

**SCARED OF WHAT'S BEHIND YOU**  
**NEGOTIATING A DOUBLE MINORITY DILEMMA IN NORTHERN**  
**IRELAND AND CYPRUS**

By

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## Abstract

Despite striking similarities between Northern Ireland and Cyprus, both in terms of the nature of their conflicts and the attempts made to resolve these tensions, the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century saw the success of the Good Friday Agreement in Northern Ireland and the failure of the Annan Plan in Cyprus. This thesis stems from the question: why did complex negotiation fail to produce a settlement in Cyprus but succeed in Northern Ireland? I argue that domestic perceptions of the relationships of third-parties had a significant impact upon the conflict parties' bargaining positions due the framing of a Double Minority Dilemma. A double minority occurs where both (or several) parties in the conflict see themselves as the minority under threat because they are preoccupied with the power and authority they perceive to be behind their opponent. Through a bridging of literature on minority nationalism with that on security dilemmas and ontological security, I develop the Double Minority Dilemma as a framework for analysing third-party influence on domestic elite bargaining positions that centres these competing perceptions of minority identity. Each additional intervening player in these conflicts, or 'third-party,' contributes to the security dilemma of the double minority condition. The thesis further contributes a unique conceptualization of third-party relationships from the perspective of domestic elites by framing third-party relationships in terms of their perceived form and distance to the Double Minority Dilemma, with highly internationalized contexts having more distant relationships. This dissertation format is article-based (or in Portfolio format), and thus comprised of three independent articles alongside an introduction and conclusion. The substantive articles build and apply the Double Minority Dilemma framework in Northern Ireland and Cyprus using a cross-case comparison and two within-case diachronic comparisons, which together examine several different negotiation processes in each case. The three articles demonstrate how critical junctures in third-party relationships framed by the Double Minority Dilemma led to changing domestic elite perceptions and strategic decisions in negotiations over time. The thesis ultimately provides a policy-relevant framework for guiding third-parties when engaging with certain conflict contexts such that their interventions may be peace-producing rather than conflict escalating.

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## List of Abbreviations

AIA	Anglo-Irish Agreement
AKEL	Progressive Party of Working People (Ανορθωτικό Κόμμα Εργαζόμενου Λαού)
BHTC	Bi-Communal Health Technical Committee
TDP	Communal Democracy Party (Toplumcu Demokrasi Partisi)
CMP	Committee on Missing Persons in Cyprus
CY	Cyprus (the island of)
DISY	Democratic Rally (Δημοκρατικός Συναγερμός)
DMD	Double Minority Dilemma
DUP	Democratic Unionist Party
EC (EEC)	European (Economic) Community
EEU	Eurasian Economic Community
EU	European Union
G/C	Greek Cypriot
GFA	Good Friday Agreement
INTERREG (EU)	Inter-Regional Programme
IR	International Relations
IRA	Irish Republican Army (Provisional)
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
KLA	Kosovo Liberation Army
KTÖS	Teachers Union in Northern Cyprus
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NI	Northern Ireland
NIA	Northern Ireland Assembly

NIWC	Northern Ireland Women’s Coalition
NORAIID	Irish Northern Aid
PIO	Press and Information Office
PRIO	Peace Research Institute Oslo
PUP	Progressive Unionist Party
ROC	Republic of Cyprus
ROI	Republic of Ireland
SDLP	Social Democratic and Labour Party
T/C	Turkish Cypriot
TRNC	Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus
TUV	Traditional Unionist Voice
UBP	National Unity Party (Ulusal Birlik Partisi)
UK	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
UN	United Nations
UNFICYP	United Nations Forces in Cyprus
UNMIK	United Nations Mission in Kosovo
UNSG	United Nations Secretary General
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
US (USA)	United States (of America)
UUP	Ulster Unionist Party

## Chapter 1

### **Introduction: Conceptualizing the Double Minority Dilemma in Conflict Settlement Processes**

There is a scene in the Lion King where Simba, the lion cub, comes face to face with three menacing hyenas. Outnumbered and overpowered, Simba is surprised to find the hyenas cowering in fear in response to his suddenly powerful roar. It is revealed, of course, that the hyenas are not afraid of Simba, but rather of his father Mufasa who has intervened and is now standing behind the cub. An opposing character “scared of what’s behind you” is a common cinema trope. For it to work, the opponent must easily see the significant power and support behind the protagonist while the protagonist remains unaware, producing confusion and misunderstanding. This trope is generally entertaining for cinema-goers, but the asymmetric information that results from such a scenario is highly dangerous and complicates conditions of real-world conflict. Different understandings of the conflict space, including the breadth of the field and the number of actors involved, produce conflicting perceptions of power and status. Competing definitions of identity emerge, with both parties to the conflict identifying themselves as a minority under threat. These dynamics produce outreach, an arms race of sorts, to balance one’s bargaining position, which broadens the number of actors involved and heightens the dual perception of minority insecurity even further. The “Double Minority Dilemma” that is produced here presents a particular challenge for peacemakers and conflict settlement processes. Understanding how the Double Minority Dilemma frames perceptions of the conflict space is useful for evaluating and potentially mitigating the impact international ‘third-parties’ have on conflict settlement processes.

Cyprus and Northern Ireland are often described as deeply divided societies featuring ‘civil conflicts,’ with the connotation being that these conflicts are somehow localized, with inherently domestic grievances. Each region is historically painted as a conflict between a domestic governing majority, the Protestants in Northern Ireland and the Greek Cypriots in the Republic of Cyprus, and a domestic

mobilized minority, Northern Ireland's Catholics and Turkish Cypriots, respectively. However, Cyprus and Northern Ireland are both primary examples of 'double-minority' conditions, where both parties within each conflict perceive themselves to be the minority most significantly under threat due to a difference in perception of the conflict space (Jackson 1972; Schaller and Abeysinghe 2006; Twietmeyer 2023b). It is true that the domestic minority – or 'local minority' – within the territory, Northern Ireland's Catholic community and the Turkish Cypriot community in Cyprus, is concerned with the power and authority of the domestic majority, the Protestant and Greek Cypriot communities, respectively. But in a double minority scenario, the so-called 'domestic' majorities are preoccupied with the power and authority of regional parties, the Republic of Ireland and Türkiye, respectively, who they perceive as standing behind their opponents. Thus, Protestants perceive themselves to be a minority – a 'regional minority' – on the island of Ireland while Greek Cypriots perceive themselves as the 'regional minority' because of Türkiye. As a result of these perceptions, the conflicts in Cyprus and Northern Ireland are neither a simple majority-minority conflict, nor are they entirely 'domestic' conflicts.

Double minority conflicts are by their nature international. Third-parties such as kin-states contribute directly to the creation of double minority conditions and play a unique role in how the domestic identity groups in conflict define themselves and their political agendas. But the double minority also provides a useful framework with which to examine the influence of more complex third-party actors, such as international organizations or mediators, and their interactions in conflict settlement processes. Wider studies show that the nature of a third-party's influence is framed through domestic elite perceptions of their capability: the power and capacity to take action; and credibility: the interest and willingness to take action in conflict settlement processes, including their (im)partiality in the conflict (Zartman and Touval 1985; Ross 1993; Kydd 2003; Reid 2017). Third-party framing can also be strategically utilized by the elites of rival domestic parties to shore up their bargaining position in political negotiations (Schulze 2018; Fang 2022). For example, elites might purposely frame a third-party that is more partial to their interests as impartial. But perceptions of third-parties are also produced and re-produced independently of

elite framing via domestic conflict narratives. With the double minority framing, elites interpret the interest and capability of third-parties as related to their perceived minority status and, ultimately, their security position. They face a security dilemma in that every actor perceived to shore up the opponent's position necessarily diminishes their own (Jervis 1978). As a result, even well-meaning intervenors who ostensibly espouse unbiased or non-aligned interests are automatically integrated into the double minority framework. The Double Minority *Dilemma* emphasizes the role that domestic elites' perceptions of external third-parties play in securitizing the double minority condition, ultimately determining domestic elite decision-making and willingness to make concessions in negotiations.

This thesis develops the Double Minority Dilemma (DMD) as a model of analysis for the role third-parties play in conflict settlement processes and outcomes. The thesis comparatively examines the process by which third-parties influenced conflict settlement processes in Northern Ireland in 1998 and Cyprus in 2004, supporting settlement agreements in the former and preventing agreements in the latter. The settlement processes in Northern Ireland and in Cyprus are shown in Chapter 2 to be influenced by a culmination of decades of strategic negotiation and domestic elite framing wherein third-parties became increasingly more integrated within a DMD conflict narrative. A critical examination of the historical development of each DMD's relationship with third-parties not only assists in understanding processes of conflict intervention and settlement in other cases but also illuminates key aspects of crises facing Northern Ireland and Cyprus today, as opposed to in 1998 and 2004, respectively. These current crises are examined through two intra-case diachronic studies in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4, the first dealing with the effects of Brexit on unionist perceptions of the DMD in Northern Ireland and demonstrating the complex interaction of domestic politics with the international politics of the DMD, The second explores the nature of the legitimization processes of the two Cypriot communities in their responses to the Covid crisis as defined by the DMD. These three studies find that conflict settlement processes in Northern Ireland and Cyprus depend upon a level of stability, and indeed serendipity, in the DMD's third-party relationships. They also demonstrate how shifts in these relationships contributed significantly to securing a successful

agreement (Northern Ireland in 1998), rejecting an agreement (Cyprus in 2004), developing stability in the absence of agreements (Cyprus in 2020-2021), and instability in the wake of agreements (Northern Ireland after 2017). Finally, the DMD is shown in the conclusion to contribute explanatory framework for wider contemporary conflict resolution, including the political conflict in northern Kosovo and the tensions between Russia and Ukraine over eastern Ukraine.

## **1.1 Originating Research Questions and Objectives**

This thesis is rooted in attempting to explain why, despite the many similarities in the conflicts in Northern Ireland and Cyprus as well as efforts to resolve them, the paths of the two cases significantly diverged when Northern Ireland successfully passed the 1998 Good Friday Agreement while the 2004 Annan Plan for Cyprus failed. There are many potential explanations for this difference in outcome in academic literature. As will be examined, existing explanations are frequently broken down along an internal and external dichotomy. On the one hand, the explanations for success and failure are seen as local and specific, e.g., key differences in the nature of the conflicts themselves or individual differences involving the motivations and capacities of participating elites. Or these explanations might come from outside, including geopolitical and economic interests which produce outside pressures on domestic parties to reach a settlement in one case and not in another. This thesis problematizes and challenges the ‘external’ versus ‘internal’ dichotomy. In a DMD, external actors can – via the interpretation and framing of domestic elites – impact internal processes, while the latter frequently impact on external intervenors.

This thesis addresses the role of third-parties as a key part of this internal/external nexus defined by a Double Minority Dilemma, guided by the following questions:

1. How did external third-parties contribute to the different outcomes of conflict settlement negotiations in Northern Ireland and Cyprus, in 1998 and 2004 respectively?
2. How does the ‘Double Minority’ condition interpret the nature of a third-party, both in terms of their perceived relationships with domestic conflict parties and with other third-parties, and in turn affect third-party contributions to conflict settlement?

3. How are the perceptions and framing of these third-parties by local elites shaped by a Double Minority ‘Dilemma’?
4. Given the role of the Double Minority Dilemma in framing the role of third-parties, how do we explain the strategic bargaining and discourse of local elites during negotiations for conflict settlement in Northern Ireland and Cyprus?

These questions seek to expand upon the existing literature on external third-party intervention in conflict settlement processes by focusing on the role of inter-party relationships and to contribute a new collection of data via an in-depth comparison of the negotiation processes in Northern Ireland and Cyprus.

Importantly, in operationalising these research questions for data collection, domestic negotiating elites become a primary source of information and the role of these elites in the narrative framing of third-party relationships is highlighted for greater examination. Given the particular nature of the comparison between Northern Ireland and Cyprus and the central role played by the Double Minority Dilemma in domestic elite perceptions and framing of third-parties and third-party intervenors, the thesis posits a fifth and final question:

5. Can we extend our understanding of third-party influence upon the Double Minority Dilemma in Northern Ireland and Cyprus to a broader set of cases?

## **1.2 Situating the Research: Building the theory of the Double Minority Dilemma**

There is some pre-existing historical work on the dynamics of double minorities, largely derived from psychology and security studies. The terminology of the “double minority” was introduced in 1972 for describing inter-group tensions in Northern Ireland in Harold Jackson’s historical study of the “Two Irelands.” Jackson highlighted the role that the perception of an Irish threat played in defining the political objectives of the unionist majority in Northern Ireland. More recently, Schaller and Abeysinghe (2006) examined the psychological aspects of double minority identity-building in Sri Lanka. The authors evidence a shifting identity, showing that when the majority Sinhalese within Sri Lanka are given a geographical frame of reference that includes the Tamil-dominated state of Tamil Nadu, India, they

become aware of their minority status, discovering “that they are outnumbered,” and begin to apply a minority status logic to their interpretation of politics in Sri Lanka (p. 618). Beyond these two studies, double minorities are usually acknowledged in a general capacity, without much in-depth case analysis. For example, James Fearon (1998) loosely described this condition as “nested minorities,” with each minority identity sphere alternately ‘nested’ within a larger administrative division (p. 125; see also: Herb and Kaplan 1999). Herbert Kelman (1978) refers to “parallelisms” of asymmetry, derived from studies of Israel and Palestine, where competing perceptions of power-imbalances result from parallel, yet opposing perspectives of the conflict space – the Palestinians see themselves as threatened by Israel’s power while Israel views itself as threatened by the greater power of its Middle Eastern neighbours (p. 354; see also: (Kelman 1982; Kelman 1987). Rouhana and Fiske (1995) further suggest this tension “reflects the double minority” in Israel and Palestine, but they do not explore the dynamic further (p. 73-74). Marc Howard Ross (1993) has also examined this parallel asymmetry in Northern Ireland (Mulvihill and Ross 1989).

These analyses all seek to examine how groups define their bargaining position as a function of a perceived power imbalance with different geographical frames of reference. However, these previous studies have three key limitations. First, they all trace the terms of the asymmetry, or minority-majority balance, to simplified power calculations, rather than drawing deeper connections to identity and boundary-making. These are important connections, discussed below, which ethno-nationalism studies and a focus on minority identities can illuminate. Second, these explanations remain focused on the roots of prolonged intractability and do not attempt to speak to opportunities for conflict settlement and resolution. This is related to their third limitation, the level of international involvement considered. These studies are largely internally-focused, giving only the necessary consideration of the first external influence – the regional majority – to their analysis: Ireland in Northern Ireland, Tamil Nadu in India, the pro-Palestine Middle Eastern states for Israel, etc. They do not examine wider third-parties, the relationships between these parties, and the role of ‘regional’ minorities and majorities.

This thesis seeks to address these shortcomings and presents the DMD as an explanatory framework for analysing conflict settlement processes. It does so by bridging and extending two branches of political science: nationalism studies of identity and boundary-making and international relations theory on security dilemmas and ontological security. In doing so, it challenges the bifurcation of ‘internal’ and ‘external’ explanations for negotiation success and failure, i.e.. domestic community-based concerns versus outside actor agendas. The separation of ‘internal’ and ‘external’ obfuscates the complex internal-external relationships at the heart of DMD conflicts. Negotiation success and failure relies not only upon a variety of endogenous and exogenous effects, but the interactions *between* these effects. In bridging comparative nationalism studies and international relations, addressing the complex interaction of internal and external factors, the DMD provides a useful framework for analysing and explaining the effects of third-parties on conflict and its resolution.

The following two sections provide a literature review of the research from which this framework is drawn, using examples from the Northern Ireland and Cyprus as illustrations. This first section discusses the bridging of comparative nationalism studies and the international relations literature, beginning with a discussion of theories of relational nationalism and minority-identity building that lie at the root of the double minority condition. This is followed by a discussion of literature on security dilemmas and ontological security, which builds out the unique bargaining dimensions of the DMD. The following section unpacks the internal-external debate, beginning with a review of internal explanations for intractability, such as ancient hatreds or historical grievances, territorial claims, levels of violence, and individual actors, before moving into a review of external explanations, to demonstrate how the two sets of explanations impact on each other. The final literature review section concludes with a discussion of the variety of third party intervenors, introducing a novel approach to understanding how different types of intervenors impact on conflicts and conflict resolution.

### **1.2.1 Nationalism studies and minority identities**

This thesis draws upon the use of the term ‘minority’ with more intentionality than previous literatures on double minorities, in order to emphasize the connection to wider conditions of competing ethnic boundary-making processes. Andreas Wimmer’s study of ethnic boundary-making suggests that historical-institutional contexts, such as the geopolitical and regional aspects which develop the double-minority dilemma, contribute to the prioritization of ethnic differences and disagreements over other, potentially cross-cutting, social cleavages (Wimmer 2013). There are key structural opportunities which elites and broader community groups can use to strategically define the boundaries of their identities. These include, but are not limited to demographics, territory, economic factors, and geopolitical contexts and events. For example, formal connections with homeland or ‘kin’ states and shifting alliances to geopolitically relevant actors provide effective external, and usually historical, sources of identity legitimation (Schulze 2018). This is most clearly defined in Rogers Brubaker’s theory of the ‘triadic relational nexus.’

The ‘triadic nexus’ examines a set of three elements operating in circumstances which should now be particularly familiar to readers of this thesis as they so closely resemble the double minority condition. The first of the three elements is found in the emergence of a “nationalizing state,” a state undergoing nation-state building processes by nationalist elites such as establishing a common language, religion, and culture within a given territorial unit (Brubaker 1996, p. 57). This results in the second element where, in contexts of heterogeneous states, the nationalizing processes produce the alienation of out-groups or “national minorities” who in return seek some form of protection or autonomy. Finally, the third element of the nexus appears via “external national ‘homelands’” of the minorities in question, who actively assert a political connection to these minorities, though they may or may not come to the defence of their interests. Brubaker develops this theory from the dissolution of the central and eastern European empires after the end of the First World War and the dissolution of various communist states after the Cold War.

Brubaker's analysis examines, in particular, the impact of relationships in bolstering the minority with the nationalizing state in turn presenting these minority communities as a threat, or as 'traitors.' This is where a particularly useful piece of the role of 'minority identity' in the double-minority puzzle is highlighted. For a national minority to retain the support of its 'homeland', it must continue to present a struggle: "one can impose and sustain a stance as a mobilized national minority... only by imposing and sustaining a vision of the host state as a nationalizing or nationally oppressive state" (Brubaker 1996, p. 64). The extension here is that the status of the 'minority' is not simply one of demographics, but a relational one born out of struggle. The DMD takes Brubaker's framework further by extending this narrative of the 'minority' identity to the 'majority' community that runs the nationalizing state. In a DMD, these nationalizing majorities are experiencing their own 'triadic nexus,' whereby they see themselves as the 'regional' minority needing greater support for the struggle against the regional 'majority', i.e. the 'homeland state' of the state's minority.

Looking now at the cases of Northern Ireland and Cyprus, we can see this presence of narratives around the minority struggle. The unionist community arises out of a defensive position against the Irish threat, just as the Irish nationalist community arises out of a defensive position against the colonization and later partition of Ireland by Great Britain. Similarly, in Cyprus, the initial conflict of the 1960s arises out of two national agendas of 'enosis' and 'taksim.' Enosis, meaning 'unity with Greece,' is a defensive position of certain 'nationalizing' Greek Cypriots and Greeks against both British and Turkish interference in Cyprus. Taksim, meaning 'separation,' is a Turkish nationalist position which is taken up by some Turkish Cypriots as a defensive position against Greek Cypriot – and possible Greek - domination of the island. In a study of in-group and out-group narratives in Cypriot communities, Smeekes, McKeown, and Psaltis (2017) found that group members "are more likely to endorse their ingroup historical narrative" to "maintain a sense of continuity" when they feel threatened (p. 282). Even more poignantly, the monikers "Turkish" and "Greek" to denote a separate branch of "Cypriot" establish boundaries between the two communities. This evidences how ethnic minority identities are not static nor

independent, they are a product of dynamic social relations and “mutually competing stances” (Brubaker 1996, p. 60; see also: Ross 1995). Institutional contexts like the DMD provide the materials for the creation and re-creation of these competing identities through perceptions and framing (Brubaker 2002).

### **1.2.2 Security Dilemmas and Ontological Security**

This thesis also intentionally emphasizes the terminology of the security *dilemma* in defining the DMD framework. The notion of a security dilemma is key to understanding the stalemate of the perceived positions of the groups involved in negotiations because it emphasizes the various interactions of parties, institutions, and events in a *system*.<sup>1</sup> Robert Jervis defines a system as a set of interconnected elements such that “changes in some elements or their relations produce changes in other parts of the system” (Jervis 1997, p. 6; see also: Coleman 2014). Accordingly, a security dilemma defines the condition whereby the actions of one group to increase their security necessarily decreases the security of other groups in the system (Jervis 1976; Jervis 1978; Mitzen 2006). In the context of a double minority scenario, one party’s perception of their minority status is directly affected by the actions of another party which seeks to assure its own ethno-national survival. Any form of action by either party, or by third-parties, which is perceived to increase their relational power is viewed as a direct threat to the other, producing a zero-sum scenario of competing ethno-national identities. The treatment of the DMD as a system allows for a greater ability to evaluate the ripple effects of internationalisation. As is examined later on, there is no specific limitation on how many international actors, or even events, might become involved in or impact the framing of the DMD, and each additional actor contributes in some fashion to the bargaining positions of the security dilemma.

The conceptualization of a double minority-security dilemma, which emphasizes both the role that insecurity and struggle play in the creation of the minority identity as well as the zero-sum nature of the

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<sup>1</sup> Notably, Brubaker emphasizes the conceptualization of nationalism as an institution in his triadic relational nexus, which shares the features of a system including the notion of relationships in constant flux and varying levels of changeability.

conflict space, provides a foundation for analysing ontological security. *Ontological security* is an identity-based security defined by inter-actor relations within a systemic context. The theory suggests that states care about their ontological structures and will “act in ways in order to maintain a stable sense of ‘self’” (Zarakol 2017). Due to this sense of ‘self’ relying on stability, both in terms of structures and actor perceptions, changes within a system necessarily present as threats. These changes alter the foundations and references which are core to an actor’s self-defined identity (Mitzen 2006). This is the same identity-based insecurity experienced within a double minority security dilemma. However, literature on ontological security provides an important extension in interpreting actor behaviour within such a system. Jennifer Mitzen (2006) notes that a counterintuitive product of ontological security is that “states might actually come to prefer their ongoing, certain conflict” to the uncertainty that a change to these relationships could produce (p. 342-343). In a DMD, as shown earlier in the discussion of the triadic nexus, each party to the conflict defines their identity as a minority not only resulting from interaction with other actors in the system, but more importantly from *conflict* with other actors in the system. The notion of an end to this conflict becomes threatening to these actors’ identity-based security, which can provide greater impetus for non-settlement and intractability (Rumelili 2015). Therefore, negotiating parties require greater assurances if there is an effort to alter these relationships such as through internationalisation processes, i.e., including another third-party, or through a negotiated settlement with power-sharing institutions.

Understanding the ontological security of a minority identity helps explain counterintuitive bargaining behaviour which emphasizes injustice and minority narratives to legitimize bargaining positions.

Traditional definitions of decision-making power tend to suggest that the more powerful actor has the greatest bargaining position. Per Dahl (1957): “A has power over B to the extent that [they] can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do.” The assumption follows that parties will seek to improve their power position to gain advantage in a bargaining situation. But William Zartman (1997) observes that if this were always true, then asymmetric negotiations, with mutually favourable outcomes, would

not exist. The more powerful actor would simply wield a veto to suit their preferences. Zartman suggests examining positions on justice and fairness as an intervening factor in determining the parameters of a successful negotiation (1997, p. 125). Kevin Avruch (2012) suggests that the empowerment of asymmetrically dominated minorities in negotiations means “increasing the power of the less powerful” (p. 157). But Zartman and Rubin (2000) and others caution that perceptions of power inequality are diverse, and some concerns might in fact advantage less powerful actors (Fang 2022). In a DMD, a minority-status advantage is not a question of traditional power in negotiations, where we would see the more-powerful privileged, but rather a question of justice and ‘deservingness’ (Rawls 2001, 72-74). The ‘minority,’ in the face of a perceived threat to their existence, establishes for themselves a base assumption of entitlement around the institutions and politics of their self-determined identity. This entitlement is derived from an innate or moral legitimacy argument that might be based in historical claims, essentialist nationalism, liberal equality arguments, etc. (Haklai 2015; Pavković 2006). Most importantly, this argument is embedded in an appeal to wider external interests and thus requires the involvement of some level of international third-party or transnational movement to garner legitimacy.

The establishment of the threatened regional minority identity, particularly by the otherwise local majority group in a DMD also rests upon an injustice argument – the group can only prevent the future injustice of their erasure through “unchallenged control” over state institutions (Pavković 2006, 123). This foundational sense of entitlement, once established, provides a bargaining position from which negotiating elites justify non-concession – again, in large part this is directed toward potential outside intervenors. This is clearly observed in the case of Cyprus where the Greek Cypriot community struggle with negotiating any loss of authority in their domestic control of the island. Furthermore, as examined in Chapter 5, the actions of some Greek Cypriot elites can appear counterintuitive in their rejection of agreements that would otherwise secure a united Cyprus against a permanent division of the island. However, these elites’ actions are logical when understood as deliberate steps which reaffirm the deservingness of the Greek Cypriot community to receive ‘justice,’ in a global and local sense, for

Türkiye's aggression and to ultimately gain authority over the island as a security against future aggression.

Former President of the Republic of Cyprus, George Vassiliou lamented the failure of Greek Cypriot nationalists to see past their desire for justice. He explained that there are two Greek Cypriot expressions for the pursuit of one's goals: *efthkero* – “what you desire,” and *efikto* – “what is feasible.” For Vassiliou, “the tragedy of the Cypriot issue is the supporters of the *efthkero* managed to destroy the *efikto*,” emphasizing an unwillingness to cooperate in pursuit of justice.<sup>2</sup> This expression is mirrored in the concerns raised by nationalist and more centrist parties attempting to form a new Northern Ireland Assembly and Executive after Brexit and the Protocol led to a collapse of these institutions. These parties are critical of extreme unionist resistance to the new Protocol and Windsor arrangements, and recent election results, as an unwillingness to cooperate which is preventing the business of government from moving forward. Sinn Féin leader Michelle O'Neill commented recently that the DUP “deliberately took a tactic, they decided to walk away from the executive in order to influence the negotiation [between the UK and EU], but the negotiation is now complete, so there's no reason for them to stay outside of the executive” (O'Callaghan 2023). But for unionists, forming government in the wake of the Protocol/Windsor Agreement is accepting an *injustice*, with DUP MP Sammy Wilson declaring that the arrangements establish Northern Ireland as “a colony of the EU” and threatening the Union (O'Callaghan 2023).

The parallel definitions of justice from the local minority on the one hand, and the regional minority on the other, prevent successful negotiation in a DMD. But moreover, per the cautions of ontological security and the triadic nexus, the bargaining position of the ‘justice-deserving minority’ necessitates maintaining the threat which legitimizes this defensive position. Maintenance in this way, ensuring there is neither an

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<sup>2</sup> Interview in Nicosia, Cyprus, 14 September 2017.

increase nor a decrease in the threat, establishes the stability of identity which is prioritized over, and frames all other objectives, contributing to the intractability of the conflict.

### **1.3 Unpacking internal and external explanations of conflict settlement success and failure**

The DMD presents a bleak set of bargaining circumstances for seeking conflict settlement success. Yet Northern Ireland has stood out as a particularly successful example of conflict management, if not complete resolution. How can we explain the outcomes of success and failure in various cases of DMDs? As mentioned, traditional theories of conflict resolution success and failure tend to lean heavily towards either internal explanations, such as individual personalities or historical grievance, or external explanations, such as geopolitical pressures or foreign interests. This following discussion unpacks the trouble with this bifurcation of explanations in differentiating the outcomes in Northern Ireland and Cyprus, where internal and external political processes are necessarily intertwined.

#### **1.3.1 Internal explanations of intractability**

##### *Ancient hatreds and intractable conflict*

Intractable ethno-national conflict is traditionally characterized by deep-rooted communal cleavages that emerge from interacting and competing definitions of identity and compounding insecurities and grievances. Literature on nationalism and ethnonational identity today generally critiques an essentialist primordialist school of thought, where ethnic conflict becomes the result of “a host of pathologies that render [plural societies] especially prone to conflict and, at the extreme, violence” (Fearon and Laitin 2003, p. 78). But this was a common position for a long time. These so-called “Ancient Hatreds” are deemed to be undefeatable by most standard methods of conflict resolution, instead requiring elaborate societal transformation and complex conflict management institutions to render these embedded identities less prone to violence. However, arguments for primordial or ‘ancient’ hatreds suffer from inaccuracies and analytical weaknesses. Steven Majstorovic (1997) highlights the importance of understanding the

history behind these identity-based conflicts in order to avoid becoming bogged down in a defeatist perspective of identity conflict.

But if the ancient hatreds thesis were true, it would be difficult – nigh impossible – to discuss any conditions for success in the context of such irresolvable grievances. Yet such success exists. For example, there was a long-held belief that Northern Ireland communities could not achieve a solution because they do not see the other as ‘human’ (Mulvihill and Ross 1989; Dillon 1990; McGarry and O’Leary 1995). The potential presence of the ‘other’ in government is therefore non-negotiable. Cyprus, too, has been described as a conflict of embedded antagonism where historical memory on both sides shores up a deep suspicion of the ‘other’ and their intentions for the people of the island of Cyprus (Makriyianni, Psaltis, and Latif 2011; Richmond 1999; Anastasiou 2007). In both cases and across all four communities, the waving of the ‘numbered dead’ to demonstrate victimhood or participation in highly confrontational communal marches, is quite common. These activities certainly suggest possible ancient hatreds. However, this theory fails to explain the numerous moments at which these so-described ancient enemies sat across the table and came to agreements including, most importantly, Northern Ireland’s ability to achieve a power-sharing settlement in 1998 (Walker 2007). A key element in these numerous occasions is the presence of outside mediators and third-party guarantors such as Britain, Greece, and Türkiye negotiating Cyprus’ initial constitution or the United States coordinating the complex negotiations between the UK, Ireland, and Northern Ireland parties. But, as shown in the chapters of this thesis, such interventions were accompanied by changing conditions of the conflict space and DMD.

The literature on intractable conflict also speaks to the seemingly irresolvable nature of long-duration ethnic conflicts through deeply embedded animosities. Intractability, or resistance to conflict resolution, is frequently defined by long stretches of markedly peaceful tensions that manifest non-violent forms of instability, including economic and social development, ‘de-facto’ state conditions, and tensions that add

to the historical memory, emotions, and grievances of the parties to the conflict over time (Coleman 2014; Crocker, Hampson, and Aall 2005; Dembinska and Campana 2017). Parties in such conflicts experience a deep mistrust and animosity that is not easily overcome in negotiations (Rifkind and Picco 2014). This suggests that it is not ‘ancient’ conflict but rather quite modern and often changing grievances driving intractability. And yet, a similar challenge to this narrative exists in that, however great these animosities, they have been frequently overcome through a combination of complex negotiations and changing circumstances. This suggests at least considering the conflict’s institutional context rather than focusing on either ancient or modern group hatreds.

#### *Territorial division and inter-group contact*

Ethno-national territorial approaches embrace a different perspective on the intractability of conflict through a narrative that combines facets of identity with physical territory. Rather than separating territorial from ethno-national explanations, these frames are bridged as part of a combined territorial and national claims-making process (Moore 2015; Brubaker 1996, p. 35). The largest challenge to resolving such territory-based ethno-national conflict is the zero-sum nature of the parties’ demands as there will inevitably be a physical loss of some kind for one or both parties in the ultimate resolution of the conflict and such a concession may be untenable to the parties. In attempting to find resolutions to these sort of challenges, theorists have weighed the pros and cons of splitting territory, whether by partition or secession, or splitting governance over a united territory through federal autonomy arrangements (McGarry 2015; Wellman 2010). But even the most creative of these solutions require the abandonment of absolutist goals by one or more parties to the conflict. As demonstrated in Chapters 3 and 4, the division of the islands of Ireland and Cyprus is at the root of the major negotiated dispute in both conflicts and drives discussions on institutional structures in negotiations (Loizides 2016). For Ireland, the initial partition of the island was an affront to their self-determination and a symbol of continued British colonial aggression. For the Protestants remaining in Northern Ireland, partition serves as a necessary buffer against Irish nationalist aggression. Similarly in Cyprus, the division created by the UN-monitored

“Green Line” symbolizes the continued Turkish aggression against the Greek Cypriot regime while it serves as a protection for Turkish Cypriots against Greek Cypriot control. To resolve these conflicts, no party can easily give ground on their position vis-à-vis this territorial demarcation without making a significant concession.

Differences in the impact of the division of the two islands might provide a potential explanation for the achievement of a settlement in Northern Ireland and not in Cyprus – the contact hypothesis. The contact hypothesis suggests that increased contact between conflict groups diminishes hateful attitudes and increases cross-communal understanding and trust (Kenworthy et al. 2005; Tausch et al. 2010). Although the communities of Northern Ireland were effective at creating barriers to cross-communal contact, the patchwork nature of the conflict space within Northern Ireland served to force regular interaction between the two communities. In contrast, both parts of Cyprus have been essentially ethnically-cleansed through the illegal partition of 1974 and the ongoing presence of the United Nations green line separating the two peoples. They operate within their own systems of government and have little if no reason to interact on a regular basis (Psaltis 2012). But regular contact in Northern Ireland was also defined by ongoing violent conflict, which is highly detrimental to inter-group attitudes and reproduces conflict frames. Therefore, while it appears to explain ongoing tension in Cyprus, the contact hypothesis is less useful for explaining what happened in Northern Ireland (Kenworthy, et al. 2005). Additionally, it doesn't resolve the question of changing positions vis-à-vis the nature of partition in either case.

Primordialism and other essentialist positions freeze identity into a particular form and over-simplify the complexities of ethnically divided societies (Kalyvas 2003). In contrast, nationalism studies show that identity is constantly fluctuating and changing. For example, Frederik Barth (1969) suggested an understanding of ethnicity as a social interaction of group-making, adapting and changing in relation to other identities or ‘out-groups.’ Ernest Gellner (1983) argued that the particular alignment of ‘state’ and some form of culturally defined ‘nation,’ which produces the politics of nationalism, also requires change

via modern innovations and understandings of both states and nationhood. Nationalism thus continually adapts and re-defines the ethno-cultural roots of the nation, even as the national group's members perceive these roots and tensions as ancient and immovable (Anderson 1983; Avruch 2012). However reconstructed, perceptions of a nation as enjoying historical 'right' underpin perceptions of this identity becoming threatened in some fashion. Competing national claims and differing perceptions of minority-majority dynamics, such as seen in a double-minority dilemma, compound these underlying feelings of threat and insecurity and so they cannot be limited to domestic or internal frames (Lake and Rothchild 1996; Goodin 1975).

### *Levels of violence and 'ripeness'*

A stronger case for the 'internal' explanation of intractability and the different outcomes in Northern Ireland and Cyprus is William Zartman's Mutually Hurting Stalemate (MHS) – that a conflict becomes 'ripe' for resolution when the levels of violence in the conflict are unsustainable to all parties (Zartman 2000). This thesis is a common explanation for differences in pressures to negotiate in Northern Ireland and Cyprus (Brubaker and Laitin 1998; Kalyvas 2003; McGarry and O'Leary 2004; Duffy 2009). The theory goes that the 1994 ceasefire in Northern Ireland reduced the violent conflict just enough to allow the negotiations in 1997 and 1998, though major attacks did continue to occur throughout the early 1990s (Arthur 1999; Mitchell 1999). The recent memory of violence, combined with a rare opportunity of peace, drove wide public support for elites to complete their negotiations and make concessions. In contrast, the island of Cyprus has experienced nearly fifty years of peace (defined as the absence of violence) since Türkiye took military action in 1974 and the UN peacekeeping mission took up residence in the 'green line,' dividing the two peoples of Cyprus into homogenous units. The lack of direct conflict, hardship, or 'hurt' has been suggested to remove any impetus for parties to negotiate or make difficult concessions (Anastasiou 2008; Yakinthou and Bozkurt 2012; McGarry 2016).

However, these conditions can also be explained through the intervention of outside forces. In Northern Ireland, the pressure to ceasefire came directly from governments in Westminster and Dublin, and was

later upheld with the additional support of Washington and other foreign partners. Moreover, peace was not achieved at the highest period of violence, but rather once violence had significantly decreased and in a context of wider intervention by the UK and Ireland. In Cyprus, since levels of militant violence are less relevant, some Cypriots have used a language of structural or cultural violence in order to demonstrate the long-term damaging effects of the stalemated conflict on the island. Structural violence stresses a form of violence which is not a product of direct harm, but rather produced by systems of unequal power and resource distribution which reduce access to basic needs and human freedoms (Barnett 2008; Gleditsch, Nordkvelle, and Strand 2014). The strangled economy in the North, the forced separation of Greek and Turkish Cypriots from their traditional homes, and narratives of ancestral cultural violence as examples. Despite these narratives, when Cyprus was said to be ‘ripe’ for resolution in the early 2000s, as demonstrated in Chapters 2 and 4 of this thesis, this ‘ripeness’ was generally in reference to the conducive geopolitical arrangements of the time. The expression “the stars were aligned” was utilised frequently to highlight the merging Greek and Turkish interests and in reference to the bid to join the European Union was being held as a veritable ‘stick’ over the Greek Cypriots to press for a negotiated agreement, and was more salient than any measure of mutual hurt or desire to find agreement domestically within Cyprus.

Normatively speaking, a theory of ripeness based solely upon mutually shared levels of hurt is not ideal. On the one hand, this suggests that there is a wait and see demand placed upon peacemakers which might require ‘waiting’ through instances of violence and atrocity. Zartman suggests external positioning and ripening are necessary alternatives to waiting (Zartman 2000). Third-parties can convince conflict parties to “seize” the ripe moment or can contribute to ‘ripening’ through provision of peace dividends, a positive benefit of achieving a conflict settlement. The latter of these is weaker. The notion that Northern Ireland was incentivised in some measure by the peace funds of the EU Peace programme is fairly weak in comparison to the benefits of ending the violence. As detailed in Chapter 3, EU influence was on the whole less direct during the 1998 negotiations. In Cyprus, EU membership might have been considered a peace dividend in 2004 had it not been granted so easily to the Republic of Cyprus (see chapter 2). Today

there is an attempt to highlight the potential benefits of an agreement on hydro-carbons in Cypriot-controlled waters (Gurel, Mullen, and Tzimitras 2013). But these dividends have proven ineffective in Cyprus. Moreover, these so-called dividends in both cases are still related to external actors and influences.

### *The influence of individuals*

Theories of ‘ripeness’ involve a set of institutional and systemic factors which need to align in order to provide an environment which promotes peace-making. There is an argument that one of these key factors is the presence of competent and interested elites, both foreign and domestic, who take advantage of the opportunity of ripeness when it presents itself. Indeed, many studies of conflict processes demonstrate that personalities and personal differences can have a huge impact in the process of negotiations. The “Great Man” theory of history suggests, rather pointedly, that history is driven by the lives of particularly great men (Carlyle 1992). Traditional theories of traits-based leadership suggest a certain set of qualities are essential to an individual’s accomplishments, including “bravery, wisdom, diplomacy, empathy, and charismatic authority” (Payne 2021). More recent theories focus on context-specific leadership, where leaders rise to occasion or are driven by circumstance. And while there has been some effort to examine leadership beyond the western conceptualization of a male individual holding political office, exploring the role of women and other identity groups as well as leadership in civil society and more broadly in community mobilization (McIntyre 2016), the predominant narratives surrounding Northern Ireland and Cyprus’ negotiators is highly traditional.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Notably, the role of the Northern Ireland Women’s Coalition (NIWC) and the interventions of then Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Mo Mowlam, have been variously examined for their unique contributions to the Northern Ireland peace process. The election process by which the Northern Ireland Forum was established, a sub-level negotiation to support the high-level talks, allowed for the NIWC members to gain notoriety and some public authority in representing their perspectives on the Northern Ireland Agreement (Bell 2018). Mo Mowlam herself recalled in her memoir that beyond being a women, her frank personality often took people by surprise and ultimately allowed her access to key stakeholder groups. Most importantly she speaks of gaining access to the prisoners who carried authority with the more hard-line segments of their respective populations (Mowlam 2002).

Evidence for this traditionally-defined role of individual leadership is most clear in the sheer visibility of certain names. David Trimble, John Hume, Ian Paisley, Gerry Adams, Martin McGuinness, Bill Clinton, and Senator George Mitchell in Northern Ireland. Though perhaps less internationally renowned, followers of the Cyprus process had known Rauf Denktaş and Glafkos Clerides, and later Tassos Papadopoulos, as the key negotiators of the Cyprus settlement for nearly 20 years. Kofi Annan, Alvaro de Soto, Lord David Hannay, and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan quickly became household names during the Annan process. All have been varyingly described as stubborn, weak, intelligent, commanding, leaders, traitors, heroes, and terrorists. Some are lauded as heroes of the peace process, integral to any negotiation success, while others are known only as spoilers who attempted to thwart successful negotiations at every turn (Hadjigregoriou 2014; Martin 2006). Many actors hold both titles equally. This level of notoriety, or infamy in many cases, suggests that at some level individual personalities and decisions matter.

Actor-centric explanations for settlement success and failure that move beyond individual traits and look toward inter-personal relationships tend to highlight leader reliability and effectiveness. Often branded in terms of bargaining in good faith or bad faith, the perception of a reliable and effective bargaining partner is a key dictate of a negotiator's decision-making. Bargaining theory has a long history of studying the role of information, predictability, and building trust in successful conflict resolution at both the state and individual level (Schelling 1960; Reiter 2009). Additionally, leadership change has been shown to have clear impacts on conflict processes by affecting these variables of information and trust. Leaders who remain in power for longer periods, demonstrating stability and predictability, can help reduce anxiety around credible commitments to settlement agreements, while conversely, abrupt change in leadership can provide an end to conflict by removing less effective leaders from power (Ryckman and Braithwaite 2020).

Northern Ireland and Cyprus experienced variations in the relationships between their negotiators that do not adequately explain settlement success and failure under these common understandings of the role of

individuals. While Northern Ireland in 1998 is a case of success, key individuals in these negotiations refused outright to sit across from individuals they deemed criminals or terrorists.<sup>4</sup> This is representative of face-saving burdens wherein elites cannot be seen to be meeting with ‘the enemy.’ Even more moderate voices, including John Hume, were restricted by this barrier. As examined in Chapters 2 and 3, EU membership for Britain and Ireland is argued to have provided political leaders a neutral venue in which they could safely engage discussions unrelated to the crisis at home and build relationships more conducive to negotiations (Meehan 2009; Burton 1969; Arthur 1999). But this barrier remained difficult to overcome even through the use of so-called ‘neutral’ venues. In 1997, parties to the negotiations were invited to South Africa to learn from its own peace-making experience and they would not stay in the same hotel, share the same flights, or hold meetings together, suggesting their own ‘apartheid’ in ensuring the separation of the unionist and nationalist parties (Adams 2003; Guelke 2008).<sup>5</sup> Yet despite these tensions, Northern Ireland’s leadership reached the successful Good Friday Agreement less than a year later.

Conversely, in Cyprus, Turkish Cypriot leader, Rauf Denktaş, and Greek Cypriot leader Glafcos Clerides had both been engaged in negotiations over the Cyprus question from the 1960s and served in government together until 1963. They were known to get on very well, thus resistance to talks was not of a personal nature as with the Northern Ireland politicians. Rather, Denktaş and Clerides resisted negotiations on principles of the negotiation agenda, believing that they understood the other’s position clearly enough to know what could and could not be negotiated at the table (Denktaş 1996; Martin 2006). Interpersonal trust or long-term relationships that build reliability in negotiations are therefore not sufficient explanations of success in Northern Ireland and failure in Cyprus.

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<sup>4</sup> The resistance of unionist hard-liner Iain Paisley to negotiate with the nationalist representative, Martin McGuinness, was particularly highlighted by many followers of the process.

<sup>5</sup> Personal communication, John McGarry.

Beyond overcoming these relationship hurdles, negotiating elites must be able to mobilize their respective communities in order to be effective in making political decisions of public weight (Rothchild 2002). In a rare comparative study of Northern Ireland and Cyprus, Moore et al. (2014) conclude that beyond legitimacy as representatives, communal leaders need to demonstrate that they can credibly fulfil the needs of their constituents. The authors suggest that the battle of ‘hearts and minds’ is based more upon “which actors stand more credibly to offer solutions” (Moore, et al. 2014). For Northern Irish voters, the idea that the parties to the negotiations should be elected to this position was important. The Northern Ireland Forum elections thus conferred upon the victorious parties their legitimacy to represent the people in the multi-party negotiations. Yet, as already mentioned, part of the exercise of bargaining is saving face for your constituents. A leader who is seen to be soft on key principles may lose the support of their community. Chapter 3 illustrates how in-group splits between the UUP and DUP in Northern Ireland created doubt that any party could successfully bring their supporters to the peace table. General positivity around Cyprus’ negotiations also increases and decreases with each election as various leaders are seen to be either more or less committed to a solution and whether or not they will work well with each-other. This effect is demonstrated to some degree in Chapter 4, particularly the impact of shifts in the lead interlocutors in Cyprus, but the chapter also demonstrates that these shifts can be driven by outside forces.

#### *Internationalization from within*

Importantly, intractability, even if internally-explained, may lead directly to regional spill-over and internationalisation of the conflict. The theory of internationalisation suggests that civil conflicts that begin domestically can become international, or at least regional because of conflict spread (Kathman 2011). Taras and Ganguly (1998) suggest that internationalisation can occur either purposefully or non-purposefully. Non-purposeful internationalisation, widely studied in conflict studies literature, refers to conflict spillover, usually through migration and refugee flows, humanitarian need, or economic crises (Oberschall 2007). High levels of such international instability may even draw the attention of large international organisations such as the UN. Purposeful internationalisation occurs when external actors

are invited - the invitation of an external mediator, for example. Frequently in double minority conditions, domestic groups will seek to entice the involvement of other states to shore up their bargaining position. The most common route is for minority groups to reach out to a neighbouring 'kin-state' for support (Kemp, Popovski, and Thakur 2011). Another possibility is for a state party to request help from one or more of the major global powers to shore up its authority. Minority groups may also reach out to non-governmental or even inter-governmental organisations to attempt to apply pressure on the regime from outside (Findley and Teo 2006). The more external parties that are drawn into a conflict, the more internationalised it becomes. This increasing internationalisation can be problematic for resolution or facilitate it depending on circumstances.

But double minority conditions suggest that inherently the conflict has always been internationalized to some degree. This is a core challenge to the notion that a conflict begins 'inside' and extends 'outside'. Internal explanations that do not account for the initial impacts of wider geopolitical concerns in underpinning the conflict narrative cannot fully explain conflict processes in double minority conditions like that of Northern Ireland, Cyprus, Kosovo, Sri Lanka, eastern Ukraine, and elsewhere.

### **1.3.2 External Explanations**

John Agnew (2000) argues that "geopolitical orders" define the external circumstances of civil ethnic conflict. For Agnew, ethno-political conflict takes on the identity of the wider ideological geopolitical conflict wherever it emerges. Following the 'containment' doctrine of the "Cold War" geopolitical order (1945-1990), the world was swiftly dominated by a heavily internationalist US sponsoring a liberal international order around the globe. This period saw the ascription of deep ideological significance to existing state boundaries, despite the myriad of independence movements across the de-colonizing and post-Soviet world, which were ethno-national in nature, challenging these borders. Agnew's understanding of geopolitical orders suggests that there is something highly valuable in the impact of geopolitical power upon civil conflict. This project stands in agreement with this suggestion.

For example, past studies of both Northern Ireland and Cyprus have highlighted the unique impact of the Cold War geopolitical era on the two conflicts. The end of the Cold War is raised as one explanation for the rapid speed at which the ‘parties to the conflict’ in Northern Ireland became the ‘parties to the agreement’ in the early 1990s as it opened an opportunity for Ronald Reagan and subsequent American presidents and their emissaries to apply pressure on their ally, Britain (O’Kane 2006). In Cyprus, the Cold War played an even more significant role in altering the NATO relationships between Türkiye, Greece, and the United States which altered domestic conflict frames. Türkiye’s partnership in NATO was a policy priority during the Cold War due to Türkiye’s strength and regional proximity to the Soviet bloc. As a result, many Greek Cypriots believe that the United States allowed Türkiye to invade the north of Cyprus in 1974 in order to secure their continued partnership in NATO (Drousiotis 2016).

These wider systemic relationships are explored via a more complex puzzle of nested geopolitical dynamics by Erin Jenne (2015). Jenne argues that the dynamics of “Nested Security” define the security arrangement surrounding a conflict which either produces conflict-inducing or conflict-reducing structures. If the outside geopolitical security spheres in which the domestic conflict is ‘nested’ operate in favour of positive minority-majority relations then there is a greater chance of negotiated success. For Jenne a domestic civil dispute set is ‘nested’, or exists entirely, within a larger set of regional dynamics and rivalries which, in turn, is ‘nested’ entirely within an overarching systemic set featuring great power rivalries and traditional balance of power dynamics. This is highly similar to the DMD dynamics seen in Northern Ireland and Cyprus, and accounts for change at levels below and between Agnew’s systemic orders. However, the theory of ‘nested security’ emphasizes the effects from the outside-in. Any change to the set of regional or system dynamics necessarily impacts all those relationships nested below, but does not suggest that changes at sub-levels would necessarily impact regional or systemic levels from the inside-out. Jenne’s theory thus accordingly recommends mediation from the ‘outside-in,’ focusing on the external dimensions of domestic conflicts and seeking regional stabilisation first before engaging domestic mediation on the ground.

Applying Jenne's theory appears quite simple on the surface. Cyprus, simply by its geographical location, suffers from a more complex system of international actors which offers significantly greater challenges for stabilising the regional and international spheres which contain the small island's conflict. Graeco-Turkish relations are notoriously difficult and the United Nations presence and continued use of the island by NATO allies has developed a wider international interest in the territory (Chapter 2). In contrast, Northern Ireland's regional stabilisation was, at a glance, much more easily attained. Anglo-Irish relations needed to improve significantly, which did eventually occur over the latter course of the 20th century (Todd and Coakley 2018). But, as previously mentioned, at the turn of the 21st century, many analysts and leaders observed that the "stars were aligned" in the Cyprus case for a successful settlement. The stabilisation of the complex international jigsaw had been achieved, in part through the geopolitical realignments produced by the end of the Cold War, warming Greek-Türkiye relations, and EU expansion. EU expansion had afforded negotiators the opportunity to leverage EU membership to induce both Greek Cypriots and Türkiye/Turkish Cypriots. Yet, despite the apparent willingness of Türkiye to give up core demands in return for their own accession to the EU, the stabilised 'nest' was not sufficient for success. The explanation for this failure requires the lens of a systemic evaluation of the conflict resolution process through the DMD that accounts for domestic interpretations of these external forces.

In his comparison of ethno-guarantors, Sean Byrne (2000) questions why external guarantors, or kin-state actors, cooperated in the case of Northern Ireland but not in the case of Cyprus. Notably, Byrne highlights the importance of the Republic of Ireland's unwillingness to contribute the same resources that Türkiye contributed to their ethnic kin in the Cyprus case. However, an equally valid explanation could be the opposite contrast, i.e., Greece's stepping away from direct negotiations in Cyprus while in Northern Ireland Britain was heavily involved as the sovereign authority over the territory in conflict. An additional application of nested analysis might compare Ireland and Greece's use of the European Union to bolster their bargaining position. Yet Byrne's analysis, as with many others of this kind, does not detail these interactions between the various third-parties involved, preferring to focus solely on interactions between

the ‘regional majority’ and the ‘homeland state’ of the national minority. Moreover, their assessments of third-party intention and action do not address the domestic elite’s framing of intervention so that we can trace its influence on decision-making during the settlement process.

Literature on the role of third-parties in peace processes suggests that their overall effectiveness is determined by perceived scales of power and interest, or capability and credibility (Kydd 2003). But even capable and credible third-parties must balance their interest in the conflict with an impartiality that deems them to be trustworthy bargaining partners (Danneman and Beardsley 2014). Trustworthiness is subjective and based in perceptions which can be altered by individual action as well as major structural or geopolitical change. This balancing act of credibility is therefore not always in the control of the intervenor, it is often subject to the perspectives and projections of key elites within the conflict environment, such as the environment found in a DMD. Part of creating circumstances of trust and a belief that negotiating parties are bargaining in good faith is tied to third-parties who are able to demonstrably guarantee commitment of the parties to their promises.

The importance of acknowledging domestic elites’ perception of these relationships, including complex historical narratives, should not be taken lightly. Looking at colonial history as one example, while it is obvious to consider the role of the UK in the Northern Ireland case, it is also true that the former colonial empire’s role in Cyprus’ affects the trajectory of the current conflict. Both islands undertook an effort to free themselves from British colonial rule, the outcome of which produced much of the underlying tensions in both cases: “To extreme nationalists [in both Northern Ireland and Cyprus], Britain has not really departed, she had simply redefined her interests” (Breen 1990). In other words, Britain may be seen as an intervenor, a kin-state, or a direct party to the conflict, and at times as all three, in the context of both cases. Thus, it is important to understand the complex relationships of third-parties like the UK to the parties within the conflict in order to truly evaluate these geopolitical nests.

Though Jenne’s thesis and others suggest that nested security works its way from the outside-in, this study argues that in fact the domestic sphere can, and does, impact the various external regional and international spheres within which it is nested. This is where the theory of internationalisation becomes valuable in understanding how geopolitical arrangements interact with historical institutions to either promote successful settlement negotiations or deter negotiation success.

#### **1.4 Conceptualizing ‘third-parties’ in a Double Minority Dilemma**

Nearly twenty years ago, Timothy Sisk observed a distinct global and historical trend toward ending war “at the peace table” rather than “on the battlefield” (Sisk 2004, p. 251), corresponding with increasingly frequent third-party intervention in such settlement processes. Regan and Aydin (2006) observed more than 400 third-party conflict management attempts from 1945-1999 (p. 739) and the Peace Settlements database project records 880 agreements featuring some form of international actor or body involved in the implementation process (PA-X 2018). These trends suggest a complex system of both international and domestic factors which is yet to be fully understood in the literature. Third-party interaction with conflict processes is diverse, involving military and economic intervention, but also diplomatic and legal intervention, mediation, transnational networks, international media, and more (Findley and Teo 2006; Nalbandov 2009). Complex interactions exist between the identities of third-parties and the forms of intervention utilized in settlement processes, yet literature that specifically analyses these relationships is remarkably recent (Diehl and Regan 2015; Chacha and Stojek 2016b).

This project does not seek to contribute a normative argument about the right to intervene or the legitimacy of intervention *ex post facto*, but it does recognize one normative assumption – that third-party intervention in protracted conflict is inevitable and has a determinable effect on negotiation outcomes. In this section, I will briefly address the decision to move beyond the ‘right to intervene’ conversation and establish the underlying presumption that third-party intervention is inevitable in civil conflict before

presenting a nuanced approach to understanding ‘third-parties’ in complex and dynamic conflict conditions such as DMDs.

#### **1.4.1 The inevitability of intervention**

Debates around the legitimacy of foreign intervention in domestic processes have been thoroughly raised by theorists, researchers, and policy-makers for decades (Mill 1859; Walzer 1977; Licklider 1999; Donais 2009; Doyle 2009). There is a central tension in the international order, established in the late 19th and early 20th century and institutionalised in the Paris Peace Conference and later the 1945 Charter of the United Nations, between the defence of sovereign territorial authority and support for self-determination. Much of this debate has circled around definitions and conceptualizations of sovereignty, with certain non-interventionist arguments seeking to reinforce a Westphalian notion of territorial boundaries and predominant authority (Krasner 1999; Glanville 2013). Throughout the years, the conversation has oriented itself toward arguments in favour of intervention. The earliest interventionism explored the need for the international community to mitigate complex security risks such as regional destabilization, transnational criminal activity, and international terrorism (Rosenau 1992; Debiel and Lambach 2009; Slotin, Wyeth, and Romita 2010; Barakat and Waldman 2013). In keeping with traditional security literature, if the conflict should spill-over such that it affects the security of another state, then intervention, potentially even preventative intervention, should be justifiable.

More humanitarian justifications for intervention, slowly emerging throughout the 20th Century, crystallized in the 1990s in the form of ‘sovereignty as responsibility’ (Deng et al. 1996; Richmond 2005). Seemingly a revolution in ideas, the notion of ‘responsibility’ was designed to allow for intervention in the direst circumstances of humanitarian need. But the implementation of Responsibility to Protect, or R2P, has been plagued with issues arising from its designation of a universal moral imperative and the contradictory particularity of its use and application (Pattison 2011; Thakur 2016). Tensions between the concepts of traditional territorial sovereignty and norms of non-intervention in international law remain, and there is a growing counter argument, and a quite critical one, that

intervention could in fact be more harmful than it is helpful and thus lay further moral premises for a norm of non-intervention. We see the basis of this argument in the ongoing struggles in Libya, the bombing campaigns in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo, and the transition of the United Nations Peacekeeping Forces to conflict party in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Yet despite ongoing concerns, it is still widely believed that there is some identifiable threshold at which the international community would agree to a moral imperative of interventionist action.

Critical analyses of third-party intervention do not benefit from continuing long-running debates between interventionist and non-interventionist perspectives. Rather, an assumption of intervention allows a focus on necessary questions about means and intentions. Literature has been amassed on a wide array of intervention methods, including military, economic, and diplomatic intervention and/or mediation (Regan and Aydin 2006; Reus-Smit 2013; Bove, Skrede Gleditsch, and Sekeris 2016). Literature on the actors themselves examines whether third-parties are trustworthy and reliable partners and whether they are acting as independent third-party mediators, or as mutual external guarantors of the agreement, or contributing stabilization forces and funding, etc. (Hoffman 1992). Third-party intervention research is thus usually not a question of “whether” or “should”, but more a conversation about “when, how, and to what effect.”

This focus on the how and what of intervention results from an assumption of the inevitability of external involvement in civil conflict on the one hand. As observed, protracted conflict is highly susceptible to internationalisation through transnational effects including direct conflict spillovers, refugee flows, humanitarian need, economic crises, etc. Moreover, as connections between climate-related environmental degradation, natural disaster, and resource shortages and civil conflict become clearer, international relationships with domestic conflict onset are revealed as integral to understanding conflict resolution processes (Buhaug, Gleditsch, and Theisen 2008; Mearns and Norton 2010; King and Mutter 2014). In return, these destabilising aspects of conflict spill-over and transnational factors of conflict

onset motivate increasingly more regional and international interventions (Lobell and Mauceri 2004).

However, simply understanding civil conflict intervention as a reaction to spill-over and similar internationalisation processes suffers from a misunderstanding of the unbounded nature of intervention.

Most conflict does not occur within “sovereign territorial borders.” Third-parties such as colonial states, kin-states, trading partners, and regional organisations, will often involve themselves due to historical ties which carry a predetermined commitment to maintaining peace and security within the state in question (Findley and Teo 2006). This is particularly true of cases of protracted conflict in ethnically divided societies with ethno-national and territorial conflicts (Basta, McGarry, and Simeon 2015). Though protracted conflicts may be more likely to produce unintentional spill-over and internationalisation due to their long-duration, the nature of international involvement in an ethnically divided society is more nuanced. States with historical or national ties may in fact even be parties to the conflict themselves, making their participation in the conflict negotiations essential for any successful peace settlement (Kemp, Popovski, and Thakur 2011; Chacha and Stojek 2016). This is certainly the case for both Northern Ireland and Cyprus where the kin-states are involved through both security and socio-historical reasons, forming the core regional architecture of the DMD in both contexts.

#### **1.4.2 Problematizing the nature of a “third-party”**

As presented in Chapter 3, “Third-Party” as a concept is often misleading in existing literature for two reasons. First, the notion of a natural “trio” typologizes conflicts as occurring between two communities and therefore a “third” party who acts as a mediator or otherwise intervenor. However, the parties to these conflicts are much more numerous in reality. The term may refer to an actor in a conflict with more than two initial parties, for example, and it may also refer to an actor who is only one of several external parties. Not only does the trifurcation mask the level of differentiation within communal groups and exclude minorities within such groups, it also ignores the level at which so-called “Third-Parties” are directly involved in the conflict at its outset, such as described above. The choice of the denominator Third “Party” suggests a nuanced recognition of the complex relationships between intervenors and the

intervened-upon where intervenors are indeed parties to the conflict and to the conflict resolution process. Yet the boundary between intervening parties and domestic parties to the conflict is consistently made clear in literature involving third-parties; staked out as a clear separation of intentions, characters, and history.

We can look to research methods for some explanation of this delineation, where there is a desire to define and protect a distance between researcher and subject. Meera Sabaratnam (2011) suggests this is due to “Third-Party Privilege.” The separation of the researcher from their subject intends to allow them to observe and manipulate without contaminating the study or its findings (King, Keohane, and Verba 1994; Richmond, Kappler, and Bjorkdahl 2015). But critical perspectives show that positionality and recognition of the researcher’s effect upon their subject is vital to understanding the data produced (Millar 2018; Avruch 2012; Tonge 2014). Similarly, while intervenors prefer to see themselves as actors outside the conflict context who can thus bring a measure of neutrality and unbiased opinion and provide some elusive missing-link to end a conflict, this misunderstands the role and effect of an intervenor. They are better understood as a third-party and thus, either by choice or through indirect connection, they are a part of the conflict process. This may appear more obvious for ‘kin-states’ such as the UK, Ireland, Greece, or Türkiye, but it is no less true of seemingly more distanced regional or international bodies such as the European Union or the United Nations, or even NGO networks and thinktanks. As this thesis demonstrates, third-parties of all varieties become part of the conflict narrative, altering perceptions of the conflict reality and providing tools which elites can use to promote negotiation or continued conflict.

Thus far, I have used “third-party” and “intervenor” interchangeably a few times and this is intentional. International intervention may be most commonly understood as a form of military or economic action (Pickering and Kisangani 2009; Talentino 2006; Carment and Harvey 2001), but the concept of intervention is inclusive of several forms of third-party activities including mediation where we more frequently see the study of “third-parties”. Mediation literature has developed somewhat outside of the

literature on intervention and civil conflict resolution studies in political science. One reason for this is that mediation as a form of intervention has historically been seen to exist beyond traditional power-relations of military and economic strength, whilst including those elements in its operations. Mark Hoffman's definition of third-party mediation, "a process in which parties to a dispute attempt to reach a mutually agreeable solution under the auspices of a third-party" (Hoffman 1992, p. 265), suggests invitation by the conflict parties - the conflict parties have realised their own efforts have failed so they turn to external assistance in finding resolution. Mediation therefore does not normally come under the scrutiny that forms of unilateral action such as military intervention receive. However, we should still conceive of mediation as an intrusive intervention within a state where it seeks to produce institutional (re)design such as the development of a democratic constitution (Sisk 1996).

We may also therefore be compelled to investigate 'to what end intervention?' Much of the dominant western international community shares a preference for democratic solutions to civil conflicts, associating liberal democracy with peace and successful conflict management (Russett and Oneal 2001; Paris 2003; Dixon and Senese 2002; Jarstad 2008). This preference extends well beyond state foreign policy and democratically-inclined global think-tanks. Across academic studies conceptualising sustainable peace, the vast majority include democratic institutions in their definitions and recommendations (Lederach 1997; Hartzell and Hoddie 2003; Hartzell and Hoddie 2005). In practice, conflict settlement negotiations are guided by an often implicit, though sometimes explicit, imperative that a conflict resolution process should produce a sustainable settlement agreement, with democratic qualities (Baranyi 2005; Wolff and Yakinthou 2012).

Recent literature on state-building and nation-building has concluded that interventions taken with such an agenda of state design and social planning are the most invasive modes of intervention in terms of legitimacy and stability (Richmond 2008; Pouligny 2009; Chandler 2006). Whether the intent of the third-parties is to implement or aid in the negotiation of a solution to a conflict, accepting mediation in civil

conflict carries with it a high political cost (Melin and Svensson 2009). Additionally, where any intervention, military, economic, or otherwise, occurs with the intent to promote a constitutionally designed conflict-management system, such as power-sharing, this is inherently an act of mediation because the end-goal is a mutually agreed upon settlement. This understanding of mediation allows for a complex depiction of interactions between the identities of third-parties and the forms of intervention utilised in mediating protracted civil conflict.

Much of the early research on third-parties and conflict-duration was more concerned with the type of conflict rather than with the identity and motivations of the intervenor or the type of intervention (Findley and Teo 2006). Although research has indeed been gradually shifting to include various characteristics of interventions, including the types and motivations of actors (Doyle and Sambanis 2000; Frazier and Dixon 2006; Kim 2015) and the timing and duration of operations (Hoffman 1992; Diehl 2006; Jones and Metzger 2016), this work still has room to develop. Moreover, while there has been an interest in the role of historical ties in conflict roots, particularly in the field of nationalism studies and around the nature of kin-states, very little work has been done thus far on how these historical ties and complex relationships impact the processes of internationalisation and intervention in conflict settlement processes (Chacha and Stojek 2016).

### **1.4.3 Building a typology of third-parties in Double Minority Dilemmas**

This thesis develops a typology of relationships third-parties experience when interacting with a DMD using two variables – form and distance.<sup>6</sup> The first is the form of the relationship between the third-parties and conflict space. The form of relationship refers to a variety of indicators including the direction of power relations and historical-institutional factors, including cultural or identity-based relationships such as shared religions and languages. The thesis proposes four somewhat overlapping forms of relationships: Identity, Power, Membership, and Transnational. Examples of this typology are summarized in Table 1.1.

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<sup>6</sup> This typology is explained in greater detail, including the use of examples from the cases of Northern Ireland and Cyprus, in Chapter 3.

The second variable is the distance or level of involvement of third-parties in the domestic conflict space, which can also be seen as an indicator of the level of internationalisation. Importantly, these variables of form and distance are understood through the perceptions of domestic elites. In other words, while one party to a conflict may perceive a third-party as having a distant power-based relationship, another party might perceive it as sharing a close identity-based relationship.

**Table 1.1 A Typology of Third Parties<sup>†</sup>**

	Identity	Power	Membership	Transnational
Close	Kin-States			
	Diasporas	Regional Powers	Regional Economic Orgs	Academia NGOs
Distant	Colonial Powers	Superpowers	Global Governance Regimes	International Media Networks

<sup>†</sup> The range of closeness of third-party examples listed here are suggested scenarios only

As further detailed in Chapter 3, *Identity* relationships refer to third-parties who have an ethnic, national, or ‘homeland’ relationship with one or more conflict parties. This is the primary source of third-party relationships which informs a DMD. The core identity-based third-parties in Northern Ireland and Cyprus - the homeland states of Great Britain, Ireland, Greece, and Türkiye - are generally assumed to reinforce conflict as they are perceived by one of the local communities to be partly responsible for the conflict. Such parties are perceived by all actors as being “close,” though there are variations in even this level of closeness. Unionists in Northern Ireland are shown in Chapters 3 and 4 to work hard on keeping Ireland at a distance. In Cyprus, Greece has progressively become less ‘close’ to the conflict on the Island, at least in juxtaposition to Türkiye whose military presence necessitates its direct involvement in conflict resolution processes.

*Power* relationships exist between domestic elites and third-parties who hold a position of regional or international power. Some identity actors might also fit a power relationship type, such as the UK's historical role in Europe or Türkiye's influence in the Eastern Mediterranean, but generally power-based third-parties are attributed this power through their position in geopolitics, such as the 'superpower' status of the United States and Russia (Buzan 2004). While identity-based relationships are sticky, inherently perceived as part of the double minority condition, power-based relationships are generally perceived as more distant, changeable and adaptable.

The range of third-party actors most active in peace processes globally fall into the category of *membership* relationships. These are organisations in which one or more parties to the conflict is a member and thus contributes to the decision-making of that organisation. The United Nations, the European Union, and the African Union are the foremost examples. The balance of memberships in an organization is key to understanding the authority that membership organizations have as well as their distance to the conflict processes. They are not generally perceived as being responsible for the conflict in the sense that identity or even power-based third parties may be. However, as is shown in Chapters 3 and 5, differing perceptions of the UN's role in Cyprus, varyingly seen to be acting in the interests of the "other" side, ultimately result in it unintentionally contributing to instability in the conflict. Importantly, membership-type third-parties also interact with power and identity third-party relationships as they overlap with power and identity parties who share membership in these organizations.

Finally, the international activities of various civil society and non-governmental organizations influence conflict processes through indirect transnational effects such as 'demonstration effects' and 'boomerang effects' (Keck and Sikkink 1999). This category also includes international media and academics, whose attention and publicization of select narratives can be used by local elites to pursue conflict agendas (Wolfsfeld 2004; Wallensteen 2012).

This typology is important for organizing the complex and shifting relationships of different third-parties across the cases of Northern Ireland and Cyprus during the data analysis phase of the thesis research. A nesting model such as presented by Jenne and others does not adequately account for change in the perceptions of a third-party's relationship type, which is essential for understanding the role of third-parties in a DMD. Third-party relationships change in both form and distance and are changeable depending on the different domestic party perspectives of the conflict zone.

### **1.5 Research Design, Case Study Justification and Methods**

This project undertakes a comparative case-study methodology with most-similar cases design to examine the impact of third-parties in conflict settlement negotiations through the framework of the DMD. The reasons for this decision are two-fold: 1) the significant value of contrasting the divergent outcomes across the similar cases of Northern Ireland and Cyprus for isolating key variables in the analysis, and 2) the inability of large-N data to provide meaningful policy-relevant understanding of the processes of third-party interaction with elites and society. The following section will begin with a description and justification of the comparative method and case selection, followed by an examination of the use of a mix of historical and rational-choice institutionalism and path-dependency in the research design. This leads into a discussion of unique methodological and normative challenges for conflict research and concludes with a review of the field research undertaken to complete the study.

This thesis utilizes a comparative most-similar cases design which relies upon two critical cases which share a significant number of similarities. As detailed below, key similarities include not only the ethno-national and territory-based conflicts of the two cases but also their juxtaposition to the European continent, the timeline of their major peace processes, and, of course, the DMD itself. The comparative methodology relies upon a method of differentiation in the case studies which treats the comparison as a form of controlled experiment within which adjusted variables can be observed to have similarly or differently adjusted outcomes (George and Bennett 2005; Gerring 2007; Lijphart 1971). These variables

are presented across the three articles of this thesis as a comparison of differences between and within the conflict contexts, with the first article focusing on differences between cases and the second and third highlighting important differences within each case across time. The resulting causal or explanatory pattern can then inform the understanding of the compared conflict processes, defining a shared cause, tracing a shared solution, or illuminating the importance of what is not shared for further analysis.

### **1.5.1 Most-Similar Cases Design**

Clear similarities between Northern Ireland and Cyprus and the core difference of success and failure in their respective referendum processes in 1998 and 2004, were a key motivation for the initial research project as a whole. As the types and relationships of third-parties are key variables in all three analyses presented in this thesis, the ability to control for these interactions is essential. Thus, in an effort to follow through with Seawright and Gerring's most-similar case selection method, maintaining the scope of my case-selection toward the geographical region of Europe controls for some variation in the regional and international contexts, including the array of actors (Seawright and Gerring 2008; Gerring 2007).<sup>7</sup>

The two cases not only share similar actors, but also similar timelines. Northern Ireland's referendum on the Good Friday Agreement was held in 1998 and Cyprus' referendum on the Annan Plan was held in 2004, just six years apart. These timelines may be followed back to the two failed power-sharing constitutional settlements in each case: the constitutional crisis of the Republic of Cyprus in 1964 and the failure of the Sunningdale Agreement in Northern Ireland in 1974. Or alternatively, to the onset of violence in each case emerging through the late 1960s and early 1970s on both islands.<sup>8</sup> The shared experience of changing geopolitical contexts and institutional structures thus accounts for major

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<sup>7</sup> The choice of regional control on variables is debated in terms of the value that Area studies-styled research can provide to global research schools (Collier, 1991). However, considering the impact of the regional environment upon my variables of interest, this decision is methodologically sound in both a practical and evaluative sense.

<sup>8</sup> For Northern Ireland, 1968 is often declared as the first year of the "Troubles" signalling increasing mobilization for Civil Rights agitation which resulted in the riots of 1969. In Cyprus, 1974 is known as the year of the Turkish invasion of Cyprus by Greek Cypriots and seen as an intervention response to a Greek-led coup by Turkish Cypriots. This year is by no means the beginning of the conflict however it is the beginning of the current political stalemate on the island.

international shifts such as the end of the Cold War, the collapse of the Soviet Bloc, the Gulf War, and the peace processes for South Africa, Israel-Palestine, and Bosnia-Herzegovina, among other key historical events (Diez, Albert, and Stetter 2008).

Northern Ireland and Cyprus share further several similarities beyond the geopolitical connections to Europe and time-frames that make them an even more ideal selection for this analysis. Most importantly is the mode by which the double-minority dilemma is produced in each case. As already examined, the cases are both examples of territorial conflict, centred around questions of partition versus union, compounded by the future role of two homeland states: Britain and Ireland and Türkiye and Greece. It is due to these complex questions that the two conflicts are frequently regarded as “role models of intractability, monuments to political extremism,” and “trouble spots to be avoided” (Breen 1990). Both Northern Ireland’s talks process up to 1998 and the Annan process in Cyprus up to 2004 feature a long negotiation arc with a lengthy period of pre-negotiation and indirect talks between various parties involved.<sup>9</sup> The cases were also both mediated by an external third-party and resulted in a public referendum for the approval of the mediated settlement at the end of the negotiation period. Moreover, both cases feature settlements which were mediated with a presumed power-sharing outcome: consociational power-sharing in Northern Ireland and a bi-communal federal solution in Cyprus.

The decision to limit the study to the two cases of Northern Ireland and Cyprus was three-fold. First, more than two cases would reduce the level of in-depth case research necessary to present the study’s theory of the double-minority dilemma and the role of third-parties in the two peace processes’ outcomes, but a single case study does not allow for the comparative analysis needed to develop a generalizable, if limited, theory of third-party intervention and the double-minority-dilemma (George and Bennett 2005). Second, due to their proximity and relationship with the continent of Europe and the European Union,

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<sup>9</sup> G.R. Berridge (2005) defines pre-negotiation as the attempt to reach agreement on three key areas: need, agenda, and procedure. Pre-negotiation is the most important for setting up the negotiation structure. Indeed, the concept of a ‘pre-negotiation’ is a misnomer and features key high-level negotiations which contribute substantially to the larger negotiation.

both Northern Ireland and Cyprus share a set of specific third-party actors and additionally share similar historical experiences in their relationships with those actors, particularly in that they share a British colonial history (Kumar 1997), which allows for significant control over the most important variables in the study. And third, the cases served as a practical choice given the access to materials for field work made available in the English language in both cases as well as travel and institutional supports available.

The thesis moves beyond the original scope of negotiations, presenting an additional set of studies beyond the 1998-2004 period. Thus, Chapters 3 and 4 focus on separate within-case diachronic comparisons in Cyprus and Northern Ireland. This choice to expand the focus of the original study continued to apply the logic of the initial case selection whilst responding to the real-world events that both confirmed and extended the original project objectives. In particular, the diachronic studies provide a greater depth to the responses of domestic elites to changing third-party relationships in the DMD, highlighting this variable with greater clarity. In the Northern Ireland case of Brexit and the Protocol, the analysis provides a focus on the security position of the ‘regional minority’ unionist community and its role in interpreting third-party relationships that are undergoing dramatic change. The Cyprus case of hard-liner responses, in both the regional and local minority communities, to the UN-monitored buffer zone, or ‘Green Line’ across time. This study demonstrates how domestic elites can alter positions and approaches within a frozen constellation of wider third-party relations in a DMD.

It would be remiss of me at this point to fail to observe the very clear similarity of the two cases being related to an island condition. It is slightly less examined in this thesis how the impact of “island status” affects perceptions of third-parties in their interactions with the conflicts in both cases (Breen 1990; Byrne 2000; Faustmann 2011; Guelke 2001), but this is not to lessen the potential influence of this factor. However, the island perception is deemed less impactful on domestic elites’ perceptions of the conflict than other facets of the various third-parties and so is left out for future analysis.

This institutional setting of both cases pre-determined some specific aspects of the settlement process such as this power-sharing focus. As noted, Cyprus and Northern Ireland are somewhat unique cases in that they share in a historical failure of past power-sharing arrangements which were designed as conflict resolution mechanisms (Coleman 2014; Whyte 1990; Fisher 2001a; Breen 1990). As Lijphart mused:

...when the British themselves have been directly or indirectly instrumental in drafting constitutions for territories under their control, they have not unalterably adhered to their own democratic model: they have tried to impose the consociational model on Northern Ireland, and they encouraged and approved of the ill-fated consociational experiment for their former colony of Cyprus (Lijphart 1977).

The major impact of this historical institutional experience is that the Northern Ireland and Cyprus peace processes are important cases for an analysis of third-party intervention where the objective or solution to the conflict was effectively pre-determined before negotiations even began, or at least was agreed to very early on in a pre-negotiation period. This is partly symptomatic of the cases being home to relatively developed democratic cultures.

Democratic cultures are key to understanding elite behaviour in both cases as well. As this study undertakes an analysis of elite decision-making as a response to third-party interventions and actions, consideration of the negotiators themselves is important for understanding the causal outcomes in the cases. Due to the high prevalence of political elites educated in the British style of education, particularly those educated within the British legal school, there is great similarity on this particular indicator as well.<sup>10</sup> This institutional culture, related to the recent colonial history and significant continuing relations with United Kingdom, thus provides a little extra control on wider cultural differentiations in elite responses to political processes across the two cases.

The key difference between the two cases is of course the settlements' referendum outcome. In the case of Northern Ireland there was a successful settlement achieved in 1998, while the 2004 Cyprus settlement

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<sup>10</sup> This legal orientation was repeatedly raised as a point of interest by various academics and other interview subjects in Cyprus and is a notable affectation of the party leaders in Northern Ireland as well.

process failed. However, in light of recent events in Northern Ireland, it may seem suspect to deem the 1998 Agreement process a ‘successful’ peace agreement. Certainly, it has not shown itself to be wildly successful in implementation across a variety of its parameters including several periods of return to rule by Westminster and a recent prolonged failure to form government since 2017. But success for the purposes of this project is being determined solely by the result of the public referendum in each case. Both settlements were put to public referenda and in both the Northern Ireland and Cyprus cases there was significant participation, with more than 80% voter turnout from the registered electorates in both cases. Both cases also involved a double-referendum. In the case of Northern Ireland, this was held with separate votes tallied for the Northern Irish population and Republic of Ireland Population. IN Cyprus, separate votes were taken for the Turkish Cypriots and the Greek Cypriots. The Belfast Agreement ‘yes’ vote succeeded with 71.12% of the vote in Northern Ireland<sup>11</sup> and 94.39% of the vote in the Republic of Ireland. In Cyprus, the result was far less positive and divided significantly by population: the Turkish Cypriots casting 64.91% of their ballots in favour of the Agreement and the Greek Cypriots casting 75.83% of their ballots against. Both settlements were agreed to by a combination of elites in negotiations and external third-parties before going to referendum, though the process by which elites negotiated in Cyprus was dictated more heavily by external parties, namely the United Nations. This particularly important difference is evidenced clearly in the DMD analysis of the levels of internationalisation in the two conflicts.

I acknowledge that I cannot control for all variation. A focus on long-protracted conflicts necessarily increases the influence of domestic issues which can vary greatly over time. This project acknowledges that conflicts are case-specific and recognizes that there is no such thing as a perfect case selection (King, Keohane, and Verba 1994). Circumstances of equifinality, meaning different causes can produce similar

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<sup>11</sup> Though accurate communal breakdowns of the vote are impossible to determine, the suggestion is that an overwhelming amount of support stemmed from the Catholic community, possibly as high as 96%, while the Unionist community was more divided, coming in closer to 52 or 53% in favour of the Agreement (CAIN Research Archive).

results, may be present in the analysis despite efforts to control the study (George and Bennett 2005). Additionally, the two cases differ on some key elements that have already been highlighted, such as levels of violence and inter-personal trust, however these variations do not preclude the potential for cross-case similarities, or notable differences, regarding the impact domestic contexts have upon third-parties and vice-versa. By choosing a most-similar case design and selecting upon the dependent variable of a success and failure in a peace negotiation, the comparison of both similarities and differences should indicate strengths or weaknesses in the results of each of the independent case analyses. The initial two conflicts therefore fit within a reasonable model of most similar case selection, sharing several controllable aspects while differing on key intervening variables.

But there are actually four cases...

Conflicts like those observed in Ireland and Cyprus generally stem from a series of compounding issues that lead to their intractability, which include ethnic or national identity disputes and competing conceptualizations of territory. Conflict parties perceive their own circumstances and bargaining position quite differently to their opposing parties. A conflict party's historical and temporal relationship to the various external and domestic factors is differentiated from the other parties to the conflict by the very nature of the divisions in the conflict itself. Thus, it is not too far of a stretch to argue that this study in fact undertakes a comparative analysis of four-cases. That of the Northern Ireland unionists, the Northern Ireland nationalists, the Greek Cypriots, and the Turkish Cypriots. A comparison differentiated by all four groups provides greater opportunity to highlight commonalities and differences and to develop a broader theory of third-party intervention and the double-minority dilemma. Chapters 3 and 4 demonstrate the value of a temporal within-case comparison, observing the changes to the DMD in terms of the changed nature of third-party relationships and domestic perceptions resulting from major external shocks – Brexit in Northern Ireland and COVID-19 in Cyprus.

### **1.5.2 Process-Tracing and Path Dependent Analysis**

This project applied a process-tracing method to a theory building exercise using the different outcomes of the Northern Ireland and Cyprus cases as a foundational point of inquiry. Per Beach and Pederson (2013), I began with a ‘y’ centric analysis “where we know an outcome (Y) but are unsure about the causes” (p. 16). I hypothesized from an initial analysis of the final negotiation period in each case, where core external parties were highly integrated in terms of setting guarantees and defining agreement parameters, that an embedded relationship between these so-called “external” or “third” parties would be important to explaining the outcomes. Utilising historical evidence, archives, interviews, and existing theoretical explanations, I proceeded to determine an overarching causal variable (X) – the existence of a double-minority dilemma. This project then investigated possible mechanisms by which agreement was successfully reached in one case and not in the other, which were directly related to this systemic variable of the DMD. As demonstrated in both the theoretical development of the DMD and the in-depth diachronic case studies, determining such causal mechanisms required an understanding of how perceptions of identity and security vis-à-vis these external actors may shift and change over time. A theoretically and historically rich narrative derived from within each case therefore requires process-tracing and path-dependent analysis (Pierson 2004; Mahoney 2000; Diehl 2006).

The process tracing method allows for the consideration of alternative pathways – meaning that there are a number of possible explanations for the outcomes in the two cases and more than one explanation could produce the same outcome (George and Bennett 2005). The DMD seeks to provide a framework within which to understand these irregularities, and this is examined most effectively in the within-case comparisons in chapters 4 and 5. Additionally, process-tracing helps illuminate multi-directional analysis, meaning that the causal effect might operate in more than one direction (Collier 2011; Bennett and Checkel 2015). In this project, this multi-directional analysis illustrates both circumstances wherein a third-party directly affects perceptions of the double-minority dilemma and circumstances wherein the third-party themselves is affected by the domestic elites’ framing of the DMD. In addition, conflict studies literature emphasizes that the impact of a third-party is related to both the effectiveness of

domestic elite framing and the sequencing and timing of these impacts, as there is significant room for spillover effects both within and across conflict contexts (Diehl and Regan 2015; Diehl 2006).

Timing and sequencing is also necessary to account for the complex effects of action on the outcome of the settlement process. Interventions and changes within a DMD have both indirect and delayed effects (Jervis 2012). First, as shown, relationships in a system are not “bi-laterally determined,” so the impact of one third-party might not be immediately apparent in a direct line of influence. Rather, a third-party’s influence may appear via changes produced in other third-parties’ relationships. This is particularly notable in terms of the impact of ‘events’ on the actors in the system, such as the impact of 9/11 and the ‘war on terror’ in the Middle East which contributed to a re-interpretation of the nature of US interest in Cyprus away from invested peacemaker and toward Türkiye’s NATO ally, as discussed in Chapter 2. The emphasis is on questions of path dependence, critical junctures, sequencing, timing, and unintended consequences rather than simply examining the variables themselves (Pierson 2004, p 5-6). In particular, the role of increasing returns and positive feedback from actions are highlighted, demonstrating the reinforcement of institutions over time (Mahoney 2000). This can be seen in Chapter 2 and 3 where the membership of the UK and Ireland in the EU is presented as a critical juncture in altering the perceived relationships of the DMD and setting a course toward eventual settlement in 1998. In Chapter 4, the openings of checkpoint crossings in Cyprus’ UN-monitored ‘Green Line’ in 2003 initially challenge perceptions of a ‘border’ on the island yet, despite initial suspicion, lead to more and more openings until their closure in 2020. As Ruane and Todd (2007) note in their path dependent analysis of institutional change in Northern Ireland’s peace process: “our concern is not simply with what factors are important for settlement, but when, and why at that time and not at others...this is not a rejection of comparison or generalization but a shift in its focus” (p 442). The cases can then be compared in terms of the ordering of impactful events as well as the strength and type of the impacts themselves.

In addition, Paul Diehl (2006) argues for ‘politics in time,’ highlighting the long-term and delayed impacts of phases in a conflict upon overall conflict duration and direction. A focus on narrow time frames and immediate outcomes explains very little of conflict dynamics in their entirety. Diehl demonstrates the importance of compounding and sequencing through the role of ‘learning’. Such ‘learning’ can be seen in both Northern Ireland and Cyprus as well as there are prior attempts at settlement in both cases which inform internal and external perceptions of the settlement processes themselves as well as prior external attempts to intervene. The failure of the 1973 Sunningdale Agreement for a power-sharing government in Northern Ireland has been cited as a result of lack of knowledge about how devolution and power-sharing work, knowledge which was learned after two decades of EU membership and wider popularization of these political arrangements resulting in more acceptability of similar systems in the 1998 Good Friday Agreement (Little 2009). Chapter 3 examines the learning in Northern Ireland around pooled sovereignty stemming from EU membership. It is also part of the adaptation and learning of many key actors as a result of the emergence and expansion of the European Union during this period of history. Similarly chapter 4 demonstrates that parties in Cyprus learned and adapted to the institutional trappings of open checkpoint crossings in the UN-monitored “Green Line,” resulting in the initially disruptive openings being normalized such that their closures were seen as disruption (Chapter 4). Though not directly addressed here due to the limitations of this thesis, it is important to also acknowledge that learning occurred in terms of peacemakers’ approaches to Cyprus as a response to Northern Ireland’s experience, just as Northern Ireland’s negotiators learned from South Africa’s peace process and so-on (Guelke 2008).<sup>12</sup>

### **1.5.3 Data Collection and Fieldwork**

My fieldwork for this project consisted of approximately eight months of archival research and elite interviews, approximately four months in each case, between May 2017 and June 2018. Interviews were

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<sup>12</sup> The particular influence of South Africa in Northern Ireland was detailed across several interviews. Various track-two workshops were held in South Africa and a delegation from South Africa attended the Forum for Peace and Reconciliation in Dublin in 1994.

conducted in both cases using a combination of strategic selection and snowballing method. I conducted thirty semi-structured elite interviews plus a further 15 unstructured interviews in both Northern Ireland and Cyprus in order to ascertain first-hand accounts of third-party influence. The emphasis on interview subjects was first on domestic political elites rather than the representatives of the third-parties as the core inquiry was the extent to which domestic elites thought the presence of third parties impacted negotiation decision-making. First, a list of negotiators was compiled in each case to ascertain those most closely connected to the negotiations processes. Contact information for each interview candidate was assembled either via public database, for those still currently serving in political positions, or through snowballing from active scholars in the two cases. In both Northern Ireland and Cyprus, active scholars served a dual purpose of orienting research and negotiation contacts and of providing essential contextualizing information on the two political processes. Many scholars in both cases were at one point involved in the political negotiations process thus serving a dual role as interview subjects. A similar subject emerged in the form of journalists who were covering the negotiations during their significant periods. Initially approached out of an interest in deriving contacts with political officials, several journalists served to provide essential analytical data on timelines and causal events.

### *Elite Interviews and Memoir*

In operationalizing the DMD in the context of negotiations, the mechanisms of elite perceptions and elite communication are examined to determine the impact of third parties on the negotiations processes. There are a few practical justifications for an elite-focused approach. The first justification is functional – in both Northern Ireland and Cyprus, the central negotiations processes were driven largely by elites, both in terms of the negotiators at the table and the mediators and negotiators representing the kin-states and other third parties involved (Gormley-Heenan 2007; Millar 2008b; Hadjigregoriou 2014; Lindahl 2019). In addition, there is extensive literature that suggests a logic to preferencing elite positions in understanding public perceptions which is further supported by the experience of both cases (Delaney 2007; Kertzer and Tingley 2018). The referendum process, held in both cases to ultimately approve the

elite-negotiated settlement through public decision-making, produced outcomes which aligned with the elite discourse during the post-negotiation referendum period (Lordos 2006; Loizides 2014; Amaral 2019). Literature suggests that this demonstrates elites hewing close to the public consensus (within their own national groups), though there are debates as to the extent elites respond to the public consensus or directly shape consensus (Carrubba 2001; Matanock 2017; Matanock and García-Sánchez 2017). There is additionally a practical methodological element vis-à-vis the analysis of perceptions in that it is difficult for a researcher to ascertain public opinion on historical events (in the absence of existing surveys).

The focus on elite perceptions and framing is a core component of understanding the various changes to the DMD experienced as a result of third-party influences. If we were to take up the assertion that the DMD can be considered to be ‘constructed,’ it is done so through competing perceptions of historical and present relationships held by the domestic parties. There is a question as to the extent this construction can be considered a product of instrumentalism and elite framing (Van den Bossche 2003; Majstorovic 1997; Schulze 2018). The diverse motivations of elites within divided societies suggest that pure elite manipulation is a non-starter. Brubaker, Loveman, and Stamatov (2004) argue, for example, that minority group identity should be examined in terms of how “ways of seeing, interpreting, and experiencing social relations are unselfconsciously “triggered” or activated by proximate situational cues” rather than instrumentally driven by individuals (p. 51). But domestic elites remain the core interlocutors of the interpretation of relationships within the DMD.

The original plan for the project was to primarily conduct elite interviews, however unexpected political transitions in 2016 and 2017 led to upheaval and unexpected barriers in reaching elites. The collapse of the Northern Ireland Assembly led to a series of election cycles and general discomfort from key DUP and Sinn Fein party members in discussing wider questions of negotiations. In Cyprus, following the breakdown of negotiations in July 2017, sitting politicians who were present during the 2004 negotiations were on vacation or otherwise unwilling to comment. The final interview selection was still representative

of a wide scope in terms of community positions, however it was limited with a total number of 17 interviews in Northern Ireland and 28 interviews in Cyprus (See Appendix A). Although interviews were difficult to obtain, the Northern Ireland case is heavily researched in the existing record. Elite interview data is supplemented with memoirs and various sources of collected interview data, which represents the positions and opinions of key lead negotiators. In addition, first-person accounts from the core leadership in Cyprus' negotiation processes are also used to supplement the data from this case. Autobiographies and memoirs of key negotiators in both cases include that of John Hume, Gerry Adams, Rauf Denktaş, and Glafcos Clerides. Biographical accounts including direct interviews with the subjects were further collected on central elites including David Trimble, Ian Paisley, and Tassos Papadopolous. Accounts from outside the domestic elites include those of former Secretary for Northern Ireland Mo Mowlam, mediator for Northern Ireland's Agreement Senator George Mitchell, and UK Special Representative to Cyprus David Hannay. See Appendix C for a summary list.

Memoirs offer one, highly curated perspective from the mind of the author. Several individuals in positions of leadership at the time of the negotiations in both cases produced memoirs in the decade or so following the agreement in Northern Ireland and in the period following the failed Annan Process in Cyprus. Personal memoir in these two cases is useful due to the fact that these publications were produced within a period of time conducive to memory accuracy. However, we cannot account for memory alteration by design. As Stephen Hopkins (2001) notes in his review of several historical memoirs on Northern Ireland:

There is a perceived opportunity to 'set the record straight', and shed light on actions and events, many of which may have been too sensitive to discuss previously. Of course, this effort can have as a primary objective self-justification and represent an attempt to shape the agenda of historical discourse, so the 'judgment of posterity' reflects favourably on the author (memoir/autobiography) or subject (biography), and his/her political party or organisation (p. 75).

Similarly, reflecting on the role of memory in Cyprus, Bryant and Papadakis (2012) highlight the political motivations of memoir:

The most contentious events that still have an impact on the present belong to the period of 1955–1974, which means older Cypriots can still speak as witnesses. That these periods and events are so contentious means people often feel compelled to tell their version of the events in order to correct what they believe are other, incorrect versions (p. 18).

However, while acknowledging these difficulties in the interpretations and intentions of witnessing, these memoirs produce anecdotal perspectives which can be fact checked against archives, interviews, and in conversation with other memoirs.

Additionally, in contrasting elite interviews, discussions with wider actors, and the content of memoirs, I was able to note a vast ‘insider’ exporting of expertise as peace advisors and educators or historical and biographical author. Particularly interesting was the amount of cross-pollination of learning between the two cases via self-described ‘peacemakers’ contributing insight into other political processes. In combination with a dense level of ‘outsider’ studies of the cases, particularly in Northern Ireland, much of the active memory gleaned from the interviews is a mirror of a broadly agreed set of narratives of successful peacebuilding established more globally. Interviewees demonstrated a desire to provide responses which suggested a stronger authority on the subject than perhaps their peers or other researchers might suggest they were due, often quoting opinions and perspectives that were not necessarily their own but that mirrored their adopted perspective. They may be pursuing other agendas, co-opting the interview as an opportunity to promote their professional role in peace-making, for example. As Jonathan Tonge (2014) describes it: “Cross-national policy learning and transfer has been aided by the growth of academic studies of peace and by the numerous examples of the ‘export’ of experienced peace-brokers across various conflicts to offer brokerage or mediation roles” (p. 14).<sup>13</sup> One former negotiator and academic was promoting an upcoming documentary on how the late John Hume’s time in America was essential to Northern Ireland’s successful peace process.<sup>14</sup> This occurrence was not unique to Northern Ireland. The Cyprus case, also in part due to the intense amount of academic attention

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<sup>13</sup> See also: MacGinty (2012) and Carey (2012) on the commodification and professionalization of peace

<sup>14</sup> Farren, Sean & Haughey, Dennis (2005) John Hume: Irish Peacemaker Dublin: Four Courts Press.

on its conflict and peace process, was a site of set, though competing, narratives informed through key authored works and biographical accounts.

Northern Ireland and Cyprus are both cases of extensive interventionist research and ‘outsider’-produced literature. Combined with a broad scope of actors involved in both cases who have further produced commodified historical memory, this has contributed to a marketed “shared consciousness” around key events and a local co-optation of history by outsider producers of knowledge (Wallensteen 2012). I acknowledge my own positionality as an outsider producer of knowledge and the tension around the politics of these histories and their potential explanations.

#### *Newspapers and Archival Data Collection*

In addition to elite and individual narratives, archives of government statements and major news-media were explored for situating knowledge. The Northern Ireland archival data was retrieved from a combination of archives including the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI), the Linen Hall Library (LHL), the Queen’s University Belfast Library Archive, and the National Archives of the United Kingdom in Kew, London. Unfortunately, due to the very recent change in the policy on archival release at both the PRONI and National Archives offices, much of the government documentation for the period of 1992 to 1998 in Northern Ireland is unavailable for access. In 2011, PRONI reduced the time limit of record release from 30 to 20 years with a phased roll-out of 10 years. In 2013, the UK National Archives also altered their release of records policy from 30 years to 20 years. Despite a 20-year release period meaning that documents prior to 1998 should have been available in 2018, by that year, only documents with dates from 1993 and 1994 were released in both archives. The Linen Hall Library houses a vast collection of newspaper clippings and privately collected political paraphernalia from the Troubles. A wide array of news sources were reviewed, reflecting a variety of perspectives on the negotiations in the 1990s, including the *Belfast Telegraph* and *Irish News* outlets who represent relatively centrist Northern Ireland-wide perspectives, the unionist leaning *News Letter*, and Dublin’s more nationalist-leaning *Irish Times*, among many other local and international papers. Because they are not beholden to the National

Archives restrictions, The Linen Hall Library was able to provide a selection of resources pertaining to the negotiations in the 1990s, though this was incomplete in some aspects due to the voluntary contributions of the archives. In addition, the CAIN archive (Conflict Archive on the Internet) proved extremely useful for providing key documentation and direction to valuable documents.<sup>15</sup> In total, the archival documents on Northern Ireland amounted to over 400 newspaper article clippings and over 100 government documents, political communiques, pamphlets, and ephemera from political parties and civil society organizations.

The Cyprus archival data regarding government statements and press releases was retrieved from two separate state archives, the State Archives Nicosia, the official national archives of the Republic of Cyprus, and the Kyrenia National Archives, the official national archives of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. The Kyrenia National Archives further provided access to several key local Turkish Cypriot news sources in both Turkish and English with my primary focus on articles printed in *Kıbrıs Gazetesi* during the Annan Plan negotiations period. For the Republic of Cyprus, the news archives of the major English-language publication *Cyprus Mail* were retrieved from the Press and Information Office (PIO) in Nicosia along with a subset of articles from Greek language *Phileleftheros*. A wider variety of Greek Cypriot news sources were collected via the newspaper's independent online archives, including *Kathimerini* and *Politis*. Greek and Turkish language articles and documents were translated using Deepl. Several memoirs and other files were also collected at the Centre for Visual Arts and Research (CVAR) library which houses the 'Clerides Library' collection – the actual content of the Office of Former President of the Republic of Cyprus, Glafkos Clerides. Finally, a collection of UN documents housed in a warehouse of the Library of Cyprus in Nicosia provided access to hard-copies of all Security Council resolutions and deliberations on Cyprus since the initial creation of UNFICYP. In a complete coincidence, the archival documents in Cyprus similarly amounted to just over 400 newspaper article clippings and

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<sup>15</sup> In 2019, due to funding issues, the CAIN archive closed its updating operations. The archive continues to exist in its form as of May 2, 2019 at [cain.ulster.ac.uk](http://cain.ulster.ac.uk). You can learn more about the consultation process on the future of the archive at [cain.ulster.ac.uk/cainfuture.htm](http://cain.ulster.ac.uk/cainfuture.htm)

over 100 government documents, political communiques, pamphlets, and ephemera from political parties and civil society organizations.

## **1.6 Core Contributions**

The DMD framework is an innovative theoretical contribution which extends the original concept of double minorities through bridging literature on nationalism and boundary-making with literature on international conflict resolution and security dilemmas. The theory is innovative in its ability to address the impact of perceived geopolitical (third-party) shifts on decision-making processes in settlement negotiations by establishing a framework within which elite decision-making can be logically explained. The framework reveals how the perceived DMD both shapes and is shaped by elite perceptions, over time. It additionally demonstrates how the unique relationships of external third-parties and conflict parties perceived through the DMD create security conditions which are either conducive or obstructive to concessions in negotiations. Finally, through revealing the interaction of minority identities and ontological security, the DMD provides a nuanced framework for studying internationalised ethno-national conflict such as seen in Northern Ireland and Cyprus, Kosovo, Eastern Ukraine, and elsewhere.

The thesis further contributes a comparative analysis of the Northern Ireland and Cyprus negotiation processes that focuses on domestic elite perceptions and rationale in producing a variety of settlement outcomes. Comparisons of the initial success and failure of the two cases in 1998 and 2004 are growing in number in recent years, but while recent studies have focused on peace settlement referendums, the analysis of external third-party impacts on domestic elite perceptions contributes a novel perspective. The historical examination of each case in Chapter 2 provides an empirical contribution via a syntheses of new data collected through original elite interviews and the use of archival content, political declarations, news interviews, and personal memoirs. Chapters 3 and 4 then extend the analyses to recent upheavals in both cases (the UK's EU Withdrawal Protocol in Northern Ireland and COVID-19 check-point closures in the Green Line in Cyprus). These newer studies both reinforce the historical study findings while serving to

inform policy-making moving forward in both cases through the examination of recent changes to the DMD context. The thesis thus contributes beyond the historical analysis which originally underpinned the theory-building component of the thesis.

## **1.7 Structure of Dissertation**

The thesis comprises five chapters inclusive of this introduction, three independent articles, and a conclusion.

### **1.7.1 Chapter 2: The Double Minority Dilemma and Complex Negotiation: explaining the role of third-parties in Cyprus' Annan Plan and the Northern Ireland's Good Friday Agreement**

Chapter 2 presents the puzzle of the successful negotiation of the 1998 Agreement in Northern Ireland and the failure of the 2004 Annan Plan in Cyprus despite the numerous similarities between the cases. The chapter makes two major contributions. First, it establishes the theory of the DMD through the bridging of the literatures on nationalism studies and security studies. Second, the Chapter demonstrates that the difference between the two outcomes in Northern Ireland and Cyprus can be explained by applying the DMD and third-party relationships frameworks to a comparative study of the two cases. The first half of the Chapter develops the DMD framework, utilising the 1998 Agreement in Northern Ireland and the 2004 Annan Plan in Cyprus as foundational empirical matter to demonstrate the veracity of the DMD as a theory. Next, the typology of third-parties in a DMD is presented through brief references to the various actors involved in Northern Ireland and Cyprus. The second half of the Chapter conducts a comparative historical analysis of the DMD in Northern Ireland and Cyprus segmented into each of three third-party relationship types: identity, power, and membership. These relationships are examined for change, or lack thereof, over time to locate shifts in the DMD in each case. The analysis demonstrates that while some third-party relationships in the Northern Ireland DMD were strengthened, including that of the Republic of Ireland, broader third-party relationships were limited and thus the level of internationalisation, or distance as demonstrated in Table 1.1, in Northern Ireland was also limited. Bolstered by the level of influence wielded by the sovereign British government, these precise controls on

the DMD both mitigated the risks of minority concessions and constrained the autonomy of local elites, particularly for unionist negotiators. In contrast, complex and wide-ranging internationalisation produced key challenges for negotiators and third-parties in Cyprus. Opportunities to mitigate the risk of minority concessions by Greek Cypriots were not accompanied with constraints on elite autonomy in negotiations, which ultimately provided the room, indeed incentives for elites in Cyprus to reject concessions, preventing settlement in 2004.

### **1.7.2 Chapter 3: Partition and Protocol – Unionism and the Double Minority Dilemma in Northern Ireland**

Despite the landmark success of the 1998 Good Friday Agreement, which ended over thirty years of violent conflict in Northern Ireland, the government in Northern Ireland has been facing a series of crises since the UK's decision to exit the EU. This chapter argues that the political crisis facing Northern Ireland today can be best understood by examining the particular security dilemma that faces the 'regional minority' – the unionist community, which is the local majority but perceives itself as a threatened minority when the conflict space is expanded to include the Republic of Ireland. The chapter examines the impact of the UK's exit from the European Union, a membership-type relationship which is shown to have historically contributed to achieving the necessary mitigations of the DMD to achieve a peace settlement in Northern Ireland. This relationship is made more significant now that it has shifted in distance to being more closely involved in Northern Ireland politics as an intervenor. The within-case comparative analysis of the negotiations in Northern Ireland in the 1990s and today reveals two facets of the precariousness of DMD conditions. The first is the nature of the regional minority's perception, the unionist perception, of its own ontological insecurity and how this drives strategic decision-making over time to adapt to changing institutional circumstances. The second is the importance of the 'distance' qualification of a third-party's influence in producing positive negotiation outcomes and how changes in this distance can affect the DMD. This is revealed through the differentiation of the EU in 1998 – a third-party which had minor, but positive, effects on the double minority conditions, producing successful

settlement – and the EU today – a direct and powerful third-party intervenor which increased insecurities, preventing successful implementation of the Protocol Agreement (and Windsor Framework). This shift in the nature of the EU disrupted the strategic tools utilised by unionists historically to assure their voice in Northern Ireland is secure, both now and in the future, resulting in the collapse of the Northern Ireland power-sharing regime in 2017.

### **1.7.3 Chapter 4: Coming Together or Staying Apart – Implications of the “Green Line” COVID-19 Checkpoint Closures for Negotiations in Cyprus**

Chapter 5 focuses on paradoxical decision-making by elites in a DMD produced by the ontological requirements of a minority ‘struggle’ and justice-seeking behaviour in legitimizing bargaining position. It begins with a puzzle arising from the unilateral closure of crossings in the border/non-border that is the UN monitored ‘Green Line’ by the Republic of Cyprus. Why was it the traditionally unity-seeking Greek Cypriot leadership who supported the closures and the pro-division Turkish Cypriot leaders who opposed them? At face value, these positions do not seem logical. However, the DMD provides an explanatory framework that accounts for the strategic calculus which explains both the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot responses. Ultimately, the ontological security of the Greek Cypriot bargaining position rests on a foundation of being the victims of the conflict deserving of concessions, including the full withdrawal of Türkiye’s influence from the island. The closures contributed to a future negotiation context which both shores up this position in the long term and provides Greek Cypriots more security against Turkish interference in the short term. Turkish Cypriot hardliners seeking partition of the island objected to the unilateral closures to strategically frame the decision as evidence of Greek Cypriot unilateralism and resistance to compromise. This narrative in turn supports a Turkish Cypriot bargaining advantage. Moreover, the Chapter evidences this calculus not just in the response to COVID-19, but also in the responses of the two communities to the initial *openings* of the Green Line checkpoint crossings in 2003. In drawing these connections to the initial openings, the chapter demonstrates how the DMD establishes a

pattern of strategic behaviour which explains the failure of Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot elites to cooperate politically, even in the face of a global pandemic.

#### **1.7.4 Chapter 5: Conclusion**

In the short concluding chapter of this thesis, I discuss the potential for broadening the DMD thesis to a wider set of cases and subject matter. The first half of the conclusion briefly re-states the findings and contributions of the thesis through the study of the DMD in Cyprus and Northern Ireland. This is followed by two detailed discussions of possible extensions of the framework. The first expands the scope of cases to look at how different conflict contexts that do not appear as straightforward as the cases of Cyprus and Northern Ireland also feature core elements of DMD framing and decision-making by elites. This includes looking at circumstances where the group in the otherwise ‘regional minority’ position is itself a ‘local minority.’ The second demonstrates a more detailed application of the DMD to ongoing negotiations and conflicts in Kosovo and Eastern Ukraine. These discussions highlight the particular role of third-parties in defining the securitization of identity and the scope of the internationalization of the conflict. In both Kosovo and Ukraine, negotiations were stalled by an inability of the ‘regional minority’ to grant federal autonomy arrangements to their ‘local minority’ due to a clear irredentist threat from this community’s kin-state (Serbia and Russia, respectively). The thesis then concludes by delivering some final thoughts on applying the DMD framework to future third-party interventions.

## Chapter 2

# The Double Minority Dilemma and Complex Negotiation: explaining the role of third-parties in Cyprus' Annan Plan and the Northern Ireland's Good Friday Agreement

### Abstract

Cyprus and Northern Ireland have been primary examples of intractable ethno-national conflicts, highly resistant to resolution due to the presence of a 'Double Minority Dilemma' (DMD) where both parties to a conflict perceive themselves to be the minority under threat and thus fearful of compromise. Yet in 1998 the parties in Northern Ireland signed the Good Friday Agreement, ending over 30 years of violent conflict. Six years later, negotiations for a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem – the Annan Plan – failed. What explains these contrasting outcomes? This article develops a framework for explaining how external third-parties affected the outcomes because of their complex relationships with the DMD defined by identity, power, and level of internationalisation. The framework emphasizes how domestic elites' perceptions of these third-parties – and their resulting narratives – either addressed or reinforced the DMD, affecting the preparedness of the sides to accommodate each other. The paper demonstrates how limitations on third-party relationships in Northern Ireland mitigated the risks of the regional minority's concessions and also constrained domestic elites' decision-making autonomy, ultimately incentivising settlement in 1998. In Cyprus in contrast, complex and wide-ranging internationalisation lacked effective constraints on the autonomy of Greek Cypriot elites' decision-making and even provided incentives for them to reject concessions, preventing settlement in 2004.

### 2.1 Introduction

At first glance, the islands of Ireland and Cyprus may appear quite different. Northern Ireland has stood out in contemporary conflict resolution as a story of *success*,<sup>16</sup> while Cyprus stands equally as infamous

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<sup>16</sup> Historically speaking.

in its *failure* to end the stalemate that divides the island. Yet these cases share a broad set of similarities. Importantly, Cyprus and Northern Ireland are primary examples of a ‘double minority’ condition, where in each case both parties to a conflict perceive themselves to be the minority under threat. A ‘local minority’ perceives their minority status in relation to the ‘local’ or territorial majority, while in turn this so-called majority perceives their status as a ‘regional minority’ in relation to a regional power. This article develops the Double Minority Dilemma (DMD) as a framework for explaining how external third-parties contributed to the different outcomes of the two cases. The DMD approach emphasizes the role that perceptions and narratives of third-parties play in contributing to the threatened minority identity represented by domestic elites, producing and responding to the double minority condition, and ultimately informing decision-making and concessions in negotiations.

This article begins by developing the DMD framework, situating existing understandings of nationalism, boundary-making, and minority identity within the structures of security dilemma and bargaining theory. Next, a typology of third-parties is presented which breaks down the different relationship types through which third-parties interact with the DMD. The framework is then tested through a comparative examination of critical junctures in domestic elite perceptions of third-parties across Northern Ireland (NI) and Cyprus. In demonstrating how different types of third-parties – including kin-states, international mediators, and regional actors – interact with the DMD, the paper finds that the limiting of internationalisation and strengthening of the core relationships within the DMD in Northern Ireland, namely that of the United Kingdom and Ireland, both mitigated bargaining costs and constrained bargaining options for negotiating elites, contributing to successful settlement. But in Cyprus, third-parties increased bargaining costs by contributing to a greater perception of threat to both ‘minorities’ on the island. Moreover, wide-ranging internationalisation, with numerous third-party actors, resulted in incentives for Greek Cypriot negotiating elites to reject compromise. The comparative examination of the DMD supports this approach as an effective framework for examining the role of third-parties in ending or exacerbating conflicts under certain ethno-national conditions.

## **2.2 The Double Minority Dilemma Framework**

The theory of the Double Minority Dilemma (DMD) is premised on an ontological understanding of the international nature of ethno-national conflict. Where many analyses of nationalist and ethnic conflict frequently view these as inherently internal (Whyte 1990), the DMD starts from the position that neither the conflicts themselves, nor the processes of negotiation and settlement, can be fully understood outside their external contexts. This is particularly true of cases of ‘protracted’ ethnic conflict, which persist over long periods of time and “refuse to yield to efforts – through either direct negotiations by the parties or mediation with third-party assistance – to arrive at a political settlement” (Crocker, Hampson, and Aall 2005). Intractable conflict is highly susceptible to internationalisation through conflict spillovers, migration and refugee flows, humanitarian need, and economic crises which commonly result in third-party intervention (Taras and Ganguly 1998; Oberschall 2007; Mabry et al. 2013). Moreover, conflicts of self-determination challenge the borders and territories of existing states and have a clear geopolitical impact on the international system (Carment and Harvey 2001). Additionally, some third-parties involve themselves due to wider historical ties such as former colonial powers, kin or ‘homeland’-states, and regional organisations (Kathman 2011; Fearon 1998; Kemp, Popovski, and Thakur 2011; Ganguly 1998). Protracted ethnic conflict, therefore, is defined in-part by intervening actors and geopolitical circumstances, making this type of conflict a rich area for examining the impacts of various third-parties.

The role of third-parties in conflicts is exacerbated where there is a double-minority condition. In a double minority scenario, both parties to the conflict perceive themselves as a minority under threat. The minority-majority balance within a political unit is upset by geopolitics and differing perceptions of the conflict space, or field of reference, held by the conflict parties. On the one hand, an ethnic minority (or minorities) within the political territory – the local minority – perceives itself to be the group whose existence is most under threat by domination by the local majority ethnic group. This is generally a question of local demographics, though, as is revealed when population numbers become similar, other power and relational dynamics can also define this minority status. On the other hand, by virtue of the

presence of kin-states, regional frames of reference, and other perceived allies supporting the so-called minority group, the local majority ethnic group also perceives itself to be the minority whose existence is most under threat – the regional minority. In Northern Ireland, for example, the Protestant community was historically dominant in the territory, making the Catholic population a local minority, yet Protestants see themselves as a minority under threat on the island of Ireland, which has a large Irish Catholic majority in control of the territory, and they thus see themselves as a regional minority. In Cyprus, Turkish Cypriots see themselves as a local minority on the island, but the Greek Cypriot majority on the island sees itself as a minority in the region because of the backing that Turkish Cypriots receive from Cyprus' neighbouring giant, Türkiye.<sup>17</sup> In these conditions, the relationships of the kin-states or other third-parties are understood to be geopolitical, and not simply geographical, because there are important historical power relations beyond physical proximity that underpin these relationships.

The terminology of the “double minority” has a limited history of usage. It was introduced for describing inter-group tensions in Northern Ireland in Harold Jackson (1972) historical study of the “Two Irelands.” More recently, Schaller and Abeysinghe (2006) examined the psychological aspects of double minority identity-building in Sri Lanka, where the majority Sinhalese within Sri Lanka become aware “that they are outnumbered” if their geographical frame of reference includes the Tamil-dominated state of Tamil Nadu, India (p. 618). These two analyses examine how groups similarly define their minority status as a function of a perceived power imbalance, yet with very different frames of reference. A related understanding emerges in the study of ‘parallel asymmetries’ – where mirrored perceptions of unequal power distribution between negotiating parties affects “the strategic conflict behaviour of each party” (Rouhana and Fiske 1995, p. 50). Herbert Kelman (1978) introduced the notion of “parallelisms” of asymmetry in Israel and Palestine, where the perceptions of negotiating parties become mutually exclusive, or zero-sum, due to holding parallel, yet opposing, positions (p. 354). Marc Howard Ross

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<sup>17</sup> Numerical demographics do not necessarily determine the dominant community. A minority may be perceived to be more powerful due to their presence in institutions of power. This is often true in cases of ethnic domination, where an ethnic minority has grasped the political authority of a state – Apartheid South Africa, for example.

(1993) has also briefly examined this psychological impact of parallelisms in the Northern Ireland context, noting briefly the role of Ireland in creating the existential threat to the Protestant community and thus a parallel sense of minority status (Mulvihill and Ross 1989; Ross 1993). This body of work on double minorities and parallel asymmetries is limited in focus. These studies are restricted to single-case analyses and are usually concerned with barriers to conflict resolution rather than exploring potential opportunities for success.

This paper adapts the double minority concept to emphasize the ethno-national frames of reference of the parties to the conflict and stresses the role that third-parties can play, either providing support for concessions and settlement success, or contributing to intransigence and settlement failure. It does so by bridging nationalism studies of group-making and minority identity with literature on security dilemmas and ontological security, or the security of one's identity. This bridging illuminates a complex stalemate for domestic elites at the heart of the DMD and offers a framework for observing how this stalemate responds to third-parties.

### **2.2.1 Bridging Nationalism and Security Studies**

First, the double *minority* theory emphasizes the importance of minority status as an identity marker in terms of comprehending and evaluating perceived asymmetries of power. The use of the term 'minority' is understood to encompass wider structural and political inequalities which contribute to, and are informed by, the boundary-making of communal groups (Barth 1969; Horowitz 1985). While structural opportunities like demographics or geography may guide elites in strategically framing these relations (Schulze 2018), minority identities are primarily a product of dynamic social relations and "mutually competing stances, not a static ethno-demographic condition" (Brubaker 1996, p. 60; see also: Ross 1995).

A key aspect of defining 'minority' is the historical-institutional context of the double minority condition which drives the emphasis of ethnic minority differences over other social division (Wimmer 2013). For

example, regional minorities, ethnic groups who are locally dominant but define themselves as a minority, may opt to implement institutions of control over diverse populations in order to secure their own local authority (Lustick 1979; McGarry and O'Leary 1993; McGarry 2010). These domination regimes are framed as responses to a perceived threat from an outside source, but they also reproduce the threatened identity. The more control that is consolidated in the governing and security apparatus, the more the justifications for this control become tied to the group's (minority) identity. Concessions or relaxation of this control are seen as a direct threat to the group's existence. In turn, this increasing institutionalisation of hierarchy and inequality reinforces the minority identity of those ethnic groups who are excluded from the governing and security apparatus – the local minority. The local minority also further establishes its own institutional supports, generally through increasing ties with their homeland state or any external power that will help it. Such is the triadic nexus of Rogers Brubaker's theory of relational nationalism (Brubaker 1996). Therefore, the institutionalisation of minority identity, and the identification of geopolitically relevant actors to strategically frame this process, is a mode of ethno-national determination which results in institutional and political constraints on actor behaviour.

Second, the framing provided by security dilemma theory is key to understanding the stalemate of the communities involved as being conditions in a system – a set of interconnected elements such that “changes in some elements or their relations produce changes in other parts of the system” (Jervis 1997, p. 6; see also: Coleman 2014). The security dilemma defines conditions whereby the actions of one group to increase their security necessarily decreases the security of other groups in the system (Jervis 1978; Mitzen 2006). In the context of a DMD, (in)security is defined by the perception of minority status held by both parties. Party B, assuming it is the local minority under threat from the local majority, Party A, seeks some form of assurance for its ethno-national survival. In a vacuum, Party A might perceive this action as simply balancing, and perhaps not even balancing exactly, but simply a minority pursuing some decrease in the gap of power, and thus not a direct threat. But in the context of the DMD, Party A already perceives itself to be the regional minority under threat. Therefore, any action by Party B to increase its

relative power is a direct threat. In the bargaining terminology of a “fixed pie” scenario, in Party B’s attempt to increase their share of the pie, Party A is losing its portion of the pie. This security dilemma can be framed in terms of traditional forms of power, such as political, economic, or military power. But the DMD framework suggests that this dilemma infiltrates more deeply into the identities of the groups in conflict.

### **2.2.2 Minority Identity and Ontological Security**

The definition emerging from the combination of minority identities and security dilemmas aligns with the emerging discussion of ontological security – the security of an actor’s identity and world-view – in international relations. According to Jennifer Mitzen (2006), this identity-based security is defined by both the institutional, or systemic, context and by inter-actor relations within that context. Changes within the system present as threats if they alter the foundations and references core to an actor’s self-defined identity. Importantly, ontological security operates counterintuitively because it can be assured through continued conflict: “That is, states might actually come to prefer their ongoing, certain conflict to the unsettling condition of deep uncertainty as to the other’s and one’s own identity...” (p. 342-343). The DMD represents a particular mode of ontological (in)security where the domestic actors’ minority identities, whether local or regional minorities, are defined through conflict with the other actors in the system. The notion of an end to this conflict is therefore threatening to these actors’ identity-based security, creating conditions of ‘peace anxieties’ which contribute to intractability (Rumelili 2015).

The establishment of a threatened regional minority identity by the otherwise local majority group in a DMD rests upon the previously noted injustice argument – the group can only prevent the future injustice of their erasure through “unchallenged control” of state institutions (Pavković 2006, 123). This foundational sense of entitlement, once established, provides a bargaining position from which negotiating elites justify non-concession. The parallel definitions of justice from the local minority on the one hand, and the regional minority on the other, subsequently prevent successful negotiation (Haklai 2015). Moreover, per Mitzen’s caution that conditions of conflict can become determinant of security, the

legitimation of a bargaining position of non-concession necessitates maintaining the threat which justifies this position.

In encompassing both the politicised nature of minority identity and systemic nature of a security dilemma, the DMD provides a nuanced framework for studying the particular form of ethno-national conflict which we see in Northern Ireland and Cyprus. It additionally supports greater nuance in understanding the relationships of various third-parties with these conflicts.

### **2.3 Third-Parties and the Double Minority Dilemma**

“Third-Party” as a concept is misleading for two reasons. First, the notion of a natural “trio” is problematic as this typologizes conflicts as occurring between two domestic parties. The term may refer to an actor in a conflict with more than two initial parties, for example, and it may also refer to an actor who is only one of several external parties. Indeed, for both Northern Ireland and Cyprus the assumption of a natural duality, that there are two communities who are in conflict and therefore a “third” party who acts as a mediator or intervenor, is a misperception. Not only does the bifurcation mask the differentiation within communal groups, and exclude other minority groups, it also ignores the degree to which so-called Third Parties have interests or even direct involvement in such conflicts, as seen primarily with the UK, Ireland, Greece, and Türkiye.

The second issue is the notion that these are still “parties” to the conflict in some fashion is generally ignored, with the boundary between intervening third-parties and the parties to the conflict staked out as a clear separation of intentions, characters, and history. There is a desire to define and protect the distance between intervenor and subject in order to allow intervenors to manipulate without contaminating (King, Keohane, and Verba 1994; Sabaratnam 2011). Similarly, intervenors prefer to see themselves as actors outside the conflict context who bring a measure of neutrality, unbiased opinion, and provide the elusive missing-link to end a conflict. But this misunderstands the role of an intervenor. Recognition of the intervenor’s effect upon the subject is vital to understanding subject behaviour. They are better

understood as a third-party and thus a part of the conflict. This may appear more obvious for ‘kin-states’ such as Ireland or Türkiye, but it is no less true of the EU, the UN, or even NGO networks and thinktanks. The security framing of a DMD conflict is nested within overlapping identities (Jenne 2015; Fearon 1998), with third-parties of all varieties becoming part of the conflict narrative, altering perceptions and providing tools which elites can use to promote negotiation or continued conflict.

The term “third-party” is also inclusive of several forms of third-party interaction with conflict processes, including military and economic intervention, but also diplomatic and legal intervention, mediation, transnational NGO networks, international media, political support, and more. Some are seen to be less “intervening” than others. For example, mediation often suggests invitation. The conflict parties have realised their own efforts have failed so they turn to external assistance in finding resolution (Hoffman 1992). Such interaction does not normally come under the scrutiny that, say, military interventions receive, yet mediation is also often an intrusive act. Recent literature has concluded that interventions of any type, taken with an agenda of state design and social planning, are the most invasive modes of intervention, and mediation is frequently used for this purpose (Richmond 2008; Pouligny 2009; Sisk 1996). Understanding the coordination of these various strategies and actors is more important for the study of third-party impacts than any single form or type of actor, but literature that specifically analyses the role of inter-party relationships in conflict resolution is relatively recent (Diehl and Regan 2015; Chacha and Stojek 2016b). The following typology seeks to contribute to this growing field of analysis.

There are two key variables in establishing a typology of third-parties that provides insight into effects on the DMD. The first is the perception of domestic elites from both the local and regional minority communities of the ‘nature’ of the relationship between them and the third-parties. This is defined by the perceived identity, or the nature of the party’s interest, and the power or capability of a third-party to act. The second variable is the perception of ‘distance’ or the level of involvement of third-parties, which can also be seen as the level of *internationalisation* of the DMD. This framework produces four types of

relationships: Identity, Power, Membership, and Transnational. Examples of this typology are summarized in Table 1.

Identity	Power	Membership	Transnational
Kin-States	Regional Powers	Economic Orgs	NGOs
Colonial Powers	Superpowers	Global Governance	International Media
Diasporas		Regimes	Networks
			Academia

**Identity.** Identity relationships refer to those third-parties who have an ethnic, national, or ‘homeland’ relationship with one or more conflict parties. This would include ‘kin-states’ but also former colonial powers, diaspora populations, and states with shared languages and cultures. This is the primary source of third-party relationships which inform the DMD, but it does not mean these relationships are necessarily detrimental to negotiations, only that there is a pre-established measure of knowledge and trust (Darden and Mylonas 2012). For example, the perception of Türkiye’s long-standing good relations with Afghanistan has been argued to have leant Türkiye a productive relations advantage as a member of NATO’s ISAF forces as their cultural and historical connection allowed Turkish ISAF forces to distinguish themselves in the eyes of the local organisations (Guney 2007). However, the core identity-based third-parties in Northern Ireland and Cyprus are generally assumed to reinforce conflict as they are perceived to be part of the conflict roots.

The UK has a unique position vis-à-vis both Cyprus and Northern Ireland as the history of the British Empire’s colonial influence impacts both the UK’s current domestic and foreign-policy decisions as well as the reception of those policies by the host societies (Kumar 1997). Many Greek-Cypriots lay the blame for the Greek-Turkish conflict over the island at the feet of the UK, and this has not been helped by

efforts by the UK to assist with Türkiye's EU accession bid (Ker-Lindsay 2007). But the UK is also a 'homeland' or 'kin-state' in the context of Northern Ireland. A kin-state can be conceived loosely as any state having persons who belong to their national communities who reside abroad as citizens of other states and it has an enhanced ability to apply pressure in negotiations involving these kin-minorities. In both Cyprus and Northern Ireland, kin-states are considered to be external 'ethno-guarantors' (Byrne 2000; Kerr 2006). The stability of relationships not only between the kin-states and the kin-minorities but also between the kin-states themselves is seen as necessary for the stability of domestic relations during negotiations and in the final agreement (Guelke 1989; Jenne 2015). This has led to a wider focus on the policies of the UK and Ireland and those of Greece and Türkiye by many researchers of the conflict resolution processes in both cases (Laffan 2003; Aktar, Kizilyürek, and Özkirimli 2010).

**Power.** Power relationships exist between domestic elites and third-parties who hold a position of power, broadly defined, in a wider regional or international context. They may be attributed this power through their regional authority, such as the UK's historical authority in Europe or Türkiye's regional influence in the Eastern Mediterranean. Or they may be attributed power through their position in international geopolitics, such as the 'superpower' classification of the United States and Russia (Buzan 2004). Power relationships and identity relationships overlap quite frequently, as is the nature of the international system, but perceptions of a power-based relationship are treated differently within the DMD. Identity-based relationships are sticky. They are inherently perceived as part of the double minority equation and due to their long histories and ethno-national ties, they are difficult to alter or change. In contrast, power-based relationships that have reduced identity connections, such as the US, are more distant, changeable and adaptable.

This adaptability can be a positive feature, in that power-relations might be able to transition toward being peace-producing, such as the US being largely viewed as having been positive in the context of mediation in Northern Ireland despite its historical identity based Irish-Catholic traits and perceived support for the

Irish cause (Curran and Sebenius 2003; Byrne 2006). But it can also be negative, abruptly shifting allegiances at inopportune times as in Cyprus where the US was ultimately declared alongside other international interests as pro-Turkish and negatively positioned against domestic Greek Cypriot interests.

**Membership.** Membership relationships are third-party organisations in which one or more parties to the conflict, including other third-parties, retain membership and thus contribute to the decision-making of that organisation. The United Nations, the European Union, and NATO are such third-parties in the contexts of Northern Ireland and Cyprus. The United Nations is the foremost international source of intervention globally, though it only presents as a third-party in the case of Cyprus. In Northern Ireland, the UK firmly maintained that the conflict was internal to the UK and would not consent to UN intervention, ensuring this distancing through their seat in the Security Council. However, UN intervention in Cyprus since 1964 is pervasive to the extent of becoming part of the conflict furniture (Peristianis and Mavris 2011; Hadjigregoriou 2014). The UN-monitored ‘Green Line’ or ‘Buffer Zone’ which separates the north and south of the island is maintained by regular Security Council resolutions and the UN Good Offices mission which oversees the UNFICYP mission are key contributors to the political discourse of the Island today (Twietmeyer 2023a). The UN is generally accepted on both sides as the core mediating body for any negotiations in Cyprus, yet it is varyingly seen to be acting in the interests of the “other” side, making it an unstable contributor to conflict resolution in the region.

Regional organisations tend to take an interest in the politics of their membership. Similarly to power-based relationships, membership-based relationships can range from being perceived as non-aligned to being perceived as extremely one-sided (Ganguly 1998). Membership might advantage a single party with power and knowledge, such as the unilateral accession of the Republic of Cyprus to the EU without an all-island solution, while Turkish Cypriots and Türkiye were left out (Demetriou 2008). But if there is joint membership, such as the shared membership of both the UK and Ireland in the EU, it offers opportunity for confidence-building activities and innovative solutions (Ruane and Todd 1996).

Membership relationships interact more directly with power and identity relationships as they overlap with other third-parties.

**Transnational.**<sup>18</sup> Transnational relationships involve external effects, including ‘demonstration effects’, that impact on local civil society. A public response to external forces might apply pressure upon representative elites, or, alternatively, international activities may influence the support base of the elites in negotiations through boomerang effects (Keck and Sikkink 1999). In Northern Ireland, this ‘boomerang effect,’ was observed when the US Civil Rights movement and various other social movements around inequality motivated Catholic community demonstrations for civil rights (Bosi 2008; Maney 2014). Similarly, many argue that the 1994 South African constitutional settlement provided evidence that not only could an agreement be reached but that it should be soon (Guelke 2008; Arthur 1990).<sup>19</sup> There was more support for transnational influence within the Catholic – or nationalist – community in Northern Ireland due to the preference of the Protestant – or unionist – community to treat the conflict as a particular issue of UK internal politics.<sup>20</sup> Similarly, there were different levels of support for transnational efforts between the two communities in Cyprus. The leadership of the Greek Cypriot community reinforced a powerful narrative against international influence in 2004 which overwhelmed the burgeoning civil society on the island (CIVICUS 2005; Drousiotis 2005). Finally, this category also includes international media and academia. The impact of such international attention and the publicization of select narratives can provide a potent source for political action, though it may also reinforce the agendas of local elites (Wolfsfeld 2004).

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<sup>18</sup> Due to limitations on length, transnational actors will be left out of the scope of this article’s analysis.

<sup>19</sup> Interviews by author: SDLP negotiator B, 6 November 2017 in Coleraine, Northern Ireland,; British negotiator, 27 June 2017 in London, UK.

<sup>20</sup> Interview by author with UUP negotiator A, 3 June 2017, Belfast, NI.

Unionists are politically motivated by protecting the *union*, the United Kingdom, while nationalists are politically motivated by Irish *nationalism* and the goal of a united Ireland.

## **2.4 Elite Perceptions and Framing**

The DMD can be considered to be ‘constructed’ through both historical and present relationships as perceived by the domestic groups. The diverse motivations of elites within divided societies suggest that pure elite manipulation is a non-starter, but domestic elites remain the core interlocutors of the interpretation of relationships within the DMD (Van den Bossche 2003). Therefore, the following analysis examines domestic elite communication and framing of the dynamics of actors and actor relationships in the DMD. Interventions and changes within these dynamics have indirect and delayed effects, meaning that the impact of one third-party might rather appear via changes related to other third-parties and that the impact may not be observed until a significant amount of time has passed (Jervis 2012; Pierson 2004; Streeck and Thelen 2005). The use of elites as the subject of analysis entails an assumption that elites take decisions informed by their perception and framing of the DMD in a given time.

## **2.5 Applying the DMD Framework in Cyprus and Northern Ireland**

The following section illustrates the impact of third-parties across both cases and highlights key moments of change in the context of the DMD. The evidence is supported with elite interviews and archival documents and media collected through in-person fieldwork by the author from 2017-2019 as well as content from autobiographical memoirs written by key negotiators. A comparative analysis of the Good Friday Agreement negotiations in Northern Ireland and the Annan Plan negotiations in Cyprus demonstrates how differences in the alignment of relationships of the third-parties to the regional minorities in the DMD, and differences in levels and forms of overall internationalisation, altered the institutional context of the DMD in both cases. In Northern Ireland, the identity-based alignment of the regional minority unionists *with* the UK, who in addition to being regionally powerful retain the sovereign authority over the territory of Northern Ireland, incentivized concessions by constraining the autonomy of the regional minority unionists, forcing them to negotiate with the Republic of Ireland. This, combined with generally limited levels of internationalisation beyond these core actors, enabled risk-

mitigation through the centring of the principle of consent, a principle which is shown later in this piece to empower local elites in decision-making. In Cyprus, alignment of the regional minority Greek Cypriots *against* the regional power of Türkiye, and conditions of broad internationalization which set geopolitical priorities for negotiations, failed to sufficiently mitigate the risks for Greek Cypriot elites, requiring a concession of shared regional authority with a Turkish guarantor. Moreover, rather than constraining the autonomy of Greek Cypriot negotiators, key relationships with Greece and the EU incentivised a rejection of the agreement.

### **2.5.1 The alignment of identity and power in the DMD: Britain and Türkiye**

Although there are technically four core identity-based cases across Northern Ireland and Cyprus, the UK and Türkiye will be emphasized in this section due to their significant regional power. In Northern Ireland, the UK is the political unit within which the conflict occurs and exercises political sovereignty consistent with a unitary state. This makes the UK a unique third party to the DMD. Türkiye is also directly involved on the territory of the conflict because it militarily occupies the north of Cyprus, but it is an international actor without recognized sovereign authority and is seen as an occupying power. Yet the regional minority Greek Cypriot view of Türkiye's presence as illegal, supported by their kin-state of Greece, is also the position that local minority Irish nationalists take toward British sovereignty in Northern Ireland. Thus, an important difference in framing these relationships within the DMD is that the UK is positioned on the side of the regional minority, the unionist community, while Türkiye supports the local minority, the Turkish Cypriots.

#### *Anglo-Irish constraints and unionist bargaining*

For nationalists in Northern Ireland, Britain<sup>21</sup> is regarded as one of four key negotiating partners, along with unionists and the Republic of Ireland. Nationalist parties only engaged in negotiations if “they were

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<sup>21</sup> Nationalists see their conflict with the government of Great Britain rather than accepting any part of Ireland as part of the UK.

clearly stated that they would be quadripartite.”<sup>22</sup> As the local minority, nationalists required the inclusion of Ireland at the table to support their bargaining position against the UK. This perspective extends from the Irish war of independence from British colonialism and was bolstered by Ireland’s claim to the territory of Northern Ireland as stated in Article 2 of the Constitution of Ireland. While there are concerns regarding local Northern Ireland’s political institutions, the conflict, as far as nationalists are concerned, is between Britain and Ireland. In contrast, unionism is resistant to including Ireland as a negotiating party. Unionists hold on to the UK government’s initial position that “responsibility for affairs in Northern Ireland is entirely a matter of domestic jurisdiction” (“Downing Street” 1969). The resistance to Ireland’s role was seen as necessary for retaining negotiating power for unionists because the Irish dimension implied by Dublin’s involvement would legitimise the nationalist claim that Northern Ireland was not inherently part of the UK. This resistance extended to excluding nationalist representatives within Northern Ireland who were “friends” with the Irish government and was a core source of intractability so, despite efforts to engage unionism in negotiations, “unionists didn’t really want to bother with [the SDLP]” so long as they sought a united Ireland.<sup>23</sup> As long as unionism had the support of Britain, and Ireland was not at the table, unionism retained an advantage in decisions about Northern Ireland’s future. This bargaining position, however, was jeopardized when the Anglo-Irish relationship grew in strength from the 1970s, and particularly from the 1980s, ultimately eliminating the prior claim that Northern Ireland was an exclusively internal matter for the UK (O’Kane 2004; Tannem 2020; Arthur 2000; Twietmeyer 2023c).

Britain’s relationship with unionism is particularly defined by Britain’s power within the identity-based relationship. By the early 1970s, unionists were worried that discussions about the future of Northern Ireland were dominated by nationalist parties, the Republic of Ireland, and the British government,

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<sup>22</sup> Interview by author with Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) negotiator B

<sup>23</sup> Interview by author with Alliance Party negotiator C, 9 November 2017 in Belfast, Northern Ireland.

leaving unionism increasingly marginalized (Aughey 1989).<sup>24</sup> A long-held fear that the British did not reciprocate a strong affinity for their unionist kin was confirmed by the signing of the Anglo-Irish Agreement (AIA) in 1985. The AIA officially recognized that there were two major ‘traditions’ in Northern Ireland - one that wanted to remain part of the UK and one that wanted to unite with Ireland, and that this required a shared role for the UK and Ireland in achieving a settlement that would respect both traditions ("AIA" 1985). David Trimble, former Ulster Unionist Party leader and lead negotiator in the Good Friday Agreement process, remarked that the AIA could be read as blurring the lines between the UK and Ireland, “the implication being that Britain would somehow tiptoe away...” (quoted in: Millar 2008a, p. 49-50). For Trimble, the AIA had “put the British/Irish partnership at the centre of policymaking and further marginalised the unionists” (ibid). Former Democratic Unionist Party leader, Ian Paisley, embodied this anger toward the British government, stating that the AIA was an act of ‘betrayal’ and that “with a stroke of a pen” Margaret Thatcher had “signed away to Dublin our inalienable right to equality of citizenship within the UK” (Paisley 1985). This initial response represented the worst fears of unionism, that they would be erased from the conversation, like the pied noir in Algeria (Todd 2011). Indeed, heading into the 1990s, this marginalization of unionism by British leadership was seen as increasing.

A core bargaining objective of the growing Anglo-Irish relationship was focused on the Republic of Ireland’s constitutional claim to Northern Ireland. The withdrawal of this claim was a major concession, supported by the inclusion of the principle of ‘consent’ in the final Good Friday Agreement, a principle whereby the self-determination aspirations of the nationalist movement could be realized through the consent of the majority of people in Northern Ireland (and a majority in the Republic). As observed by McGarry and O’Leary, this was a core part of the final compromise on Northern Ireland, along with

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<sup>24</sup> This concern was realized during negotiations between the UK and Ireland for the 1973 Sunningdale Agreement, which was the first formal acknowledgement of the ‘Irish dimension’ through the inclusion of cross-border institutions (see: Todd and Coakley 2018). Protests against the Agreement, including a General Strike organized by unionist parties, collapsed the Sunningdale Agreement within a year.

several joint institutions, including the North-South Ministerial Council, the British-Irish Governmental Conference, and the British-Irish Council (McGarry and O'Leary 2009, p. 32). These agreements on the 'Irish dimension' to the final settlement combined with the principle of consent mitigated key risks of bargaining for Irish nationalists, but as they integrated the Republic with Northern Ireland's politics, even in a relatively weak fashion, they were major concessions for the unionist community.

For unionists, the growing constraint on their bargaining options created by the Anglo-Irish dimension could only be countered in their view by returning authority to domestic control, i.e., by re-establishing autonomous institutions in Northern Ireland. Trimble argued that his decision to make the concessions that unionists ultimately made in the Good Friday Agreement, even just sitting at the table with Sinn Fein<sup>25</sup>, was necessary to save unionism by snatching back control over their own future – “to create a situation which would be more stable and more unionist-friendly” – including the flip-side of the principle of consent: that a majority in Northern Ireland would have to consent to a united Ireland by referendum (quoted in: Millar 2008a, p. 54.). Unionists were depicted by Trimble as having little authority over a British government that was increasingly more interested in ending the conflict by any means necessary, including working around an intransigent unionism. This could have meant full exclusion from the process and complete loss of control to Irish interests (McGarry and O'Leary 2009). Though branded by hardline unionists as a traitor, Trimble sought to strengthen the Union through devolution and the principle of consent, giving the latter a pro-unionist gloss. From his perspective these handed a significant amount of Westminster's decision-making power back to the people of Northern Ireland and specifically to its unionist majority, mitigating the key risks of concessions as he saw them.

#### *Turkish demands and Greek Cypriot rejection*

Unlike in Northern Ireland, where the regional minority unionists refused to negotiate with the Republic of Ireland until constrained by the UK, Greek Cypriots as a regional minority view Türkiye as the key

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<sup>25</sup> Unionism felt Sinn Fein, as an extension of the terrorist and criminal organization of the Irish Republican Army (IRA), should not have been granted legitimacy nor a role in the negotiations.

negotiation partner. Greek Cypriots take a position similar to Irish nationalists, seeing Türkiye's presence as responsible for the disruption of their right to self-determination, an illegal intervention that needs to be ended, including through the withdrawal of Turkish troops from the island of Cyprus. They perceive the Turkish Cypriots as acquiescent in the decision-making authority of Türkiye, much as Irish nationalists see the UK's relationship with unionism. This juxtaposition of the alignment of both power and identity in the two cases is important for understanding how Türkiye serves to create an intractable situation for negotiators in Cyprus, rather than supporting a solution as the UK did in Northern Ireland.

The involvement of kin-states at the table in Cyprus is a result of historical diktat. The 1960 Treaty of Guarantee that was part of Cyprus' new constitution established both Greece and Türkiye (along with the UK) as guarantors. This is a concern for Greek Cypriots as Türkiye is more powerful and physically closer than Greece. Türkiye used its right as a guarantor to invade and partition Cyprus in July 1974, in the wake of a failed Greek coup in Cyprus that was aimed at achieving union with Greece. This puts Greek Cypriots on the defensive. They need to ensure that a final agreement ends Türkiye's guarantor status, and indeed contains guarantees *against* Türkiye's future interventions, including the removal of all Turkish troops from the island (Michael 2009). Moreover, the Greek Cypriots must also resist too much independence for Turkish Cypriots, e.g. a two state solution. Greek Cypriot leader Glafcos Clerides observed that the danger of the continuation of the conflict and Türkiye's presence in the north is that "the north will inevitably become an extension of Türkiye, it will host Turkish troops and this will be a permanent threat, 'a Damoclean sword,' hanging over the rest of Cyprus" (Kızılyürek 2008, p. 227).<sup>26</sup> Like David Trimble, Clerides was a moderate who felt that any solution was better than no solution, as no solution would ultimately result in this greater danger. He justified support for the Annan Plan regardless of its inclusion of Türkiye's guarantor powers and continued Turkish troop presence, however limited, as

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<sup>26</sup> Supported in interview with Greek Cypriot MP, 26 August 2017, Nicosia, CY

one step toward removing the greater threat of separation. However, for most Greek Cypriots this threat was a reason to vote ‘no’ to the Annan Plan.

In his now famous speech to the Greek Cypriot people on April 8, 2004, then President Tassos Papadopoulos declared that concessions in the Plan, including colonizing Turkish settlers remaining as citizens of Cyprus, the continuing of Türkiye’s guarantor status, and the continued presence of Turkish troops “while we [Greek Cypriots] would have disbanded the National Guard” would create “conditions of insecurity for the Greek Cypriots” and called for a firm rejection of the Plan (Papadopoulos 2004).<sup>27</sup> Papadopoulos argued that the only fair agreement would see a full withdrawal of Türkiye’s presence from Cyprus and further observed that the timelines for Greek Cypriots to gain their very minimal side of the deal, including property return and troop withdrawals, were vague and not sufficiently guaranteed (Papadopoulos 2004). Additionally, the Annan Plan contained references to what was perceived as the ethno-national sovereignty of the ‘constituent states’ of the new bi-zonal federal system, which made it sound something like a confederation. Greek Cypriot leaders preferred a ‘bi-zonal’ federal system which was not ethnically defined with the ‘bi-communal’ element operating as a separate system (McGarry 2015; Hatay and Bryant 2011). Together, these were untenable concessions for GCs which signalled the future division of the island and demanded a rejection of the Annan Plan.

This Greek Cypriot perception of the DMD was a problem for Turkish Cypriots. Turkish Cypriot negotiator Ergun Olgun observed that the Greek Cypriot rejection of the Annan Plan was a strategic mistake in “not empowering Turkish Cypriots to the point of being their [negotiation] partner and their buffer” against outside interference, whether from Türkiye or elsewhere.<sup>28</sup> Many Turkish Cypriots believe they are being marginalized and would, he argues, be better negotiating partners for the Greek Cypriots than Türkiye. Turkish Cypriot representatives noted that, in their opinion, Turkish Cypriots “have a

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<sup>27</sup> In a televised interview, Papadopolous stressed that they opposed continuing guarantor arrangements and had argued that due to Cyprus’ accession to the EU, combined with Türkiye’s effort to accede, “under European Acquis Communautaire there is no longer a need for a guarantor power keeping troops forever” (Papadopoulos, 2004b).

<sup>28</sup> Interview by author, 5 September 2017, Nicosia, CY

different culture” to Türkiye and want to stop the (Islamist) cultural changes happening under the current arrangements.<sup>29</sup> Yet despite these views and similar claims by the Turkish Cypriot leadership, Greek Cypriot leaders have not been prepared to accept that the Turkish Cypriots are independent actors.

The contrasting positions of Greek Cypriot leaders Clerides and Papadopoulos reflect the divisions facing unionist negotiators in Northern Ireland. However, these communities face very different alignments of power in the DMD. Greece, the major identity-based supporter of Greek Cypriots, is not sovereign in Cyprus as the UK is in Ireland, and moreover it actively supported the Greek Cypriots rejection of the Annan Plan. Additionally, Greece’s relationship with Türkiye is significantly more conflictual than Britain’s relationship with Ireland, which led the two Cyprus guarantors to have different interpretations of the need for ethno-national guarantors in any future settlement. Greece prefers to remove guarantor powers altogether, seeking to remove Turkish influence, meanwhile Türkiye views maintenance of guarantor arrangements as necessary for provision of security (Constantinou 2017).

Unlike the Anglo-Irish Agreement, which drastically changed bargaining positions and opportunities in Northern Ireland, Greco-Turkish relations have been extremely tense throughout Cyprus’ history. Greece and Türkiye have a long history of conflict, primarily around control of the Aegean Sea but also informed by long-standing ethnic tensions, and in spite of the fact that both states are ‘partners’ in NATO (Ioannides 2018; Aktar, Kizilyürek, and Özkirimli 2010). Greece supports a united Cyprus under Greek Cypriot authority, and many Greek nationalists further support *enosis*, or unity of Cyprus and Greece. As such, Greece was never interested in applying pressure on its ethnic kin in Cyprus to make concessions as the UK did in Northern Ireland. Additionally, as will be shown, the tension between Greece and Türkiye prevented other agreements that might have led to indirect pressure in this regard including EU accession.

## **2.5.2 Membership Parties: The EU and UN**

### *The European Union*

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<sup>29</sup> Interviews by author with Turkish Cypriot MPs in Nicosia, CY: 26 August 2017; 30 May 2018; 1 June 2018

The difference in alignment and level of internationalisation, which shapes the core of the DMD, directly affects and is affected by wider third-party ‘membership’ intervenors like the European Union. The relationship of the European Union to the DMD undergoes changes in both cases as the relevant actors varyingly apply for or become members of the regional organization. The difference in both the possible impact the EU could have in Northern Ireland versus Cyprus and the actual impact that it had in both cases hinges on two common negotiation elements: timing and internationalization (Diehl 2006; Paris 2014). The membership of the UK and Ireland in the EU was formalized more than twenty years before the Good Friday Agreement, making this joint membership part of the general context at the time of the negotiations and limiting the organization’s direct involvement. In contrast, the accession of Cyprus, and potentially Türkiye, to the EU was concurrent with the Annan Plan negotiations in Cyprus, which elevated the role and power of the EU as an intervenor. This role was further compounded by the fact that Greece was a member (but Türkiye was not), and together this contributed to the complex internationalization of the Cyprus conflict.

The EU had no formal intervening role in the negotiations in Northern Ireland. A Northern Ireland Women’s Coalition (NIWC) negotiator commented that the EU was influential, that the European voice was “the only voice of tolerance” and that their supporting work “empowered the community level” to be recognized at the negotiation table.<sup>30</sup> But this speaks more to the EU working in a ‘transnational’ capacity. Despite attempts by nationalist leaders elected to the European Parliament to get a European response to issues of social and economic disparity in Northern Ireland, the outcome of this effort was very limited.<sup>31</sup> Direct EU involvement occurred only by way of the EU Peace funds which supported post-Agreement community and peace initiatives. Many observers share the perspective that the EU did not have a large impact at the time of the Agreement and “seems a more significant force retrospectively”.<sup>32</sup> This relationship distance was advantageous, as direct European involvement could

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<sup>30</sup> Interview by author with NIWC negotiator, 16 October 2017, Belfast, Northern Ireland.

<sup>31</sup> Interview by author with SDLP negotiator A; Personal communication with Dr. Paul Arthur.

<sup>32</sup> Interview by author with DUP negotiator, 31 October 2017, Belfast, Northern Ireland.

have increased the risks of the DMD. While the European project is held in positive regard by many nationalists who recall the aid given to Irish Catholics by Europe in freeing themselves from the British colonial project (Miller 1998), the Protestant population is far more Euro-sceptical, viewing Europe, with its fundamental project of dissolving borders, as partial to a united Ireland and historically more Catholic in orientation (Skar and Lydersen 1993; Ingraham 1998).<sup>33</sup>

More important was the joint membership of the British and Irish governments and how it affected their relationship vis-à-vis Northern Ireland. The joint-accession of 1973 provided unique opportunities for track-two diplomacy, confidence-building, and institutional learning which significantly altered the possibilities on the table for negotiation (Hayward and Wiener 2008). The constant contact between the Irish Taoiseach, the UK PM, and other ministers in Brussels has been said to have “softened the issue of Irish Unity” within a context of “European unity.”<sup>34</sup> This is evidenced by improvement in the relationship cumulating in the Anglo-Irish Agreement of 1985, and the institutional understanding of pooled sovereignty, or at least the idea that cross-border cooperation would no longer threaten state sovereignty, which underpinned the later concessions of the Good Friday Agreement (McGarry 2006, p. 279; Ruane and Todd 2007; Lagana 2021). The EU’s role is more supported by nationalists. One unionist acknowledged that in 1998 negotiators wouldn’t have imagined a time when the question of EU membership “would have been a particularly live issue.”<sup>35</sup> It did not seem important enough to discuss at the negotiation table in the face of wider concerns around paramilitary demobilization, policing reform, prisoner releases, and parades. As I argue elsewhere, the reality of the importance of the membership itself, and the border erasure therein, would not be realized until the UK decision to end its EU membership (Twietmeyer 2023c).

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<sup>33</sup> For example, unionist leaders note that the EU’s predecessor, the European Economic Community, was founded by the Treaty of ‘Rome’, the seat of the Vatican, and that the Maastricht Treaty that created the EU in 1992 was negotiated by three Catholics, Jacques Delors, Helmut Kohl and Francois Mitterand.

<sup>34</sup> Interview by author with UK negotiator, 27 June 2017, London, UK

<sup>35</sup> Interview with DUP negotiator.

In contrast, the EU accession process that ultimately resulted in EU membership for the Republic of Cyprus – yet excluded Türkiye and did not extend de facto to the Turkish occupied region – had a significant negative impact on the Annan Plan process and referendum-based rejection (Faustmann 2011; Demetriou 2008). The European dimension of the Annan Plan began in the 1990s, when Türkiye and Cyprus were both approved as candidates for EU membership. The 1999 Helsinki Declaration by the European Council established two key parameters: 1) a settlement of the Cyprus problem was not a precondition for a decision on Cyprus' accession but the conditions in Cyprus would be considered as part of wider criteria, and 2) Türkiye's fulfilment of the political criteria was tied directly to the UN-led talks for a settlement in Cyprus (European Council 1999). Through these overlapping contingencies, the EU became directly engaged with core aspects of the Cyprus conflict including the elusive Greco-Turkish rapprochement. Albeit a gamble, the first few years suggested ground was indeed being gained as Türkiye and Turkish Cypriots alike worked to ensure a settlement was reached so they could enjoy the dividends of EU membership.<sup>36</sup> Turkish Cypriot leader Rauf Denktaş, who had previously declared EU membership a step toward the Greek Cypriot dream of enosis (Denktaş 1995), had ultimately supported Cyprus' accession bid in 1995 under the conditions that there was a Cyprus settlement with Türkiye as a guarantor and Türkiye was also made an EU member (Manisali 2000). Greek Cypriots, believing accession made more sense with a united Cyprus, initially also approached a settlement effectively as a requirement for accession (Kızılyürek 2008).<sup>37</sup> Finally, the pre-set EU accession date for May 2004 established a useful timeline to reach an agreement on Cyprus (Ker-Lindsay 2005).

Unfortunately, the potential authority the EU wielded in the mid-1990s when it could have made a settlement an absolute pre-requisite, was non-existent by the time of the settlement referendum in April 2004. Greece's membership and Türkiye's non-membership trumped the peace-producing potential of the EU. Greece was able to wield a veto to prevent the EU from supporting Türkiye's accession and refused

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<sup>36</sup> Interview with Turkish Cypriot MPs, 9 May and 30 May 2018, Nicosia, CY.

<sup>37</sup> Interview by author with Greek Cypriot MP, 26 August 2017, Nicosia, CY

to approve the EU's fundamental and long-planned Eastern enlargement unless Cyprus was included, with or without a settlement (Spiteri 2002). Former President Vassiliou quoted EU representatives as feeling "cheated by the Greeks" and a Greek Cypriot journalist also recalled comments of Cypriots having "cheated their way into the EU."<sup>38</sup>

But the EU failed to understand the motivations of Greece and Greek Cypriots.

Most vitally, the EU's decision to allow the Republic of Cyprus to accede without a settlement created an environment that encouraged the Greek Cypriots to rally the 'no' vote. Greece argued that failure to approve Cyprus' accession would be allowing the aggressor, Türkiye, to continue to hold the victimized Greek Cypriots hostage. President Clerides recalled Greece's position on preventing Cyprus accession as arguing: "You cannot victimize Cyprus because the Greek Cypriot side is not responsible for the lack of a solution; it is the Turkish Cypriots and Türkiye who are responsible" (quoted in: Kızılyürek 2008). EU ministers' comments on how Türkiye's invasion was in the past and negotiators needed to focus on what could be done today were criticized for dismissing history and "any content of justice."<sup>39</sup> This position was easier to take when euro-sceptic Rauf Denktaş – a difficult negotiation partner, frequently responsible for bringing talks to standstills and walking away from the table – was at the helm of the Turkish Cypriot side. But by the time Turkish Cypriots, desiring to become European citizens and angered at Denktaş' intransigence, elected a new pro-European leader, Cyprus (de facto, the Greek Cypriot-controlled part) had already been formally granted an accession date of May 1, 2004. In the north, Turkish Cypriot supporters used the upcoming accession to rally a 'yes' vote around the benefits of EU membership. But vitally, a one-sided EU membership provided Greek Cypriots future protection against Turkish interference, their core objective in negotiations. This not only mitigated the risks of not achieving a settlement, it guaranteed Greek Cypriots a much more advantageous position in any future negotiations, as, among other reasons, the Greek Cypriots, controlling a member-state, would have a veto over

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<sup>38</sup> Interviews by author, 14 September and 15 August, 2017, Nicosia, CY

<sup>39</sup> Interview by author with Greek Cypriot MP, 30 May 2018, Nicosia, CY

Türkiye's accession (as well as the de jure extension of the EU to the north of Cyprus). In combination with the untenable concessions of the Annan Plan, this all but ensured a Greek Cypriot "no" vote in the referendum.

It is possible the accession deadline could have helped, had it been handled differently, to press negotiators to a solution as George Mitchell's Good Friday deadline did in Northern Ireland (Mitchell 1999; Holbrooke 1998). But, as shown in the next section, the United Nation's response to the EU accession deadline by using arbitration to unilaterally conclude the negotiations was widely blamed for producing a settlement that did not guarantee Greek Cypriots justice (Amaral 2019; Psyllides 2004).

### *The United Nations in Cyprus*

As previously mentioned, the UN was prevented from acting in Northern Ireland due to the domestic nature of the conflict as interpreted by the UK. In Cyprus, however, the UN is highly involved, at times exacerbating the issues of the conflict and at other times helping to advance the goal of achieving a settlement (Fisher 2001a; Bahcheli 2000; Michael 2009). Several key UN-mediated agreements and processes have framed the terms of negotiations for both domestic parties. These include the 1977 and 1979 High Level Agreements, the 1992 Set of Ideas presented by UNSG Boutros Boutros Ghali, and the Annan Plan process mediated by Alvaro de Soto as the UN Special Advisor to UNSG Kofi Annan (Hadjigregoriou 2014). These interventions laid out several core assumptions about a future solution for Cyprus including, importantly, an understanding of Cyprus as the "common home of the Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities" whose relationship "is not one of majority and minority but one of two communities" in one state (Hadjigregoriou 2014, p. 161). This assumption has often produced negotiation failure rather than success as it is a disagreeable position for both Greek Cypriot nationalists who would prefer a united Cyprus under a Greek majority and Turkish Cypriot nationalists who would prefer to have a complete division of the island.

Addressing the events of the Annan Plan process from a Greek Cypriot perspective, Claire Palley (2005) provides a cutting examination of the role of the UN and its missteps in producing a settlement document that could not pass a public referendum. Palley mainly emphasizes the UN's perceived weakness as its deference to the geopolitical interests of its core members. The secretariat, she argues, "had been tasked by the USA, the UK and certain other Western Powers with clearly absolving Türkiye from responsibility ... to leave Türkiye with apparently "clean hands" for EU entry negotiations" (Palley 2005, p. 239).

James Ker-Lindsay (2009)'s critique of what he calls "mediation" compounds this critique. Mediation occurred in Cyprus under de Soto's more robust mediation style where, upon seeing negotiations could not make their deadline, he unilaterally arbitrated the content of the fourth and final Annan Plan agreement independent of the negotiating domestic parties. While this tactic may be successful in some instances (McGarry and Loizides 2021), it allowed space for even greater criticism of foreign interference and produced agreement content which was easily labelled as unjust and lacking in Greek Cypriot input and consent (Ker-Lindsay 2005).

### **2.5.3 Managing US Interference**

The US as a mediator was affected by its power-based relationship in both cases. In Northern Ireland, the US is perceived to be on the side of Irish interests, even so far as sharing key identity markers under the leadership of key Irish-American politicians. Over time, the US transitioned to a more neutral mediator position, but not without difficulty. In Cyprus, the US underwent a shift in the opposite direction, perceived to be aligned with Turkish interests by the Greek Cypriot negotiators and a less neutral mediator.

The perception of America being 'on-side' with Irish nationalism was well-founded. The "Friends of Ireland", Irish Northern Aid (NORAID), and Irish National Caucus, were institutions clearly representing Irish-American 'trans-national' support for a united Ireland (Guelke 1996; Hanley 2004; Collins 2021).

These bodies predominantly produced financial support, though there were frequent claims that this was direct support for the IRA as well (Cochrane 2007). Politically, American leadership had taken hotly

debated positions with a series of visa scandals exemplifying public discourse. The US government was criticized for refusing a visa for unionist leader Ian Paisley based on his “inflammatory” actions and statements, yet Clinton promised during his election campaign, and later granted, a visa to nationalist leader Gerry Adams, who had previously been denied a visa for his attachments to the IRA. These seemingly biased decisions were seen as extremely unfair by unionists.

Moreover, as previously stated, a key bargaining goal for unionists was to prevent additional actors from joining the conversation. Unionism was struggling to handle the imbalance they were facing within the context of the UK, let alone on an international scale. Nationalists had a very different perspective. Since unionist leaders refused to sit at the table with nationalist parties: “you start to influence whatever players you can get on your side. Hence the move in the US.”<sup>40</sup> John Hume, then leader of the moderate nationalist SDLP, made enormous strides in moving US support towards a peace process which would garner the Irish minority in Northern Ireland a fair agreement and away from support for a militant IRA agenda (Fitzpatrick 2017).<sup>41</sup> Through long efforts of Hume and others in the 1970s and 1980s, the American dimension of the peace process was activated.

Despite their scepticism, the increasing intervention of the Clinton administration in the 1990s began to sway more and more unionists to see value in courting American support and to take control of this new dimension to the conflict. Gary McMichael, then-leader of the Ulster Democratic Party, observed that “Americans are very romantic about Ireland and nationalists have taken advantage of that” but unionists could also attract “friends” in America and shore up this support for negotiations (quoted in: MacGinty 1997). Meanwhile, Senator George Mitchell emerged as the clear choice to be appointed mediator for the negotiations process. Mitchell had been acting first as a special advisor to President Clinton on economic matters in Ireland, not political matters, since January 1995, and then as chair for an international commission on decommissioning from December 1995 to January 1996, during which time unionists

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<sup>40</sup> Interview by author with SDLP negotiator, 10 June 2017 in Coleraine, NI

<sup>41</sup> Interview by author with SDLP negotiator B

accommodated themselves to his presence (O'Grady 1998). His personability also helped. Former Alliance Party leader, Lord John Alderdice recalled that when George Mitchell was tasked to produce a report on decommissioning paramilitary arms he held meetings with various people one on one and “became seen to be a ‘good guy’.”<sup>42</sup> Still, although unionists agreed to an external chair, they would have preferred someone from a Commonwealth country to shore up support for a continued UK identity – “Mitchell was by no means their choice.”<sup>43</sup> But Mitchell’s role was strategic from the perspective of the UK and Ireland, viewed as a conduit for British and Irish agendas that might not work or could be outright rejected for being seen as too one-sided, where Mitchell could “take blame where necessary” for failure.<sup>44</sup>

The US neutrality that was precariously developed over many years re: Northern Ireland, and still not entirely embraced by many unionist groups, was absent in Cyprus. The American dimension there had a much greater geopolitical component, with important NATO implications during the Cold War and later with Cyprus being located so close to the Middle East. As early as the Turkish invasion in 1974, seen as permitted by the U.S., “anti-Western sentiment was not only expressed by the Left but by all Greek Cypriots,” notes former Greek Cypriot President George Vassiliou, because it was convenient to view Türkiye as “nothing more than a tool of the Americans and NATO” (Kızılyürek 2014). Journalist Makarios Drousiotis argues that this position was developed by Soviet efforts to cultivate a public opinion that the invasion was a “NATO-led conspiracy” (Drousiotis 2016).<sup>45</sup> This was supported through gestures by the Soviet Union to “disengage the Cyprus problem” from NATO (Michael 2009, p. 100.). For Greek Cypriots, the Soviet Union reduced their anxieties about Türkiye’s commitments and about wider British and American interference, which they felt was unduly shaped by the need to keep Türkiye on NATO’s side in the east-west conflict. Both the Soviet Union and later Russia were seen as a positive force by

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<sup>42</sup> Interview by author 12 June 2017 in Belfast, NI

<sup>43</sup> Interview by author with SDLP negotiator, 10 June. Notably, Canadian General de Chastelain, who mediated alongside Mitchell with Finnish President Hari Holkeri was deemed to be more aligned with British interests.

<sup>44</sup> Interview by author with DUP negotiator, 24 October 2017 in Belfast, NI

<sup>45</sup> Interview by author, 8 August 2017, Nicosia, CY.

Greek Cypriots both in terms of a potential identity affinity through a shared Orthodox Christianity and due to their strategic narratives and anti-US positioning throughout the Cold War (Drousiotis 2016; Melakopides 2016; Faustmann and Solomou 2018).<sup>46</sup>

In contrast, Turkish Cypriots saw Soviet interference as preventing conflict settlement and as self-serving, noting correctly that “if the conflict continued, they could prevent Cyprus from becoming a member of NATO” and maintain friction between NATO members Greece and Türkiye.<sup>47</sup> But additionally, US support for Türkiye did not equate to support for Turkish Cypriots, who still feel that the international community refuses to acknowledge their right to exist as an independent authority while Greek Cypriots sit at the UN and in other legitimizing forums (Ker-Lindsay 2015). Rauf Denktaş was a frequent critic of how the Americans referred to the Greek Cypriot negotiators as the “Government of Cyprus” and noted that “the British Government grants recognition to states, not governments” (Denktaş 2004, p. 141).

From the 1990s, NATO and EU expansion were no longer confronting Soviet resistance and Russian interests were aligning with the US and the UK vis-à-vis Cyprus, and while the US was sceptical of enticing a settlement with EU membership they were generally on board with the Annan Plan approach (Holbrooke 1998).<sup>48</sup> Unfortunately, the UN and American-led attempts to intervene were “ultimately perceived as arrogant dictation to Cypriots by outsiders” (Palley 2005, p. 239). Two compounding issues impacted US influence during the Annan Plan process from 2000-2004: the longstanding Greek Cypriot perspective of the US as Türkiye’s ally, and war in the Middle East. Suspicions about American interests were rallied after the war in Afghanistan began in 2001 as Cyprus became once again a major military base for NATO activities. A Turkish Cypriot labour union leader reflected that on the same day several unions had organized a protest against the intransigence of Rauf Denktaş, American forces invaded Iraq.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> The Republic of Cyprus was one of the founding members of the Non-Aligned Movement during the Cold War, distancing themselves from the Western bloc, but retaining close ties with the Soviet Union (Stergiou 2007).

<sup>47</sup> Interviews by author 5 September 2017; 9 May 2018.

<sup>48</sup> Interview by author, 4 May 2018, London, UK

<sup>49</sup> Interview by author, 5 September 2017, Nicosia, CY

Once again, the US was perceived to have lost influence over necessary ally, Türkiye, and with heightened interests abroad, US influence in Cyprus was rapidly reduced to provision of development funding. This funding led to direct criticism of any recipients, culminating in a media scandal regarding the treatment of any organizations or persons who supported a ‘yes’ vote on the Annan Plan as paid agents of foreign interests or part of an “Anglo-American plot” to disadvantage the Greek Cypriots (Drousiotis 2005; Hatay and Bryant 2011).

## **2.6 Conclusions**

In comparing third-party relationships to domestic parties in both Northern Ireland and Cyprus, the systemic nature of the DMD is revealed. All domestic parties are seeking an outcome which ensures their ‘minority’ identity is not threatened. The local minority tends to seek outside assistance to provide this support, wielding their minority position as justification for wider internationalization. This is seen in Irish nationalist parties seeking Irish, European and American aid or Turkish Cypriots relying on Türkiye and the UN. The regional minority is likely to face a more difficult prospect in internationalizing the DMD. Primarily, this is because the threat to their community already exists due to an expanded scope of actors. However, two key differences between Northern Ireland and Cyprus are the alignment of the regional kin-states and the resulting level of internationalisation. The regional actor ostensibly maintaining the division in each disputed territory, the UK and Türkiye respectively, is to some degree on the side of the regional minority in Northern Ireland and firmly on the side of the local minority in Cyprus. This alignment of authority allowed for more constraints to be applied on the regional minority unionists in Northern Ireland through their relationship with the UK, producing concessions. In Cyprus, the alignment and perceived constraints of Turkish authority diminishes the independent Turkish Cypriot bargaining power in relation to the Greek Cypriots who are unconstrained by their regional kin-state.

Though unionists were unable to prevent the inclusion of the Irish dimension, the UK did support them in limiting or at least constraining wider involvement of third-parties such as the EU and the US. Indeed,

this effort to resist internationalization was bolstered by an improved Anglo-Irish relationship. Moderate unionist elites could suggest the Irish dimension as a trade-off for their community, encouraging support for the ultimate agreement so long as the agreement guaranteed decision-making authority remained with the communities of Northern Ireland. In contrast, while Greek Cypriots would also prefer to de-internationalize the conflict and re-establish their domestic position on the island, they are on the defensive when it comes to internationalisation. Türkiye's position on the island, the initial conflict which resulted in a UN presence, and the impact of wider international geopolitical interests is unavoidable. Greek Cypriots frame interference by Türkiye, and by international actors they perceive as supporting Türkiye, as an imposition, an injustice for which Greek Cypriots are due compensation, legitimizing their rejection of concessions.

Importantly, however, Greek Cypriots benefitted from one particular act of internationalization that was supported by their Greek counterparts – accession to the European Union. Once again, alignment with the DMD is key to understanding the differing impacts of this membership organization. Where the pooled sovereignty arrangements of EU membership for the UK and Ireland mitigated the risks of unionist concessions in negotiations, the accession of Cyprus to the EU without Türkiye, and indeed without a guarantee of Turkish Cypriot inclusion, mitigated the risks of not making concessions for Greek Cypriots. The move for EU accession may have proved a risk had not Greece supported Cyprus by blocking Turkish negotiations and forcing the EU to allow the island to accede in part. The result was that EU membership supported a 'no' vote in 2004 as Greek Cypriots ultimately gained an advantage against Türkiye by acceding without a settlement.

Ultimately, neither the outcome in Northern Ireland nor Cyprus resolved their DMDs. Greek Cypriots and Northern Ireland unionists both took decisions which protected them from their regional majorities, but also maintained their regional minority identities, whilst Turkish Cypriots and Northern Ireland nationalists retained their local minority status, although Northern Ireland's minority has hopes of

becoming the local majority. In examining both Northern Ireland and Cyprus today, as well as wider cases such as Kosovo, the Ukraine, and elsewhere, it is important to recognize these underlying frames and the opportunities for third-parties to mitigate the security risks produced by the double-minority-dilemma in order to avoid contributing to greater insecurity.

## **Chapter 3**

# **Partition And Protocol - Unionism and the Double Minority Dilemma in Northern Ireland**

### **Abstract**

Despite the success of the 1998 Good Friday Agreement (GFA), which ended over thirty years of violent conflict, Northern Ireland's power-sharing government has been facing a crisis since the UK's decision to exit the EU in 2017. This paper argues that this crisis can be best understood via the lens of a 'Double Minority Dilemma,' and specifically by the unionist community's perception of itself as a 'regional minority' threatened by Irish unity, and by extension European unity, without Great Britain. Through successive agreements between the UK and Ireland and the UK and the EU, unionist parties have variously positioned themselves as resisting treatment of Northern Ireland as a 'place apart' from the union with Great Britain. The paper compares the negotiations and implementation process that gave rise to the 1998 GFA with those that resulted in the 2020 Northern Ireland Protocol, and points to key changes in 1) relationships among Ireland, the UK and the EU; 2) the impact of these relationships for unionists, and 3) the strategic framing of decision making by unionist elites to present themselves as defending their membership in the union against the Irish and European threat. This analysis demonstrates that while the crisis facing unionist politicians today in Northern Ireland is familiar, responding as it does to a continuing 'Double Minority Dilemma' and concerns about being treated differently within the United Kingdom, it is also new, due to the EU's significantly altered role as an intervenor in Northern Ireland's domestic politics.

### **3.1 Introduction**

In 1998, the Nobel Peace Prize was awarded jointly to John Hume and David Trimble, representing the nationalist and unionist communities of Northern Ireland respectively, 'for their efforts to find a peaceful

resolution to the conflict in Northern Ireland.’<sup>50</sup> The Good Friday Agreement (GFA) has been lauded for ending over 30 years of violent conflict and is seen worldwide as an example of best practice regarding conflict resolution. Yet today, the power-sharing institutions at the heart of the Agreement are facing a crisis resulting linked to the United Kingdom’s withdrawal from the European Union (Brexit), which have arguably put the entire GFA in jeopardy. This paper argues that understanding the impact of Brexit on Northern Ireland’s political discourse requires understanding the identity politics of the Double Minority Dilemma (DMD), where both communities in a conflict perceive themselves to be a minority under threat. Work on DMDs emphasizes the role of third-parties in shaping conflict narratives as the concept entails an understanding that conflicts are rarely purely local (Twietmeyer 2023b). The DMD is thus particularly useful for understanding the impact of the UK-EU relationship on the conflict in Northern Ireland.

A fair amount of work has been done on the role of third-parties in Northern Ireland, from the historical conflict, through the peace process leading up to the GFA in 1998 (Guelke 1989; McGarry and O’Leary 1995; Arthur and Jeffery 1996). Systemic analyses of third-party influence beyond Ireland and the UK, particularly in relation to negotiations around identity and security, is relatively new in comparison (Kerr 2006; Todd and Coakley 2014; Walsh 2017). Moreover, the role of actors like the US or the European Union in the context of these ‘third-party’ relations has been widely debated, ranging from inconsequential or exaggerated (Hayward and Wiener 2008; Dixon 2006; McGarry and O’Leary 2013) to absolutely essential (Donoghue 1993; Laffan 2003; Meehan 2006; Lagana 2021). The DMD offers a framework which can assess the role of these different third-parties, specifically their role in contributing to the unionist community’s perception of itself as a ‘regional minority’. This self-framing is important for understanding the tensions in Northern Ireland we see today.

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<sup>50</sup> ‘Unionist’ or ‘unionism’ comprises two core components, the ethno-cultural Ulster Protestant identity combined with a British national identity. Unionists want to retain unity with the UK. Unionists tend to avoid the view that they are nationalists, which in the context of Northern Ireland is used to describe ‘Irish nationalists’, those who want to end partition and re-unite with the rest of Ireland.

This paper begins with an introduction to the crisis facing unionism in Northern Ireland in the wake of Brexit and situates this discussion in the understanding of unionism as a regional minority identity threatened by Irish unity, and European unity by extension. Contextualizing the unionist identity in this way allows for an examination of three interacting factors: 1) the EU's relationship to Ireland and the UK, 2) the impact of this relationship on unionists' identity security, and 3) the availability and utility of this relationship for unionist elites to strategically frame their negotiating positions as narratives of defending the union and retaining control over their own future. The paper examines these three factors through a comparative analysis of unionist positions at two points in time: first, the 1998 Good Friday Agreement and its implementation, and second, the 2020 Northern Ireland Protocol and its initial implementation. These comparisons demonstrate that the crisis facing unionist politicians today is both new, in relation to the EU's intervention in domestic politics post-Brexit, but also familiar, responding as it does to the same DMD that has defined unionism for a century. The paper finds that the EU provided an environment that managed the risks of concessions by unionists in the GFA but no longer does so under the Protocol. This finding is important for understanding unionism's current crisis as well as the future of unionism in the face of ongoing systemic change in the region.

### **3.2 Conceptualizing a Crisis for Unionism**

Concerns that the UK's 'Brexit' from the EU would threaten the peace in Northern Ireland, re-awakening divisions that had dissipated under the relative stability of the Good Friday Agreement (GFA), have been widely raised (Hayward and Phinnemore 2017; Humphreys 2018; Doyle and Connolly 2019; Murphy 2021). In her initial response to the Brexit referendum, Christine Bell (2016) suggested that it was an experiment in "kicking sleeping dogs," risking the peace process that had been successfully implemented for a record nine years since the last suspension of devolution ended in 2007. During the Brexit negotiations, the question of where the necessary border between the EU and UK would be located and fears about violent conflict should it be placed on the island of Ireland were pronounced. The withdrawal agreement ultimately included a 'Northern Ireland Protocol' which sought to alleviate these tensions by

allowing Northern Ireland to remain within the EU customs union (and single market for certain regulatory purposes), thus preventing the emergence of a hard land border on the island of Ireland (Harvey 2020).<sup>51</sup> The alternative, however, was that a customs border, with checks on goods, had to be placed in the Irish sea, between Great Britain and Ireland. This resulted in customs checks on goods moving from Great Britain to Northern Ireland at the latter's ports, although Northern Ireland and Great Britain are part of the same state: the United Kingdom. Unionists reaction to this sea border – which could be described as apoplectic – has led to their unwillingness to participate in Northern Ireland's institutions ever since,<sup>52</sup> thus posing a threat to peace and the GFA.

One aspect of the current deadlock in Northern Ireland is a shift from the traditional 'green' and 'orange' divide of nationalists and unionists to a divide within unionism itself. This does not clearly appear at a cursory glance. The effect of catering to the needs of Irish nationalists to prevent a land-border, has created, in what has long been a zero-sum world, an impression of nationalist gains, and this is associated with an increasingly strong narrative that a united Ireland is imminent. In 2022, unionists' ability to resist this narrative was dealt two successive blows. The first came in May, when the leading nationalist party Sinn Féin won a historic electoral victory, winning more seats in the Northern Ireland Assembly than any other party, which entitled its leader to become First Minister-designate. This was the first time since Northern Ireland was created in 1920 that a nationalist party has been the largest party in government. The second blow was the release of the 2021 Census results which showed for the first time since Northern Ireland was created that citizens identifying as Catholic or having been raised in a Catholic household were now in a majority (52.2%).<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Online at: <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/eu-exit-and-northern-ireland-Protocol>

<sup>52</sup> At the time of publication.

<sup>53</sup> Persons identifying as Catholic or raised as Catholic were a combined 45.7% to persons identifying as Protestant or raised as Protestant as a combined 43.48%. Neither group attained more than 50% of the religious identifying responses with other religious groups filling out the remaining 10.82%. From 2011 to 2021 there was also a higher increase in people who do not practice their household's religion in the Protestant community than in the Catholic community. Online at: <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/census/2021->

Yet this obvious evidence of the growing strength of Irish nationalism belie a more complicated politics. Public voting trends demonstrate that vote-flight from the dominant Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) toward other unionist parties and more centrist parties have split the unionist vote while nationalists were relatively united in supporting Sinn Féin at relatively stable levels (Figure 3.1). And the census results demonstrate that religion does not necessarily signal political identity. The multi-variable national identity question reveals 40% claiming British as a core factor of their identity, with no Irish component, in contrast to only 31% who claim Irish as a core factor of their identity, with no British component. Additionally, nearly 22% identify as either only Northern Irish or as British and Irish combined, which makes the political leanings of a sizable portion of the electorate harder to qualify. The political deadlock that has resulted in the failure to form a government for close to seven years (since Brexit) is a product of a unionist ethno-national political identity in crisis. But how we understand the current crisis within unionism – and by extension the conflict in Northern Ireland – depends on how a regional minority’s identity is defined through the Double Minority Dilemma and the role that third-parties play in the changing nature of this identity.

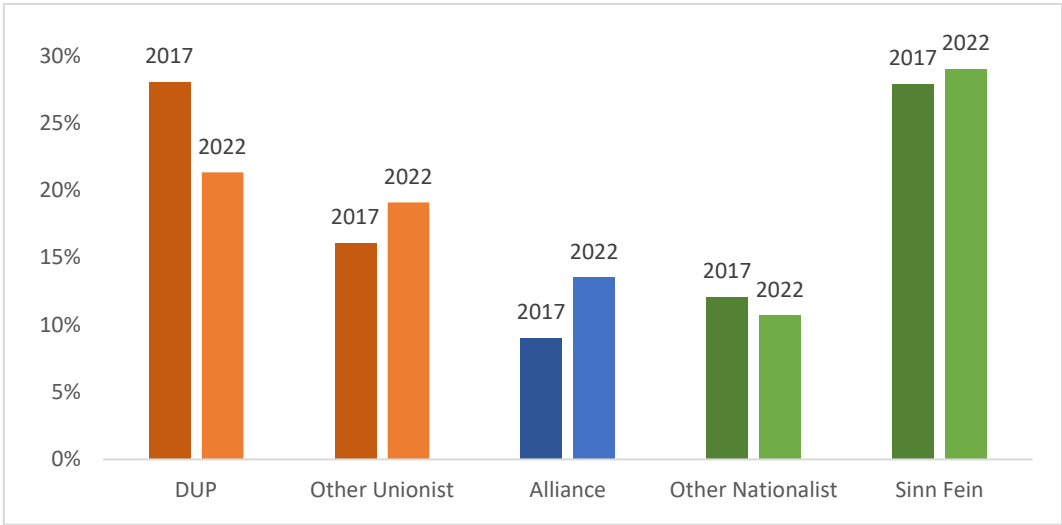
‘Double minority’ conditions exist where more than one community perceives itself as a minority under threat due to their focus on the power of outsiders perceived as supporting their ethnic rivals. For unionists, their ‘minority’ identity has been created and shaped in relation to the political and demographic dominance of nationalists on the island of Ireland, including the latter’s control of the Republic of Ireland (Twietmeyer 2023b; McAuley, McGlynn, and Tonge 2008; Rouhana and Fiske 1995; Jackson 1972). In their analysis of the ‘Troubles’ in Northern Ireland, Michele Dillon (1990) argues that ‘Protestants,’ a rough synonym for unionists, perceive the ‘Troubles’ of Northern Ireland, i.e., the thirty-year period of violence, to have resulted directly from actions taken by the Republic of Ireland. This perception is not unfounded. Until 1998, the 1937 Constitution of Ireland stated in Article 2 that “The

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[census#:~:text=The%20population%20of%20Northern%20Ireland,21%20March%20of%202021%2C%20was%201%2C903%2C175.](#)

national territory consists of the whole island of Ireland, its islands and the territorial seas” making unification what was once described by Ireland’s courts as a ‘constitutional imperative.’<sup>54</sup> This claim to Northern Ireland was a great source of insecurity for unionists throughout the ‘Troubles’. Although Article 2 was amended in the context of the GFA of 1998, it was replaced in the new constitution by an aspiration to Irish unification. The GFA also recognizes the right of the ‘people of Ireland’ to self-determination, and includes a process for achieving a united Ireland through a simple majority vote in dual referendums in Northern Ireland and the Republic. In other words, the GFA, while providing a buffer of majority consent in Northern Ireland for unionists, also provides the legal means, if not entirely ensuring the will or capacity, for nationalists to achieve Irish unity.

**Figure 3.1 Northern Ireland first preference vote share, 2017 and 2022 elections compared**



Note: Sinn Fein’s share of the popular vote in 2022 increased just 1.1% over 2017, in contrast to the DUP’s drop of 6.7%. Other nationalist parties also dropped 1.4% of the vote showing a relative shift within the nationalist voting bloc. The non-sectarian Alliance Party claimed the greatest increase overall rising to 13.5% of the popular vote in 2022 in contrast to their 9.1% share in 2017.

<sup>54</sup> Article 3 goes even further by establishing that the constitution and laws of the Republic of Ireland would be extended, unaltered, over the full territory of the island “pending” reunification.

The DMD suggests that the security of unionism as an identity *requires* the existence of an external threat. This notion – that the threat from the Republic of Ireland (ROI) contributes to the definition and consolidation of unionist identity – relates to theories of nationalism and ontological security.

Nationalizing ethnic groups emphasize ethno-national structural inequalities and fears, including external forces like those presented in the DMD, over all other social divisions (Wimmer 2013; Brubaker 1996). Moreover, unionist elites' decision making in Northern Ireland is driven by anxieties produced by their DMD, which produces a deep 'ontological insecurity' in the root of their identity (see also: Twietmeyer 2023b; Kay 2012; Mitzen 2006). The very notion of a political identity that defends the 'union' requires a threat to that 'union' to defend against. Within this existential framing, specific ethno-national identity markers may be more diverse - varying interpretations emphasize loyalist culture, Orange Order fraternal groups, affiliations to Protestantism, and broadly defined traits of 'Britishness' (Burgess and Mulvenna 2015; McAuley 2017; Tonge et al. 2014) - but these ethno-cultural markers are all governed by unionist politics around the threat of Irish unity.

The impact of the UK's withdrawal from the EU can be understood as a key juncture in the third-party relationships that define the DMD for unionists. The Brexit process and the subsequent negotiation of the Protocol has had at least three observable effects in Northern Ireland. First, there has been a radical shift in the nature of the EU's relationship with the UK and, because the ROI is a member of the EU, a commensurate shift in the relationship between Ireland and the UK. These relationships are, in the majority, trade related, but they have wider political ramifications as well. The second effect relates to how this change in relationships has impacted unionists via the DMD. Per theories of ethno-nationalism and ontological security, if unionism defines itself and its security position in relation to threats from outside third-parties like the ROI or the EU, then a change in the nature of these parties' relationships should affect unionism. Finally, the ability of the unionist leadership to leverage these changes in relationships in strategically framing unionist positions and concessions in negotiations as gains toward securing Northern Ireland's membership in the UK should be observable (Schulze 2018). While this third

component has never been an easy task for unionist parties at the negotiation table with the UK and ROI, it is even more under stress as a result of the Brexit withdrawal negotiations and the introduction of the EU as a bargaining partner with the UK.

These three effects will be examined through a comparison of the DMD conditions during the negotiations and implementation of the Good Friday Agreement and those – resulting from Brexit - that informed the negotiations and implementation of the Northern Ireland Protocol.

### **3.3 Europeanisation and the Good Friday Agreement**

Many observers and participants in the negotiations for Northern Ireland's Good Friday Agreement argue that the European Union (EU) had very little role in the process. There is no mention in the Agreement of the EU, though there are references to EU policy concerns that need to be addressed by the parties, and of course an acknowledgement of a European 'peace dividend' via implementation funds. Even those who believe the EU played an important role acknowledge it did not have a 'compulsory impact' on getting to an agreement. Hayward and Wiener (2008) found that any 'direct' impact from the EU on political elites within Northern Ireland was non-existent and while they note that a more direct impact for the EU emerged post-GFA when its Peace and Development funds were used to encourage cooperation between parties, they also cautioned that "the ones who are most affected by this 'carrot' are neither [key] political leaders nor paramilitaries, but community-level actors" such as civil society organizations (p. 47). The EU was rather deliberately kept away from the negotiations themselves because of UK and unionist desires to keep the conflict and any settlement as a domestic matter. Most actions by the European Union were in response to requests from Britain and Ireland, or in the wake of their express permission, rather than initiatives of the EU itself. Moreover, both the EU and Council of Europe had historically acted (i.e., before the GFA) only when there was agreement between Britain and Ireland (Ruane and Todd 1996, 280).

In contrast, there is some support for the idea that the European dimension provided an institutional framework that helped facilitate the productive transformation of British-Irish relations as well as providing a stable geopolitical environment within which key communal divisions could be overcome (Hayward 2004; Meehan 2009; Lagana 2021).

### **3.3.1 UK and Ireland Relations**

Supporters of this “Europeanisation” of the Northern Ireland conflict narrative focus on the impact that the UK and Ireland’s membership of the European Union had upon the actors involved and the institutional context of the conflict. Certainly, in terms of historical trajectory, with Britain and Ireland both joining the European Community (EC)<sup>55</sup> in 1973 we can observe the increasing interest of (continental) Europeans. In return, EC membership for Britain and Ireland gave these two states a position from which they could develop a culture of ‘pooled sovereignty’ between them. EC membership, which led to Ireland and the UK enjoying equality in the European Council put the two countries on an equal footing in a way Ireland had not experienced before in its relations with the UK, improving relations between the two states significantly (Meehan 2009). The integration process of the European Community also encouraged the two states to cooperate with each other on issues of joint-concern, including Northern Ireland, on a “battle-field” detached from the conflict itself (Ruane and Todd 1996, 280). For example, in speaking to the strength of the pre-Agreement peace process, Irish Taoiseach Albert Reynolds pointed to the ‘great personal relationship’ he had built with UK Prime Minister John Major “when they were both Finance Ministers in the [European] Council of Ministers” (Hayward and Wiener 2008, 41). This unofficial ‘track-two’ diplomacy filtered over into the realm of Northern Ireland politics as well.<sup>56</sup> As a constituency of the European Parliament, Northern Ireland has been electing three MEPs since 1979 allowing Northern Ireland’s politicians to participate in the affairs of Europe. The European

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<sup>55</sup> Refers to the common name for the European Economic Community (EEC), which was formally transitioned into the EU.

<sup>56</sup> Track-Two strategies are valuable for overcoming complications of leadership being seen as cooperating with ‘the enemy’ (Arthur 1999).

venue provided them with a neutral space within which to engage each other directly, something that had been virtually non-existent in the unionist-dominated Stormont parliament before its abolition in 1972.

Despite the EU's relatively distant relationship from the GFA, it has been argued that there were several key ingredients provided by institutional 'learning' via the EU, such as pooled sovereignty (Jones and Keating 1995). The institutional learning here wasn't simply about how forms of consociational power-sharing worked within the European Parliament, or why the rules for comprising European parliamentary committees devised by the 19th century Belgian mathematician Viktor D'Hondt might be useful in the Northern Ireland context. The learning was fundamentally about how borders could be eroded and sovereignty pooled in a European context, in a way that would not be threatening to unionists, and how to sell these ideas and the accompanying north-south institutions to them (McGarry 2006; Tannem 2013). Conceptually separating sovereignty from territory in this way was nearly impossible without the slow and steady integration of the UK and Ireland into the EU.

Despite the adoption in the GFA of a pooled-sovereignty and devolved approach to resolving the conflict in Northern Ireland, the resulting institutional arrangements were a difficult sell for unionists. The 1985 Anglo-Irish Agreement (AIA) formally established an Irish dimension to Northern Ireland's governance by granting the ROI input in negotiations in Northern Ireland and its future governing institutions, through an Intergovernmental Conference and north-south cooperation mechanisms (McLoughlin 2014). It also established the foundation for consent to an Irish unity vote, whereby Northern Ireland could join the ROI by the "wish of the majority of the people in Northern Ireland" ("AIA" 1985, Article 1). These major concessions, made by the UK without the consent of unionist parties within Northern Ireland, were widely criticized (Aughey 1989). The unionist leadership highlighted the goal of the AIA, as well as the subsequent Downing Street Declaration in 1993, which established the foundations for negotiations ("Downing Street Declaration" 1993), as being the marginalization of unionism and a betrayal by the UK government (McLoughlin 2014; O'Kane 2004). Later, when the UK's 1995 Framework Documents for

negotiations still contained North-South institutions with potential executive powers, unionists deemed them tantamount to the “economic and social unification of Ireland” and rejected them outright (Alcock 2001). But due to the slow integration of territories within the EU, institutions of cooperation such as INTERREG bodies (the EU interregional cooperation programme) were already in operation – the genie was out of the bottle. As one reporter later observed, “after three decades of membership of the European Union, Northern Ireland [had become] inextricably entwined in a ‘variable geometry’ of relationships with the rest of Ireland, the rest of the UK and the rest of Europe. Either/or ‘sovereignty’ choices are now remote from reality” (Robin Wilson, Irish Times, 5 March 2003. Quoted in: Meehan 2009). Due to the increasingly integrated Anglo-Irish relations, an Irish dimension manifested through formal institutions had become an unavoidable reality (Ruane and Todd 2007).

This reconceptualization of the nature of sovereignty in relation to the conflict underpinned the process of internationalization that allowed for the 1998 Good Friday Agreement (GFA) between not only the UK and the ROI but between the parties in conflict within Northern Ireland as well. The Agreement has three ‘strands’. Strand One involves the domestic power-sharing arrangement within Northern Ireland. Strand Two formalizes the Irish dimension through North-South institutions, and Strand Three establishes East-West cooperation between Britain and Ireland. Strand Three notably dealt with Articles 2 and 3 of the Irish Constitution, with the Republic agreeing to rescind its claim to the northern territory in return for an agreement from the UK on constitutional change by consent of a majority in Northern Ireland and a majority in the Republic of Ireland. Beyond informing the institutions of the GFA, Jennifer Todd observes that the pooled sovereignty conditions also underpinned the process of the Agreement’s *implementation* (see also: Haughey 2006). All day-to-day decisions and negotiations between unionist and nationalist parties are made within this pooled-sovereignty interpretation, meaning that any

movement away from this understanding of the core overlapping relationships challenges the very basis for the political arrangement therein.<sup>57</sup>

### **3.3.2 Unionism's European Dilemma**

By virtue of the complex political discourse of a DMD, positioning oneself in regard to Europe and the European Union entails expressing a political opinion on the conflict. As observed by Jan Erik Grindheim in 1993, divisions around the benefits or costs of European membership created an environment in which “the introduction of the European dimension... might reinforce the old cleavages” rather than uniting the parties for peace (Skar and Lydersen 1993). Indeed, despite the long historical record of Europe's involvement with Ireland and Britain, unionists have consistently been sceptical observers of any EU influence. A unionist reflecting on the question of EU influence in the GFA negotiations noted:

I'm not convinced it was a particularly large impact at the time of the Belfast Agreement and probably to certain limited extent even in terms of implementation... it wasn't I think central to the agreement itself... I'm not convinced of the centrality of that in terms of cementing the peace or cementing the agreement.<sup>58</sup>

This scepticism was quite clear through the Anglo-Irish Agreement process and during negotiations in the early 1990s. Northern Ireland's political parties disagreed widely on the role of Europe and European integration in resolving the conflict. In general, the nationalist Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) under the leadership of John Hume was the most pro-European. This pro-Europe position was supposedly due to economic concerns considering the amount of trade between the North and South of Ireland and the European market. Unionists, however, remained correctly suspicious of these motives (Ingraham 1998). Hume was a prominent member of the European Parliament and Europe, founded on the notion of eroding borders between states, and sought an all-Ireland institutional dimension, an ‘Irish dimension,’ as a step toward a united Ireland. For Unionists, this Irish dimension was seen as a backdoor to Irish re-unification. Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) leader, Ian Paisley asserted that “the whole aim

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<sup>57</sup> Personal communication with Jennifer Todd (2017-05-31).

<sup>58</sup> Interview conducted with Unionist politician, October 2017.

of the [European] community is to seek to weaken and eventually destroy [Northern Ireland's] links with the rest of the United Kingdom."<sup>59</sup> While the European community presumably had wider aims than this, Paisley and other concerned unionists were not raising unfounded issues. Several scholars were working on similar fatalistic narratives, offering predictions that greater north-south cooperation and progress toward European 'union' would mean "the relevance of the border in a political sense will also, in time, be diminished" (Donoghue 1993, 21). There were also apprehensions by republicans (staunch Irish nationalists) who were not entirely of one mind concerning Europe. Concerns were raised that the pro-European stance would lead to European unity rather than Irish-unity, thereby abandoning nationalist concerns of communal identity. But nationalists quickly united in a view of the EU as working positively towards Irish unification – further evidencing unionist fears.

A long view of history is required to understand the disconnect between British perspectives of Europe, coloured by a history of invasions and wars, and Irish perspectives, informed by centuries of Spain and France offering safe haven for Irish men and women.<sup>60</sup> In short, Ireland has a history of positive relations with mainland Europe, while the UK does not, and the culture around these perspectives frequently underpins popular opinion surrounding European integration even today (Maccaferri 2019). In terms of the double-minority-dilemma, the Irish position is deemed to be supported by European countries and by European institutions. The UK, having joined the EU in 1973, was also seen by unionists to have stepped away from the cause and the future stability of the union. The threat posed by Europe was attenuated, but only modestly, by the fact that the UK was a full member of the EU and thus afforded powers of consent. As the UK harmonized more and more relations with both Ireland and the EU, the gap between the interests of unionism and the actions of Westminster grew significantly, leaving unionist parties to feel even more threatened and marginalized.

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<sup>59</sup> Quoted by Paul Arthur in Skar and Lydersen, 1993.

<sup>60</sup> A sentiment relayed in an interview with Lord John Alderdice, May 2017.

For unionism, the effects of the European dimension have meant treatment of Northern Ireland as ‘a place apart’ by successive Westminster governments. This is untenable for unionists. It is a violation of the integrity of the Union and a key component of the double-minority dilemma, reinforcing fears of Irish unification through economic cooperation, producing concessions of authority via UK membership in the EU, and supporting inclusion of an Irish dimension in Northern Ireland’s politics. This growing concern, in combination with the final power-sharing arrangement of the GFA, requiring unionists to share power with Sinn Féin, the party they deemed to represent the Irish Republican Army paramilitary group, as well as cross-border institutions providing the ROI at minimum a consultative role in the governance of Northern Ireland, were major concessions for unionist negotiators. So how were unionist leaders in 1998 able to encourage their supporters to vote for a political agreement that contained concessions on these and several other core minority identity issues?

### **3.3.3 Communicating the European dimension to unionist voters**

For unionists, adapting to the new institutional frameworks of the GFA and the re-framing of the double-minority-dilemma was not easy. While the GFA referendum passed with 71% in favour, this was overwhelmingly via nationalist support, possibly as high as 96%, with estimates in the unionist community being closer to 52 or 53% voting in favour of the Agreement (CAIN Research Archive 1998). Additionally, the pro-Agreement leaders of the largest unionist party at the time, the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP), were branded traitors and swiftly lost favour within the unionist community after the Agreement was signed.<sup>61</sup> The UUP leader at the time, David Trimble, argued that the concessions were necessary in order to stave off an even worse agreement, possibly even entailing co-sovereignty for the UK and Ireland. Trimble was also acting under severe pressure from the UK and PM Tony Blair to make these concessions. Meanwhile the second largest unionist party at the time, the DUP, opposed the terms of the Agreement, leaving the talks and refusing to sign on to provisions effectively guaranteeing the inclusion of the IRA’s political wing, Sinn Féin, in Northern Ireland’s government. And despite the UUP carrying

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<sup>61</sup> Interview with former UUP MLA (2017-06-27)

the seat of first minister through the 1998 elections to establish the Northern Ireland Assembly, the ultimate results recorded a victory for the anti-Agreement wing of unionism. As observed by Henry Patterson, the seat count was narrow, with the UUP only winning 28 seats against 25 held by the anti-Agreement DUP and United Kingdom Unionist party. Moreover: “as at least three of the UUP’s own contingent were also anti-Agreement the ideological battle within unionism had clearly not been won by Trimble and his supporters (Patterson 2012, 247).

By the following Assembly election in 2003, the UUP had entirely lost its position as unionism’s largest party to the anti-Agreement DUP.

However, in 2007, staunch rejectionist and DUP leader Ian Paisley agreed to take the seat of First Minister in a newly formed Northern Ireland Assembly with Sinn Féin’s Martin McGuinness in the position of Deputy First Minister. In their extensive analysis of the DUP’s post-Agreement rise, Tonge, et al. (2014) observed that the party was required to make practical moves toward agreeing to share power with Sinn Féin. These moves can be understood by examining two moderating pressures, resulting from the wider EU influence on Anglo-Irish relations, which had also impacted the UUP before them (in 1998): building a narrative of protecting unionism from its most immediate threats and responding to ongoing pressure from the UK government to moderate their positions.

The first pressure arises internally as elites strive to air a narrative of ‘protecting unionism.’ The UUP was required to be very precise in selling the GFA as ending the violent conflict and shielding Northern Ireland from a more adverse political outcome, whilst simultaneously conceding both a delay on IRA decommissioning and an Irish dimension through cross-border institutions and a future unity vote. In many ways, ending the violent conflict was the primary reason for supporting the Agreement. Regardless of wider concerns surrounding the external threats to unionism, the internal and very real experience of violence and terror internal to Northern Ireland was easily presented as the greater threat to be dealt with. Per Trimble’s position, debates around decommissioning of paramilitaries and restructuring of policing

could be done under conditions of a cessation of violence – and this ending of violence would require balanced political concessions to nationalism including the principle of consent regarding the future of Northern Ireland (Millar 2008a). There was a direct trade-off here which promised the eventual demobilization of the IRA and nationalist paramilitary forces. While border ‘erasure’ produced and supported by EU membership posed risks, it also provided a very practical reduction in violence from the Republican branch of the nationalist community as partition had motivated much of its violence. The greater threat can be argued to be that of Irish unity, rather than partition, granting unionists a greater claim to justice-seeking protections in negotiations.

Moreover, pro-Agreement unionism sought to frame north-south cooperation as solely economic to reduce the perception of the political meanings behind such institutions including recognition of Irish authority (Alcock 2001). They argued that the political question of Irish unification now depended on the consent of people in Northern Ireland and not through Irish or British or even European interference, thus re-centring unionism in the decision-making process. This strategic bargaining logic, framed by the DMD, is also illustrated by the concession made by unionists in 1998 to the so-called Irish unity vote, or ‘Border Poll.’ The Border Poll is clearly a significant threat to unionism. But in 1998, pro-Agreement unionist leaders were able to negotiate this as a short-term win. The provision for holding a Northern Ireland border poll, made into UK law via the Northern Ireland Act 1998, states that “if the wish expressed by a majority in such a poll is that Northern Ireland should cease to be part of the United Kingdom and form part of a united Ireland, the Secretary of State shall lay before Parliament such proposals to give effect to that wish...” (Northern Ireland Act, 1998, part 1, section 1). The provision of majority consent significantly delays the question of Irish unification, the core of unionism’s DMD. It requires a substantial demographic and political shift within Northern Ireland which, though occurring at present, was not deemed to be of immediate concern in 1998. Despite the concession of the ‘Border Poll’ also being able to be framed as a ‘win’ for nationalists, the inherent delay ultimately reduced the

nationalist threat to the union and ensured the decision of Irish unity could not be taken without the consent of the unionist community. As UUP referendum press officer, Alex Benjamin, noted:

We sold [the Agreement] on a number of issues, namely the fact that our reading of the Agreement was that it secured Northern Ireland within the Union, gave power back to the people of Northern Ireland and enabled everyone to get involved and participate... (quoted in: Somerville and Kirby 2012, p. 243).

Moreover, the concession also came in tandem with the agreement by Ireland to withdraw its constitutional claim, further reducing this existential threat.

For both Ireland and Irish nationalists, the concession of unionist consent on a united Ireland and the removal of the constitutional claim were mitigated by membership in the EU. As already mentioned, the joint membership of both the UK and Ireland meant that Irish-identifying citizens of both states could easily move north and south and engage in trade, educational exchange, and other benefits of the pooled sovereignty arrangements. This made the delay a less difficult concession on their part and thus gave unionists room to wield the unity vote, as well as other core components of the GFA, as a major concession from their side.

Once the Agreement was signed and the Northern Ireland Assembly established, the dangers of the concessions were glaringly obvious in both the short and longer-term. It was in this climate that the DUP was able to present themselves as the ‘true protectors of unionism’ by demonstrating that they had stood against the concessions of the 1998 Agreement, particularly around decommissioning, and had subsequently refused to form a government across from Sinn Féin until such time as the official decommissioning processes had concluded. The party could then sign the St. Andrews Agreement in 2007, not as the party that made concessions to Sinn Féin but rather as the party that led the unionist community out of the era of concessions and defensive politics (Patterson 2012, 251). Notably, however, the dangers of European integration and border-erasure had become a footnote in the day-to-day political

discussions in Northern Ireland, accepted as the default reality of Northern Ireland's political existence as a devolved constituency in an EU-member state: the UK.

The second, but no less important, moderating influence was the continued pressure from the UK government for unionists to reach an agreement, pressure which was reinforced by demands from the Irish government that the UK secure an agreement. This pressure emerges in a direct line from the Anglo-Irish Agreement, which, as presented earlier, resulted in-part from the altered institutional context and learning provided by joint-EU membership for these two states, through to the referendum vote in April 1998. McGarry and O'Leary (2006) highlight the importance of the consistent policy of successive governments in the UK vis-à-vis the Anglo-Irish cooperation on a devolved government in Northern Ireland from the time of the Anglo-Irish Agreement forward. Even when the Conservative government of John Major "depended upon unionist support in the House of Commons," the UK's position did not waver (McGarry and O'Leary 2006, p. 50.). This stems from the difference between the Conservative party in the UK, which, at least historically, holds to the notion of Northern Ireland as 'British' and the people as 'kin', and the Conservative government, or the state, which must remain neutral in the conflict in Northern Ireland to maintain its good relations with the Republic of Ireland (McGarry and O'Leary 2004a, p. 228). When Tony Blair's Labour government came to power this pressure on unionists was applied judiciously with the joint-support of the Irish and American governments and within a context of wider European support. So judicious was this pressure, in fact, that David Trimble would reflect upon his final decisions as securing unionism not against the Irish threat alone, but against the threat of being bodily removed from the decision-making by a Westminster government intent on a peace agreement by any means necessary (Millar 2008a; Mowlam 2002).

The DUP of the new millennium would implement the GFA, including overseeing several commissions on policing, decommissioning, and other core issues, and ultimately negotiate the St. Andrews Agreement, forming a power-sharing government with Sinn Féin in 2007, under the continuation of a

Labour government that consistently applied pressures on unionists on behalf of both the UK and Ireland. In 2006 the British and Irish governments released a joint statement threatening a ‘plan B’ – that should no agreement be reached they would develop their own partnership arrangements to redevelop the GFA (Tonge, et al. 2014). DUP leader Iain Paisley also provided this justification for sitting across from Sinn Féin, suggesting that they “we [the DUP] were told [by Britain] that if we didn’t do this, then it was going to be curtains for our country,” resulting in the destruction of the union with Britain and ultimately risking a “joint government by the South of Ireland” (see also: Molony 2007, p. 43-44; McGarry and O’Leary 2009). This concern was echoed by DUP negotiator, and later First Minister, Peter Robinson. He recalled that where Westminster’s long-term policy was concerned, they “weren’t bluffing...If we hadn’t reached an agreement we would have ended up with a much greener [pro-nationalist] form of direct rule” (quoted in: Tonge, et al. 2014, pp. 48-49). This notably mirrors the fears and justifications for concessions made by Trimble in 1998. In general, the DUP, like the UUP before them, were able to ‘sell’ their members on the idea that after the St. Andrews Agreement, their concessions meant that the risks posed by the Irish dimension had been reduced and the likelihood that Northern Ireland would stay part of the UK had been sufficiently increased.

This paper has previously argued that the European Union had a positive effect on negotiations for the GFA in 1998 in various ways. Despite unionist rejection of EU influence, the pooled sovereignty and border erasure effects of the joint Anglo-Irish membership in the EU ultimately allowed for agreements around a future ‘border poll’ and increased devolved community-level authority and consent in Northern Ireland that could be framed as an acceptable trade-off for unionists. These outcomes were produced by the conditions of the DMD influenced by this membership – not direct interventions by the EU itself. And while there is much to be said for the EU’s financial interjections in supporting the peace process,<sup>62</sup> it can

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<sup>62</sup> The EU Agriculture funding which contributes to North-South co-operatives is estimated at just under €350 million for the next seven years. The INTERREG funding for North-South cooperation is estimated at just under €190 million. And this doesn’t include the funding for peace initiatives through the PEACE I, II and III programmes.

be reasonably argued that the EU was not an intervening actor in the negotiations of the Agreement. Rather, it was an institutional context within which elites could more easily negotiate their DMD and sell concessions to their communities. The next section examines how Brexit and the subsequent agreement on the Northern Ireland Protocol changes the nature of the EU's role in the Northern Ireland politics. The EU will now be shown an intervening actor in the DMD. Importantly, unionists were part of the alteration of this relationship context, as they chose to present the EU as a more influential actor – one to be opposed – in their decision to support the UK referendum to exit the EU. The result of this action has affected not only how unionist elites have been able to pick up this new perception of the EU in their political discourse but also how they frame their entire DMD.

### **3.4 The European dimension on the eve of 'Brexit'**

Two conditions existed at the time of the GFA in 1998 that were altered by, or by the time of, the Brexit referendum in 2016 and that are key to understanding the recent changes in the parameters of the double-minority-dilemma: 1) the dominant position of unionism and 2) the assumption of the UK's continued membership in the EU. The first affects the dominance of unionism in relation to the border poll concession. The threat of a diminishing unionism, a reality post-2016, did not exist in 1998. The split within unionism in 1998 was certainly notable, but regardless of party preference, the broader base of support for all unionist parties and the essential agenda of remaining part of the UK was strong. As demonstrated by more recent electoral results, census results, and public discourse, the base of support for unionism that would have been expected to hold strong against a border poll for unity with Ireland has diminished. Part of this growing weakness is evidenced by the portion of unionists voting remain in the 2016 Brexit referendum, with one survey suggesting 25% of DUP supporters voted to remain compared to 42% of UUP supporters, and a full 83% of the moderate Alliance Party which represents a number of historically Protestant community members. A general explanation for this outcome is that unionists have been benefitting from economic ties to both the Republic and continent of Europe via the EU and wished

to retain this access. This has led to suggestions that a successful border poll might be framed in terms of EU membership rather than Irish unity (Diamond and Colfer 2023).

The second condition that has changed is the UK's withdrawal from the EU. As previously observed, although the EU was not an active player in the 1998 negotiations, the idea that the UK would no longer share membership in the EU in common with the ROI was not thinkable in 1998. This assumption about the future resulted in components of the Agreement taking circumstances for granted. Importantly, the diminished role of the EU in the 1998 negotiations obfuscated an important security for the unionist community's survival in a post-border poll united Ireland – that the protections afforded Northern Ireland's nationalist community by Ireland's membership in the EU, including the pooled sovereignty arrangements and free movement of goods and people, would have been afforded to Northern Ireland's unionist community by the UK's membership in the EU (Todd 2021; O'Leary 2021). Post Brexit, these protections no longer exist.

As discussed, a key component of EU membership in 1998 was that it took the question of the Irish border out of the dispute between nationalists and unionists – the effective lack of a border could be justified because of Ireland and the UK's membership of the EU. In the aftermath of Brexit, the border issue returned with a vengeance. The primary point of discussion was a question of a “hard- or soft-Brexit,” and a ‘hard’ Brexit would necessarily involve some re-negotiation of the border. The Northern Ireland border is the only land border that the UK has with the European Union (or anyone else). It could operate easily within the EU's single market and customs union, as these effectively erased it for economic purposes. In reflecting on the potential risk of reinstating this border, several key actors from the original 1998 negotiations reflected on the role the effective disappearance of this border through membership in the EU played in Northern Ireland's peace process. Former UK PM Tony Blair commented:

A hard border between the ... [UK and Ireland] would be a disaster and I am sure everyone will and must do all they can to avoid it. In addition, the GFA was formulated on the assumption that both countries were part of the EU. This was not only for economic but also for political reasons, to take account particularly of nationalist aspirations (Doyle 2017).

Blair's counterpart, former Taoiseach Bertie Ahern, expressed similar opinions:

We certainly don't want to dig up any of the enmities, animosities of the past. We hope that we find in the new British Government after June 8 that they will work with us to find solutions, that we can continue to move our people over trade and build on relationships... (Belfast Telegraph 2017).

Former Taoiseach Enda Kenny observed that "one of the most beneficial effects of the peace process and our common membership of the EU has been the virtual elimination of that border" (Young 2016). And American mediator Senator George Mitchell also noted how the ability to move back and forth easily had contributed to Northern Ireland's ongoing peace process by "reducing stereotypes on both sides" (BBC News 2016). One Alliance Party candidate spoke to this movement as well, paraphrasing Irish politician Maurice Hayes' sentiment that "once we were both in the EU it didn't matter what side you were on" and describing the frequency of trade across the western border into co. Donegal.<sup>63</sup>

But this idyllic sense of shared community was soon lost when concerns regarding the sovereign rights of Britain and Ireland were raised once more in the public discourse in 2016, as they had been prior to accession to the European Economic Community in 1973. The old politics of UK versus Ireland become mapped onto the positions of anti-EU leave-voters and pro-EU remain-voters. For example, a perspective amongst pro-Brexit voters in Northern Ireland holds that that fearmongering around the impact of the European withdrawal upon the Agreement is no more than a political tactic to "scupper Brexit" by 'pro-Europe' Irish nationalists.<sup>64</sup> Though these voting blocs were not completely unified, it is true that the vast majority of leave-voters were unionist voters and remain-voters were nationalist.

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<sup>63</sup> Interview conducted with Alliance Party candidate, June 2017.

<sup>64</sup> Personal communication with Belfast property manager (2017-05-31).

Additionally, the much-lauded erasure of the land border remains a threat for unionism in the context of the DMD. Though blurred by the mutual benefits of economic relations and peaceful community relations prior to 2016, this threat has returned to focus as a result of Brexit. According to a citizens assembly conducted in 2018, participants largely in the ‘remain’ category of voters (mainly Catholics), were concerned that withdrawal from the EU would produce a hard-border leading to increased tensions and violence, while a minority of participants on the Leave side (mainly Protestants) were much less concerned about living with the land border (Garry et al. 2020). More importantly than increasing tensions within the territory, however, the question of the future impact this might have on a potential united Ireland was raised as a potential source of anxiety for unionists. As Garry et. al. note, supporters of ‘leave,’ including the DUP who, as will be shown, held significant bargaining power following the Brexit vote, were interested in staving off EU centralization. Yet paradoxically, “their own project may be seen as unilateral centralization by many of the Northern Irish (and the Scots)... The exit of a multinational member state from the EU confederation without strong support or consent from each component may jeopardize its own union” (Garry et al. 2020; also see: Murphy 2021). In other words, Brexit might in fact produce a dissolution of the UK into independent states of its constituent parts, increasing tensions and re-invigorating motivations for Irish unity and hastening a Border Poll toward a united Ireland in the Northern Ireland case. This concern arises logically from the prior understanding that the original Agreement relied upon the border-erasure and pooled sovereignty circumstances to function.

However, the trade-off for avoiding a hard-border on the island of Ireland, one that might ultimately result in Irish unity if not a return to conflict, is a ‘border’ between Northern Ireland and the UK. This realizes unionism’s fears of being treated differently from the rest of the UK and could also make the potential for Irish unity more viable. Either way, the relationships with the two homeland states would be impacted, creating imbalances in the DMD and threatening the identity of unionists.

Ultimately, the notion that a hard-border would somehow result in a united Ireland was less of a concern than might have been anticipated, despite how frequently this fear was used to drum up support for and against various post-withdrawal conditions.<sup>65</sup> It was highly unlikely to be a hard-border exit regardless as leadership in both the UK and Ireland as well as the EU was steadfastly against changing the context of the land-border in Ireland regardless of any debates within Northern Ireland itself. Thus, the Northern Ireland Protocol, a customs check located in the Irish sea separating Northern Ireland from the UK, entered the discourse as the measure for both granting the UK its exit from the EU whilst addressing the special circumstances of continued North-South cooperation and protection of the 1998 Agreement.

### **3.5 European Intervention: The Northern Ireland Protocol**

Several years of negotiations around how the UK would withdraw from the European Union without jeopardizing the peace of the Good Friday Agreement (GFA) produced the 2020 Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland (“the Protocol”)– an agreement on customs checks in the Irish sea to accompany the formal EU-UK Withdrawal Agreement. According to the Northern Ireland government’s website, the Protocol aims to 1) avoid a hard border between Northern Ireland and the ROI; 2) ensure the integrity of the EU’s single market, and; 3) facilitate access for Northern Ireland goods to the GB market and free trade agreements between the UK and third countries. It does so through a complex restructuring of authority between the UK and the EU which leaves Northern Ireland within the EU customs union and single market and thus subject to the EU customs code. The major concern, as Katy Hayward (2021) describes, is that “the Protocol brings areas of strong policy relevance for Northern Ireland under the auspices of joint responsibility between the UK and the EU” (p. 212). This new arrangement of powers constitutes a much greater expansion of EU authority over certain areas of domestic policy in Northern Ireland than was ever envisaged in 1998. Moreover, because this is not true of any other part of the UK, it makes Northern Ireland separate, distinct, and apart-from the rest of its preferred state in a way that is

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<sup>65</sup> Notably, while just 26.1% of total respondents felt that a hard-border UK exit would result in a united Ireland, this was only 4.5% of Protestant respondents while a much more significant 52.7% Catholic respondents. (Garry et. al. 2020b).

profoundly threatening to unionism and reinforces their DMD. Finally, the Protocol does not contain sufficient elements of domestic consent for the parties in Northern Ireland. Article 18 of the protocol set a future date of December 2024 where the parties in the Northern Ireland Assembly would be granted the opportunity to declare consent to continue the Protocol another four years or call for a re-negotiation of the arrangements by the UK and the EU. This limited consent is a significant reduction in the authority of the Northern Ireland parties, unionist and nationalist alike.

### **3.5.1 UK and Ireland *and* EU relations**

The Protocol increases the importance of the UK-EU relationship over the previous Anglo-Irish relationship, situating the EU, through the ROI as lead interlocutor, as a dominant partner in decisions regarding Northern Ireland. One key criticism raised in addition to the lack of domestic consent is that, although the Protocol actively seeks to maintain the North-South cooperation arrangements of the GFA, it does not explicitly take into account the British-Irish relationship that has been shown to be required for successful maintenance of the GFA (Tannem 2020). The good relations between the two states were previously balanced and made predictable by the shared EU membership. Although there is an opportunity for a new, possibly more substantial system to be put in place to offset this loss of the more informal relationship, the Anglo-Irish strand of the GFA remains a future question as it transitions to UK-EU discourse. Clearly, the tension between the two states at least on the subject of Brexit itself demonstrates an emerging friction in the bi-lateral relationship. More importantly, the various new arrangements of the Protocol reaffirm the Double Minority Dilemma for unionism as a threat of a united Ireland from Dublin supported directly by an EU authority which jeopardizes the trappings of sovereignty with which the unionist population defends itself, at a time when the UK is no longer a powerful member of the EU.

Article 12(2) of the Protocol provided for the EU's presence in all decisions of implementation of the Protocol by UK authorities. This interference has resulted in several legal clashes during the Protocol's implementation throughout 2021 and 2022 as the UK government attempted to circumvent some of the

more problematic trade restrictions by delaying implementation and was preparing to pass a bill in 2023 which would have unilaterally overridden components of the Protocol. However, the newly introduced UK-EU Windsor Framework (2023) ended this unilateral process by opening up a ‘trusted trader’ and green-lane corridor, for goods that are not intended to leave Northern Ireland, in order to simplify within-UK flow of goods and appease interests in London. Additionally, the Windsor Framework seeks to address the question of consent in the Northern Ireland Assembly through the introduction of the ‘Stormont Brake.’ This provision allows the Assembly, through a vote of 30 Assembly members across two or more parties, to notify the UK government of any objection vis-à-vis changes in EU laws which would have a ‘significant impact specific to everyday life’ for the communities of Northern Ireland (Szczepański 2023). The UK, in exceptional circumstances, could then act to stop the application of these laws.

The UK is broadly in support of the new arrangements under the Windsor Framework, as are several nationalist and other parties in Northern Ireland who are willing to accept this compromise as a way to move forward. However, the DUP and several other unionist parties will not accept the framework primarily because Northern Ireland is still being treated as different to and ‘a place apart’ from the rest of the UK.

### **3.5.2 A new(?) crisis for Unionism**

The preoccupation with being ‘a place apart’ within the Union as a result of the GFA and now the Protocol is key to understanding the crisis for unionism today. The introduction of the Protocol highlighted the division of the communities in Northern Ireland in interpreting the new political conditions post-Brexit. For their part, the nationalist community begrudgingly moved forward with the new arrangements, having rather remained in the EU entirely, and many groups are beginning to run public opinion polls on pursuing a vote on Irish unification. In terms of their situation vis-à-vis the peace agreement in Northern Ireland, nationalists are satisfied, at least for now, because they have avoided a border on the island of Ireland. Indeed, at least in the perception of the Protocol as imposing a sea

‘border’ between Northern Ireland and Great Britain, the Protocol provides an even greater concession to the nationalist identity. Combined with the historical perception of the EU as a supporter of Ireland and nationalists in Northern Ireland, this new arrangement is naturally perceived as a direct threat by unionism who view the terms of the Protocol to be a profound constitutional threat to unionism.

A growing sentiment that Northern Ireland’s political institutions, and the complex array of wider regional institutions within which they operate, were becoming more and more supportive of the nationalist community’s cause has underpinned increasing support for various smaller, more extreme unionist parties. Protests erupting in late March 2021, while bolstered by growing anxiety around the economic impacts of the newly introduced customs arrangements, made clear their opposition to the protocol was primarily due to its threat to Northern Ireland’s place in the Union. During this period, the Loyalist Communities Council, representing unionist interests and parties, wrote to PM Boris Johnson stating it was withdrawing its support for the GFA, noting the Protocol “gives effect to the Irish nationalist position at the expense of the unionist position” and “undermines the basis on which the Combined Loyalist Military Command (CLMC) agreed their 1994 ceasefire” (David Campbell 2021). This was not surprising as the unionist community believed it had already made more domestic concessions in the GFA than what was fair. But their previous level of discontent had been manageable. With the Protocol and the increasing role of the EU, and their recent loss of this predominant position in governance, unionism – as the regional minority<sup>66</sup> – perceives itself to be under a greater threat and is now seeking new safeguards.

A separate concern of ‘apart’-ness from the UK arises from the idea that differentiated citizenship jeopardizes the equality guaranteed by the 1998 Agreement. By law, any individual born on the island<sup>67</sup> is

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<sup>66</sup> Notably, at the time of writing, this status appears to be on the precipice of a turn. Future research on the impact of a trade in positions, as the nationalist population becomes the ‘regional minority’ – a demographic and political majority within Northern Ireland but a minority in the United Kingdom – and the unionists become the ‘local minority’, will be necessary to understand the complex dynamics of any future unity vote or renewed political agreement.

<sup>67</sup> Or whose parent or grandparent was born in Ireland.

eligible for Irish citizenship and so many nationalists in Northern Ireland had already acquired dual-citizenship with Ireland and retain access to the EU post-Brexit. Uneven distribution of EU status and variations in access to goods and services, benefits, and systemic supports, could suggest Irish citizens “enjoying more rights than British citizens,” or a two-tier citizenship within Northern Ireland (Harvey 2020, 7). Indeed, one of the anecdotes of the 2016 referendum result was the large number of individuals applying for Irish citizenship in the immediate aftermath. There were a large number of cross-border commuters who quickly became concerned with the potential for an international border and many people who identified as British wanted to ensure they and their children would retain access to Europe for jobs, holidays, and freedom of movement. Even unionist politicians were aware of the important socio-economic considerations, with DUP MP Ian Paisley Jr advising “if you are entitled to a second passport then take one” (Belfast Telegraph 2016). Some concern arose that the race for citizenship signalled an underlying “European Identity” for Northern Ireland citizens that might sway a future border poll in favour of nationalism. However, the passport rush was less a signalling of a new identity, and more a desire to retain access to the EU and the benefits therein.

### **3.5.3 Communication Breakdown: The DUP and the Protocol in Northern Ireland**

In the lead up to the Brexit referendum, political leaders in Northern Ireland reflected the longer historical position of their communities on the question of the European project – the DUP campaigned on a hardline anti-European Union position while Sinn Féin was strongly pro-Europe. Both campaigns removed more moderate parties from the table, reinforcing a polarization of opinion in Northern Ireland. Unionist parties have since elected to motivate the narratives of their DMD in condemning the Protocol and drumming up support. Various smaller unionist party leaders released a joint statement in September of 2021 affirming their “unalterable position that the protocol must be rejected and replaced by arrangements which fully respect Northern Ireland’s position as a constituent and integral part of the United Kingdom” (quoted in: MacCambridge 2021). More hardline leaders like Jim Allister, of the Traditional Unionist Voice (TUV), have stated that the protocol seeks to design an all-Ireland solution

and challenges Northern Ireland's "rightful place within the United Kingdom," while Billy Hutchison of the Progressive Unionist Party (PUP) declared "the British government tore up the Act of Union and also the Belfast Agreement. In doing this they diluted our Britishness" (MacCambridge 2021). These statements very clearly frame the Protocol as a threat to unionist identity and existence.

Jeffery Donaldson, leader of the DUP, has also iterated that the Protocol jeopardizes both Northern Ireland's place in the UK internal market and its constitutional position and is currently refusing to take part in government until concerns about the differentiated treatment created by the Protocol/Windsor agreement is sufficiently addressed.<sup>68</sup> Donaldson is responsible for taking the seat of Deputy First Minister, thus establishing the power-sharing executive with the First Minister, a position held by Sinn Fein since the last election. His refusal to do so thus prevents the power-sharing strand of the GFA and ultimately prevents the establishment of government in Stormont. But while his position may seem to be aligned with unionism's wider concerns about sharing power in these new circumstances, he has been facing criticism from within the unionist community.

Primarily, the DUP is tarred by its failure to mitigate the Protocol outcome after they secured a Confidence and Supply agreement to prop up PM Theresa May's coalition government in the 2017 UK elections. Reminiscent of the 1992 UUP-Major government prior to the 1998 Agreement, this position granted the DUP a significant buffer against concerns of marginalization by the UK. However the DUP's influence, motivated by the opportunity to reinstate a hard-border in Ireland and gain more security in the face of their rapidly changing demographic status, ultimately backfired by producing the less agreeable Protocol arrangement (McGarry and O'Leary 2019). The DUP pressured Theresa May to pursue an Irish border result, negating any room for a compromise that might jeopardize Northern Ireland's relationship to the Union. But as the EU and Ireland were strongly opposed to reinstating a hard Irish border, the DUP's influence only halted processes of negotiation for a withdrawal deal and these delays ultimately

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<sup>68</sup> Jeffrey Donaldson, Twitter, Jan 9, 2023.

resulted in her resignation in 2019 (Syal 2019). Boris Johnson would subsequently secure a majority government in December that same year, officially eliminating the DUP's authority. The outcome of this gamble was far worse than the concessions the DUP fought hard against under May, one example being the UK remaining within the European Customs Union, leaving no border between Northern Ireland and the rest of the UK (McGarry and O'Leary 2019). Instead, the DUP's tenure set in motion the Protocol, situating a border between Ireland and the UK. Additionally, unlike previous instances of UK pressure on unionist negotiators, UK pressure on unionists to comply with the agreement negotiated under PM Johnson operated completely independently of the DUP representatives and without their consent. As a result, despite continuing their previously successful strategy of defending unionism's right to consent and staving off marginalization, the DUP now finds itself branded either as 'traitors,' in their own community as the negotiators of this unappealing solution, or as 'troublemakers,' in being unwilling to get on with the business of government while opposing the Protocol. The breakdown in unionist support for the DUP has in part resulted in vote flight to the smaller extreme unionist parties or to the middle Alliance Party (Figure 3.1).

During a Northern Ireland Assembly discussion in November 2021 on the impact of EU and UK leadership and decision-making in regard to the Protocol, an interesting shift in narrative from party elites on both sides occurred. Sinn Féin representative Declan Kearney presented his party's concerns that, while Sinn Féin does not want the Protocol as it is a function a Brexit they opposed, *the majority* of people in Northern Ireland understand the Protocol is necessary to protect the GFA and ensuring its smooth implementation is paramount. The response of UUP representative Steve Aiken was to correct this claim of majority support – noting that studies had shown *the majority* “want no barriers between Great Britain and Northern Ireland” and “no barriers across our United Kingdom.”<sup>69</sup> This exchange demonstrates the positioning of both community parties as seeking to represent the “majority” demands of

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<sup>69</sup> Quotations from NI Assembly Hansard, AQO 2667/17-22, November 8, 2021

the people of Northern Ireland. It appears that these parties are vying to represent the more “legitimate” claim of a cross-communal majority. However, these majority-based arguments belie the underlying motivations of the double minority positions staked by the two political representatives. Where Aiken sought to clarify a majority position of wanting to keep a UK of no borders, Kearney stresses majority support for the need to avoid a hard border and protect North-South relations with Ireland.

### **3.6 Conclusion**

The conflict in Northern Ireland is still clearly functioning via the framing of the DMD for unionist elites. The crisis for unionism today is three-fold. First, they are losing the numbers game within Northern Ireland both in terms of demographic weight and elected representation. Second, the DUP, which had built its political strength in the unionist community on a narrative that it was recovering the concessions lost by its predecessors in the 1998 Agreement around power-sharing and North-South institutions, has seen its position upended by Brexit and the negotiation of the Protocol. The Protocol, in jeopardizing Northern Ireland’s relationship with the UK and treating Northern Ireland as separate, or apart-from it, is a betrayal of unionism laid at the feet of the DUP. And third, the imposition of the EU as an intervening actor in Northern Ireland’s peace process has altered the DMD for unionism. Unionists might have been somewhat advantaged by the withdrawal from the EU as that allow them the possibility of drawing clearer lines between the North and the South of the island. But instead of removing the threat of pooled sovereignty and border erasure created by EU membership, the Protocol disadvantages unionists significantly by repositioning the authority of the EU within the politics of Northern Ireland. The safeguarding mechanisms of the GFA which were designed to protect unionist interests and mitigate their insecurities in a shared-government arrangement with nationalists have been altered unfavourably by the removal of the UK’s EU-membership. The future of unionism appears bleak. The identity is broadening while its dominant party, the DUP, struggles to adapt in the face of an increasingly imminent Border Poll. Without the mitigating conditions of the UK’s EU-membership, it remains to be seen how unionism will emerge from the current crisis.

## Chapter 4

# Coming Together or Staying Apart: Implications of the COVID-19 “Green Line” Checkpoint Closures for Negotiations in Cyprus

### Abstract

The island of Cyprus exists in a state of suspended politics due to the UN-monitored buffer zone, commonly referred to as the “Green Line,” which has separated the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities since 1974. The island’s conflict is frequently described as ‘intractable’, with successive failures to negotiate a political solution on the island that this article argues stem from its ‘Double Minority Dilemma’, where both parties to the conflict see themselves as threatened ‘minorities’. Paradoxically, in the wake of COVID-19, the traditionally unity-seeking Greek Cypriot leadership supported what looked like a strengthening of the ‘border’ via the closure of checkpoints, through which Turkish Cypriots can access the south and Greek Cypriots can access the north. Pro-division Turkish Cypriots, in contrast, decried the closures and supported re-opening, i.e. a weakening of the border. By way of an analysis of the politics of the ‘Double Minority Dilemma’ that surround perceptions of the Green Line, presented through a comparison of paradoxical positions on the Green Line checkpoints both during their initial opening in 2003 and their closure in 2020, this article explains this elite behaviour as a strategic legitimization of more hard-line ‘traditional’ bargaining positions in future negotiations.

### 4.1 Introduction

The intractability of the Cyprus conflict is evidenced through decades of failures to negotiate a political settlement (Fisher 2001b; Lindahl 2019). This intractability, I argue, is a product of two factors: i) conditions arising from a Double Minority Dilemma (DMD), where both parties to a conflict perceive themselves as threatened minorities for whom concessions in negotiations represent an existential threat (Jackson 1972; Schaller and Abeysinghe 2006) and; ii) a state of suspended politics resulting from partition in 1974 and the UN-monitored buffer zone, or “Green Line,” which resulted from it. The DMD has been reinforced by the ability of elites to manipulate public perceptions of the Green Line as a hard

permanent border or as something that is either not a border or a soft, temporary one. Turkish Cypriots, who either seek a federal border in a decentralized united Cyprus, or a border between two states, adhere to the former position. Greek Cypriots, either want a unitary state or a federation as close to it as possible (with freedom of movement throughout the island), take the latter position. Yet, in February of 2020, as the world responded to the onset of the coronavirus pandemic, the ostensibly unity-seeking Greek Cypriots supported checkpoint closures, hardening the island's border, while pro-division Turkish Cypriots supported re-opening. Why did both communities' elites take these paradoxical positions?

The article begins with a historical analysis of the DMD and politicization of the Green Line in Cyprus. This framing contributes a novel way to understand intractability by centring a party's perception of its threatened 'minority' status as essential to its identity and bargaining position in negotiations. The original opening of crossings in the Green Line in 2003 are presented as a 'first disruption,' demonstrating the paradoxical positioning of Cypriot elites as a strategic response aimed at strengthening their ability to achieve their ultimate objectives in negotiations. The article then briefly situates pandemic and emergency politics in Cyprus within the global response to COVID-19 before examining the unilateral and arbitrary Greek Cypriot decision to close the checkpoints in the Green Line and wider ethno-national implications of the Greek and Turkish Cypriot responses in more detail.<sup>70</sup> By examining these positions through the frame of the DMD, elite behaviour is again shown to be guided by a strategic effort to strengthen future bargaining positions in negotiations. The risk of perceiving the Green Line as a hard border in 2020, which concerned moderate Greek Cypriots, was deemed manageable by hardline Greek Cypriots in a context of demands for greater security in the south of the island. Meanwhile the unilateralism of the closure presented an opportunity for hardline Turkish Cypriots in the north to build support for their partitionist position within the Turkish Cypriot community by depicting Greek Cypriots as unreasonable.

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<sup>70</sup> This study utilised discourse analysis of statements from government officials and various news media to qualify policy responses and attitudes emerging in the early COVID-19 period. Citations are a representative sample.

#### **4.2 The ‘Double Minority Dilemma’ and ‘Green Line’ as sources of intractability**

Resistance to agreement in Cyprus stems from a Double Minority Dilemma (DMD) which pre-dates the 1974 partition. Under double minority conditions, both parties to the conflict perceive themselves to be threatened minorities. Turkish Cypriots are demographically a significant minority on the island and fear that in a Greek Cypriot controlled Cyprus, they would be under the control of the majority.<sup>71</sup> As a result, they either seek independence (i.e., a two-state solution) or a federation which approximates this. On the other hand, Greek Cypriots see themselves as a minority in the region, a status defined by both regional demographics and geopolitical power dynamics. They are preoccupied, not so much by the Turkish Cypriots but by Türkiye, which they see, correctly, as the power behind Turkish Cypriots. This leads Greek Cypriots to view concessions to Turkish Cypriots as implying concessions to Türkiye, the power that poses an existential threat to them (in much the same way as, prior to February 2022, Ukraine saw concessions to Russian-speaking elites in eastern Ukraine under the Minsk Accords as empowering Russia (Åtland 2020)).

The DMD has been a reality of Cyprus’s politics from its independence in 1960. The initial power-sharing constitution provided for Türkiye to be given the position of constitutional guarantor, with a unilateral right to intervene in Cyprus to uphold the original constitutional order. From the position of Turkish Cypriots, Türkiye’s guarantor status was necessary to protect them from actions by the Greek Cypriot majority, including any unilateral moves by it to overturn the constitution’s power-sharing partnership. Although Greece was also made a guarantor power, this did little to reassure Greek Cypriots, as Türkiye is much closer than Greece and more powerful (Lijphart 1977). In the years after independence, as Turkish Cypriots feared, Greek Cypriots did reject the constitution’s provisions on

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<sup>71</sup> The division has remained approximately 80% G/C and 20% T/C for half a century. These percentages represent only the self-identifying population of T/C and G/C denominations and exclude groups identifying as ‘other’ or ‘none.’ Also, statistics on Cyprus are difficult to confirm, particularly concerning the territory of Northern Cyprus where the Turkish “settler” population creates confusion around self-identified T/Cs and the settlers who are part of a nationalising agenda by Türkiye. See Loizides 2015. Today, Turkish Cypriots would also be an economic minority in a future united Cyprus as their level of development has lagged behind that of the Republic of Cyprus, adding a layer of minority status beyond simple demographics.

power-sharing and also sought, unsuccessfully, to unite Cyprus with Greece, as a way of overcoming the threat from Türkiye. When Greek Cypriot hardliners, backed by the military dictatorship in Athens, launched a coup in Cyprus on 15 July 1974, aimed at enosis (union with Greece), Türkiye invaded the island on the 20 July, citing its rights and responsibilities as a ‘guarantor.’ They subsequently partitioned the island, effectively giving rise to the UN buffer zone, or ‘Green Line,’ which separates the Turkish military-controlled (Turkish Cypriot-occupied) regions in the north from the Greek Cypriot-controlled (Greek Cypriot-occupied) south (Michael 2009; Polyviou 2013). The Green Line spans 112 miles and is patrolled by some 900 UN peacekeepers. According to one legal expert, the Green Line “is not an agreed or fixed, but rather an uncertain and occasionally disputed, area” (Polyviou 2013, p. 185). Since 1974, Cypriot politics on either side have involved a narrative on the Green Line which reflects their DMD positions as threatened minorities.

Greek Cypriots (G/Cs) see the Green Line as a temporary, and thus exceptional, buffer between a temporary Turkish occupation and a free and independent united Republic of Cyprus. The line’s existence is seen as an injustice, a violation of the Republic of Cyprus’s sovereignty that can only be rectified by unification. Alternately, Turkish Cypriots (T/Cs) view the barrier as offering a necessary permanent protection from the assimilationist Greek Cypriots and imagine the Green Line as either a federal or international border, in each case delineating a Greek Cyprus from a Turkish Cyprus. In using the line to realise the future objectives of each party, it is in the interest of the rival elites to resist any normalization of the line that works against their long-term objectives (Constantinou 2008; Agamben 2005). A hardening of the border would clearly be destructive to a future united Greek Cyprus, while a disappearing border would weaken the T/C goal of separation. And yet, domestic elites in Cyprus often take decisions that run counter to these presumed positions.

#### **4.2.1 First Disruption of the Green Line: The Checkpoint openings in 2003**

The first disruption to these perceptions of the Green Line came in April 2003 with the initial openings of four checkpoints in the Green Line for public crossings. The openings began with the sudden and paradoxical announcement by hardline T/C leader, Rauf Denktaş, of the Ledra Palace crossing opening in the capital city of Nicosia/Lefkosa on 23 April. This was followed quickly by the Agios Nikolaos/Strovilia and Pyla/Beyarmudu crossings to the east,<sup>72</sup> and finally, in mid-May, the major Agios Dometios/Metehan crossing was opened just west of Ledra Palace (Figure 4.1). These openings occurred in the midst of UN-led negotiations for the Annan Plan for Cyprus (Bryant 2010).<sup>73</sup> The move was surprising to most observers at the time as it went against Denktaş' frequently emphasized two-state agenda. Some believed that the initial openings were dictated by Türkiye, which was seeking to ingratiate itself with the EU and wider international community, or that they resulted from a strategic move by Denktaş himself who at the time was losing popularity within the T/C community (Christou 2003a; Christou 2003b).<sup>74</sup> The impact of the EU appeared pertinent, given that it had decided a week earlier on 16 April that the Republic of Cyprus could accede to the EU without a settlement, leaving Turkish Cypriots outside the EU. Commenters noted that the 2003 opening was a way to release political pressure building within the north, illustrated by various protests for a federal settlement amidst a growing economic crisis and anger over the EU decision (Peristianis and Mavris 2011; Kambas 2003). Another observer thought there was a legal incentive, noting that the opening coincided with hearings by the European Court of Human Rights into G/C property claims in the north, and that this required making the north accessible to Greek Cypriots.<sup>75</sup> Though the real reasoning for this unprecedented move is still

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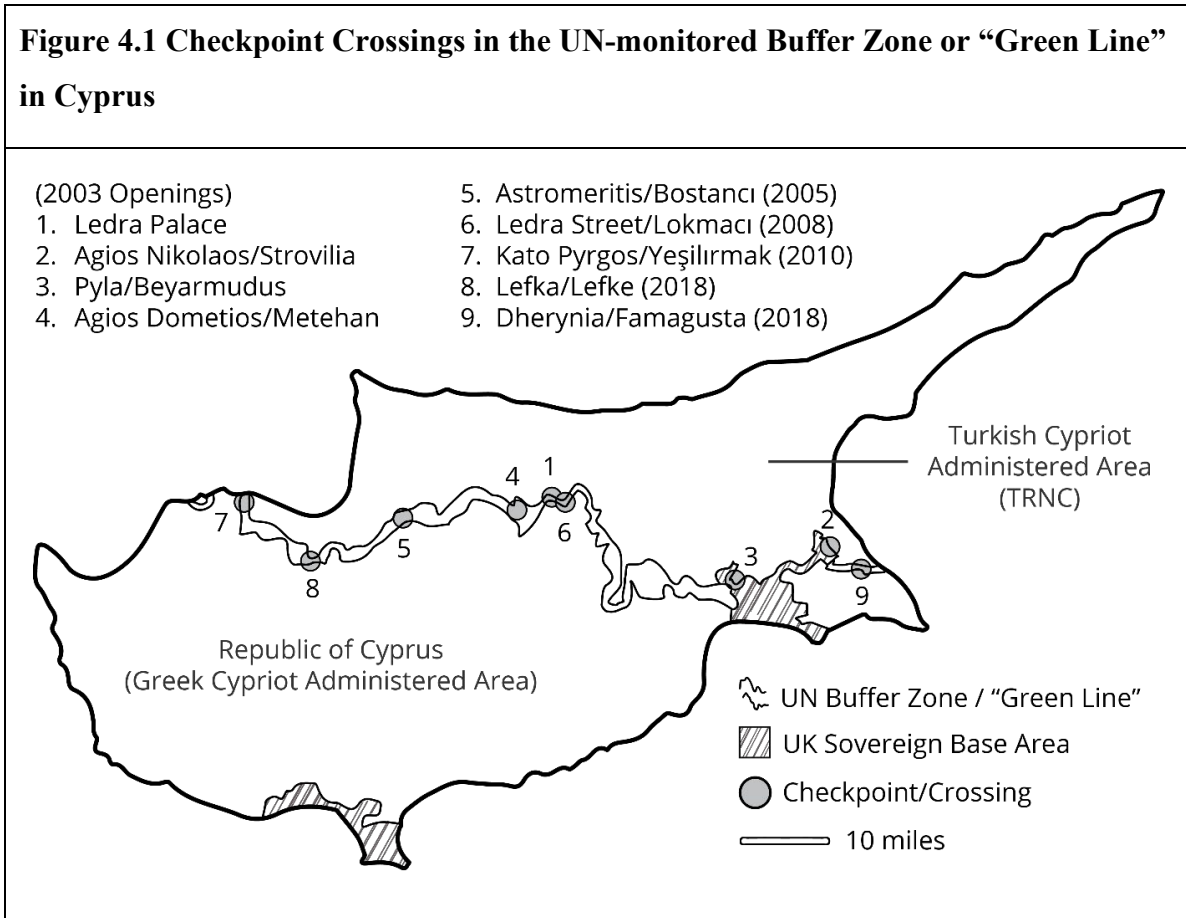
<sup>72</sup> These are both crossings located on the eastern British Sovereign Base Area of Dhekelia. The UK retained two sovereign base territories on the island of Cyprus after the 1960 independence: Akrotiri near the city of Limassol in the South and Dhekelia northeast of the city of Larnaca.

<sup>73</sup> The "Annan Plan" is short-hand for the Cyprus peace negotiations process under then-Secretary General Kofi Annan from 2000 to 2004.

<sup>74</sup> Various interviews conducted in 2017 and 2018 supported these positions.

<sup>75</sup> Interview by author, 13 August 2017, Kyrenia, CY.

speculated, the eventual openings of a total of nine checkpoints<sup>76</sup> were lauded by moderate Cypriots, peacemakers and observers on both sides of the line.



These moderate observers maintained that the ability to cross over would open up social interaction in positive ways with the potential to break down inter-communal barriers on the island (Kenworthy, et al. 2005; Tausch, et al. 2010). Many cross-communal efforts that are common today, inter-communal school and sport activities for example, would not be possible without these crossing points (Psaltis 2012; Ioannou 2020b; Makriyianni, Psaltis, and Latif 2011). When the checkpoints were closed by the Republic

<sup>76</sup> The Astromeritis/Bostancı crossing in the western side of the island opened in 2005, also unilaterally by the Turkish Cypriots; followed by the Ledra Street/Lokmacı pedestrian-only crossing in the heart of Nicosia/Lefkosia in 2008 and the Katos Pyrgos/Yeşilirmak crossing in 2010, which were joint initiatives with the UN and EU. The final two checkpoints, Lefka/Lefke and Dherynia/Famagusta, were opened through a north-south joint-agreement with UN and EU supervision in 2018.

of Cyprus (the G/Cs) in February 2020, the main moderate Greek Cypriot party, AKEL, highlighted that this was a counterproductive step given that the 2003 openings suggested the Green Line was not a permanent border and signalled a step toward reunification (AKEL 2020).

But support for the openings among Greek Cypriots has been far from universal.<sup>77</sup> Hardline G/C nationalists refused to cross the Green Line in 2003 because they believed that the act of crossing would recognize the borders' legitimacy (Lytras and Psaltis 2011). As Olga Demetriou (2007) observed, there was a strong feeling amongst G/Cs that crossing would indeed be giving in to T/C leader Rauf Denktaş' agenda of separatism...with many public declarations to the effect of "one should 'not need a visa to visit one's own house.'" For Greek Cypriots who oppose openings, the UN Buffer Zone operated as a temporary intervention solely to protect the south from Turkish aggression. It was not seen as a 'border' in a legal sense. The act of opening crossings resulted in new built infrastructure and institutions of passport control, reifying the legal nature of the border. To assuage these public concerns at the time, T/C official Serdar Denktaş – son of the hardliner Rauf Denktaş, but member of a more moderate T/C coalition – emphasized that the showing of G/C passports to Turkish authorities would not amount to recognition of the state in the north (Demetriou 2007). South of the line, then Attorney General Alecos Markides, a moderate, also supported the openings by explicitly declaring that the act of crossing would not amount to a form of 'treason,' nor would it produce any recognition of the state in the north. Both elites were countering the more hardline narratives which were being highlighted in G/C media at the time (Christou 2003a; Ioannou 2020b).<sup>78</sup> Additional discourses included the narrative that the openings were a strategic move by Türkiye, making this inherently threatening to a reasonably distrustful Greek Cypriot public. Moreover, the international community's support for the openings was, and continues to

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<sup>77</sup> Rebecca Bryant, Personal Communication, 2018.

<sup>78</sup> Olga Demetriou contextualizes this by noting that during her research on the crossings at that time, the G/Cs she interviewed would actively quote Markides' declaration to her in their explanation for choosing to cross.

be, viewed among Greek Cypriots as a signal that they support a normalization of the Green Line as a border, and the Turkish and Turkish Cypriot authority to control their side of this border.

So it is that in 2003, we see the first combination of hard-line Greek Cypriots positioning themselves against openings and hard-line Turkish Cypriots positioning themselves in support. There is a split in the interpretation of the openings within each community, one that can be explained through the lens of the DMD.

#### **4.2.2 The double minority identity and the notion of ‘injustice’ in bargaining**

A core component of the double-minority dilemma rests on the ontological security of each community in conflict. Ontological security suggests that states care about the ontological structures which frame their identity and will “act in ways in order to maintain a stable sense of ‘self’” or security in their identity (Zarakol 2017). Changes that threaten this stability alter the foundations and references which are core to an actor’s self-defined identity. Jennifer Mitzen (2006) notes that a counterintuitive product of ontological security is that actors may prefer the certainty of the conflict to the uncertainty that a change could produce (p. 342-343). As observed in their study of Cypriot in-group and out-group narratives, Smeekes, McKeown, and Psaltis (2017) found that when group members feel threatened they were “more likely to endorse their ingroup historical narrative” to “maintain a sense of continuity” in their identity (p. 282). In a DMD, if each party defines their identity as a minority through conflict with other actors in the system, the notion of an end to this conflict thus becomes threatening to their identity-based security, promoting non-settlement and intractability (Rumelili 2015).

The ontological security of a threatened ‘minority’ status is also key to the bargaining position of these parties. The bargaining position of a minority in a DMD necessitates clarifying the threat which legitimates this defensive position until the final conclusion of negotiations. Though traditional definitions of decision-making power often suggest that the more powerful actor has the greatest bargaining position (Dahl 1957), it is not always true that parties will seek to improve their power

position to gain an advantage. William Zartman (1997) observes that if the more powerful actor would always wield a veto in such a manner, then asymmetric negotiations, with mutually favourable outcomes, would not exist. Rather, perceptions of power inequality are diverse and might in fact advantage less powerful actors (Fang 2022; Zartman and Rubin 2000). Zartman further suggests examining justice and fairness as an intervening factor in a successful negotiation (1997, p. 125). Particularly in a DMD, minority-status advantage is not a question of traditional power in negotiations, where we would see the more-powerful privileged, but rather a question of leveraging a legitimacy argument regarding perceptions of injustice and deservingness, or rather entitlement (Rawls 2001, 72-74). The ‘minority,’ in the face of a perceived threat to their existence, establishes for themselves a base assumption of entitlement around the institutions and politics of their self-determined identity. This entitlement is derived from a legitimacy argument that might be based in historical claims, essentialist nationalism, liberal equality arguments, etc., and is directed at convincing wider third-party actors to support their side (Haklai 2015; Pavković 2006). For the ‘regional minority’ in particular, in Cyprus the Greek Cypriots, this narrative of the minority and an injustice to be rectified is key in confronting wider international perceptions of the conflict which may otherwise place them in the ‘majority’ position.

Additionally, the two parties in Cyprus need to simultaneously maintain the possibility of their own future objectives - no border or a weak federal border in the case of G/Cs vs a strong federal or international border in the case of T/Cs - while also demonstrating the alternative as a tangible threat. This maintenance establishes the stability of this threatened minority identity which is prioritized over and frames all other objectives and explains how the DMD reframes counterintuitive decision-making as strategic bargaining. For example, despite ultimately wanting to erase the Green Line, G/C hardliners see the increasing number of openings reifying the border, giving recognition to T/C institutions and Turkish influence, and normalizing cross-border interactions. Even moderates such as former President George Vassiliou cautioned that the longer the perception of the Green Line as a normalized border is considered ‘status

quo', the stronger Türkiye's roots in Northern Cyprus will become.<sup>79</sup> This outcome is a greater threat than an impenetrable buffer zone, tangibly representing a framing of the ongoing conflict within which G/Cs are the victims of Turkish aggression.

On the other side of the line, hard-line T/Cs might have also explained the decision to open the Green Line in 2003 through strategic justice-seeking angles, including garnering wider support for the elusive international recognition of their regional authority (Isachenko 2012).<sup>80</sup> For example, the openings, and G/C rejection of them, could have been presented to wider international audiences as evidence of T/C peace-making and G/C intransigence. But T/C elites did not make an effort to drive this particular narrative. For T/Cs, it was the lack of explanation for this unilateral decision, self-serving or otherwise, from neither hardline nor moderate T/Cs, that contributed to legitimizing their future justice-seeking bargaining position. Particularly following the G/C's resounding 'no' to the Annan Plan agreement in 2004, T/Cs have presented themselves as the good-faith resolution-seeking minority continually making concessions to the dominant G/Cs in the south.

Additionally, avoiding legitimation of the opposing community's minority claims prevents engaging in pre-negotiation agreements, which would normally slowly accumulate, producing a foundation for dialogue between the two conflicting states (Berridge 2005). This barrier results in a 'nothing is agreed until everything is agreed' approach to negotiations.<sup>81</sup> So it is that, even while inter-personal relations on the island may have grown since the 2003 opening of the checkpoints, the major institutional bodies of the island continue to resist any formal cooperation in absence of a peace agreement (Baykallı, Hatay, and

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<sup>79</sup> Interview with former President George Vassiliou, 14 September 2017, Nicosia, CY.

<sup>80</sup> Interview with Turkish Cypriot Negotiator, 17 August 2017, Kyrenia, TRNC

<sup>81</sup> This critique was the central focus of a 2018 conference, *Nothing is Agreed until Everything is Agreed: A Comparative Evaluation of the Comprehensive Settlement Approaches*, PRIO Cyprus Centre, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Cyprus, and The Centre for Sustainable Peace and Democratic Development. Cyprus: Nicosia, Thursday June 28, 2018.

Sophocleous 2020; Tzimitras and Hatay 2016). Such is the condition into which emergency COVID-19 procedures were introduced.

#### **4.2.3 COVID-19 and “emergency” politics**

Concern with COVID-19 emergency responses in Cyprus generally mirrored narratives which emerged globally regarding the long-term implications of pandemic politics. Jonathan White defines the condition of emergency politics as those circumstances “in which actions departing from conventional practice are rationalised as necessary responses to exceptional and urgent threats” (White 2015). Often, these derogations from the norm may take the form of explicit law-creation, for example the emergency powers law in Hungary (Ioannou 2020a), or re-interpretation or creative application of existing legal processes, such as increased migration restrictions across Europe (Stierl and Dadusc 2022). In addition, the domestic implementation context has serious implications for policy effectiveness and long-term outcomes, which highlight the unique circumstances of nationally divided societies (Kishi 2020). The sense of urgency, tied to a discourse of securitization, raises unique challenges and opportunities for decision-makers. Florian Bieber (2020) categorizes these challenges into two primary concerns: proportionality and democratic process (Klugman 2020).

#### **4.2.4 Emergency politics in Cyprus**

Cypriots, north and south, shared similar pandemic discourses to the rest of the world. The first measures in response to COVID-19 produced panic, fear, and the feeling that authorities were ‘not in control’ of a worsening situation (Cyprus Mail 2020). The pandemic would eventually prompt authorities throughout Cyprus to restrict both external travel and internal movement, both between and within each territory and these measures were debated for efficacy and proportionality. Like many other tourism-supported economies, the impact of external travel restrictions into Cyprus was a source of domestic tension. Also similarly to other countries, the economic strain of internal social-distancing and isolation quickly began to take a toll (Kiliaris 2020). The public in Cyprus also shared concerns that the authorities were side-stepping democratic process, using the sense of urgency to legitimate otherwise objectionable policy

decisions and stifling of debate. Indeed, the Attorney General of the Republic of Cyprus remarked that objections and constitutionality discussions should be postponed to “a longer time when we will have the luxury of judging” (Politis 2020). These policies were also criticized for the lack of checks or balances with which to guarantee a return to normal political behaviour after the crisis is over.

However, extreme movement restrictions between internal territories, such as the closure of the Green Line check-point crossings preventing all north-south movement Cyprus, have been far less common globally. Even in similar territorial ‘grey-areas’, such as the boundary separating Northern Ireland from Ireland, movement remained generally open throughout the pandemic with temporary checkpoints for COVID-19 travel screening only implemented in winter of 2021 (Hayward 2020). Moreover, as shown in the next section, the first of these inter-regional restrictions in Cyprus were implemented on 29 February, two weeks before closing the external ports into Cyprus to non-residents (PIO\_ROC 2020a), and while restrictions on freedom of movement within the territories on the island, north and south, were mandated with clear time horizons (that were subsequently extended), the final restrictions on movement across the Green Line received no such timelines. The highly differentiated approach to the Green Line policies left much of the public in a state of broad uncertainty about the future of the island, compounding the wider conflict over the meaning of the closures for ongoing negotiations in Cyprus.

#### **4.2.5 The untapped potential of emergency politics**

Crises like the COVID-19 global pandemic can present unique opportunities in complex conflict environments. Due to its borderless nature and non-political origin, the pandemic could have provided an impetus for conflict resolution (Kelman 2012). Theoretically, questions of blame or injustice that would otherwise need to be rectified can be sidestepped by the ‘act of god’ issue at hand. This ‘disaster diplomacy’ has been examined in the Greek-Turkish rapprochement stemming from a series of disastrous earthquakes on both sides of the Aegean in late 1999 (Çarkoğlu and Kirişci 2004) and again in early 2023. Demitris Keridis views the key contribution of the earthquakes as a paradigm shift regarding formerly non-negotiable interests, observing, “from time to time, nature has a way of making a mockery

of the artificial borders drawn by competing nations” – a sentiment recognized globally in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic (Keridis 2006). Indeed, early observers pointed toward the potential for COVID-related cooperation to act as a confidence-building measure, setting foundations for a better negotiation process early on in the crisis.

The communal leaders G/C President Nicos Anastasiades of the Republic of Cyprus (ROC) and T/C President Mustafa Akıncı of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), met in early February 2020 to discuss an all-island response to COVID-19. At this meeting they agreed to coordinate through the Bi-Communal Health Technical Committee (BHTC) (PIO\_TRNC 2020b). The BHTC was originally formed in 2008 as one of seven UN-backed Technical Committees for the Cyprus negotiations. The decision of the two communities’ leaders to meet and agree upon the BHTC as a mechanism for coordinating an all-island response to the pandemic provided some confidence of a willingness to cooperate substantially on an all-island scale. But with the closure of four crossings by Anastasiadis and the ROC, against the BHTC’s recommendations, and less than a month later, unilateral responses to the pandemic, on both sides, quickly became the order of the day (Dizdaroglu 2020). This outcome is unsurprising. The most recent round of negotiations prior to the pandemic failed in July 2017 and while there had been discussion around re-opening negotiations in months prior to the COVID-19 outbreak, there were no negotiations ongoing during the pandemic (Ker-Lindsay 2000). This reduced likelihood of positive engagement that might have been invigorated by the emergent situation (Baykallı, Hatay, and Sophocleous 2020). Rather, the resistance to bi-communal cooperation reinforces the level of intractability maintained by the DMD and Green Line politics.

### **4.3 COVID-19 and checkpoint closures in 2020**

Despite concerns about the openings of the checkpoints in the Green Line in 2003, daily life in Cyprus had largely normalized around the now-porous Green Line and its nine checkpoints, the final two opening just in 2018 (Figure 4.1). Daily crossings by both labourers and tourists had become common and deeply

integrated into the island's economy, north and south. The second disruption of the maintenance of double minority bargaining positions regarding the Green Line is therefore not further opening, but sudden closure. On 28 February 2020, Republic of Cyprus Minister of Health, Konstantinos Ioannou, announced that “the operation of the crossing points of Ledras Street, Astromeritis, Lefka, and Dherynia [would be] temporarily suspended for a period of seven days,” subject to review and extension if necessary, starting on 29 February (PIO\_ROC 2020c).<sup>82</sup> Protests against the decision by moderate activists began immediately that day with an all-island protest organized for 7 March. The conflict came to a head when Republic of Cyprus police clashed with protesters, utilising tear gas and making several arrests (Reuters Staff 2020).<sup>83</sup> The images of Republic of Cyprus police firing tear gas on protestors made international headlines and prompted public outcry. A joint statement released by protest organizers highlighted several concerns, two of which I will examine in detail: “the arbitrary and unjustified closing of the crossing points” and “the resurgence of the nationalist sentiment ... which will eventually lead [Cyprus] to a permanent partition” (Unite Cyprus Now 2020a).

#### **4.3.1 “Unilateral and arbitrary” closures**

The unilateral decision by G/C President Anastasiades to close a select number of checkpoints was criticized locally and globally for sidestepping the BHTC. President Akıncı, a moderate who supported ongoing negotiations for a federal settlement, immediately called out the decision, affirming his position that any action should have been taken within the framework of the BHTC:

What is the reason for such a step to be taken unilaterally suddenly after starting to work together by taking the first step in this regard and starting to run the information and communication channels through the joint committee? [...] This one-sided decision was not a correct decision, it should be revised (PIO\_TRNC 2020a).

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<sup>82</sup> PIO\_ROC is a citation for the Public Information Office of the Republic of Cyprus. PIO\_TRNC is a citation for the Public Information Office of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus.

<sup>83</sup>A handful of protests to have the checkpoints remain closed permanently received much less media attention.

Then-Prime Minister of the TRNC, the hardliner Ersin Tatar, also declared the decision to be disrespectful and based on wrong perspectives. Tatar notably argued that the decision was unilateral because Greek Cypriots “see themselves as the legal judge of all Cyprus and Turkish Cypriots as the minority which has to be subjected to their decisions” (PIO\_TRNC 2020c). Akıncı and Tatar’s positions received tacit support from the UN who called upon all the leaders to closely coordinate a comprehensive response, noting in particular their concern with the “ongoing disruption caused to people on both sides” by the closures (UNFICYP 2020).

The closure decision was further criticized for being arbitrary in nature due to the lack of confirmed cases in either the north or south at the time of the closures. The sudden unilateral change to policy did not seem to be responding to any real change in conditions on the ground. AKEL, the moderate official opposition party in the Republic of Cyprus, joined this discourse, additionally observing that *exterior* borders to the island were remaining open with no additional security screening measures. They argued that the choice to close four of nine *internal* checkpoints demanded further explanation. AKEL joined Akıncı and others calling upon the Anastasiades government “to substantiate scientifically its decision [...] It should explain why out of all the points of entry into the areas controlled by the Republic of Cyprus the only ones that have been closed concern the checkpoints” and not seaports or airports (AKEL 2020).

There is some evidence that supports the position that the checkpoint closures were simply a pre-emptive health-related decision, as initially declared by the government (Philenews 2020). Within two weeks, Cyprus declared its first positive cases of Coronavirus, one in ROC on March 9<sup>th</sup> and two in the TRNC on March 10<sup>th</sup>. The protestors withdrew from the closed checkpoints in order to begin social distancing and isolation, per the recommendations of various global health advisories and the BHTC (Unite Cyprus Now 2020b). The positive cases were also followed quickly by the TRNC’s mirror decision to unilaterally close two additional checkpoints, Katos Pyrgos/Yeşilirmak in the northwest and Agios Nikolaos/Strovolia

in the east, on March 12<sup>th</sup> (Kathirimini News 2020a). The two leaders urged their respective communities to refrain from using the three remaining crossings – Agios Demetios/Metehan, Ledra Palace, and Pyla/Beyarmudus and began to take measures to restrict movement of citizens from so-called ‘high risk countries’ by mid-March (TRNC 2020b; PIO\_ROC 2020b). On 14 March, just two weeks after decrying the unilateral closures, the TRNC announced further extraordinary measures limiting all border access, external and internal, to “TRNC citizens and persons with legal residency,” officially establishing the closure of all nine checkpoints to G/Cs (TRNC 2020a). Altogether suggesting the closures were an inevitable policy option.

But the timing of these measures is important for the political discourse. The actions by the TRNC and wider population controls across the island occurred in response to confirmed cases, in conjunction with wider global trends in pandemic responses, and with the politically expedient buffer of the Greek Cypriots having moved first. In contrast, Anastasiades’ closure was not just unilateral, but viewed as pre-emptive and arbitrary, causing it to fall under greater scrutiny.

#### **4.3.2 Explaining Greek Cypriot decision to close checkpoints**

The unilateral and arbitrary action of the ROC government raised concerns that the decision to close checkpoints was taking advantage of the emergency to enact political, and ethno-national, agendas. A primary critique of the closures suggested they were an appeal to party supporters regarding migrant flows across the Green Line. Concerns about the migrant crisis in the Aegean and Eastern Mediterranean had been priority headlines in the period before the pandemic (Innes 2017). Movement of asylum claimants through the North of Cyprus and across the Green Line into the European Union member state had been filtering into fears among G/Cs about the lack of border controls between Türkiye and the North of Cyprus. Indeed, migrants have increasingly utilised Cyprus as a passageway into Europe, particularly following the March 2016 EU-Türkiye statement of cooperation on irregular migration (Karakoulaki 2019). Even in the midst of the closures dispute, Anastasiades called on Akıncı to take action on stemming the flow of migrants across the Green Line, tweeting:

I conveyed to the Turkish Cypriot leader, Mr. Akıncı, our grave concern regarding the organised and increasing illegal flow of migrants through the Green Line, underlining that appropriate measures must be taken in order to prevent the further exacerbation of the situation (Anastasiades 2020).

Many EU member states used the COVID-19 crisis to enact extreme anti-migration policies, or extend existing policies, justifying them on the basis that they would “prevent the spread of the virus,” but with the goal of securitizing the EU border (Stierl and Dadusc 2022, p. 1457). These tensions around population flows explain why internal checkpoints were closed while the government continued to take incremental decisions regarding restrictions on external border crossings on the island, which were seen to involve more “trusted” partners such as Greece as opposed to Türkiye (Kathirimini News 2020b). The manipulation of the migration crisis fits with the DMD framework of the conflict where Greek Cypriot agendas are positioned in opposition to the threat from Türkiye and Türkiye’s influence in the north of the island.

Another explanation for the ROC’s actions rests on the assumption that the closures could have been unilaterally taken first by the TRNC if it were not a politically and economically costly decision. Politically, federal-oriented Akıncı could not be seen to move first against the development of a porous federal border or T/Cs would lose the bargaining position of being the ‘pro-settlement’ side. Moreover, the relative weakness of the economy in the north informs the unilateralism and timing of both Anastasiades and Akıncı’s decisions around potential closures. The uneven impact of the closures primarily affected T/C commuters who cross into the South daily for work and this impacts the TRNC economy as a whole. This unevenness results from suspended political conditions of the conflict, such as the international community’s refusal to recognize the TRNC, which economically disadvantages the T/Cs in comparison to the internationally recognized and EU-residing citizens of the Republic of Cyprus (Bahcheli 2021; Hatay 2020).<sup>84</sup> Ending cross-border trade from the G/C perspective is simply less risky.

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<sup>84</sup> The north is frequently shielded from wider global economic crises such as the crisis experienced by the Republic of Cyprus from 2012-2013, and Turkish Cypriots are treated as EU citizens when they travel within the EU territory.

The ROC is more likely to weather the closures than the TRNC, thus allowing Anastasiades to take this decision initially where Akıncı could not (Yiangou 2014). As will be discussed later, these uneven economic impacts became even more evidenced in the context of re-opening where the ROC was able to maintain the closures longer than the TRNC.

Anastasiades' decision to close the checkpoints suggests strategic rationale. It was less of an economic risk for the ROC to take this action unilaterally and it entailed some domestic political advantages, such as stemming the flow of irregular migration and genuine health concerns. Moreover, there was domestic support for the closures. Beyond his own party base, supporters of the right-wing nationalist party, ELAM, conducted counter-protests calling for the government to close all the remaining checkpoints. ELAM was the only party to not criticize the initial decision, having taken a hard-line position on a united Cyprus and objecting to any crossings as recognizing the TRNC and Türkiye's authority (Prakas 2020). But Anastasiades' decision still entailed important risks vis-à-vis the island's conflict. The next section will examine the second concern regarding the closures: rising nationalist sentiment around permanent partition.

#### **4.3.3 Nationalist perceptions of partition**

The initial narrative of cemented divisions was clearly on the minds of the moderate activists who protested the initial closures of the checkpoints, and the politicization of Anastasiades' initial decision to close the checkpoints particularly highlights at least the media's willingness to promote a narrative of divisive politics. But the narrative of closures cementing division was particularly vital north of the Green Line, where it would set in motion a change in the political leadership of the TRNC. Paradoxically, though they might be expected to support the notion of the Green Line being a firm border, T/Cs broadly stood against the initial closures. But this opposition was highly differentiated. The more moderate Akıncı decried the closures as a barrier to cooperation and a turn away from the peace process, while hardliner

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But it is the perception of the Turkish Cypriot administration that this inequality is a reality. See, for example, statements by the Special Representative to the negotiations, Ergün Olgun (2000).

Ersin Tatar stated that the closures revealed the reality of “two states living side by side,” shoring up his position that T/Cs should be seeking an independent T/C state (Arnold 2020). In juxtaposition to President Akıncı’s federalist approach, Tatar represents more nationalist T/Cs who seek a stronger division of the island in any ultimate settlement. At the time of these statements, he was the leader of the National Unity Party, which seeks a two-state solution for Cyprus, so why did Tatar criticize the initial closures, which otherwise benefitted his agenda?

Primarily, it was to Tatar’s political advantage to play up these divisive narratives both within the T/C community and the communities south of the Green Line. Tatar was able to take advantage of the pandemic circumstances to paint G/C Anastasiades as having bargained in bad faith historically, situating the two leaders as at opposite ends on the need for a two-state solution for Cyprus. In taking the decision to close the checkpoints unilaterally, Anastasiades set himself at odds with President Akıncı, the UN negotiations team, the European Union, and other foreign interests such as the United States, United Kingdom, Greece, and even Türkiye (McGarry and Loizides 2021). Moreover, in highlighting the bad faith of Anastasiades, Tatar was able to discredit Akıncı and the left-leaning federalist parties in the TRNC for having supported pursuing this federal deal. But despite these strategic gains, Tatar’s response to the closures ran the risk of reversing Anastasiades’ decision and leading to re-opening and unity. Importantly, stances on the crossings both north and south have not been pro-closure for many years. Checkpoint discussions prior to the pandemic were solely around the opening of more and more checkpoints with the Lefka/Lefke and Dherynia/Famagusta crossings opening in 2018 (Andreou 2016). Tatar’s narrative of permanent closures arose prominently at a time when much public discourse was decrying even presumed temporary closures. But the risk paid off in the TRNC Presidential elections in the fall of 2020.

The perception of increasingly hardline nationalist approaches to the future of Cyprus were a prominent issue of debate heading into the election.<sup>85</sup> Tatar narrowly won in a final run-off against the moderate and unification-oriented Akıncı. Though not unprecedented in practice, the level of support which Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan threw behind Tatar in the elections was notable.<sup>86</sup> T/C protests against Turkish intervention in the domestic politics of the TRNC were also significant through September and October 2020. But this did not lessen Tatar's electoral victory, which positions him as the lead interlocutor of Turkish Cypriot interests in future negotiations on the island.

The clear relationship between Türkiye and the new government of Ersin Tatar and the narratives of crossing closures cementing the perception of a 'border' on the island directly affect DMD bargaining positions. The longer the North remained essentially cut-off increased political, social, and economic relations between the TRNC and Türkiye (Hatay 2020). Any increase in T/C relations with Türkiye creates tension within the G/C population who view calls for T/C independence as an invitation to Türkiye to continue to occupy and ultimately dominate the island. Moreover, while it is unlikely most G/Cs will turn as quickly towards the idea of a two-state solution, unwilling as they are to give up the dream of a united Cyprus, the ROC may also begin to view continuing negotiations with T/Cs as dangerous in the longer-term. Moderate T/C voices also cautioned against the new reality of division. One noted the lack of outcry in the new political environment and the ease with which the crossings were closed, by both sides, as demonstrating a weak foundation for the burgeoning inter-communal imagination of the island: "The Green Line has turned into a border for months. A normalized [emphasis added] border. And sadly, there is no significant reaction from the public" (Aygin 2020).

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<sup>85</sup> The elections, originally scheduled for April were postponed as a result of the pandemic.

<sup>86</sup> A major election issue surrounded the joint-decision by Erdoğan and Tatar to re-open the long-deserted beaches of Varosha. For G/Cs who were forced to flee the city in 1974, Varosha is expected to be returned as part of any settlement agreement. The UN has declared the occupation and settlement of Varosha illegal (European Parliament 2020), and Akıncı called this decision a "mistake that will put Turkish Cypriot people in a difficult situation on the international stage" (AFP 2020).

Additionally, just under a year after the closures, Secretary-General Antonio Guterres also observed that the limited contact over the previous year due to the movement restrictions and ongoing closure of three crossing points resulted in “very few face-to-face intercommunal activities or even simple interactions” and “a situation that deepened the estrangement between the two largest communities on the island” (Secretary-General 2021). These positions stem from the prolongment of closure and contribute to the complex discourse surrounding the *re-opening* of the checkpoints.

#### **4.4 Uneven moves toward Re-Opening**

The early discussions for re-opening saw leadership treading lightly by focusing on health measures and core economic aspects and drawing attention away from nationalist narratives that might jeopardize the fragile nature of the Green Line. Akıncı and Anastasiades spoke in late May 2020 to agree to a gradual opening, a move which was later supported by health ministers in the ROC who noted that the gradual process, with an open exchange of information from both sides, was the scientifically sound act to take (Shkuko 2020; Kades 2020). Akıncı stated that the re-opening of the crossings was of utmost importance for both the economic strength of the island *and* the good of the peace process, but his overall emphasis focused on economic access. Anastasiades echoed the economic interest to re-open the crossings, noting that as industries re-open this would include allowing labourers to cross from the North to return to work in the South with no mention of the peace process. Even Tatar’s interest in re-opening the crossings at this time presented the same framing, with economically-minded statements about the crossings rather than the role that a porous Green Line serves in achieving a future settlement on the island. Yet despite these similar discourses, moves to re-open were markedly uneven.

While openings would benefit both the economies on the island, the economic advantages of informal economic trade, consisting largely of day-labourers but also tourism and cross-border shopping, are far more significant for the economy of the North than for the South (Yiangou 2014). This leaves a significant amount of power in the hands of the ROC vis-à-vis the impact of the opening process. This

was evidenced in delays in re-opening on the part of the ROC. They claimed the TRNC failed to provide the BHTC with epidemiological data that would help move the committee forward toward re-opening checkpoints. But these delays, particularly in the face of the TRNC's reporting of zero COVID-19 cases for the greater part of May, evidenced for T/Cs a lack of trust embedded less in science and health than in political relationships (Kıbrıs 2020). However, from the G/C perspective, the re-opening of exterior borders and ports of Cyprus both North and South represented the greatest concern. Per the DMD, the ROC was less focused on the cases in the north of Cyprus than they were concerned with the North also opening its borders to Türkiye.

Eventually, Anastasiades and Akıncı agreed that persons who live in the North and work in the South would be the first to be approved for crossing in the gradual opening of the checkpoints beginning on 8 June 2020, though still subject to screening and health monitoring. Once again, the policies were uneven and criticized for arbitrarily punishing T/Cs. The ROC announced lifting the mandatory quarantine for Cypriots arriving from abroad, provided they furnish proof of negative test results, long before adjusting the mandatory quarantine on Cypriots crossing from the North. In the community of Pile/Pyla, a village in the south which is Cyprus's only significant bicomunal village, T/Cs wanting to cross to the North felt the early response from the government was oppressive – requiring that upon return they must have no contact with G/Cs in Pyla (Yenidüzen 2020). Eight months on, and an election later, crossings in both directions continued to restrict eligibility and require strict COVID-testing, with mandatory presentation of negative test results and 7-days of mandatory quarantine upon return in several instances. Some exceptions were applied including students, some labourers, medical passes, and diplomatic missions, but throughout 2020 and 2021, crossing remained significantly more restrictive than prior to the February 2020 closures.

The UN repeatedly stated throughout 2020 that they were ready to facilitate and support both sides in easing restrictions at the crossing points, encourage close cooperation in addressing the island-wide public

health emergency, and return to the negotiation table. Under the urging of Special Envoy Jane Holl Lute, both Anastasiades and Tatar confirmed their willingness to participate in an informal summit to find a way forward in the negotiations process (Andreou 2020). While Anastasiades came out in favour of taking up the previously stalled negotiations of 2017,<sup>87</sup> Tatar stated he would not resume negotiations “from where they left off” and suggested the two-state solution be back on the table. He re-established this position in January of 2022, stating that the lack of common ground made formal talks impossible. The foundation which Tatar would argue for is very specific: recognition of “sovereign equality of the T/Cs” (Sabah 2022). Anastasiades has held firm to maintaining the previously agreed framework which does not formally recognize the option of a two-state solution for the island, nor the ability to hold such discussions.

#### **4.5 Conclusion: The paradox of double minority decision-making**

The impact of the DMD on the framing of the Green Line helps explain paradoxical decision-making by various elites in Cyprus, both in 2003 and 2020. Moderate and federally-minded Cypriots on both sides saw the Green Line checkpoint closures as cementing division on the island, endangering a future settlement that would grant guarantees to both communities. Yet hardliners on both sides see no difference in the porousness of the Green Line, as long as they can present it as a potential threat. Greek Cypriot hardliners, focused on the larger Turkish threat, primarily support narratives of unstable northern borders and non-recognition of the TRNC. Moreover, if the Turkish-backed T/Cs are seen to be unwilling to negotiate a federal solution, this supports a G/C justice-seeking bargaining position of demanding a united Cyprus. The ROC is then able to close, or resist re-opening, checkpoints while securing their bargaining position in negotiations. Turkish Cypriot hardliners used the unilateral actions of the ROC to similarly suggest bad-faith bargaining on the part of G/Cs and to bring international support to their side in a similar push for a justice seeking bargaining position. Thus, the paradoxical decisions of Cypriot

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<sup>87</sup> Negotiations which Anastasiades himself was responsible for stalling as he is unwilling to agree to a stepped Turkish troop withdrawal and federal guarantor arrangements for Türkiye in any agreement.

elites are in fact a strategic product of an ontological framing which centres the “threatened minority” to legitimate bargaining positions.

The unilateralism demonstrated by both community’s leaders in responding to the pandemic, particularly after Tatar’s election, reinforces the political aspects of the more physical separation created by the Green Line. Even as politics appear to return to ‘business as usual’, it is highly unlikely that the knowledge of the ease of closure, the ease of division, will have no impact at all on the psyche of Cypriots, whether Greek or Turkish, heading into the next round of negotiations. The intractability produced through an undefined and fluctuating interpretation of the Green Line and non-recognition of cross-communal political authority is in fact a condition of bargaining stability for Cypriot elites.

## Chapter 5

### Conclusion

Two [islands], both alike in dignity,  
In fair [Europe], where we lay our scene,  
From ancient grudge break to new mutiny,  
Where civil blood makes civil hands unclean.<sup>88</sup>

In 2015, after four years of war in Syria, a European migrant crisis resulted in an expansive increase in the growing securitization of identity in Europe, accompanied by a rise in extremist parties, populist leadership, and instances of democratic decline across Europe and around the world (Öniş and Kutlay 2017; Reynolds 2020; Anderson 2021; Vachudova 2020). This combined backlash against the current political order has coalesced into a tide of nationalism, exposing old and new tensions and producing major institutional changes including the UK's exit from the EU (Calhoun 2016; Ker-Lindsay 2018). As demonstrated in Chapter 3 of this thesis, Northern Ireland quickly became the “thorniest issue in Brexit negotiations” due to the jurisdictional complexities and the ongoing conflict in the face of this major upheaval (Cooper 2017). Across the continent, new security arrangements including new EU-Türkiye relations, wars in Syria and Ukraine, and disputes over ownership of hydrocarbon fuels in the Eastern Mediterranean, have strengthened Türkiye's regional influence (Cagaptay 2017; Kaya 2020). As partly highlighted in Chapter 4, these shifts have directly affected the agenda of conflict settlement negotiations on the island of Cyprus (Grigoriadis 2017; Proedrou 2021). The repercussions of these regional and global events for Northern Ireland and Cyprus highlight the crucial role of geopolitical arrangements and third-party actors in the Double Minority Dilemmas (DMD) of these conflict settlement processes.

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<sup>88</sup> William Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, Prologue (with apologies to the Bard)

## **5.1 The Double Minority Dilemma in Cyprus and Northern Ireland**

The three articles of this thesis have demonstrated that the framing of the DMD not only explains the complex intractability of historical conflicts and settlement negotiations in Northern Ireland and Cyprus, but also current events and changes in these conflict contexts. Due to the preoccupation, not only with a third-party who is seen to lay claim to their given territory and support a mobilized local minority, but also the wider foreign influences deemed to support this ‘regional majority,’ local majorities seek to depict themselves as threatened minorities that need to avoid concessions that pose a threat to their existence. This positioning works in opposition to the ‘local minority’ which fears not only its local majority’s power and agenda, but also the wider third-parties and foreign influences who are deemed to support the local majority. These double minority arrangements automatically frame the perceptions of any wider third-party involvement, regardless of a third-party’s intentions. Indeed, in both Cyprus and Northern Ireland, the local majority has been shown to be highly resistant to internationalization and the inclusion of wider third-parties because they perceive the international community as being set against their agendas. This is seen in unionism’s distrust of the EU’s involvement in Northern Ireland and Greek Cypriots’ resistance to US-led involvement, or even the United Nations effort, in Cyprus. Changes in these relationships and interests, such as seen in the fallout of Brexit or onset of COVID-19 are filtered through the DMD and communicated accordingly by domestic elites.

In contrast, the local minority in both of these cases is pro-internationalisation, seeking to not only include support from their homeland state but also wider outside actors who support their narrative of a threatened minority. Part of the resistance to and courting of internationalization seen amongst elites in a DMD stems from the bargaining position of the threatened minority. Domestic elites both adopt and adjust the DMD to shore up and legitimize their particular justice-seeking bargaining position in internationalized negotiations. The result of this strategy is a tendency to emphasize the injustice underpinning their demands as well as resistance to changes in conflict conditions that risk weakening this bargaining position before a final settlement is achieved.

Importantly, the collection of papers presented here also demonstrate that even though the systemic arrangements of domestic and third-parties in a DMD can be stabilized in support of successful political settlements, the conditions of the DMD are never erased and can readily produce instability in the wake of settlements as well – as seen in the Northern Ireland case. The Cyprus case demonstrates that these conditions can stabilize such that they are resistant to negotiated settlement but are also not producing of violent conflict, resulting in increasing intractability over time. The conditions of the DMD are highly susceptible to changes in geopolitical conditions, as shown as a result of Brexit, and shifting conditions of stability such as the emergency conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic, but once again, elites will defer to domestic framings of minority injustice and threats to their communities in the face of these wider external challenges.

However, the cases also demonstrate that this pursuit of justice at the cost of the pursuit of resolution is not a position shared by all of a community's members. Perceptions of the DMD can be framed with varying levels of securitization. Across both Cyprus and Northern Ireland the four local and regional minority communities are themselves split between hard-liners and moderates. This is exemplified in the internal discourse of the unionist community in Northern Ireland (Chapter 3) and the shifting authority from moderates to hard-liners in Northern Cyprus's recent Presidential elections (Chapter 4). Though less detailed in this thesis, the split of moderates and hard-liners exists within the Irish nationalist and Greek Cypriot communities as well. Northern Ireland's successes in the Good Friday Agreement and later the St. Andrews Agreement were made by moves to moderation by previously hardline unionist and nationalist politicians – moves made possible by key aspects of the DMD conditions which forced them to prefer resolution over justice. This moderation is absent amongst the current unionist leadership in the DUP in Northern Ireland, as it is absent in the leadership of both communities in Cyprus today. Per President George Vassiliou's lamentation, in both Cyprus and Northern Ireland, those communal elites who strive for *efthkero* – what is desired – are actively preventing *efikto* – what is feasible.

The following two sections look at how the theory of the DMD can be used to examine a wider set of conflicts and conflict circumstances. The first discussion looks at a set of conditions which are slightly adjusted versions of DMDs in Sri Lanka, Israel, and Apartheid South Africa. The second discussion presents a more detailed presentation of the role of the DMD in two major conflicts in Eastern Europe today – Kosovo and Eastern Ukraine.

## **5.2 Extending the Theory I – Adjusted Double Minority Frameworks**

The politics of the DMD can be observed in a much wider set of cases of intractable conflict. Two cases – Sri Lanka and Israel/Palestine, as previously introduced in the introduction and Chapter 1 – demonstrate double minority narratives. However, the balance of minority identities in these two cases has altered significantly over time. In Sri Lanka, for example, the potential threat of intervention by India, representative of the Tamil minority's 'kin-state' has not been a particularly salient issue for the Sri Lankan government for some time. As Rajat Ganguly (1998) explains, India is a unique case of non-intervention by the 'kin-state' to support the secessionist movement of the Tamil minority ethnic community in Sri Lanka. Without this direct support from India, the wider 'regional majority' threat weakens.

The other case, Israel, presents a different adjustment of the DMD puzzle. Across the territories of Israel and the West Bank and Gaza, the Jewish and Palestinian population numbers today are relatively similar. Moreover, Israel has established itself as the homeland territory of the Jewish people residing elsewhere in the world and takes actions in defence of this territory. For their part, Palestinians, too, see the territory as their homeland and do not claim any foreign homeland state though they claim kinship with other Arab states in the region. However, the narrative of a double minority from a strategic perspective is produced through inter-group framing. The Israeli state is in control of the territory in conflict and thus ostensibly holds a majority power position. The Palestinians perceive themselves as a minority under threat from this powerful Israeli government and its wider international supporters, despite the raw numbers presenting

the Jewish people as a minority in the region. In turn, this minority ethno-religious status in the face of the regional threat of the Arabic and Islamic states is used by Jews in Israel to depict themselves as a threatened regional minority, with the Palestinian people representative of this greater regional threat, as a way of justifying their governing policies of domination and control (Lustick 1980; Smoocha 2002). What makes the conflict in Israel/Palestine unique to previous conflicts examined in this thesis thus far is the power of the international support behind the Israeli state that supports the Jewish position, at least in part. The DMD in this case is thus both heavily internationalised and stabilized through this internationalisation. These conditions leave very little room for external third-parties to make gainful adjustments or provide mitigating constraints on either party to the conflict.

Looking beyond the concept of the ‘regional minority,’ as the controlling authority is another possible avenue to extend the DMD. ‘Local minorities’ in positions of control are in constant vigilance to maintain this authority and can deem the presence of a third-party supporter or ‘homeland state’ of an ethnic group under their control as tipping the balance of power towards the ethnic group. Indeed, we can find several historical and contemporary cases including Burundi (-2000), Iraq (-2003), Liberia (-1980), South Africa (-1994), and Syria (-present) which have experienced a numerical minority holding the majority of coercive political power within a state (Lustick 1979; Kaufmann and Haklai 2008). This presents some room to discuss the relevance of a DMD lens in such cases. Apartheid South Africa is one candidate for applying the DMD this adjusted manner - where the White minority held political dominance of a state surrounded by Black majority states regionally (Kaufmann and Haklai 2008). The potential of local minorities to hold positions of dominance and still use the logic of the ‘regional minority’ bargaining position helps to emphasize that even in DMD cases where the numerical majority holds dominance over the political institutions, their minority or majority condition is produced in relationship with regional arrangements rather than just the domestic numerical relationship within the territory.

### **5.3 Extending the Theory II – The Double Minority Dilemma in Eastern Europe**

Considering the literature on ethno-national and nested security from which the DMD thesis is partly derived emerged from studies of the dissolution of Eastern European empires following first WWI and later the end of the Cold War (Brubaker 1996; Jenne 2015), it is perhaps unsurprising that two current examples of DMD negotiation processes have emerged in this region. In 2013, the governments of Serbia and Kosovo signed the Brussels Agreement, normalizing relations between the newly independent Kosovo state and Serbia, which refuses to recognize Kosovo's independence. The implementation of this agreement has been rocky, with broad and increasing protests against Kosovo's authorities, particularly by the Serbian minority living in its northern region. The Kosovo Albanian majority, having just recently gained independence from Serbia, fears any autonomy for the northern region as a threat to any sovereign claim, ultimately producing a DMD for Kosovo Albanians and Serbians within Kosovo and increasing instability in the region. During this same period, from 2014 until the invasion of Ukraine by Russia in February 2022, the governments of Ukraine and Russia engaged in the Minsk Agreements process – an attempt to negotiate a solution to the rising conflict in the Donbas region of Eastern Ukraine. The Donbas region is home to a dense population of Russian-speaking minorities in Ukraine and presents as a threat to Ukraine's sovereignty over the region. Ukraine is struggling to defend itself against Russian interference and perceives this Russian-speaking minority as representative of Russia, thus producing a DMD for the Ukrainian and Russian-speaking communities in Ukraine.

#### **5.3.1 Kosovo's Double Minority Dilemma and the Brussels Agreement process**

To suggest negotiations to resolve the conflict between Kosovo and Serbia *began* in 2013 would be an error. This conflict is one lingering piece of the wider Balkans conflict which has gripped the region since the early 1990s. Violence between Serbian forces and separatist Kosovo Albanians represented by the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) particularly increased following the 1995 Dayton peace process, which left Kosovo out of the negotiations (Phillips 2012). The Albanian minority in Serbia, which formed a majority in the province of Kosovo, sought independence during the breakup of Yugoslavia. Serbian

leader Slobodan Milošević's agenda of retaining the remaining Serbian-dominated nation-state began to address the separatist province of Kosovo in earnest in 1998, resulting in a series of failed ceasefires and negotiations and finally the establishment of the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) in 1999. Though there was growing interest in granting Kosovo independence at this time, the focus was on improving Kosovo's ability to self-govern.

It is during this period that the double minority tensions in northern Kosovo began to erupt. North Kosovo is home to a localized Serbian minority who, in protest of the burgeoning institutions of Kosovo's government, began establishing their own, parallel structures (Tannem 2014). Riots between the two groups in 2004 resulted in widespread violence and produced a massive reaction locally, against the perceived failure of UN efforts, and internationally, throwing support behind Kosovo's independence (Ker-Lindsay 2009). "By 2005, the US and all EU states, apart from Cyprus, Slovakia, Spain, Greece and Slovenia supported Kosovo's bid for independence from Serbia" (Tannem 2014, p. 126).<sup>89</sup> Slovenia ultimately recognized Kosovo's independence, however Romania took Slovenia's position amongst the five EU non-recognition states after acceding to the EU in 2007. Despite these conditions, Kosovo declared its independence in 2008, an move which was deemed to be a legal act under international law by the International Court of Justice in 2010. A DMD was clearly established through the creation of a Serbian minority in the northern territory of the new Kosovo state and the continued perception held by Kosovo's majority Albanian population of being the regional minority as Serbia has refused to acknowledge the independence of its former province.

Just as in Northern Ireland and Cyprus, various international actors have played key roles in this dilemma and the processes of negotiations undertaken to resolve some of the wider tensions both between Serbia and Kosovo and between the Kosovo government and Serbians in the northern territory. The preceding

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<sup>89</sup> Notably, Russia has stood firm in non-recognition of Kosovo. Also notable for this thesis, Cyprus and Greece's resistance is a clear demarcation of their own position on the northern territory of Cyprus and non-recognition of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC).

crises, including broad ethnic cleansing conducted by Serbian forces, had left the Serbian government at odds with the international community. As a result of the broadly interventionist behaviour of NATO and the UN in the region, many Serbians perceive there to be an international geopolitical conspiracy against Serbia. Broad support for Kosovo's independence underscored this perception. This situates the international community, at least from the perspective of the local minority Serbians in Kosovo, as being on the side of the 'regional minority', the Kosovo Albanians. This is quite different to the perceptions in Northern Ireland, where the international community – represented by European and American interests – is frequently depicted as supporting the nationalist 'local minority' and Irish 'regional majority.' In Cyprus, too, the Greek Cypriot narrative against the international community stems from the Greek Cypriot side traditionally viewing outsiders' interests as aligning with Türkiye and Turkish Cypriots.<sup>90</sup> An additional and important difference in Kosovo is the role of the EU and EU membership in driving forward negotiations to resolve the tensions in the region.

Both Serbia and Kosovo are seeking membership in the EU. Accession negotiations were opened with Serbia in 2014 and Kosovo filed its formal application for membership in 2022. As in Cyprus, this application process grants the EU some level of influence over Serbia, and Kosovo, in negotiations to stabilize the region. Indeed, the success of the 2013 Brussels Agreement to normalize relations between Kosovo and Serbia has been described as being influenced by the EU's potential decision on Serbia's candidate status (Smolar 2013). The application of the EU 'Acquis Communautaire,' the body of laws that comprise the European Union, requires adherence to several key institutions and values including peace and stability. The European Union (EU) was long-perceived as a potential tool to engage the Serbian government in a reduction of tensions and normalization of relations with Kosovo and, uniquely, it avoided some of the wider distrust of Serbian officials due to the aforementioned five EU members who refuse to recognize Kosovo's independence making the EU appear more neutral in its position (Tannem

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<sup>90</sup> A position directly challenged by the fact that the Turkish Cypriots do not receive recognition from the international community and perceive the EU to be strongly on the Greek Cypriot side.

2014). Recognition is the lynch-pin of all negotiations surrounding Kosovo. As observed by Gashi and Novaković (2020):

Serbian officials say “everything but recognition.” For Kosovo, there is ‘no fix’ without recognition. The United States supports a solution with recognition. The European Union supports an agreement that concludes the conflict, but does not explicitly mention recognition, mostly because five of its members *do not recognize Kosovo* [emphasis added] (p. 6).

When the first Brussels Agreement was reached on 19 April 2013, Kosovo Serb representatives immediately called for a demonstration in the city of North Mitrovica on 22 April to oppose the deal (Smolar 2013). This initial agreement, under the auspices of an international presence via the UNMIK forces and EU authorities, sought to trade some amount of regional autonomy for Kosovo’s Serbs in return for Serbia recognizing the right of Kosovo to exist.<sup>91</sup> Reminiscent of Cypriot responses to COVID-19, it seems illogical that Serbs in northern Kosovo should object to gaining greater local authority. But the framing of the DMD demonstrates how recognition of Kosovo’s right to exist is a larger threat to the Serbian minority’s identity. Regardless, neither part of this deal was fully achieved. The agreement aims to establish the northern Kosovo district of Mitrovica by uniting several Serb-dominated municipalities in the region and a power-sharing mechanism by which Kosovo Serbs must be a majority of key judicial panels, including the Mitrovica District Court. For their part, Serbian authorities have resisted any formal recognition of Kosovo or this agreement, deferring instead to piecemeal agreements on various border and trade relations between the two entities.

The EU has primarily sought to grant greater autonomy to Serbian-populated areas in the north in order to eliminate the influence of Belgrade-based institutions in the area (Ohanyan 2015). Recent violence in the northern region has occurred as a result of this exact dispute in the form of a license plate law established by the Kosovo government in 2022 to force Serb drivers to use Kosovo plates, essentially acknowledging

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<sup>91</sup> This trade is representative of the final Anglo-Irish Agreement, in which the UK and Ireland agreed to trade power-sharing mechanisms and rights of consent for the nationalist minority in Northern Ireland in exchange for Dublin withdrawing its rejection of partition its constitutional claim to Northern Ireland.

the right of the Kosovo state to exist and countering the quiet protest of driving with Serbian plates (Morina 2023). In response, ethnic Serbian officials staged a mass resignation which resulted in several local mayors and councillors, members of parliament, judiciary, and police members resigning in November 2022. When several Albanian mayors and other officials attempted to take their elected positions in Serb majority towns, violence erupted (Wolff 2023). The ongoing tension between the two positions of Serbian resistance to Kosovo's recognition by much of the international community and Kosovo's resistance to granting its Serbian minority local autonomy has deadlocked over a decade of negotiations to resolve these double minority tensions.

Third-parties face extreme difficulties in attempting to move this process forward. On the one hand the division within the EU has allowed this third-party some neutral authority in the process. It is less disruptive to the DMD than the one-sided US or the even more widely deadlocked UN where opposing Russian and US opposing interests prevent meaningful intervention. However, this division has also negatively affected the process by freezing the DMD, not only within the regional sphere, but at wider international levels. This relative stabilization of the Dilemma, much like that which followed the failure of the Annan Plan, sees all parties being supported in their bargaining position by various third-party relationships. Movement forward can only occur if there is a significant change in the positions of one or more third-parties, such as an alignment of EU positions on Kosovo's independence, which would adjust the DMD enough to push domestic elites to take more risky bargaining decisions.

### **5.3.2 Ukraine's Double Minority Dilemma and the failure of the Minsk process**

Though sharing similar tensions around federal arrangements to its southwestern neighbour, the conflict in Eastern Ukraine is defined by a more intensely geopolitical DMD than that of Kosovo, or even Northern Ireland or Cyprus for that matter. Like Kosovo, Ukraine emerged from the dissolution of empire in the 1990s and, like many other states emerging from the collapse of the Soviet Union, retained a large Russian-speaking minority population located primarily in the Eastern provinces of Donetsk and Luhansk. Internally to Ukraine, the Russian-speaking minority in the Eastern "Donbass" region is a 'local

minority,' subject to the ethnic Ukrainian nationalizing policies of Kyiv. Ethnic Ukrainians constitute a majority within the state but a 'regional minority' in the shadow of the Russian threat to Ukraine's independence. The Ukrainian state is, in general, threatened by the irredentist policies of Russia, particularly under the leadership of Vladimir Putin, who supports Russia's national myth as rooted in the capital city of Kyiv.<sup>92</sup> Ukrainian political elites are frequently divided in their political position vis-à-vis relations with Russia. This division has led to significant moments of successful Russian interference in Ukrainian politics, including the fraudulent election of Viktor Yushchenko in 2004 and the sudden decision by Viktor Yanukovich to turn away from EU accession to sign on to a Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) with Russia in late 2013 (Tsygankov 2015). Both instances resulted in nation-defining institutional changes, which will be addressed below, that in turn produced the roots of a threat for Russia. The DMD in this context expands geopolitically at this point to an east-west confrontation. Russia perceives the EU and Western relationship with Ukraine as a threat to Russian cultural heritage and physical security.

In 2014, the Euromaidan protests signalled a major sea-change in the politics of this dilemma. Prior to this popular revolution, the Ukrainian state had largely supported a 'civic identity' which was not particularly at odds with Russian-speakers in Ukraine,<sup>93</sup> nor the Russian state (Pogrebinksiy 2015, p. 85, Malyarenko and Wolff 2019). Some concern was raised following the 2004-2005 Orange Revolution, which established greater institutional independence from Russia, but the national identity of this new state was still relatively undefined. Following this change, Ukraine began to seek Western integration. General support from the ethnic Ukrainian population for Yanukovich's Association Agreement with the EU – a key first step in the EU accession process – was upended by the President's last-minute decision to instead accept membership in the Russian spear-headed EEU. From December 2013 to February 2014,

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<sup>92</sup> In an article drafted by Vladimir Putin in 2021, he emphasizes the "historical unity of Russians and Ukrainians," stressing the joint-heritage of the 'Ancient Rus,' a state whose religious and political leadership was seated in Kiev (Putin, 2021).

<sup>93</sup> Defining the Russian-speaking minority as a specific ethnic 'group' in the traditional sense is not an accurate depiction of the type of political identity which separates these communities in Ukraine (Arel 2018).

rallies of up to 800,000 were occurring every Sunday in Maidan Nezalezhnosti (Independence Square), in Kiev, becoming known as the ‘Euromaidan.’<sup>94</sup> Potentially in response to the decidedly anti-Russian and particularly ‘ethnic-Ukrainian’ narratives of this latest revolution (Kuzio 2016), Russia would annex Crimea on 18 March and conflict would break out between Russian-backed separatists and Ukrainian government forces in Donetsk and Luhansk later that spring (Horvath 2015). The failure of the subsequent Minsk process to reduce tensions in Eastern Ukraine is rooted in the Russian-speaking community’s narrative of ‘Ukrainianization,’ which arose as a common criticism of the Euromaidan and justification for the separatist movement in Eastern Ukraine. This critique could be used by the Russian-speaking minority, and by extension the Russian state, to establish a narrative of a minority under threat by the Ukrainian majority. This DMD based framing was used to legitimize Russian backing of separatists in Eastern Ukraine, their bargaining positions in the negotiations to end the hostilities and, ultimately, Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.<sup>95</sup>

In his detailed study of the failed Minsk Agreements, Kristian Åtland (2020) observes that a key barrier to the content and implementation of the Minsk Protocol is an inability to agree on the classification of the conflict itself (p. 127). This is very much in line with the DMD, as parties perceive the conflict space entirely differently and this shapes the various actors and issues that are acceptable at the bargaining table. Until 2022, Russia maintained that the conflict was internal to Ukraine, a self-determination issue stemming from a local rejection of the politics of post-Maidan Ukraine. Thus, Russia was not positioning itself as a party to the conflict, nor a negotiating partner. Ukrainian authorities, in contrast, are focused entirely on Russia’s political and military support and wider interest in fomenting instability in the region. Ukraine President Petro Poroshenko stated at the 52nd Munich Security Conference in 2016 [addressing

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<sup>94</sup> The violent response by the government, leading to the deaths of a hundred civilians, ultimately resulted in Yanukovich fleeing on 21 February 2014

<sup>95</sup> For the purposes of this discussion, I will avoid the complexities of the criminal activity in the Eastern provinces and Kyiv’s particularly aggressive crack-down, the character of which was used to bolster Putin’s initial narratives around ‘fighting fascism’ in the Donbass region by ‘intervention.’ Regardless of the reality of the circumstances on the ground, the decision by the Kremlin to invade Ukraine was never truly guided by this state-produced narrative and is more accurately explained through the Double Minority Dilemma framework.

Russia], “This is not a civil war in Ukraine, and this is not a civil war in Crimea, this is your soldiers, who occupied my country... and this is just a demonstration that we are living in a completely different universe with Russia” (Today 2016). This leaves Ukrainian authorities less interested in bargaining directly with the leadership of the separatist movements, as this conversation, one that verges on negotiations of federal autonomy, is far too great a risk without assuring further threats from Russia can be prevented.

In their broad study of multinational democracies, Stepan, Linz, and Yadav (2011) declare that when a state such as Ukraine or Kosovo faces irredentism from a powerful bordering state, Russia or Serbia respectively, it should logically pursue centrist policies and avoid federalism that can bolster its secessionist minority (p. 173). They also caution that imposing such centrist nation-state policy can be dangerous in motivating backlash from this minority group and domestic conflict, but this is a secondary risk for a ‘regional minority’ state who are more focused on the threat behind this minority population. Such is the case for Ukraine. Malyarenko and Wolff (2019) argue that the negotiations over the initial Minsk Agreements and their implementation represented “an increasingly pro-Russian set of provisions” in terms of its ability to exert influence in Ukraine. This is completely untenable for Ukraine and mirrors the refusal of concessions demanded of Greek Cypriot authorities for future Turkish influence in Cyprus during the Annan Process. In particular, the core concession of the first Minsk Protocol, signed on 5 September 2014 by Russia and Ukraine, was a decentralization of power to the Donetsk and Luhansk regions, which would have given political legitimation to the Russian-speaking separatists and bolstered Russian agendas in the region (p. 63). Minsk II, signed on February 2015 by Russia, Ukraine, and the separatist leaders, continued to call for “decentralization as a key element” and legislation for a “special status” for Donetsk and Luhansk (Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements 2015). As aptly noted by Malyarenk and Wolf, “the readiness of Ukraine’s Western partners to accept these terms contrasts sharply with Ukraine’s unwillingness to implement them” (p. 65). The authors, writing in 2019, suggest three possible ways forward, 1) reintegration of the eastern provinces with

devolved competencies, 2) ongoing negotiations under stabilized conditions with de-facto status for the eastern regions (à la the TRNC in Cyprus), and 3) an externally supported and imposed secession and independently declared statehood for Donetsk and Luhansk.

From the perspective of the DMD, the role of third parties in the international community is key for evaluating these three objectives. First, devolved competencies are simply not a secure enough option for regional minority Ukraine while Russia maintains support for the independence movements. The third option would mean giving up territory which Ukraine is highly reluctant to do. Importantly, this would have essentially created two new Russian puppet-states and granted the Russian state further encroachment into Ukraine's rapidly decreasing territory. Additionally, it should be noted that while several third-parties, including the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and France and Germany as independent mediators, took immediate action to spearhead the Minsk process and end hostilities in the Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts, the international community was on the whole silent on what to do about Crimea. In the face of the international community's inaction on Crimea, Ukraine does not itself perceive a position of strength in international support the same way that Russia perceives Ukraine having such support. The second option, a Kosovo- or Cyprus-style prolonged period of ongoing negotiations would have been the likeliest outcome had Russia not taken the unilateral decision to end the negotiations abruptly by invading Ukraine on 24 February 2022.

In a twist of fate, however, this decision prompted a significant shift in the Western agenda in Ukraine. Ukraine, now clearly the minority under threat and not a reluctant majority obstinately unwilling to grant concessions to its Russian-speaking minority, is on the receiving end of Western aid, an EU accession agreement, and a general turn toward ending the Ukraine-Russian conflict with Ukraine entirely intact. This shift in narratives also clearly exemplifies the justice-seeking bargaining position component of the DMD thesis. The injustice argument on the international stage presented an unfair advantage – at least in the eyes of Ukraine – to the Russian-speaking separatists as the threatened local minority until the

Russian invasion tipped the injustice narrative in Ukraine's favour as the threatened regional minority. These dynamics must be accounted for at any point in the future that negotiations to resolve this conflict continue with an international presence, whether as mediators, arbitrators, or guarantors.

#### **5.4 Approaching the Double Minority Dilemma as a potential third party**

This thesis presents the DMD as a powerful framework for analysing the impact of third-parties on conflict settlement agreement processes, explaining the inability to resolve conflict, and offering instruction on how to move intractable conflicts toward resolution. It has been shown to be highly effective in overcoming several shortcomings of prior analyses, including the bridging of ethno-nationalism and security-dilemmas fields of literature to provide an understanding of identity as a minority in struggle and the role of the ontological security of that identity in elite bargaining. The framework also prompts researchers to challenge the bifurcation of internal and external explanations by focusing on the interaction of these two processes and their systemic effects upon one another. The thesis demonstrates that the concept of the 'minority' is more than a simple domestic ethno-national quantifier. On the one hand, the identity of the 'minority' is a complex and effective bargaining tool on the international stage. On the other hand, it serves to securitize identities. When combined with the internationalized conditions of a DMD, the 'minority identity' produces strategic behaviour that is defined primarily by the defence of a group's ontological security. Finally, in examining third-parties as components of the DMD framework we see third-parties as core actors within the conflict and not simply outside intervenors. This allows for an analysis of the complex relationships between third-parties and between third-parties and the domestic parties to the conflict as part of a single system.

Potential intervenors who hope to contribute positively to conflict settlement in contexts defined by the DMD must be vigilant in monitoring how their relationship to the various parties will be perceived by domestic elites and their communities. Take, for example, the picture of Mufasa standing behind Simba and greatly overpowering the offending Hyenas, as introduced at the beginning of this thesis. Mufasa's

presence, while required at the time, ultimately results in greater conflict and insecurity rather than diffusing tensions. Instead of upsetting the DMD as Mufasa did, third-parties must be mindful of their positionality within this precarious system of relationships. Moreover, third-parties should also recognize the identity-based framing of third-party relationships that guides elite decision-making may result in unexpected behaviours. The Double Minority Dilemma framework provides greater appreciation of potential negotiation pitfalls and resistance to concessions by key domestic parties. These two nuanced understandings provided by the Double Minority Dilemma framework can guide not only future analyses of politics in double minority contexts, but also the analysis of identity politics in wider, less clearly defined minority contexts.

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## **Appendix A**

### **List of Interviews (by date)**

Interview with Northern Ireland Scholar (25 May 2017) Belfast, Northern Ireland

Interview with Irish Scholar (31 May 2017) Dublin, Ireland

Interview with Irish Scholar (31 May 2017) Dublin, Ireland

Interview with Northern Ireland Scholar (7 June 2017) Derry, Northern Ireland

Interview with Northern Ireland Activist (7 June 2017) Derry, Northern Ireland

Interview with House of Lord Representative, AP (12 June 2017) Belfast, Northern Ireland

Interview with Member of Legislative Assembly, AP (19 June 2017) Carrickfergus, Northern Ireland

Interview with Northern Ireland Mediator (21 June 2017) Belfast, Northern Ireland

Interview with UK Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (27 June 2017) London, UK

Interview with Greek Cypriot Scholar (28 June 2017) Nicosia, Cyprus

Interview with House of Lord Representative, UUP (2 July 2017) Belfast, Northern Ireland

Interview with Member of Legislative Assembly, SDLP (10 July 2017) Coleraine, Northern Ireland

Interview with Member of Legislative Assembly, DUP (31 October) Belfast, Northern Ireland

Interview with Member of Legislative Assembly, SDLP (6 November 2017) Belfast, Northern Ireland

Interview with Member of Legislative Assembly, AP (9 November 2017) Belfast, Northern Ireland

Interview with Northern Ireland Journalist (27 October 2017) Belfast, Northern Ireland

Interview with NIWC representative to Negotiations (8 November 2017) Belfast, Northern Ireland

Interview with NIWC representative to Negotiations (11 November 2017) Belfast, Northern Ireland

Interview with Greek Cypriot Scholar (8 August 2017) Nicosia, Cyprus,

Interview with Cypriot Journalist (11 August 2017) Nicosia, Cyprus

Interview with Turkish Cypriot Scholar (13 Aug 2017) Kyrenia, Cyprus

Interview with Cypriot Journalist (16 August 2017) Nicosia, Cyprus

Interview with Cypriot Civil Society Activist (23 August 2017) Nicosia, Cyprus

Interview with Greek Cypriot Member of Parliament, DISY (26 August 2017) Nicosia, Cyprus

Interview with Greek Cypriot Scholar (2 September 2017) Nicosia, Cyprus

Interview with Cypriot Civil Society Activist (4 September 2017) Nicosia, Cyprus

Interview with Turkish Cypriot Negotiator (5 September 2017) Nicosia, Cyprus

Interview with Turkish Cypriot Journalist (8 September 2017) Nicosia, Cyprus

Interview with Turkish Cypriot Member of Parliament, NEU (9 September 2017) Nicosia, Cyprus

Interview with Greek Cypriot Scholar (14 September 2017) Nicosia, Cyprus

Interview with Greek Cypriot President Georges Vassiliou (14 September 2017) Nicosia, Cyprus

Interview with UK Special Representative for Cyprus (4 May 2018) London, UK

Interview with Turkish Cypriot Activist (9 May 2018) Nicosia, Cyprus

Interview with Greek Cypriot Journalist (9 May 2018) Nicosia, Cyprus

Interview with Cypriot Scholar (11 May 2018) Nicosia, Cyprus

Interview with Cypriot Scholar and Civil Society Activist (15 May 2018) Nicosia, Cyprus

Interview with Greek Cypriot Foreign Affairs Diplomat (16 May 2018) Nicosia, Cyprus

Interview with British Scholar, Expert on Cyprus Negotiations (24 May 2018) London, UK

Interview with Scholar and Expert on Cyprus Negotiations (28 May 2018) Nicosia, Cyprus

Interview with Greek Cypriot Scholar (29 May 2018) Nicosia, Cyprus

Interview with Greek Cypriot Member of Parliament, Citizens Alliance (30 May 2018) Nicosia, Cyprus

Interview with Turkish Cypriot Negotiator (30 May 2018) Nicosia, Cyprus

Interview with Greek Cypriot Member of Parliament, AKEL (1 June 2018) Nicosia, Cyprus

Interview with Greek Cypriot Negotiator (4 June 2018) Nicosia, Cyprus

Interview with Greek Cypriot Member of Parliament, AKEL (5 June 2018) Nicosia, Cyprus

**Table A-1 Table of Interviews**

	Elected Officials and Negotiators	Civil Society, Academics, and Other	Total Interviews
Northern Ireland	10	7	17
<i>Nationalists</i>	2	1	
<i>Unionists</i>	2		
<i>Non-Aligned</i>	4	4	
<i>Third-Party</i>	2	2	
Cyprus	12	16	28
<i>Greek Cypriot</i>	5	6	
<i>Turkish Cypriot</i>	4	4	
<i>Non-Aligned</i>		2	
<i>Third-Party</i>	3	4	
All	22	23	45



## Appendix B

### General Research Ethics Board (GREB)

#### Clearance Letter

April 10, 2017

Ms. Samantha Twietmeyer  
Ph.D. Candidate  
Department of Political Studies  
Queen's University  
Mackintosh-Corry Hall, Room C321  
68 University Ave  
Kingston, ON, K7L 3N6

**GREB Ref #: GPLST-131-17; TRAQ # 6020628**

**Title: "GPLST-131-17 Towards a Theory of External Intervention in Peace Processes: The Role of Third Parties in Northern Ireland's Good Friday Agreement and Cyprus' Annan Plan"**

Dear Ms. Twietmeyer:

The General Research Ethics Board (GREB), by means of a delegated board review, has cleared your proposal entitled "**GPLST-131-17 Towards a Theory of External Intervention in Peace Processes: The Role of Third Parties in Northern Ireland's Good Friday Agreement and Cyprus' Annan Plan**" for ethical compliance with the Tri-Council Guidelines (TCPS 2 (2014)) and Queen's ethics policies. In accordance with the Tri-Council Guidelines (Article 6.14) and Standard Operating Procedures (405.001), your project has been cleared for one year. You are reminded of your obligation to submit an annual renewal form prior to the annual renewal due date (access this form at <http://www.queensu.ca/traq/signon.html>; click on "Events"; under "Create New Event" click on "General Research Ethics Board Annual Renewal/Closure Form for Cleared Studies"). Please note that when your research project is completed, you need to submit an Annual Renewal/Closure Form in Romeo/traq indicating that the project is 'completed' so that the file can be closed. This should be submitted at the time of completion; there is no need to wait until the annual renewal due date.

You are reminded of your obligation to advise the GREB of any adverse event(s) that occur during this one year period (access this form at <http://www.queensu.ca/traq/signon.html>; click on "Events"; under "Create New Event" click on "General Research Ethics Board Adverse Event Form"). An adverse event includes, but is not limited to, a complaint, a change or unexpected event that alters the level of risk for the researcher or participants or situation that requires a substantial change in approach to a participant(s). You are also advised that all adverse events must be reported to the GREB within 48 hours.

You are also reminded that all changes that might affect human participants must be cleared by the GREB. For example, you must report changes to the level of risk, applicant characteristics, and implementation of new procedures. To submit an amendment form, access the application by at <http://www.queensu.ca/traq/signon.html>; click on "Events"; under "Create New Event" click on "General Research Ethics Board Request for the Amendment of Approved Studies". Once submitted, these changes will automatically be sent to the Ethics Coordinator, Ms. Gail Irving, at the Office of Research Services for further review and clearance by the GREB or GREB Chair.

On behalf of the General Research Ethics Board, I wish you continued success in your research.

Sincerely,

John Freeman, Ph.D.  
Chair  
General Research Ethics Board

c: Dr. John McGarry, Supervisor  
Dr. Janet Hiebert, Chair, Unit REB  
Ms. Carli Chan, Dept. Admin.

## **Appendix C**

### **Memoirs, Published Interviews, and Newspapers**

#### **Published Interviews and Memoirs – Cyprus**

Denktaş, Rauf. 1995. *Intercommunal Negotiations and the EU Membership of Cyprus*. Edited by UNANC (29 August).

Denktaş, Rauf. 2004. *Kıbrıs Girit Olmasın*. Self-Published.

Hannay, David. 2005. *Cyprus: The Search for a Solution*. London: I.B. Tauris.

Kızılyürek, Niyazi. 2008. *Glafkos Clerides: The Path of a Country*. Athens: Rimal Publications.

Kızılyürek, Niyazi. 2014. *George Vassiliou: Reflections on the Past and the Future*. Limassol: Heterotopia Publications.

Lindahl, Ingemar. 2019. *Notes from the Graveyard of Diplomats: Cyprus 2002-2004*. Limassol: Heterotopia Publications.

Papadopoulos, Tassos. 2007. "Towards a Federal Settlement for Cyprus." *Parliamentarian* 88, no. 1 Supplement: 1-3.

#### **Published Interviews and Memoirs – Northern Ireland**

Adams, Gerry. 2003. *Hope and History: Making Peace in Ireland*. London: Brandon.

Farren, Sean, and John Hume. 2018. *John Hume: In His Own Words*. Dublin, Ireland: Four Courts Press.

Millar, Frank. 2008. *David Trimble: The Price of Peace*. 2nd ed. Dublin: The Liffey Press.

Millar, Frank. 2008. *Northern Ireland: A Triumph of Politics*. Dublin: Irish Academic Press.

Mitchell, George J. 1999. *Making Peace*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.

Mowlam, Mo. 2002. *Momentum: The Struggle for Peace, Politics and the People*. London: Hodder and Stoughton.

*Paisley: Genesis to Revelation - Face to Face with Eamonn Mallie*. 2014. Directed by Michael Mallie. on BBC One.

Tonge, Jonathan, Maire Braniff, Thomas Hennessey, James W. McAuley, and Sophie Whiting. 2014. *The Democratic Unionist Party: From Protest to Power*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

## Record of Newspaper Archives

### Northern Ireland

Andersontown News  
Belfast Newsletter  
Belfast Telegraph  
Daily Mirror  
Financial Times  
Irish Echo  
Irish Independent  
Irish News  
Irish Press  
Irish Voice  
New Statesman  
Newry Reporter  
News Letter  
Observer  
Republican News  
Sunday Business Post  
Sunday Independent

Sunday Life  
Sunday Press  
Sunday Telegraph  
Daily Telegraph  
Derry Journal  
The Guardian  
The Independent  
Irish Post  
National  
New York Times  
The Sun  
Sunday Press  
Sunday Tribune  
Sunday News  
Northern Ireland Forum  
News Letter

### Cyprus

Anatolia Agency  
Bayrak Radio  
BRTK Television Network  
Cumhuriyet  
Daily Mail  
Halkin Sesi  
Kibris  
Milliyet  
NTV  
Perceptions  
Politis  
Radio 1  
SABAH  
STAR newspaper  
TRT 1 Television  
Turkish Daily News  
Yeniduzen