score” is the proportion of the survey participants who exhibited the characteristic in question.

For instance, “DISY Supporter” score of 0.29 means that 29% of the survey participants declared themselves to have voted in favor of DISY at the 2001 parliamentary elections. “Annan Plan Settlers Provisions” score of 0.14 means that 14% of the survey participants found the relevant Annan Plan provisions acceptable.

We will now turn to examining the parameters of the model in detail.

DISY Supporter, B = 1.96

A very strong predictor of whether someone voted “Yes” at the referendum was whether he was a DISY supporter. It would seem that, all else being equal (*such as views regarding the specifics of the Plan, attitudes regarding co-existence*), a DISY supporter would experience a stronger urge in favor of voting “Yes” – presumably, because voting “Yes” was the official party line, expounded both by its historic leader, Glafkos Clerides, and by its current chairman, Nicos Anastasiades.

In this sample, the overall score for “DISY Supporter” was 0.29, which means that 29% of the sample declared themselves to be DISY Supporters. In a more generalized predictive version of this model, “DISY Supporter” can be substituted with “Political Party Support of the proposed Plan” since we have every reason to assume that the dynamics of “conformity to the party line” would work in a similar way to jolt out of their suspicions the followers of other potentially pro-“Yes” parties (such as AKEL or DIKO) in a future referendum over a revised Plan.

Annan Plan Security Provisions, B = 1.30

An almost equally strong predictor of referendum vote was what a particular voter felt about the Security Provisions of the Annan Plan. Much more than any other single aspect of the Plan, the referendum vote largely depended on the “partial vote” that Greek Cypriot citizens gave to the Plan’s security provisions. If the security provisions were felt by an individual to be unacceptable – in the sense that they would conceivably lead to further military interventions by the Turkish Army – then that individual was likely, all else being equal, to vote “No”. If alternatively the security provisions were felt to be tolerable – in the sense that “within a European Union context the intervention rights of Turkey would be rendered meaningless in practice” – then that individual was more likely to vote “Yes”, all else being equal.

The sample score for Annan Plan Security Provisions was 0.33, which means that only about one in three Greek Cypriots were swayed by the latter, more optimistic argument. About 67% of Greek Cypriots were not convinced over the security arrangements of the Plan, and this fact contributed greatly to the overall “No” result.

Already we can begin to see how the interplay between political party discipline and private evaluation of the plan led to the overall referendum result. It is known from exit polls (but also from data derived through the survey on which this paper is based) that about 10% of DIKO supporters voted in favor of the Plan, while 60% of DISY supporters voted against the Plan – both groups defying the official party line. It is reasonable to assume that many of these dissenting voters were, in the first case, DIKO supporters who found the security provisions of the Plan tolerable, and in the second case, DISY Supporters who found the security provisions of the Plan unacceptable.

As we will see below, a number of other factors also served to moderate and modulate the overall result, thus helping to explain the phenomenon of voters dissenting from official party policy.

Annan Plan Property Rights, $B = 0.64$

The Property Provisions of the Annan Plan were also an important predictor of the referendum vote among Greek Cypriots, though nowhere near as important as the Security Provisions. Where $B = 1.30$ for the security provisions, we have $B = 0.64$ for the property provisions. The relation between approval of the Plan’s provisions and final referendum vote is still there in the case of the property aspect, but it is less absolute than in the case of the security aspect. Many citizens may have been “pushed over the edge” into voting “No” by the perceived inadequacy of the Plan’s property provisions, *but in most cases this worked in combination with other factors, as a cumulative effect.*

The sample score for the Annan Plan Property Provisions was 0.32 – meaning that only 32% of Greek Cypriots found the Property provisions of the Plan to be a tolerable compromise.

Annan Plan Settlers Provisions, B = 0.60

Of similar importance to property rights were the provisions of the Annan Plan relating to the Settlers from Turkey. Again, this factor had a cumulative effect, which for a great number of citizens worked in combination with a disapproval of the Security and Property provisions of the Plan in order to create a strong undercurrent in favor of “No”.

It should be noted, in fact, that these three factors put together – Security, Property Rights and Settlers – had a cumulative effect that was much greater than the effect of “discipline to the party line”. According to the model, a citizen whose party was in favor of the plan (e.g. a DISY Supporter) but who personally found the Security, Property and Settlers provisions unacceptable, was more likely to vote “No” ($p = 0.38$), all else being equal. Alternatively, a citizen whose party was against the plan (e.g. a DIKO Supporter), but who personally found the Security, Property and Settlers provisions tolerable, was more likely to vote “Yes” ($p = 0.54$), all else being equal.

Of course, it was quite unusual for a Greek Cypriot citizen to find all of these provisions tolerable. Particularly in the case of the Settlers provisions, the sample score is only 0.14 – meaning that at 14% approval, the Settlers provisions of the Annan Plan were its most unpopular aspect among Greek Cypriots.

Annan Plan Legal Status, B = 0.52

The Annan Plan’s hallmark was, arguably, the “constructively ambiguous” way it dealt with the opposing views of the two communities regarding the legal status of the new state of affairs. In the Annan Plan, the issue of history was bypassed, the long-standing arguments between legal continuity and legal succession were glossed over, and both sides were given just enough “supporting evidence” to assume that the new state of affairs came into being in accordance with their own historical and legal thesis.

This “devious” or “ingenious” approach – depending on how one evaluated it – was an important predictor of referendum vote, carrying about the same predictive strength as the Property and Settlers provisions of the Plan. The difference is that the Legal Status aspect of the Plan was nowhere near as unacceptable as the other aspects mentioned above: With a sample score of 0.47, we can estimate that about half of the Greek Cypriots felt they could live with the “virgin

birth approach”. Those, however, who did not approve of this specific aspect, tended to consider it an important reason to reject the Plan altogether.

“I would not mind having Turkish Cypriot neighbours”, B = 0.77

Beyond the party politics surrounding the referendum and the specifics of the Annan Plan, a number of attitudinal factors also contributed to whether someone voted “Yes” or “No”. The most important attitudinal predictor among Greek Cypriots was whether someone felt that “co-existence on the ground” was desirable or not.

On the whole, this factor worked in favor of a “Yes” vote rather than of a “No” vote: With a sample score 0.57, a clear majority of Greek Cypriots would not mind having Turkish Cypriot neighbors; and this factor predisposed them in favor of voting “Yes”, all else being equal.

“Our side is also to blame for the current situation of the Cyprus Problem”, B = 0.75

Quite interestingly, the extent to which a citizen accepts Greek Cypriot responsibility for the historical course of the Cyprus Problem is an important predictor of referendum vote. In hindsight, it makes sense that “taking responsibility” would be correlated with a willingness to accept the painful compromise that the Annan Plan represented: “We also made mistakes, therefore we now have no choice but to accept a less than ideal solution”.

Given the very high sample score, 0.79, this attitudinal factor was a strong advocate for a “Yes” vote among the Greek Cypriot community, all else being equal. Nearly four in five Greek Cypriots seem willing to accept a share of the responsibility for the Cyprus Problem, and this is definitely a hopeful sign for future efforts to achieve a settlement.

“The two communities should go their separate ways from now on”, B = -0.68

As one would expect, the extent to which a citizen has “lost faith” in the concept of reunification is an important negative predictor of the referendum vote. Having said that, the sample score is quite low, 0.22 - only about one in five Greek Cypriots was willing to come out in favor of partition, at the time of the survey. Thus, the “desire for partition” does not, overall, have strong explanatory power of the Greek Cypriot “No” vote at the April 2004 referendum,

except for the relatively small minority of Greek Cypriots who held such attitudes at the time. As we will see further in this article, this factor could however cause serious difficulties in future efforts to achieve a settlement, if pro-partition attitudes among the Greek Cypriots gain strength with time.

Famagusta District resident, B = 1.58

Current residents of Famagusta District were far more likely to vote “Yes” at the referendum than residents of other districts, all else being equal. It should be made clear here that by “Famagusta District resident” we mean the Greek Cypriots who currently reside in the various villages just south and west of Famagusta – we do not mean “refugees from Famagusta”.

This particular group of individuals would have been very directly affected if the Annan Plan had gone ahead, since within three months they would have “regained” the capital city of their district, and the whole region would then have been upgraded both economically and culturally. It would seem that the “hard benefits” of re-unification were not lost to these individuals, who were likely to even push aside party discipline and other external factors in order to vote “Yes”. Thus, this finding tends to support the “rational agent” hypothesis for referendum voting patterns.

Refugee Status, B = 0.51

Refugee Status was a positive pre-disposing factor in favor of a “Yes” vote at the referendum. Refugees have a greater emotional and practical stake at efforts to re-unify the island, so this result was to be expected. The co-efficient is, however, comparatively low (B = 0.51) when compared for instance to the co-efficient for “Famagusta District resident” (B = 1.58). If refugees could expect substantial and tangible gains through re-unification based on the Annan Plan, shouldn’t we expect a co-efficient on a par with the co-efficient for “Famagusta District resident”? The fact that it is not so (in fact the co-efficient is barely one third of it), leads us to hypothesize that the refugees as a whole did not believe that they had much to gain tangibly from the Annan Plan. This leads us back to the low popularity of the Plan’s property provisions, but also to the widespread suspicion of Greek Cypriots that even the compensation scheme would not have “worked properly” to guarantee that “at the very least they would be fairly compensated for the loss of their property”.

High Education (College +), B = -0.60

Among Greek Cypriots, it would seem, citizens with College / University education were more likely to vote “No” at the referendum, all else being equal. One possible hypothesis to explain this intriguing finding is that the more educated could understand the subtler arguments used by the “No” camp – such as for instance, concerns regarding the administrative functionality and economic stability of the solution, fears that bipolar and ethnically defined federations have a centrifugal tendency and tend to break down, etc.

This finding definitely calls for further research to understand exactly why the more educated Greek Cypriots had a stronger tendency to vote “No”.

Low Family Income (less than CYP 750), B = -0.66

Greek Cypriots with a low family income (less than CYP 750) experienced a stronger urge to reject the Annan Plan, all else being equal. This is an important finding insofar as it confirms the hypothesized role of economic concerns in bringing about the rejection of the Annan Plan.

Though fears were widespread that the Annan Plan would have meant an economic deterioration for the Greek Cypriot community as funds and wealth were transferred to the Turkish Cypriots, in actual practice it was only the less wealthy Greek Cypriots who were influenced by these concerns into voting “No”. The wealthier may have had the luxury to accept the risk of an economic downturn for the sake of re-unification, but those who were already near the poverty line did not feel that they could afford to tolerate such an eventuality.

Female Gender, B = -0.70

Apparently, the strongest demographic factor that predisposed Greek Cypriots to vote “No” was gender – and more specifically, female gender. All else being equal, women felt they had more reasons to reject the Annan Plan.

A working hypothesis to explain this finding is that women are by their nature more risk-averse than men, mostly because their nurturing - parental roles leads them to put a premium on social

stability, and that the Annan Plan re-unification proposal represented a risk to social stability that they were less willing to take compared to men.

Again, this finding calls for further research to understand in depth the concerns of Cypriot women regarding prospects of re-unification.

The overall picture that develops from this explanatory model of Greek Cypriot referendum voting patterns is interesting and multi-faceted. Political party discipline indeed had a strong role to play; but an even stronger role was played by each citizen's personal evaluation of the Plan – especially of the Security aspect, but also on the issues of Property, Settlers and Legal Status. Underlying attitudes towards re-unification also mattered, though in the case of Greek Cypriots these attitudes served to restrain rather than enhance the “No” vote; and finally, demographics played a role: Future research should specifically focus on the concerns of refugees, of the more educated, of the less wealthy, and of women.

From explanatory model to predictive model (Greek Cypriots)

Using the derived model to test various “what-if” scenarios would be an interesting exercise; and this is what we will now proceed to do. Just like the model can be used to predict the probability of an individual voting “Yes” (e.g. $p = 0.58$, therefore the individual is likely to vote “Yes”), so it can be used to predict the overall “Yes” percent of the population (e.g. $p = 0.58$, therefore 58% of the population can be expected to vote “Yes”). We shall now attempt to use the model to make overall predictions for the population, given alternative scenarios.

For the purposes of this predictive model, the variable “DISY Supporter” has been renamed “Political Party Support of the Revised Plan”, while the variables “Annan Plan Security Provisions”, “Annan Plan Property Rights”, “Annan Plan Settlers Provisions” and “Annan Plan Legal Status” have been renamed to ‘Revised Plan Security Provisions’, “Revised Plan Property Rights”, “Revised Plan Settlers Provisions” and “Revised Plan Legal Status”, respectively. The underlying assumption is that firstly, voters will be influenced by a “Yes” stance of their political party in the same way, regardless of which party it is, and secondly, that they will give similar weight to the evaluation of the specific provisions of the “revised Plan”, as they did to the evaluation of the specific provisions of the Annan Plan.

Finally, the constant has been adjusted in such a way, so that with the starting parameters of the April 2004 referendum (which we assume are correctly represented in the survey results), the model correctly yields the actual 24% “Yes” vote of the referendum. This can be seen as a “calibration” of the predictive model.

Before the model is presented, a disclaimer is in order. The use of this model for predictive purposes is a daring undertaking, since the circumstances of a new referendum might be very different to those that prevailed in April 2004; furthermore, other hidden factors might come into play that have not been included in this model. Disclaimer aside, using a statistical model is a better predictive strategy than relying on purely subjective evaluations, and in this spirit we may proceed to examine the various different scenarios.

Predictors of "Yes" vote in possible future referendum (<i>Greek Cypriots</i>)	Regression Coefficients	Actual Scores (%)	Scenario A	Scenario B	Scenario C	Scenario D	Scenario E
Political Party Support of the Revised Plan	1,96	29	63	63	63	63	82
Revised Plan Security Provisions	1,30	33	33	55	55	55	55
Revised Plan Property Rights	0,64	32	32	32	55	55	55
Revised Plan Settlers Provisions	0,60	14	14	14	55	55	55
Revised Plan Legal Status	0,52	47	47	47	60	60	60
"I would not mind having Turkish Cypriot neighbours"	0,77	57	57	57	57	30	57
"Our side is also to blame for the Cyprus Problem"	0,75	79	79	79	79	79	79
"The two communities should go their separate ways from now on"	-0,68	22	22	22	22	60	22
Famagusta District resident	1,58	5	5	5	5	5	5
Refugee Status	0,51	31	31	31	31	31	31
High Education (College+)	-0,60	25	25	25	25	25	25
Low Family Income (less than CYP 750)	-0,66	30	30	30	30	30	30
Female Gender	-0,70	50	50	50	50	50	50
Adjusted Constant	-3,10						
Z-score		-1,15	-0,48	-0,20	0,26	-0,20	0,63
Projected "Yes" percent		24	38	45	57	45	65

For the purposes of this analysis, five alternative scenarios were tested using the model:

Scenario A – Annan Plan as before, but with AKEL Support

The first scenario is quite simply the Annan Plan, but with AKEL joining forces alongside DISY to campaign for its acceptance. Though this scenario is highly unlikely in the future, it is meant as a response to those who wonder what would have happened if AKEL had decided to campaign in favor of the Annan Plan during the April 2004 referendum.

Indeed, we can predict that the “Yes” vote would have been much higher than what was actually achieved – but still a far cry from majority approval of the Plan. More precisely, the model predicts a 38% “Yes” vote. Though AKEL and DISY together theoretically “control” over 60% of the electorate, the numerous other factors that come into play would push the “Yes” vote down to around the 40% mark. We are reminded here of the French referendum over the EU Constitution, where despite the strong majority of political parties in favor of “Yes”, the various other attitudinal factors at play pushed the vote down to below the 50% mark.

In the case of the Cyprus referendum, the “other factors” pushing the vote down would mostly be views regarding the Annan Plan’s provisions (especially security), as well as the concerns of various specific groups of the population (refugees, women, etc.)

This begs the question: What if, in a future round of negotiations, significant improvements are achieved in the security aspect of the Plan, and at the same time AKEL’s support was procured alongside that of DISY? Would that be sufficient for a “Yes”?

Scenario B – Plan extensively revised in Security aspect, and with AKEL Support

This scenario harkens back to the original pre-referendum proposal of AKEL – that the security aspect should be clarified, and only then should the Plan be put to a referendum. Of course, AKEL has now moved beyond this proposal, but given how important the security aspect appears to be in this model compared to other possible revisions of the Plan, it was felt that this scenario was worth testing.

It should be clarified at this point that by “extensive revisions in the security aspect” we do not mean “adjustments to the treaty of guarantee”, such as a faster withdrawal of troops, or even an abrogation of the provisions allowing intervention at the other constituent state as well. Such proposals for “adjustments to the treaty of guarantee” have been tested in the survey, and the result was that they had just as low an approval rating as the Annan Plan’s provisions, presumably because the underlying security and guarantee structure remains unchanged.

Instead, what we mean here as “extensive revision of the security aspect” is the development of a wholly new security system that would be integrated in nature, largely based on the Cypriots themselves, with some non-Cypriot involvement to guarantee neutrality, and only a “last-resort” option for Turkey or Greece to intervene if the primary security system described above fails to protect the two communities on the island. Such a proposal, it was discovered in the survey, could conceivably achieve a small majority support among Greek Cypriots, while also being acceptable to the Turkish Cypriots (Lordos 2005). Based on this finding, a target of 55 % in favor of the revised Plan’s security provisions was set in this scenario.

The outcome of this scenario is an “almost Yes” – at 45 %. Unfortunately, despite the political party majority in favor of the Plan, and despite the somewhat favorable opinion regarding the Plan’s revised security provisions, other outstanding concerns such as Property and Settlers would bring the overall vote down to a point where the final outcome cannot be predicted with any certainty. Thus, the next scenario to be tested will involve a more extensive revision of the Plan, where all the key areas of concern cited by the Greek Cypriots will be re-considered.

Scenario C – Plan revised in all key areas of concern, and with AKEL Support

This is the scenario that we can hope to achieve if the two sides engage in extensive negotiations to define a revised Plan under UN auspices, with the creative flexibility that will be needed to discover “win-win” solutions to the various aspects of the Cyprus Problem. Such possible compromise solutions have been tested in this survey, and it seems that aiming for the 55 % mark in terms of Greek Cypriot approval of the particular provisions of the revised Plan, is realistic and feasible to aim for.

Specifically for the Property aspect, it is possible to maintain the overall principle that “refugees currently using another refugee’s property will not be disturbed, and significant investments on

properties will on the whole be respected”, as in the Annan Plan, but the additional 1/3rd quota restriction on property restitution could be abolished, and refugees who are not entitled to their original home could be guaranteed to receive an alternative new home in the same town or village.

For the Settlers issue, a criteria based approach could be used, whereby children of Turkish origin born or raised in Cyprus could receive a full citizenship, while their parents could receive a residence permit and a work permit to also stay in Cyprus on humanitarian grounds – but without receiving a full citizenship.

Regarding the Legal Status of the new state of affairs, the Legal Continuity of the Republic of Cyprus could be explicitly acknowledged, while at the same time the Turkish Cypriot administration of the preceding decades could be retrospectively acknowledged as precisely that – an “interim Turkish Cypriot Authority”. In both cases, that is of the legal continuity of the Republic despite its mono-communal control and of the validity of the Turkish Cypriot Authority despite its un-constitutional nature, the “law of necessity” could be invoked; at the same time, it could be highlighted that the Republic of Cyprus, fundamentally, has always been and still remains bicomunal in nature, and that this bicomunal nature now carries over into the Republic’s evolution into a bizonal Federation.

All these possible provisions have been tested in the survey: Among Greek Cypriots they score between 52% and 59% approval, while among Turkish Cypriots they are equally acceptable as the equivalent provisions of the Annan Plan (Lordos 2005). Thus, they could reasonably be considered the target of a new round of negotiations, and in this context they form the basis of the scenario being presented here.

If AKEL support is also posited for this revised Plan – a reasonable assumption since these proposed revisions are well within the stated acceptability margins of AKEL – then we can expect a clear if somewhat narrow “Yes” vote, at 57 % of the Greek Cypriot voters.

And yet – we have so far not considered the effect of a possible shift in underlying attitudes towards re-unification; which is what we shall do in the next scenario.

Scenario D – Plan revised in all key areas of concern, with AKEL support, but with deterioration in Greek Cypriot attitudes towards re-unification and co-existence.

In spring 2006 opinion poll data was made public which apparently shows Greek Cypriots turning against the idea of co-existence with Turkish Cypriots. While such a shift in attitudes remains to be verified and confirmed by other opinion polls, it is reasonable to wonder: What would happen if, while the leaders strive to agree on mutually acceptable revisions to the UN Plan, the Greek Cypriot public loses faith in the idea of re-unification and becomes estranged from the concept of co-existence with the Turkish Cypriots? What if we end up with an acceptably revised Plan as described in the previous scenario, with AKEL support, but with a public that has become hostile to the idea of re-unification?

The answer is undoubtedly unsettling: The “Yes” vote would most likely deteriorate, perhaps to about 45% of the Greek Cypriot voters. And this, despite the political support, despite the fundamentally sound nature of the Plan. Once again, we can sense echoes of the European Constitution referendum in France, where people voted *against the underlying idea*, rather than against any particular detail of the proposal.

It is a fact that little attention has so far been paid to underlying Greek Cypriot attitudes to co-existence; perhaps because so far they had not been problematic. From now on, however it would be wise to begin considering the issue of “underlying attitudes” as a critical aspect of any serious effort to re-unify Cyprus. In this context, further research is urgently required.

We will conclude this analysis of alternative scenarios with a “target scenario”: The ideal, as it were, towards which efforts for re-unification should aim.

Scenario E (Target Scenario) – Plan revised in all key areas of concern, with AKEL and DIKO support, while attitudes towards re-unification hold without deteriorating

In this final scenario, we can begin to estimate the realistic maximum Greek Cypriot “Yes” vote in a future referendum over a revised Plan. Working to maximize the Greek Cypriot “Yes” even beyond the “strictly required” 50 % + 1 is a worthwhile undertaking, since a strong “Yes” vote would serve as a solid foundation of the new state of affairs – citizens would rally around the

new constitution striving to make it work, rather than stand outside of it as hostile by-standers, in bitter acrimony and confrontation.

According to this scenario, achieving a 65 % Greek Cypriot “Yes” is not unthinkable, so long as the following conditions are satisfied:

- a) **Political support of the revised Plan by DISY, AKEL and DIKO:** Achieving such support is definitely within the realm of possibility, since DIKO, along with AKEL and DISY is firmly and officially committed to a Bizonal – Bicomunal Federation. It is true of course that DIKO is more demanding than either of the two larger parties regarding the specific terms of the Plan that would be considered acceptable, but if the aspect of “functionality” is also seen to be adequately covered in the revised Plan, and if the improvements in Security, Property, Settlers and Legal Status described earlier are seen to be a tolerable compromise, then there is no reason why DIKO should not campaign in favor of a “Yes” during a future referendum campaign, alongside DISY and AKEL. The same cannot easily be said of the smaller parties, EDEK and EUROKO, which seem now to be rejecting outright the concept of a Federal Solution.
- b) **Plan to be revised in all key areas of concern:** The possible parameters of such a revised Plan have already been described, but achieving such amendments in practice will prove quite difficult. Even though the Turkish Cypriot public could tolerate all the proposed amendments, we should not necessarily expect similar flexibility from the Turkish Cypriot leadership - or from Turkey, for that matter. It is estimated that, in increasing order of difficulty, the easiest aspect to renegotiate will be Property. Then, on a medium level of difficulty, Settlers and Legal Status, while by far the hardest will be Security, since re-negotiating this aspect depends not only on the Turkish Cypriots but also on the Turkish military establishment, which is of course notoriously conservative on “strategic matters”. Ironically, the Security aspect is the one that most desperately needs to be revised if we are to turn the Greek Cypriot “No” of April 2004 into a future “Yes” in a new re-unification referendum.
- c) **Attitudes towards re-unification must hold without deteriorating:** If recent opinion polls are to be trusted on this matter, we may indeed be heading for a serious and potentially damaging deterioration of attitudes. The phenomenon, if it indeed exists, must be carefully measured and analyzed, while any worthwhile proposal to re-establish trust between the two communities on a grass-roots level must be given serious thought. It

seems that the prevailing doctrine of the last few years, that “Confidence Building Measures are merely a distraction from our real job, which is to negotiate a Comprehensive Settlement”, should now be rejected as dangerously misleading. Confidence Building Measures should from now on proceed hand-in-hand with substantive negotiations for a Comprehensive Settlement, if we wish to avoid further painful surprises in a future re-unification referendum.

We can now turn to an examination of Turkish Cypriot attitudes; starting with a presentation of the equivalent Turkish Cypriot regression model, which similarly purports to explain why citizens chose to vote the way they did in the April 2004 referendum

Model Findings – Turkish Cypriots

Without further ado, the statistical model derived from the analysis of the Turkish Cypriot data will be presented now. Readers who desire an explanation of the underlying statistical procedure and the meaning of the various parameters are encouraged to refer back to the explanatory comments just before and after the presentation of the Greek Cypriot model.

Predictors of "Yes" vote in April 2004 referendum (<i>Turkish Cypriots</i>)	B	S.E.	Wald	Sig.	Sample Scores
UBP Supporter	-2,17	0,29	58,07	0,00	0,22
DP Supporter	-1,48	0,31	22,72	0,00	0,12
CTP Supporter	1,14	0,29	15,11	0,00	0,48
Annan Plan Security Provisions	0,96	0,23	17,09	0,00	0,56
Annan Plan Power Sharing Provisions	0,80	0,25	10,24	0,00	0,70
Motive: To be able to enjoy the benefits of EU Membership	0,68	0,27	6,42	0,01	0,69
"We have much in common with the Greek Cypriots"	0,61	0,21	8,27	0,00	0,48
"I would find it natural and acceptable is someone in my family chose to marry a Greek Cypriot"	0,51	0,23	4,88	0,03	0,42
"The two communities should go their separate ways from now on"	-0,42	0,21	3,87	0,05	0,50
"Religion is important in my life"	-0,46	0,22	4,37	0,04	0,53
Iskele Region resident	0,84	0,33	6,37	0,01	0,10
Low Family Income (up to YTL 1,500)	0,48	0,23	4,58	0,03	0,67
Old Age (55+)	-0,87	0,25	11,70	0,00	0,18
Constant	-0,47	0,42	3,47	0,06	

This model is also substantially powerful to explain voting patterns in the April 2004 referendum:

	Predicted		% Correct
	No	Yes	
Observed			
No	254	65	79,6
Yes	68	582	89,5
			86,3

The model correctly allocates 86.3% of the sample cases into the appropriate category, a slightly better performance when compared to 85.3% correct allocation of the Greek Cypriot model.

Similarly to the Greek Cypriot model, variables from all four categories (Political Allegiance, Plan-specific attitudes, Underlying attitudes and Demographics) have made it into the model, suggesting that the Turkish Cypriot referendum vote must also be interpreted as a multi-factorial and multi-faceted evaluation process.

We will now examine the parameters of the model in detail.

UBP Supporter, B = -2.17

Being a UBP supporter was a very strong negative predictor of referendum vote. UBP was against the Annan Plan, and it seems that the party had substantial success in convincing its supporters of its official policy.

DP Supporter, B = -1.48

Being a DP supporter was also a negative predictor of referendum vote, though to a lesser extent than being a UBP supporter (B = -1.48, compared to B = -2.17). This stands to reason given that DP was officially “neutral” towards the Annan Plan, rather than “opposed” in the way UBP was. Even so, and despite this neutrality, it is interesting that “DP Supporter” remains a strong negative predictor; it would seem that the socio-cultural make-up of DP supporters was such as to lead them to vote against the Plan, despite not being told to do so by their party. Indeed, the

leader of the Party himself, Serdar Denktash, admitted later that he had voted “No” at the referendum.

CTP Supporter, B = 1.14

In an inverse manner, being a CTP supporter was a strong positive predictor of referendum vote. The same was in fact true of BDH voters, though for statistical reasons (*small representation in the sample*) it did not prove possible to also include BDH in the model.

It would seem that, on the whole, party politics were very closely related to referendum vote among Turkish Cypriots, perhaps more so than among Greek Cypriots. This can either be interpreted to mean that Turkish Cypriot parties – having taken early positions on the Annan Plan, either for or against – were more successful in bringing their supporters to vote along party lines, or alternatively it could mean that Turkish Cypriot parties are ideologically and sociologically more cohesive entities than Greek Cypriot parties. A bridging hypothesis is that Turkish Cypriot parties were originally created based on opposing views regarding the Cyprus Problem, with CTP and BDH “existing to promote re-unification”, and DP-UBP “existing to promote the recognition of a separate state”. Thus, it was to be expected that referendum voting would closely follow the contours of political party affiliation. Greek Cypriot parties, in contrast, cannot so easily be categorized as pro-unification versus anti-unification parties since, officially, all of them have always supported re-unification.

A corollary of this hypothesis is that Turkish Cypriot parties are inevitably vulnerable to public opinion swings regarding the desirability of re-unification. A pro-unification mood among the Turkish Cypriot public will eventually translate into a stronger share for CTP, while an anti-unification mood will eventually strengthen UBP. The possible consequences of such a dynamic will be explored later in this paper.

Annan Plan Security Provisions, B = 0.96

Following Political Party allegiance, the strongest predictor of referendum vote among the Turkish Cypriots was whether a voter approved of or opposed the Annan Plan’s Security Provisions. Turkish Cypriot voters who could not bring themselves to accept the Plan’s security provisions were very likely to vote “No” at the referendum, all else being equal. This finding

closely echoes the Greek Cypriot model, where Security concerns were also found to be the prime determinant of referendum vote after Political Party affiliation.

Interestingly, only about 56% of Turkish Cypriots found the Annan Plan's Security Provisions acceptable, a significantly lower score than their overall 65% acceptance of the Plan. Thus, we can say that the Security aspect of the Plan, though acceptable to the majority, served to dampen Turkish Cypriot enthusiasm for the Plan rather than to enhance it.

In hindsight, this finding is not surprising. Though the Treaty of Guarantee that was re-confirmed in the Plan had the "positive" of affirming Turkish intervention rights, it also had the "negative" of affirming Greek intervention rights. In a separate analysis of this survey's data, it was found that the extent to which a Turkish Cypriot trusts Greece was very strongly correlated with referendum vote ($r = 0.202$, $p = 0.00$). In other words, a Turkish Cypriot who felt that Greece was likely to abuse its "right of intervention" was quite likely to vote "No" as a result. It should be recalled at this point that from a Turkish Cypriot historical perspective, Greece had a large share of responsibility for Turkish Cypriot sufferings in the 1960s. Though on the balance a majority of Turkish Cypriots found the Annan Plan Security Provisions acceptable, it should be noted that a large part of this support had to do with the reasoning that "Turkey is closer than Greece and more willing to intervene in case of trouble", rather than with an unqualified overall approval of the proposed Security structure.

Annan Plan Power Sharing Provisions, B = 0.80

Along with Security, the only other aspect of the Annan Plan that was a critical factor in deciding the referendum result was Power Sharing. The Turkish Cypriots tended to see the Annan Plan as a Power Sharing proposal, which they either approved of and therefore voted "Yes", or disapproved of and therefore voted "No". It should be noted that about 70% of Turkish Cypriots found the Power Sharing arrangements of the Plan to be acceptable, and therefore we can conclude that the proposed system of Power Sharing added a strong impetus to the Turkish Cypriot "Yes" campaign.

It is interesting to note at this point that the Plan's Power Sharing provisions were not a significant factor in determining the Greek Cypriot referendum vote: Whatever Greek Cypriots felt about the proposed arrangements for positive participation of both communities in the

decision making process, it was not an issue that was likely to decide their vote. This finding is a response to those who assert that “With their vote, Greek Cypriots said ‘No’ to Power Sharing” – such a hypothesis, it would seem, cannot be confirmed through empirical evidence.

In a similar manner, the other aspects of the Plan which Greek Cypriots saw as critical parameters in their referendum decision – Property, Settlers and Legal Status - were not equivalently significant factors for Turkish Cypriot voters. Turkish Cypriots may have approved or disapproved of the way that the Plan dealt with the Property issue or the Settlers issue, but either way, this was not a factor that was likely to decide their vote.

Motive: To be able to enjoy the benefits of EU membership, B = 0.68

For Turkish Cypriots, an “indirect aspect” of the Annan Plan was that it would immediately render them full members of the European Union. This factor was indeed a prime determinant of referendum vote: For Turkish Cypriots the Annan Plan referendum was partly a referendum on EU accession.

Given that about 69 % of Turkish Cypriots felt that EU membership was a worthwhile goal (according to the survey results), we can say that this factor was primary in leading the “Yes” campaign forward.

“We have much in common with Greek Cypriots”, B = 0.61

As with Greek Cypriots, underlying attitudes played a role in the referendum decision of the Turkish Cypriots as well. The most important attitudinal predictor was the “sense of commonality” with Greek Cypriots that each Turkish Cypriot voter experiences; those who see Greek Cypriots as alien to themselves, members of another nation and another culture, tended for this reason to vote “No” at the referendum, all else being equal.

Since according to the survey only about 48% of Turkish Cypriots experience such commonality, this factor dampened rather than enhanced the Turkish Cypriot “Yes” vote.

“I would find it natural and acceptable if someone in my family chose to marry a Greek Cypriot”, $B = 0.51$

Though for Greek Cypriots the critical attitudinal predictor variable was whether one felt that having Turkish Cypriot neighbours is acceptable, in the case of Turkish Cypriots the extent to which intermarriage between the two communities is considered acceptable was a more reliable predictor.

There are sound theoretical justifications behind such a finding: While for the more populous and developed community the critical issue is whether everyday co-existence with the poorer and less developed community can be tolerated – and hence the significance of the “I would not mind having Turkish Cypriot neighbours” variable – in the case of the less populous and less developed community, everyday co-existence is taken as a given and the issue becomes whether cultural assimilation can be tolerated. Many Turkish Cypriots feared that with re-unification their own separate culture would eventually be eroded, as their children inevitably intermarried with the children of the more populous and more developed Greek Cypriot community – and for many, this was a serious enough reason to vote “No”.

Since only about 42% of Turkish Cypriots felt at the time of the survey that inter-marriage with Greek Cypriots was acceptable, this factor served on the whole to dampen the Turkish Cypriot “Yes” vote at the referendum.

The two communities should go their separate ways from now on, $B = -0.42$

Like the Greek Cypriots, loss of faith in re-unification was a negative predictor of referendum vote. What is interesting and surprising is that while among the Greek Cypriots, who purportedly said “No” to re-unification, only 22% agreed that the two communities should now go their separate ways, among the Turkish Cypriots – who voted “Yes” to the Annan Plan - a full 50% seem to believe that partition is the way ahead!

Of course, this is an issue on which the Turkish Cypriot community has always been divided. Even today, the actual strength of pro-unification and anti-unification parties remains equally divided, and it is thus still impossible to put together an administration composed only of pro-

unification parties (the coalition still in power during spring 2006 was between CTP, a pro-unification party, and DP, a traditionally anti-unification party).

If Turkish Cypriots voted “Yes” at 65%, this was despite underlying attitudes to re-unification, and not because of them. Turkish Cypriots voted “Yes” to EU accession, to being raised to a status of political equality with the more populous community on the island, to the promise of an increased standard of living (as we shall see further in the paper), but not all who voted “Yes” were voting in favor of co-existence with Greek Cypriots; a disturbing reality, but a reality nonetheless.

Religion is important in my life, B = -0.46

The more religious among the Turkish Cypriots had a greater propensity to reject the Annan Plan re-unification proposal. Presumably, this finding is also linked to the concept of cultural assimilation, and how desirable such assimilation is. Religion is always a guardian of culture, and religious individuals tend to be more attached to their cultural heritage than non-religious individuals.

This variable did not show up in the Greek Cypriot model, presumably for the same reason that the inter-marriage variable failed to show up in the model: The more populous community does not experience the fear of cultural assimilation, in the same way that such fear is experienced by the less populous community.

Iskele Region resident, B = 0.84

A surprising finding of the model was that residents of Iskele Region (i.e. of the Karpas peninsula), experienced a greater urge to vote in favor of the Annan Plan, all else being equal. This was not an expected finding, since in this region property restitution to Greek Cypriot former residents will be more extensive than elsewhere. Despite this, residents of this region were more likely to vote “Yes”.

A working hypothesis is that residents of Iskele district have never ceased to co-exist with Greek Cypriots over the past 30 years, due to the presence of enclaved Greek Cypriots in the region, and are therefore free of the anti-Greek Cypriot stereotypes that residents of other districts might

be suffering from. It should be recalled that the previous Turkish Cypriot regime was making deliberate use of historical narratives to discourage pro-unification movements, and that these narratives generally focused on how domineering, violent and dangerous the Greek Cypriots can be. Residents of Iskele District may well have been immune to such efforts at stereotyping, since they were living and working peacefully with Greek Cypriots on an everyday basis.

Low Family Income (up to YTL 1,500), B = 0.48

In sharp contrast with the Greek Cypriots, low family income was a positive predictor of referendum vote among the Turkish Cypriots. While the less well off Greek Cypriots saw re-unification as an economic threat, the less well-off Turkish Cypriots saw re-unification as an economic opportunity. Neither finding is surprising; given the economic disparity between the two communities, the less wealthy of both sides estimated correctly how re-unification might impact their personal economics.

Given that 67% of Turkish Cypriots fall within this lower income bracket of less than 1,500 YTL monthly, we can say that the expectation and hope of a higher standard of living contributed significantly to the strongly positive referendum result.

Old Age (55+), B = -0.87

The older Turkish Cypriots exhibited a propensity to oppose the Annan Plan re-unification proposal. This, of course, is the generation that experienced the 1960s first-hand, while it is also the generation that “made the decision”, as it were, to pursue security in separation from the Greek Cypriots. Thus, it is not surprising that this age group would have greater misgivings over a re-unification proposal. It is perhaps encouraging to see that the younger Turkish Cypriots do not as a whole share these misgivings, but tend to focus on the opportunities for social development and economic growth that re-unification would bring.

On the whole, we can say that the Turkish Cypriot “Yes” vote at the April 2004 referendum was helped along by the prospect of European Union accession, by the hopes of the less wealthy for a higher standard of living, and by the overall very favorable evaluation of the Annan Plan’s Power Sharing arrangements. At the same time, the “Yes” vote was somewhat dampened and restrained by lingering doubts regarding the desirability of re-unification and co-existence, and

these doubts were especially strong among the elderly. Finally, the Security arrangements of the Plan, though on the whole tolerable to Turkish Cypriots, served also as an unwelcome echo of troubled times – the 1960s - when these precise same Security provisions failed to protect the Turkish Cypriot community for eleven consecutive years.

From explanatory model to predictive model (Turkish Cypriots)

In the same way that the Greek Cypriot regression model was then used in a predictive capacity, we shall now attempt to use the Turkish Cypriot explanatory model to test various “what if” scenarios. Readers, who wish for a technical explanation of the process leading from the explanatory to the predictive model, are encouraged to refer back to the comments just before the presentation of the Greek Cypriot predictive model.

Predictors of "Yes" vote in possible future referendum (Turkish Cypriots)	Regression Coefficients	Actual Scores (%)	Scenario A	Scenario B	Scenario C
UBP Supporter	-2,17	22	32	35	22
DP Supporter	-1,48	12	15	17	12
CTP Supporter	1,14	48	35	30	48
Revised Plan Security Provisions	0,96	56	56	30	65
Revised Plan Power Sharing Provisions	0,80	70	70	35	75
Motive: To be able to enjoy the benefits of EU Membership	0,68	69	69	69	69
"We have much in common with the Greek Cypriots"	0,61	48	25	48	60
"I would find it natural and acceptable is someone in my family chose to marry a Greek Cypriot"	0,51	42	35	42	42
"The two communities should go their separate ways from now on"	-0,42	50	75	50	40
"Religion is important in my life"	-0,46	53	53	53	53
Iskele Region resident	0,84	10	10	10	10
Low Family Income (up to YTL 1,500)	0,48	67	67	67	67
Old Age (55+)	-0,87	18	18	18	18
Adjusted Constant	-1,15				
Z-Score		0,61	-0,08	-0,48	0,85
Projected "Yes" percent		65	48	38	70

Using this model, three separate scenarios were tested:

Scenario A – Nationalist and anti Greek Cypriot shift in Turkish Cypriot attitudes and politics

The first scenario to be tested assumes that in Turkish Cypriot politics the overall political balance between CTP-BDH on the one hand, and UBP-DP on the other, depends on underlying public attitudes along the “pro-Cypriot, pro-unification” Vs “pro-Turkish, pro-separation” scale.

In this scenario, the solution Plan remains unchanged – therefore theoretically as acceptable to Turkish Cypriots as the Annan Plan – but underlying attitudes towards Greek Cypriots and re-unification undergo a dramatic deterioration. In a climate of confrontation with Greek Cypriots and of disappointment with the European Union and the wider International Community, Turkish Cypriots turn towards Turkey and towards nationalism in search of a more secure identity. Thus, as a knock-on effect to this “rightward shift” in attitudes, CTP loses ground in favor of the more nationalist UBP and DP.

If a new re-unification referendum occurs under such circumstances, it is likely that the “Yes” vote will not reach the 50 % mark. In fact, the model predicts 48 %.

Scenario B – Unacceptable changes in Security and Power sharing, with loss of confidence in CTP

In this scenario, Turkey agrees to make further concessions in the re-unification Plan due to fears that Cyprus might become an obstacle in her course to EU accession, and pressures the Turkish Cypriot leadership to accept revisions to the Annan Plan that are deeply unacceptable to the Turkish Cypriot public. Specifically, changes are made in Security that remove Turkish protection and intervention rights without providing a convincing alternative security framework, while changes are made in Power sharing that represent a decided shift towards “majority rule”.

While such a plan is being negotiated, the public loses faith in CTP – in much the same way that the Greek Cypriot public lost faith in President Clerides and DISY while the Annan Plan was being negotiated – and turns towards UBP and DP for “protection” from the new Plan.

Under such a scenario the new referendum would be similarly disastrous to the April 2004 referendum, but this time it would be the Turkish Cypriots who would be “in defiance” of the motherland and of the International Community: Their “Yes” vote can barely be expected to reach 40%. In fact, the model predicts 38% only.

Having examined what could “go wrong” on the Turkish Cypriot side, we will now conclude this analysis also with a “target scenario” – the ideal towards which efforts for re-unification should aim.

Scenario C (Target Scenario) – Improvement in Security provisions, “win-win” changes in Power sharing, attitudes towards re-unification slightly improve, CTP remains strong

This final scenario is an attempt to estimate the maximum realistic Turkish Cypriot “Yes” vote in a future referendum over a revised Plan. Though in a practical sense it wouldn’t matter if the future Turkish Cypriot “Yes” is by a narrower margin than what was achieved in April 2004, from a psychological viewpoint such an outcome would be experienced by Turkish Cypriots as a “defeat”, thus causing unnecessary bitterness at the very first steps of the new state of affairs. On the contrary, if an increased “Yes” vote is achieved, the psychological message will be that the revised Plan was an improvement over the Annan Plan for both communities.

According to this target scenario, improving on the April 2004 Turkish Cypriot “Yes” is indeed possible, to the extent that a 70 % “Yes” vote is conceivable, but only if all of the following conditions are satisfied:

- a) **Improvement in Security provisions:** As we saw earlier, Turkish Cypriots had some misgivings over the Annan Plan Security provisions. While the intervening role of Turkey was theoretically acknowledged, in actual fact such intervention could only realistically take place as a last resort option. Furthermore, such last-resort intervention would most likely be coupled with an escalation of Greece’s military presence on the island, combined perhaps with the potential presence of unauthorized armed militias, and the likely victims of such military escalation would be ordinary members of the public. This, in fact, was exactly how the situation played out in the late 60s and early 70s. If, in contrast, an integrated Security Force was instituted as part of a revised Plan, based on Cypriots themselves but with a sufficient non-Cypriot element to guarantee neutrality,

and if this force had a practical and specific mandate to quell any possible incidents of terrorism, civil unrest and ethnically-oriented violence, then a much more real sense of security could be provided to the Turkish Cypriots when compared to the somewhat abstract protection provided by the Treaty of Guarantee. The role of Turkey and Greece could then be re-considered within the context of this new Security system. It was indeed shown in the survey that such a security system would be significantly more acceptable to the Turkish Cypriots than the Annan Plan security provisions. (Lordos 2005)

- b) **“Win-Win” changes in Power sharing:** It is well known that the current Greek Cypriot leadership places great emphasis on issues relating to the functionality of Power sharing arrangements. This concern with avoiding needless deadlocks in the functioning of government could be satisfied either in a “win-lose” manner (such as a subtle shift towards governance by “simple majority rule”), in which case the Turkish Cypriot “Yes” vote can be expected to deteriorate sharply, or the problem can be resolved in accordance with various “win-win” proposals, which will improve the functionality of the Plan without rendering the net result unacceptable to Turkish Cypriots. One such “win-win” proposal is that made by AKEL, that the governance of various Federal Institutions need not be by “Greek Cypriot chairman and Turkish Cypriot vice-chairman”, but instead a quota could be instituted, so that each Institution will be led by a stronger and more decisive Chair without being hampered by a second-guessing vice-Chair, while an agreed number of these chief executive positions will be held by Turkish Cypriots. Another “win-win” proposal is to reconsider the make-up and functioning of the Supreme Court. Instead of three Greek Cypriots, three Turkish Cypriots and three non-Cypriots, the Supreme Court could be made up of five Greek Cypriots and five Turkish Cypriots, without any non-Cypriot judges. Deadlock resolution could be taken away from the judiciary and passed on to an a specially instituted Political Council comprised of Cypriots only, which would be appointed for a long-lasting term (e.g. 7 years) by the widest possible bicomunal consensus. Finally, weighted cross-voting could be instituted for the election of Federal Senators, so that Federal politicians begin to experience themselves as accountable to both communities on the island, instead of having to reduce their scope to the lowest common denominator of ethnic and nationalistic appeal. None of the above suggestions would be consistently experienced as a deterioration of the Plan from a Turkish Cypriot viewpoint, and indeed some of these proposals, such as cross-voting, have been shown in the survey to be particularly popular among Turkish Cypriots. (Lordos 2005)

- c) **Attitudes towards re-unification slightly improve:** As we have seen earlier, the Turkish Cypriot community was, even at the time of the 2004 referendum, divided as to the advisability of co-existence with Greek Cypriots. The Turkish Cypriot “Yes” vote was spear-headed by the prospect of EU membership and the hope of an improved standard of living, while attitudes towards Greek Cypriots were in fact much less positive. Such a situation is not a good omen for what might happen after re-unification, when beyond the new reality of EU membership the two communities will actually have to actively co-operate with each other, on a personal as well as on a collective level. Thus, improving underlying Turkish Cypriot attitudes towards co-existence with Greek Cypriots should be a primary goal of any serious re-unification campaign. At the moment, however, attitudes are moving in the opposite direction, with Greek Cypriots being seen as “standing in the way” of the Turkish Cypriot community’s further development. To reverse this trend, both leaderships need to work together on finding ways to improve the image of Greek Cypriots among the Turkish Cypriot community, seeing this as a strategic common interest on the road to re-unification.
- d) **CTP remains strong:** A strong CTP, and indeed a strong presence of other pro-unification parties, will automatically translate into a strong pro-unification current at the time of a new referendum, whereas a weakened CTP and a weak presence of other pro-unification parties will by contrast translate into a weakened desire for re-unification. Thus, supporting and strengthening such parties should also be seen as a strategic common interest of the current Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot leaderships.

Implications for the Cyprus Conflict

This paper began with the expression of a dilemma; whether Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot referendum voters should be seen as “rational agents” who carefully weighed the pros and cons of the 2004 re-unification proposal before casting their vote, or alternatively whether they should be seen as “unthinking followers”, who simply obeyed the officially stated positions of their political leaders.

After the statistical analysis of the preceding pages, it should by now be evident that such a dilemma is entirely false; the voting behaviour of Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots at the April 2004 referendum cannot be reduced to such a simplistic dichotomy. In reality, voters of both communities were rational agents *to an extent*, but also subtly influenced in their judgement

by the official positions of their political parties. This influence, however, was not so strong as to overcome deeply held personal views regarding either the specifics of the proposed Plan, or of the overall “re-unification and co-existence” theme.

Greek Cypriots in particular were strongly influenced to vote “No” by the perceived inadequacy of the Plan’s provisions on the aspects of Security, Property, Settlers and Legal Status, while the lack of extensive political support for the Plan served to enhance and solidify this already negative tendency. The economic fears of the less well-off Greek Cypriots also worked against the acceptance of the Plan, while the response of refugees was less positive than one might have hoped. Underlying attitudes towards re-unification were, on the other hand, quite positive among Greek Cypriots, and served to restrain rather than enhance the trend towards a “No” vote.

The Turkish Cypriot “Yes” vote, in contrast, was driven by the prospect of EU membership, by the hopes of the less well-off for a better standard of living, and by the perceived strong acceptability of the Annan Plan’s Power Sharing provisions. Other factors, such as the level of desire for co-existence with Greek Cypriots, or the perceived acceptability level of the Plan’s Security provisions, served to restrain rather than enhance the Turkish Cypriot “Yes” vote.

Looking beyond the April 2004 referendum, a future drive for re-unification must succeed on multiple levels if we are to achieve a strong and simultaneous “Yes” response from both communities on the island. Political support is essential; but it is also essential to carefully draft a revised Peace Plan that will satisfy the fundamental concerns of both communities. At the same time, even the best re-unification Plan could conceivably fail the referendum – on either side of the Green line – if the underlying attitudes of ordinary Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots towards the desirability of re-unification and co-existence are allowed to deteriorate further.

In this context the negotiating doctrine that has prevailed over the last decade - that “Confidence Building Measures are merely a distraction from our real job, which is to negotiate a Comprehensive Settlement” – must now be rejected as misleading and dangerously flawed. Substantive negotiations for a Comprehensive Settlement and measures to rebuild confidence between the two communities should from now on proceed hand-in-hand, if we wish to avoid further painful surprises in a future re-unification referendum.

Wider implications for conflict resolution efforts

The use of public opinion polling in the context of conflict resolution is a comparatively new approach, which was first used extensively by Professor Colin Irwin, in Northern Ireland during the years prior to the signing of the Good Friday Agreement (Irwin 2002). In an age of expanded democratic rights, where conflict resolution is no longer seen as a mere act of high level diplomatic brokering, the use of public opinion polls has already been shown to fill an important political gap; especially so, in cases where referendums over a peace agreement have to be won, as was the case successfully in Northern Ireland, where public opinion polls did take place before the referendum, or unsuccessfully in Cyprus, where unfortunately the idea of conducting opinion polls in order to appropriately calibrate the plan and render it acceptable to the people was at the time turned down. In any case, it is true of all realms of human endeavor that important lessons often need to be learned the hard way, through painful experience. In the few years since the failed referendum in Cyprus, it has become surprisingly commonplace among high diplomatic circles to refer to the need for reliable public opinion information as an insurance that efforts made during in-depth and highly technical negotiations will not be wasted due to a lack of insight into what the people, ultimately, wish to have as their future.

As the “top-down model” of conflict resolution (*‘impartial’ mediator proposes a settlement, local leaders sign up to it after negotiations*) comes under increasing criticism, and as the idea of “local ownership” gains a foothold in peace-brokering efforts worldwide, the use of opinion polls where the acceptability of alternative proposals will first be tested with the public “informally” before their consent will be “formally” required in a referendum should be seen as a matter of plain common sense. The science of polling and of statistical analysis, while extensively utilized for decades now wherever people need to win elections or make a profit, has so far not been utilized adequately in the one field that is, in the final analysis, the essential foundation before any other human progress and activity can take place: The making of peace. It is hoped that the experience of a failed referendum and of subsequent polling in Cyprus over the last few years will add to the few lone voices which had already been advocating for greater ownership of peace processes by the people, until “Peace Polls”, to use a term coined by Professor Irwin, become an accepted and central element of all conflict resolution efforts worldwide.

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Annex I – Model Variables

The variables that were tested in the model, as potential predictors of the April 2004 referendum vote, belong in four general categories as follows:

a. Underlying Attitudes

- We have much in common with the Greek Cypriots (*/ Turkish Cypriots*).
- I would not mind having Greek Cypriot (*/ Turkish Cypriot*) neighbours.
- I would find it natural and acceptable if someone in my family chose to marry a Greek Cypriot (*/ Turkish Cypriot*).
- If my cultural rights and my security can be guaranteed, I can imagine myself living under a local administration that is primarily Greek Cypriot (*/ Turkish Cypriot*).
- The Greek Cypriots (*/ Turkish Cypriots*) cannot be trusted to adhere to an agreement we might make with them.
- The two communities, Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot, should go their separate ways from now on.
- Cyprus should really be considered a Turkish (*/ Hellenic*) island.
- Religion is important in my life.
- We should all strive, from now on, to be Cypriot first, and Greek or Turkish second.
- To achieve a Comprehensive Settlement, we have to understand and seek to alleviate the concerns of the Greek Cypriots (*/ Turkish Cypriots*), as well as our own concerns.
- The only way to solve the Cyprus Problem is through an armed struggle.
- Our side is also to blame for the Cyprus Problem.

While the data collected for the above 12 questions was along a 5-point likert scale (Strongly Disagree, Partly Disagree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Partly Agree, Strongly Agree), for the purposes of this analysis the variables were recoded into dummies, with “partly agree” and “strongly agree” receiving a value of “1”, and all other responses, including non-responses, receiving a value of “0”. This recoding was done, firstly, to cancel out the inherent subjectivity of likert scale responses (“partly” and “strongly” do not necessarily mean the same thing to all people), and secondly, to ensure that no further cases would be lost from the analysis due to missing values.

b. Political Allegiance

Political allegiance was measured for the purposes of this model, using as basis the declared vote of respondents in the most recent parliamentary elections of their respective community (May 2001 elections for the Greek Cypriots, January 2005 elections for the Turkish Cypriots). The following dummy variables were constructed to denote vote in favor of each particular Political Party (Party Supporter=1, other responses=0):

- AKEL Supporter
- DISY Supporter
- DIKO Supporter
- EDEK Supporter
- CTP Supporter
- UBP Supporter
- DP Supporter

One dilemma during the course of the analysis was whether to also include data from the most recent presidential elections in the two communities. In the end it was decided not to include such data, primarily because it would be very difficult to theoretically discern cause from effect: Did someone vote for Papadopoulos and was then led by the “President he trusted” into voting “No” at the referendum, or did someone intend to vote “No” at the referendum and therefore voted for Papadopoulos who would then further his agenda by opposing the Annan Plan? Such questions are intractable on a statistical level, and it was therefore decided to exclude the issue from the analysis. Political Party support is, on the other hand, a more enduring personal characteristic, and it thus becomes somewhat easier to discern cause from effect: If, for instance, DISY voters tended to vote in favor of the Annan Plan more than the average, then it is a reasonable assumption to say that DISY voters were at least partly influenced by their party into voting Yes.

c. Plan-specific factors

Regarding the specifics of the Annan Plan, five distinct questions regarding different aspects of the Plan were asked in the survey and then included in the analysis. The response scale for each of the questions was explained to the interviewees beforehand as shown below:

Totally Unacceptable: This proposal is completely unacceptable under any circumstances.

Tolerable if necessary: This proposal is not what I would like to see, but I would be willing to put up with it for the sake of reaching an agreed settlement.

Acceptable arrangement: This is a proposal I can accept without difficulty.

Very Positive arrangement: This is a proposal which would make the overall plan much more acceptable in my mind, and it would be a strong reason for me to vote “Yes” in a future referendum.

I am not sure: This proposal has both positive and negative aspects for me, and I cannot at this moment decide which aspect outweighs the other, or, I do not fully understand the implications of this proposal.

The respondents were encouraged to carefully ponder each proposal, after hearing it repeated to them twice. The proposals were deliberately complex and multi-faceted, in order to simulate the real dilemmas that citizens were faced with in striving to evaluate the equally complex and multi-faceted Plan which was presented for their vote at the April 2004 referendum.

Annan Plan Security Provisions:

“On the issue of Security, the UN Plan provided for the continuation of the Treaty of Guarantee between Greece, Turkey and the UK, which means that each one of those three countries will be allowed to intervene militarily anywhere in Cyprus. Furthermore, under the Treaty of Alliance, Greece and Turkey will each maintain troops in Cyprus, 6000 each until the year 2011, 3000 each until the year 2018. After that, 950 Greek soldiers and 650 Turkish soldiers will remain on the island indefinitely, but Greece, Turkey and Cyprus will review troop levels every three years with the objective of total withdrawal, if all parties agree.”

Annan Plan Property Rights

“On the issue of Property rights, the UN Plan provided for the return of some territory to Greek Cypriot administration – making the Turkish Cypriot state about 28% of Cyprus – and in that area which will come under Greek Cypriot administration all property will be returned to original owners, while current occupants will be re-housed elsewhere. As for Greek Cypriot property

that will remain within the Turkish Cypriot state and Turkish Cypriot property that will remain within the Greek Cypriot state, original individual owners will be entitled to 1/3rd of their property, but current occupants will have priority control of a particular property they are using if they are themselves refugees or if they have made a major investment on the property in question. Agricultural land will not be returned to original owners if this necessitates sub-dividing the property into plots of less than 5 donums, or less than 2 donums for irrigable land. For any property not returned, the original owner will be compensated.”

Annan Plan Settlers Provisions

“On the issue of immigrants from Turkey (Settlers), the UN Plan provided for a list of 45,000 persons that would be given citizenship of Cyprus the day after the settlement, and furthermore, allowed for anyone who has already been a permanent resident in Cyprus for at least five years before the agreement to be able to claim citizenship by naturalisation four years after the settlement. In practice, this would have meant that 60,000 to 75,000 immigrants (Settlers) would have been able to remain in Cyprus and become its citizens.”

Annan Plan Power Sharing arrangements

“On the issue of power sharing in the Federal Government, the UN Plan provided for a system whereby all decisions would require the positive participation of both communities. For instance in the Senate, for a law to be passed it would be necessary for at least one quarter of Turkish Cypriot present senators and one quarter of Greek Cypriot present Senators to agree with it, as well as the requirement that at least half of the overall number of present Senators must be in favour of the proposal. Similarly in the Presidential Council, at least one member from each community must be in favour of an executive decision, before it can take effect.”

Annan Plan Legal Status

On the issue of Legal Status, the UN Plan approach was that the two sides would not be required to agree about the previous legal status of the two sides' administration, and instead a “virgin birth” would take place, leading to a “new state of affairs”. The two sides would be asked “to agree about their future without necessarily agreeing on their past”.

For the purposes of this analysis, responses to all the five above questions were recoded into a trichotomy, where “tolerable” “acceptable” and “very positive” were all coded with a “1”, while “I am not sure” was coded with a “0,5” and “totally unacceptable” was coded with a “0”. By recoding in this manner, the defining issue becomes whether one can “live with” the provisions of the Annan Plan, regardless of whether he/she actually liked them or merely tolerated them for the sake of reaching a compromise solution. This choice was made because very few interviewees from either community could bring themselves to score the various provisions of the Annan Plan as anything better than “tolerable for the sake of a compromise”, and thus it did not make sense from a statistical viewpoint to focus on the subtle gradations between different levels of positive response.

For the Turkish Cypriots in particular, an additional “aspect of the Annan Plan” was also tested: The fact that through acceptance of the Annan Plan the Turkish Cypriots would immediately join the European Union. More specifically, interviewees were asked in the survey to evaluate a range of possible motives for wanting a solution of the Cyprus Problem. The variable “To enjoy the benefits of European Union membership” was included in the model, while responses were coded into a trichotomy where 1=A primary motive, 0.5=A secondary consideration, 0=Not at all a motive.

d. Demographics

Regarding demographics, a number of different variables were included, though all of them were recoded in such a way as to yield dummy “0-1” variables. Gender, for instance, was encoded as Female=1, Male=0.

Age was recoded into three dummy variables, “Young (18-34)”, “Middle Age (35-54)”, “Old Age (55+)”. Similarly, education was recoded into three dummy variables “Primary Education only”, “Up to Secondary Education”, Higher Education”. Recoding the variables in this manner renders the model more sensitive to differences which apply for only one particular age or education group, without necessarily having a uniformly linear relationship between age/education and referendum vote.

In a similar way, level of family income was recoded, for the Greek Cypriots, as “Low Family Income (up to CYP 750)” and “High Family Income (CYP 1,500+)”. It was considered unnecessary to encode the middle income ranges (between CYP 750 and CYP 1,500) separately. For Turkish Cypriots, only one income category was encoded “Low Family Income (up to YTL 1,500)”. The income structure among the Turkish Cypriots is pyramidal, with 67% of the sample falling in this lower income bracket, thus it was considered unnecessary to encode another variable for the highest income range – since it would merely be the inverse of the low income bracket variable.

A regional element was also included in the analysis, firstly in terms of the urban/rural dichotomy, and then additionally certain particular districts: For the Greek Cypriots, residents of Famagusta and Paphos districts were encoded in separate dummy variables, while for the Turkish Cypriots Guzelyurt, Lefkosa, and Iskele districts were also encoded in separate variables. The rationale behind including these particular districts was that in different ways, each of them would be greatly impacted if the Annan Plan had gone ahead. Famagusta district - currently entirely rural - would “re-acquire” its capital city, Paphos district would conceivably suffer as a tourist destination, Guzelyurt (Morphou) would have to be evacuated and essentially “rebuilt” in a different area, Lefkosa would merge with “Greek Cypriot Nicosia”, a wealthier urban body of over 200,000 population, while Iskele region would witness the return of large numbers of Greek Cypriots who would have had their properties returned to them. Thus, it was hypothesised that residents of any of these regions might have exhibited different voting patterns to the population average at the Annan Plan referendum.

Naturally, refugee status was also included as a variable, both for Greek Cypriots and for Turkish Cypriots. Additionally for Turkish Cypriots, a variable to denote whether someone was currently using a Greek Cypriot property was encoded, since the Annan Plan included complex provisions for users of such properties, which would have impacted on them in various different ways.

A Greek Cypriot specific variable that was included among the demographics was whether one was a state-sector employee. This was done in order to test the hypothesis that doubts and rumours expressed in the days prior to the referendum, along the lines of “if the Annan Plan goes ahead then civil servants might lose their jobs”, actually impacted on voting patterns.

A Turkish Cypriot specific variable that was included in the analysis was whether one was of Turkish, rather than of Cypriot origin. This variable was encoded through responses to the question “Where were your parents born?” - The response “father and mother born in Turkey” was denoted with a “1”, while all other responses were denoted with a null value.