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A comparative analysis of agenda-setting and political communication: a case study of the 2004 Cyprus Referendum

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**A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF AGENDA-SETTING AND
POLITICAL COMMUNICATION:
A CASE STUDY OF THE 2004 CYPRUS REFERENDUM**

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**A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the
requirements of the University of Westminster for
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ABSTRACT

This study is an investigation of cross-national comparative analysis of agenda-setting and political communication process during the 2004 Cyprus Referendum. The main aim of the study is to explore the dynamics amongst political campaigners and news media in the agenda-setting process in the referendum that was proposed by the United Nations General Secretary Kofi Annan to reunify the island after 50 years of division.

This research is a unique subject to study as it has not been scrutinised by academics from a mass media and political communication perspective. There have only been a few attempts to compare the contents of election communication in different societies, particularly for referendum campaigns communication. To scrutinise the dynamics and discretionary power between the media professionals and political campaigners, I have employed the framework of the pioneering study of Semetko et al. (1991) *The Formation of Campaign Agendas: A Comparative Analysis of Party and Media Roles in Recent American and British Elections*.

In this study I have explored the dynamics between the political campaigners, politicians and the news media over the agenda-setting process and I have also investigated to what extent cultural and political factors influenced the political campaign design and the agenda-setting power of the political actors. Additionally, the influence of media systems - in particular print media - on the agenda-setting process has been examined. So, this study analysis not only contributes to the comparative studies, where there is a dearth of research scope, but it also contributes particularly to the literature of agenda-setting research within the context of referendum elections, an area in which scholarly research is also neglected. Perhaps, most importantly, this study will also create a body of knowledge for likely future referendum studies in Cyprus on reunification

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABP	Justice and Peace Party/Adalet ve Baris Partisi
ADIL	Fighting Democratic Movement/Agonistiko Demokratiko Kinima
AKEL	Anorthotiko Komma tou Ergazomenou Laou/Progressive Party for Working People
AKP	Justice and Development Party/ Adalet ve Kalkinma Partisi
BDH	Peace and Democracy Movement/ Baris ve Demokrasi Hareketi
BDP	Peace and Democracy Movement/Baris ve Demokrasi Hareketi
BKP	United Cyprus Party/Birlesik Kıbrıs Partisi
ÇABP	Solution and European Union Party/ Çözüm ve Avrupa Birliği Partisi
CAN	Cyprus News Agency/Κυπριακό Πρακτορείο Ειδήσεων
CHP	Turkish republican party / Cumhuriyetçi Halk Partisi
CTP-BP	Turkish Republican Party and United Forces/ Cumhuriyetçi Türk Partisi-Birlesik Güçler
DHP	Democratic Populist Party/Demokratik Halk Partisi
DIKO	The Democratic Party/ Demokratiko Komma
DISY	Democratic Rally/ Dimokratikós Sinayermós
DP	Democratic party / Demokrat Parti
EDEK	Movement of Social Democrats/ Enie Dimokratiki Enosis Kyprou
EDI	The United Democrat/ Enomeni Dimokrates
ENOSIS	Hellenism and Unification of the island to motherland Greece
EOKA	Ethniki Organosis Kypriou Agoniston/ Greek for National Organisation of Cypriot Fighters
EU	European Union
KADEM	Cyprus Social Research and Educational Consulting Centre/Kıbrıs Arastırma ve Egitim Danismanlığı Merkezi
KAP	Cyprus Justice Party/Kıbrıs Adalet Partisi
KISOS	Social Democrat Movement/ The Kinima Socialdemokraton
KKE	Greek Communist Party/Kommounistikó Kómma Elládas
KSP	Cyprus Socialist Party/Kıbrıs Sosyalist Parti
MAP	Nationalist Justice Party/Milliyetçi Adalet Partisi
MBP	Nationalist Peace Party/Milliyetçi Baris Parisi
MHP	Nationalist Justice Party /Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
PASOK	The PanHellenic Socialist Movement/Panellinio Sosialistikó Kínima
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
PPR	Political Public Relations
PR	Public Relations

SC Res	Security Council Resolution
S-G	Secretary-General
TAK	Turk News Agency Cyprus/Türk Ajansı Kıbrıs
TDP	Communal Democracy Party/ Toplumcu Demokrasi Partisi
TKP	Communal Liberation Party/ Toplumcu Kurtulus Partisi
TRNC	Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus/Kuzey Kıbrıs Türk Cumhuriyet
UBP	National Unity Party/ Ulusal Birlik Partisi
UHH	National Patriotic Movement/ Ulusal Direnis Hareketi
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNFICYP	UN Peace-Keeping Force
UNSC	United Nations Security of Council
US	United States
YBH	Patriotic Unity Movement/Yurtsever Birlik Hareketi
YP	New Party/ Yeni Parti

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**I DEDICATE THIS
TO THE MEMORY OF MY NENE
MERYEM KORGAN**

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Historically, Cyprus has always been of prime geopolitical interest to many invading tribes and nations culminating in control being held by probably the two biggest empires for the last 400 years, the Ottoman and British Empires. After the last colonisation of the island by the British Empire, the postcolonial period from 1960 was left to the two indigenous people of the island, the Turkish and Greek Cypriots, to rule it themselves as the independent Republic of Cyprus. However, the Republic only survived three years. The ethnic and political conflicts amongst the two communities, and the heated political disputes over its control amongst the motherlands, Turkey and Greece, have meant the 'Cyprus Issue' is still an insolvable amalgam of problems. Continual involvement in the process of reunification of the island of third parties, namely the UK (as a guarantor state); the US; Russia; the European Union (and with the full membership of South Cyprus in May 2004) eventually led to the unsuccessful referendum in April 2004 held under the auspices of the UN.

The complex and multifaceted 'Cyprus Issue' has been of great interest to many scholars from different academic fields since 1960. However, scholars have neglected a detailed examination of this historical referendum from the perspective of political communication and mass media.

Elections and referendums are at the heart of democracy. Elections enable citizens to select their leaders, political parties and how they should be governed. Particularly when referendums are implemented as a direct form of democracy where the citizens have the final say on the issue and not the representatives, 'the will of the public' is subsequently reflected in its strongest form. The 2004 Cyprus reunification referendum was, in this sense, crucial, as for the first time in the history of the dispute members of the public from both sides spoke for their future. In our contemporary societies, democracy needs informed citizens (Keane 1991) hence election campaigns are at the forefront of the battleground for political campaigners to convey messages and to persuade voters. More

importantly, mass media inescapably takes centre stage as the main political affairs source provider in present-day social order. Particularly, as an information agency, the importance of mass media becomes more crucial at referendum elections where the referendum issue(s) is/are 'new' to voters. Under these circumstances, the voters rely heavily on mass media to obtain information in order to orientate themselves and make a judgement. Needless to say, the mass media are not only the potential information suppliers, but are also one of the key news sources on politics.

Election campaigns arise among three main players, especially in modern societies: the political parties and/or candidates, the media, and the voters (King 1997; McCombs 2004). As we are living in the 'mass mediated' political age, politicians try to win hearts and minds of citizens by using every possible communication medium to express themselves and to deliver their messages via the mass media. In this sense, the political elites use mass media as 'mediator' to interact with their electorates. In addition, political elites employ highly skilled communication professionals within PR and advertising and marketing researchers to design their campaign strategies and tactics, slogans, symbols and language (in terms of terminology and tone). Hence, a new age of opinion management, in which 'the art of creating consent' among the governed has become an integral part of the political process (Herman and Chomsky 1994). Political campaign communications can influence public opinion by disseminating and controlling the generated amount and type of information (Holbrook 1996) and also by creating 'pseudo-events' (Lippmann 1922) to capture the attention of the media and the public.

Meanwhile, the media tries to demonstrate resistance and not to give a 'free ride' (Kleinsteuber 2004) to any attempts of campaign professionals to set the agendas of both the news media and the public. Whilst the mass media acts as a 'mediator' in election campaigns, its capacity to control the content of communication mediums is a significant element of its political power. The mass media is the ultimate source of information and cues for citizens during the referendum election campaigns (LeDuc 2002; Vreese and Semetko 2004), as in most cases the

referendum issue is a brand new issue to citizens. Hence, by 'reporting or neglecting' particular political information to citizens, the news media exhibits its power as a political actor. In addition, news media draws 'attention' to key issues and enables citizens to make judgements and evaluations based on readily accessible information. It also either defines or reinforces deflating sub-issues, which are put forward by campaigners (Vreese and Semetko 2004). Consequently, the mass media has the ability to set the news agenda as well as the public agenda by 'telling people what to think about' (Cohen 1963). By setting the agenda for each political campaign the mass media has influenced the salience of attitudes towards the political issues (McCombs and Shaw 1981). Thus, the mass media is a cornerstone of political communication within any election campaign in terms of its effect on the formation of public opinion and the outcome of referendums.

So, the mass media has become a battleground among political journalists and campaign communication professionals over who will set the news and public agendas; this has considerable implications on public opinion and henceforth on society as a whole. This battle over the control of communication and messages can pose a fundamental problem for the free flow of information that constitutes the very heart of a democratic society. Moreover, within the liberal democratic understanding, the mass media should function to 'inform', 'educate', provide a 'platform' for political publicity and institutions, and serve as a channel for the 'advocacy' of political viewpoints whilst acting as a 'watchdog' on political power (McNair 1999). In addition, the press should supply 'diverse' opinions and 'promote' rational debates for public interest in order for the electorate to make informed judgments at election times (Curran 1991). Alongside the power battle amongst the two key political actors, the contextual factors (e.g., media norms, ownership, journalistic norms) that affect news production processes are also highly significant in ensuring the healthy functioning of a democratic society. Thus, the referendum elections and the dynamics amongst the political actors in the campaigning process are crucial subject matters to investigate as both have direct influences on the democratic functioning of society.

The focal point of traditional scholarly research on political communication has been the production and dissemination of political messages and its impact on audiences (Negrine and Stanyer 2007; McNair 2002). The majority of political communication studies focus on the effects of election campaigns and news media on the voting behaviour of electorates, and attitude formation and change (McQuail 2005; Esser and Pfessth 2004). Scholars interchangeably use terminologies of 'media effects', 'political communication effects', 'campaign effects' and 'the mass communication effects' within an election context examination. The interdisciplinary nature of mass communication and politics studies has been the reason for this. To avoid any terminological confusion in this research study, I will be using the term 'political communication effects' as I believe this is the term which neatly summarizes this multifaceted research subject; politics, communication and their likely effects.

Instead of using the traditional root of scholars' investigations at the macro-level, in this study I place particular emphasis on exploring the role of media and political campaigning in a referendum election (and what effect this has) on public opinion formation and more specifically its broader implications on a healthy functioning democratic society. At the micro-level, I attempt to explore the dynamics amongst the news media and political campaign communication incumbents; their battle over the control of media agenda; the influence of sources which other news organizations use on media agenda-setting and at the final stage, the effects of press news issues agenda on the important concerns of the Cypriot public. In other words, the influence of these two political actors on the formation of public opinion. To investigate what I have outlined above, I employ the theory of agenda-setting from the pioneering study by Semetko, A. H. Blumler, G. J. Gurevitch, M. and Weaver, H. D., (1991) *The Formation of Campaign Agendas: A Comparative Analysis of Party and Media Roles in Recent American and British Elections*. The theory is adopted in order to analyze a varied context of referendum election in my own research. However, I expand my research further by putting in practice their suggestion of 'a number of differentiating influences' on contribution to campaign agendas for future studies.

Within this main conceptual framework, I adopt Semetko et al., (1991) analytical framework to evaluate the media's power during referendum election campaigns in structuring the campaign agendas. This analytical framework consists of four variables: (1) the position of politics and of politicians in society, in other words, the political culture; (2) newspeople's orientations toward politics and politicians, 'valuation of politics'; (3) the degree of 'professionalization' of election campaigns; and finally (4) the consequences of different levels of political and media competition. After scrutinizing the research subject conducted within this adopted analytical framework, overall conclusion analysis is provided on whether the news media functioned in its normative liberal democratic role during the referendum election.

To investigate this research subject, the structure of the thesis is outlined as follows:

Chapter 2 of the thesis provides detailed explanation of the employed conceptual framework; that is 'agenda-setting' theory.

In Chapter 3, I review the literature under the broad title of Political Campaign Communication and Referendums. In this section, I review various subjects that are related in undertaking such a study: the political communication concept; typology of political campaigns, and its role within campaign effects; the changing pattern of political communications, and a brief historical overview of theories of political communication in relation with media effects studies. Finally, a general overview of referendums around the world and public opinion formation are provided.

Chapter 4 sets the historical context of the 'Cyprus Issue' in order for readers to comprehend the political campaigning scene of the election.

Chapter 5 provides the context of the 2004 Cyprus referendum on reunifying the island. Additionally, the overall view on political camps is documented.

Chapter 6 examines the media and political systems in Cyprus. A cross-national descriptive analysis of the national party system and electoral system is outlined. Furthermore, the ideological stance of political parties in both North and South Cyprus are expressed, as well as their stances on the Annan Plan. In the second section of this chapter, cross-national comparative descriptive analysis on Cypriot media is illustrated. Additionally, all editorial policies of the print news media are summarized alongside their reasoning.

Chapter 7 addresses the employed research methods. It outlines the adopted multi-method (triangulation) research design, including a justification of why it is appropriate for this research, as well as the data collection techniques and in-depth interviews and quantitative content analysis.

Chapter 8 provides findings on the ‘analysis of news production processes: interviews’. This chapter explores the relationship between the two key political actors in the referendum campaign; political journalists and political incumbents and outlines their battle over media agenda-setting.

Chapter 9 examines the communication process of political campaigns cross-nationally and hence documents the campaign strategies, tactics and their referendum election agendas.

Chapter 10 documents the findings of press news coverage of the election through content analysis. Based on the four newspaper analyses of the election, various inputs are documented, such as the amount of attention devoted to referendum news coverage, in general as well as in the headlines; favorability of the press towards political camps; news sources of the press and so on. More importantly, I examine whether press is successful in telling the Cypriot public what to think about.

Chapter 11 provides an overall summary of the core findings of this research study and outlines the discretionary power of the press at course of 2004 Cyprus

Referendum. Furthermore, I discuss the broader implications for political communication, referendum campaign studies, and normative liberal understanding of journalistic practice in the light of a healthy functioning democratic society. Last but not least, future research indications are also outlined.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: AGENDA-SETTING THEORY

Agenda-Setting Theory: Theoretical Framework

The social, political, and media environments in a given society can be expected to influence the character, form, and content of political information available and its impact on the public.

McLeod et al., 1994

This chapter describes the theoretical framework employed for this study, namely agenda-setting, and justifies why the chosen theoretical framework is appropriate to investigate the topic. It is organised in three parts. First, it briefly outlines the interrelationship of political communication effects and the role of agenda-setting theory within effect studies. Thereafter, the conceptualization of agenda-setting theory in the context of media political effects is explained to readers. In conjunction, its historical evolution and the development of different approaches to agenda-setting theory is summarized. In the final section, the lack of empirical agenda-setting investigation within the referendum campaign studies is delineated, particularly from a cross-national comparative perspective.

Introduction

Elections take place at the heart of democracy. Elections are important as they enable citizens to select their leaders and political parties and influence how they should be governed. Thus, they matter for any form of democratic regime. Therefore elections and election campaigns are particularly fascinating and a crucial area of research particularly in understanding their influences on the future of our society.

In today's mediated politics, "a mature democracy depends on having an educated electorate, informed and connected through parliament" (Sampson 1996:47) and it is through media that citizens can fulfil this principle. In our contemporary societies, most citizens rely on mass media to obtain information about politics

and consequently, the mass media becomes a core and vital political information source (Norris 2000). As the media is a cornerstone of any election campaign, it becomes the most crucial in the battleground for political actors in terms of who will control its agenda.

Agenda-setting theory provides a platform to investigate the three key political actors in elections: politicians, media and electorates and its wider implications for democracy as a whole. First, it enables scrutiny of whether the normative assumptions of mass media, particularly the press, are maintained within liberal democratic understanding. Then, it provides an opportunity to explore the dynamics and complex relationship of media sources, their struggle over the control of agendas and to what extent the media has a 'discretionary' power (Semetko et al. 1991) to set the agenda, and finally whether they have been able to affect public opinion. Thus, it is essential to monitor the adequacy of press performance and the relationship of mass media and political institutions, which affect the process of political communication content and its impact on public opinion. Political communication systems demonstrate variation in their characteristics within different structural and cultural political climates, which in turn can influence the formation of news and public agendas. The analysis of all of these factors can be undertaken through an agenda-setting conceptual framework. The next section sets out the role of agenda setting within 'effects' studies and describes the historical development of this rich conceptual framework.

Agenda-Setting as Political Communication Effects

Agenda-setting is a part of the broader topic of public opinion and mass communication (McCombs 1981). This research has become a central interest of 'effects' research since the first empirical study of McCombs and Shaw (1972) on the agenda-setting function of mass media (Son and Weaver 2005). The birth of agenda-setting research in political communication dates back to the 1970s.

During the 1980s and 1990s, agenda-setting theory reached its latest stage of political-effects research. In the 20th century, as mentioned later in Chapter 3, the mass communication field passed through a series of paradigms from the early hypodermic needle and magic-bullet models of the 1920s and 1930s to the all powerful mass media (McQuail 2005). Agenda-setting is not a return to a bullet theory or a hypodermic theory of all-powerful media effects (McCombs 2004); it has shifted media 'effects' research away from the 'limited effects' model that emerged from studies of voting behaviour (Semetko and Mandelli 1997). As we entered the fourth decade of the research in political communication (Son and Weaver 2005) due to the emerging body of literature, the latest paradigm in political communication research has been named agenda setting, framing, and priming (Scheufele and Tewksbury 2007).

According to McLeod et al. (1994), the news media's political effect is a subset of a larger set of political communication effects. The term 'effects' is loosely used and therefore can be ambiguous or misleading (Ibid, 1994). The reasons for this are the term 'effects' mainly connotes a quantitative research paradigm and associates with the most widely investigated research studies of voting behavior and attitude changes in political communication. However, there is a diverse set of 'effects' presented in political communication literature, namely; opinion formation and change; cognitive (learning, attention, awareness); perception of the political system and political participation (Ibid, 1994). The complexity and varieties of potential meanings of the term is described by McLeod et al., (1994:130) as:

... effects can be manifested at micro level of individual behaviour, the intermediary level of political groups, or at the macro level of the system itself. There are also effects that involve cross-level relationships such as the impact of political institutions on individual behaviour or the process by which individual political sentiments become translated into social policy.

So, in terms of 'effects', agenda-setting theory falls under psychological cognitive effects. The combination of cognitive and affective elements in agenda-setting

research reawakens the concepts of mass communication effects on public opinion and attitudes. However, there are also some studies which explore the behavioural consequences of agenda-setting (for example Roberts 1992 and Weaver 1991). The core theoretical foundation of agenda-setting is based on news media's cognitive effects by defining priority of salience of objects as the unit of analysis – in other words, a public issue – and the importance which the electorate perceives the issue to have. So, cognitive effects of agenda-setting occur when the news media coverage influences the public perception of issue(s) by shifting the electorates' 'focus of attention', 'what they think about' and 'how they think about' the issue(s).

Therefore, agenda-setting theory is based on the idea that the news coverage can structure and change audience cognition (Williant 1997) by transferring the salience of issues from the news media to the public. In the context of election campaign setting, agenda-setting effects means the extent to which electorates rely upon the mass media to obtain political information which Lippmann (1922) calls 'picture in our heads'. The agenda of salient and attributes in their minds occur through news coverage of what are regarded as the most important issues in elections. Consequently, the mass media sets the agenda to a substantial degree for the formation of the electorates' opinions and perhaps, in turn, their voting behaviour.

Agenda-Setting: What it Means and Why it is Important to Study

Agenda-setting can simply be described as a *battle for control over the agenda*. In election studies, agenda-setting research has mainly been used to explore the struggle for control over the media and public agendas amongst competing agenda-setters: the news media and political campaigners. Traditionally, agenda-setting research concentrates on the mass media's power to determine the degree of attention given to particular issue(s) to the neglect of others, and its consequent influence on the importance of issue(s) in the public mind. It assesses this by

determining whether the ranking order of importance of the issues in the public eye positively correlates with the ranking of issues emphasised in the news media. However, at the core of the agenda-setting is the notion of 'issues,' although what constitutes an issue still remains an open question (Lang and Lang 1981). Therefore, agenda-setting theory is about the news media's power to structure the importance of political issues in the public's mind (Perse 2001:98). The news media is a particularly powerful communication medium, where no direct experience of learning occurs about what is going on in a broader context and within public affairs. This process is called *pseudo-environment* by Lippmann (1922). So, the basic hypothesis is the 'learning function' of the media (Son and Weaver 2005) whereby the 'issue' becomes more important in the mind of the public after having been exposed to mass media.

McCombs (2004:1) precisely documented the power of news media and the meaning of agenda-setting as:

Through their day-by-day selection and display of the news, editors and news directors focus our attention and influence our perceptions of what are the most important issues of the day. This ability to influence the salience of topics on the public agenda is called the agenda-setting role of mass communication.

Thus, the decisions of reporters and editors may have an effect on the voters' concerns and perhaps their voting. Agenda-setting therefore postulates that the way in which media covers the news during election campaigning not only influences the body of politics, but in broader sense also influences the democratic function of society by deciding how to define and frame the issues – hence influencing the rational-decision making process of the voters. Therefore, it is necessary to examine 'the news production process' of journalists during elections and their 'journalistic professionalism' which can explain why certain issues are covered and for what purposes. The scrutiny of 'news production process' and 'professional practice' of journalists provides a uni-dimensional examination of the role and degree of the influence which owners of the media have, their

relationship with journalists, and more importantly the influence their intertwined relationship has on news production processes. Furthermore, it enables us to realize how this dynamic influences the way in which news is framed and/or shaped. That's why I analyse the news production process of selected newspapers in this study first before I outline the agenda-setting effects in the 2004 Cyprus referendum.

How Does Agenda-Setting Work?

In this part, I outline the evolution of the agenda-setting process. It adopts and expands the theoretical mapping of agenda-setting theory proposed by McCombs (2004) in his study of *Setting the Agenda: The Mass Media and Public Opinion*. Theoretical mapping is particularly useful in portraying scholarly activities on the topic. Agenda-setting theory has evolved into a multi-faceted theory over the years. Scholars have investigated different perspectives of possible agenda-setting effects of the mass media in both election and non-election settings across different continents, mass media channels and public issues. As the intention of this study is to analyse agenda-setting process in referendum election campaigns, this section omits the literature outside election studies.

To do this, I first provide four perspectives on the agenda-setting effects of the mass media. Then, I attempt to combine the different phases of agenda-setting processes into one comprehensive outline. It is essential to provide this comprehensive conceptual map, which is currently neglected (Ibid, 2004), to pinpoint the existing claims on the agenda-setting. As a continuously evolving research paradigm, its conceptual domain is expanding together with and in consequence of a rather 'complex and confusing' conceptual situation (Rogers et al. 1993) as diverse interpretations are provided for conceptual terminologies by scholars. For example, on the premises of priming and framing, whether they are an extension of the agenda-setting process or a variant of agenda-setting. Although some scholars have attempted to clarify the many conceptual problems

within agenda-setting research, it still remains problematical. So, I first address the conceptual disputes amongst scholars and the various terms used in the literature to describe the agenda-setting effects. I then set out my own position on this dispute by adopting the terminology of McCombs' (2004)¹ as one of the founders of the research, to describe the agenda-setting processes and thus deflect potential criticisms of my stance on the issue. Finally, I explain how this comprehensive map of agenda-setting process has been utilised in this study.

Perspectives on Agenda-Setting Effects

Examination of agenda-setting effects in mass communication field has been undertaken from diverse perspectives (McCombs & Reynolds 2002; McCombs 2004). 'The Acapulco' typology has been introduced in 1981 by McCombs to describe these perspectives. This typology includes two basic dichotomies. At the first level, a determination of *a single issue* or a *set of issues* on the media and public agendas and, at the second level, whether to use the *aggregate population measures (issue(s))* or the *individual measures* as the unit of analysis. The combination of these two dichotomised dimensions create the four categories (see Figure 2.1) (McCombs et al. 1995; McCombs 2004).

¹ The reason for selecting McCombs can be explained as his pioneering work with Shaw (1972) was the first empirical study, first ever to include the use of the term 'agenda-setting' to describe the media's role in public agenda-setting in the 1968 presidential election campaign (Rogers et al., 1993). In addition, McCombs' work, particularly his first page, has received the highest citation among academics up until 1993 (Ibid).

Figure 2.1 The Acapulco Typology: Four Perspectives on Agenda-Setting

		Measurement of the agenda	
		Aggregate data	Individual data
Focus of Attention	Set of Issues	Mass Persuasion I	Automaton II
	Single Issue	Natural History III	Cognitive Portrait IV

This proposed analytical framework makes a distinction in terms of the methodological underpinning between the level of agenda assessment at either individual level or aggregated level and the range of issues as single issue or set of issues. Type I (Mass Persuasion) and Type II (Automaton) studies focus on sets of issues. On the contrary, Type III (Natural History) and Type IV (Cognitive Portrait) studies pay attention to a single issue to test the news media's effects. Whilst Types II and IV studies examine the agenda-setting influence of news coverage at an individual level, Types I and III studies measure this on an aggregate level. As I propose to measure the agenda-setting effects at the aggregate level based on a set of issues, this study is in the mass persuasion category.

In addition to this methodological decision, the literature outlines a further methodological consideration that needs to be addressed in the analysis of agenda-setting processes: that of 'real-world events' versus 'controlled laboratory experiments'. According to McCombs et al. (1995), the best evidence has been produced under controlled experiment condition where various manipulations and a high degree of control over the experiment exist, such as Iyengar and Kinder study of 1987. However, this choice of method to examine the effects of agenda-setting process has been criticised by scholars who pinpoint its artificial situations. In defence, McCombs (2004:18) argues:

a complete set of evidence for agenda-setting effects requires both internal validity of experiments where the media and public agendas are tightly controlled and measured and the external validity of content analysis and survey research whose designs assure us that the findings can be generalised beyond the immediate observations at hand to a larger setting in the real world.

Moreover, the 'time frame' in terms of 'time span'² for the translation of issues from media agenda to public agenda and 'the medium' (newspaper versus television) are important factors which can influence the effects of agenda-setting processes (McCombs et al. 1995; Wanta 1997). Methodologically, the time frame for an agenda-setting study consists of three elements (McCombs 1981:130):

1. duration of the media agenda: the number of the days of media content analysed to yield a measure of the independent variable;
2. duration of the public agenda: the number of days which elapse during the collection of data on the public agenda, the dependent variable;
3. timelag: the number of days which elapse between the last day of media content examined and the first day of data collection from the public. In the literature this is range from zero to nine months.

Any agenda-setting study needs to address these methodological concerns to provide a complete set of evidence for an agenda-setting effects investigation.

Brief Historical Overview on Agenda-Setting Evidence

Originally, the notion of agenda setting by the media can be traced back to Walter Lippmann's 1922 study of *Public Opinion*. As mentioned, he proposed that the media was responsible for the 'pictures in our heads' and labelled this process as *pseudo-environment*. According to Lippmann (1922), where we are exempt of direct experience, the mass media, as a window to our world, establishes our cognitive maps of that world. This study was followed by Cohen's (1963) famous

² A message transmitted through the news media needs some sort of repetition before it can fully influence an individual. Determining the optimal time lag for this repetition of issue information to have the greatest magnitude of influence is a key consideration (Wanta 1997:147). According to McCombs et al. (1995) the typical time span for this is five to seven weeks. However, there is a remarkable variability across issues.

statement about the media that it “may not always be successful in telling people what to think, but they are usually a success in telling people what to think about”. Thereafter, Lang and Lang (1966:468) also supported the idea of the media’s agenda-setting power by stating that “the mass media force attention to certain issues... they are constantly presenting objects, suggesting what individuals in the mass should think about, know about, have feelings about”. However, McCombs and Shaw conducted the first empirical study of the agenda-setting function of the mass media in 1972. They analysed the agenda-setting hypothesis in the 1968 US presidential election campaign. They found that there were .98³ rank-ordered correlations between the amount of news coverage of issues and the rank ordering of those issues among the undecided voters.

Ever since this study, more than 400 empirical studies have been produced and many of them have followed the Chapel Hill study root (McCombs 2004). The researchers have adopted different research designs, namely cross-sectional surveys, panel studies, and experimental studies to provide evidence of agenda-setting effects. In time, the scope of agenda-setting research has expanded to examine the salience of political advertising (Roberts 1997; Roberts and McCombs 1994; Golan et al. 2007); public relations materials for example political campaign press releases; candidates’ speeches: pseudo-events (Weaver et al., 1981; Turk 1985, 1986; Kioussis et al. 2006); policy agendas (Brewer and McCombs 1996; Davis 2007) and political candidates’ image (King 1997; Bryan 1997; Lopez-Escobar et al., 1997). The vast majority of these studies have found widespread support for a media influence on issues. However, up until today most studies investigating agenda-setting effects in many countries during and outside of election campaigns have provided ethnocentric research (Werde 2002) and they mainly focused on the US, and the UK. Even the comparative studies were profoundly based on these two countries.

³ .98 correlations indicate how strongly the pair of two variables related and the .98 shows the strongest form of that relation.

The Explanation of the Theoretical Map of Agenda-Setting

The agenda-setting role of the mass media has provided rich soil for researchers and still much of its wealth remains unexploited after thirty-five years of investigation (McCombs 2004). As mentioned, agenda-setting theory is a complex intellectual map that is still evolving (see Figure 2.2) so in the next section I attempt to summarise the multifaceted expansion of this complex map and its consequences. Traditionally, researchers have investigated the influence on public opinion of the salience of issues (objects), which are highlighted by the media. In this traditional agenda-setting analysis, the amount of coverage or emphasis given to certain issues by particular media influences the priority of public concern on these issues (McCombs and Shaw 1972; Dearing and Rogers 1996; McCombs 2004). This is called 'first level agenda-setting' analysis, which examines 'the transmission of object salience from media agenda to public agenda' (McCombs et al. 2000; McCombs 2004), and the proposed hypothesis is to have a positive relationship between media agenda (independent variable) and audience (dependent variable). In the 'second level of agenda setting' analysis the focus is on attributes, characteristics, or perspectives of an issue or a public figure (Son & Weaver 2005). It therefore concentrates on "the influence of the particular elements of an issue on the public's agenda of attributes" (Ghanem 1997:8). At the second level of analysis, there are two major hypotheses about attribute salience:

1. The way an issue or other object is covered in the media (the attributes emphasised in the news) affects the way the public thinks about that object.
2. The way an issue or other object is covered in the media (the attributes emphasised in the news) affects the salience of that object on the public agenda (Ibid, p. 4).

A second level of agenda-setting links agenda-setting with a major contemporary concept – news framing (McCombs 1994; McCombs and Bell 1996). Ghanem (1997) argues that second-level agenda-setting consists of four dimensions: subtopics; framing mechanisms; affective elements; and cognitive elements. The

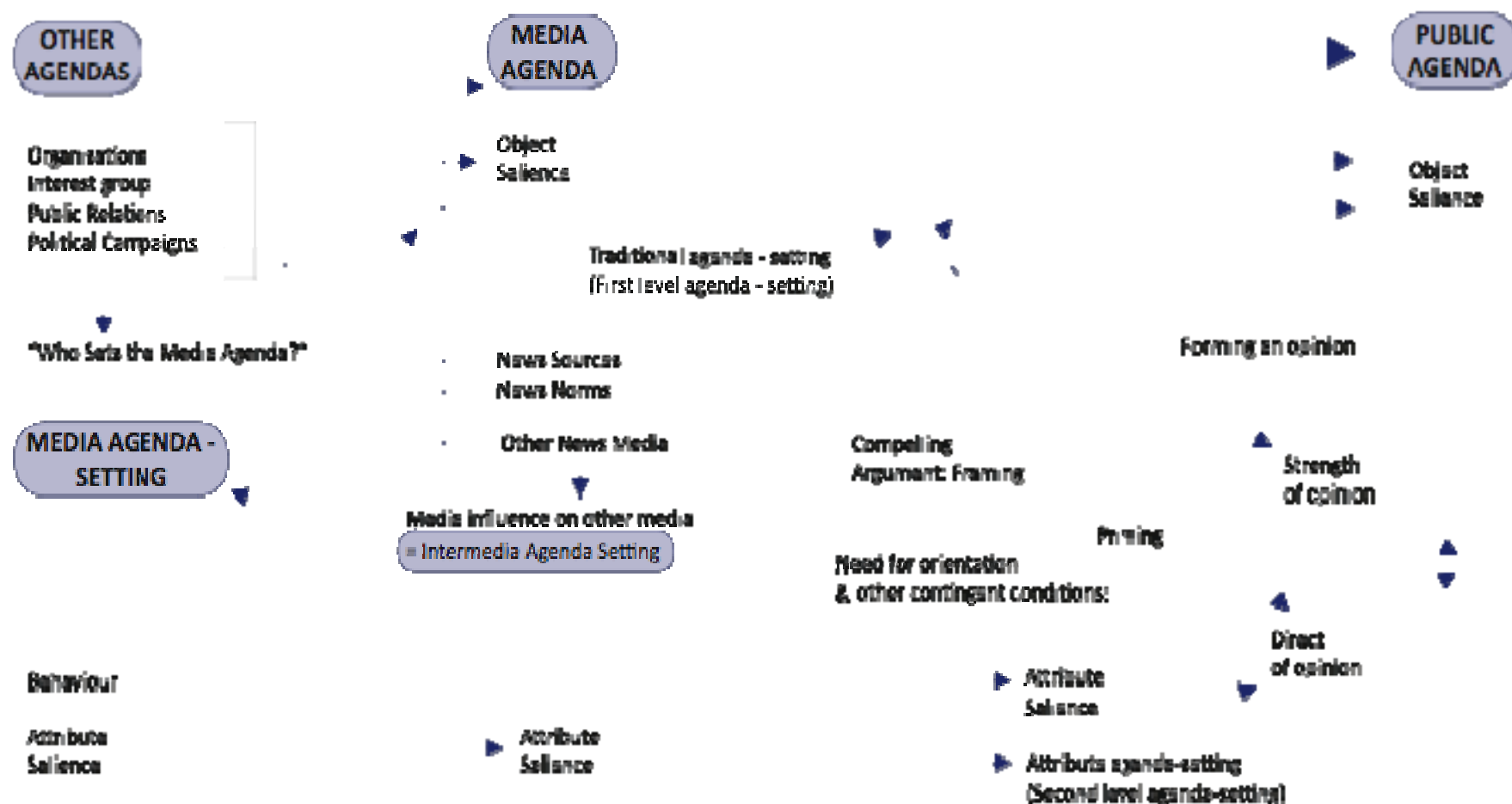
majority of research on the second-level analysis has investigated elections and political candidates (Golan 2007). Although within these two areas of research the focus is on the influence of media messages, the nature of influence is however divergent on the variety of 'objects'⁴ versus 'attributes' - obstructive⁵ or unobstructive⁶ issue(s) (McCombs 2004). The nexus amongst the two analyses identifies Lippmann's (1922) idea of pictures in our heads (McCombs 2004; Ghanem 1997).

⁴ According to McCombs (2004), a public issue is an object but not only for the agenda-setting analyses. McCombs (2004:69-70) defines the term as "thing towards which our attention is directed or the thing about which we have an attitude or opinion. Traditionally, in discussions of agenda-setting that has been a public issue".

⁵ Obstructive issue – they obtrude into our daily lives and are directly experienced. For example; inflation, economy, unemployment, crime, etc. (see McCombs 2004).

⁶ Unobstructive issue – we encounter them only in the news, not directly in our daily lives, e.g., national unity, patriotism, pollution, drug abuse, energy, etc. (see McCombs 2004).

Figure 2.2 THEORETICAL MAP OF AGENDA-SETTING



Notes: Adapted and re-constructed on the basis of McCombs (2004) for public relations communication. Theoretical map of Agenda-Setting Theory

After these two levels of analysis the claims were based on the argument that the frequency of object appearance on the media agenda influences the degree of public concern. However, these studies did not refer to the dispute about how influential stratification of the kinds of attributes that alluded to the object by the media has been. Therefore, the idea of ‘compelling arguments’ was introduced in 1996 into the theoretical map of agenda-setting after the effects of Ghanem’s study of media coverage of crime on the public opinion in 1990s (McCombs 2004). Here, the claim is that certain attributes of an object on the media agenda influences the salience of object(s) on the public agenda by organising and structuring the picture of an object: framing. Sheafer (2007) asserts that the compelling argument hypothesis arises when “some object attributes emphasised by the news media affect the accessibility of that object (and not of the attribute) to the public, *regardless of the frequency of their appearance in the media message*. This is the impact of the second-level on first-level agenda-setting” [italic is emphasised by author]. In the literature, attribute agenda-setting analysis (the second level analysis) is categorised at two levels: substantive (cognitive) and affective (emotional) (McCombs et al. 1997; Lopez-Escobar et al. 1998; McCombs et al. 2000; Kiousis 2004; Sheafer 2007). Whilst substantive attributes are concerned with the definition of the issue (or objects in general) in the media, the analysis of affective attributes places emphasis on the tone of media presentation, with *evaluation* of issues (i.e., positive, negative, or neutral) [italic emphasised] (Sheafer 2007).

McCombs et al. (2000) claim that in election settings the distinction between first and second levels of agenda-setting is evident and argue further:

the candidates vying for a political office are, in the abstract, a set of objects. The salience of each of these candidates, frequently measured in political research as ‘name recognition’, can be influenced by news coverage and by political advertising. Increasingly, though, political campaigns around the world are organised as media campaigns whose goals include image building (Swanon & Mancini 1996). In this setting, where the objects are the candidates, the attributes are the various traits that define the images of the candidates in the media and among the voters.

The first level analysis of agenda-setting refers to “priming” effects and the second-level analysis refers to “attribute or media agenda-setting” effects. McCombs et al. (2000) state that second-level agenda-setting links agenda-setting with a major contemporary concept of ‘framing’. The claim in the second-level analysis is that media not only affect the salience of ‘objects’, but also the salience of object ‘attributes’, which ascribe the features and qualities of the objects.

The central idea of priming research is that people make their judgements or expresses an opinion based on the most accessible or salient information (Weaver et al. 2004). Priming research investigates the question of “*what* issues are emphasised by the news media” (Weaver et al. 2004:258). Priming research has shown that although media coverage by itself is unlikely to change the political attitudes of many people, media coverage can influence which attitudes people use to make political judgements. This is due to the fact that priming can alter the criteria citizens use to evaluate political issues, leaders, and events (Althaus and Kim 2006). This is particularly argued that citizens made their evaluations based on newly attained and readily available information (Vreese and Semetko 2004). Hence, the priming hypothesis states that the issue salience in news media agenda (independent variable) influences the public’s evaluation of the performance of political actors, issues, and events (dependent variable) (Iyengar & Kinder 1987). According to the priming theory, media exposure and accessibility cause the activation of related knowledge, where knowledge stored in the memory is likely to be retrieved and used spontaneously and effortlessly in political judgments. So far, most media priming research has dealt with the evaluations of US Presidents’ performance (Krosnick and Kinder 1990; Price and Tewksbury 1997; Willnat 1997; Sheafer and Weimann 2005). In a European political context, Maier and Reittberger (2008) found a priming effect on standards by which individuals evaluated potential EU candidate countries after media exposure. In the context of a referendum, Vreese and Semetko (2004:146) in their study of the 2000 Danish national referendum concluded that “the overall evaluation of political leaders was strongly dependent upon an issue that was highly salient, readily available, and at

the forefront of citizens' minds". In other words, as the visibility and the importance of the referendum issue increased in the media, the reliance of the public on that issue to evaluate political leaders also increased.

On the other hand, framing is to select "some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation and/or treatment recommendation for the item described" (Entman 1993:52). Framing research examines "how these issues [priming] are reported" (Weaver et al. 2004:258), instead of 'what' topic is reported. Price et al. (1997) state that theories of framing propose that news coverage can promote changes in public opinion by endorsing particular definitions and interpretations of political issues. So, the underlying proposition is that how journalists cover or construct the issue topic in the news might influence how it is perceived by audiences. Therefore, it refers to the approach journalists choose to present complex information in a practical way. This is labelled as 'media framing' or 'news frame' in the literature. Through framing, the mass media highlight special aspects or attributes of an issue or object, and in so doing can shape image, for example that of political leaders. This function of mass media is described by McQuail (2005) as 'construction of social reality'.

As outlined previously, by framing the content of election news coverage, the media is a powerful political force in influencing citizen's judgement by channelling the public discussion of a specific issue in terms of a particular viewpoint, thus forming the public opinion. "News framing is the result of various factors at work, among them commercial imperatives, the political system and its configuration, political-cultural notions and values, and frames presented by powerful elites" (Strömbäck and Shehata 2007:135). Furthermore, the news media hold substantial discretionary power as to how to frame the daily news report of an election campaign and how much to go beyond the issues and to report other aspects of the campaign. However, its discretionary power is restricted by some external

factors on the agenda of issues in the news (Semetko et al. 1991). For example, Iyengar's (1991) experimental television news study of the framing of issues such as poverty, crime, and so on revealed that differences in framing influenced people's perceptions of who was responsible for the problem. For example, the 'strategic' or 'game' frame dominates contemporary campaign coverage (Patterson, 1993 cited in Nelson et al. 1997). As it is not the intention of this research to study framing no further details will be provided on framing.

In the next section, I outline another aspect of agenda-setting research, which has generated a substantial amount of interest from scholars, namely media agenda-setting. I also intend to scrutinise media agenda-setting because without addressing the question of 'who sets the media agenda' there is a danger of oversimplifying the relationship between the agenda of the media and the public agenda.

MEDIA AGENDA-SETTING

After intensive studies of the traditional agenda-setting process, researchers have shifted the direction of the subject by focusing on the question of ‘who sets the media agenda?’. This interrogation primarily examines the dynamics between news organisations and sources of news and how the news sources might influence the media agenda-setting process. In other words, this study scrutinises the dynamics of the power struggle between journalists and various political actors during political campaigning. “All parties want the election campaign to deal with their particular favourite issues – issues that are positive for them or at least negative for the opposing parties. Each party wants to set the agenda for the campaign and, in the end, for the voters” (Asp 1983:336).

Definition and Explication

The term ‘media agenda-setting’ is defined by Berkowitz and Adams (1990:723) as the “overall process of creating mass media agendas”. In the literature, scholars have conceptualised this research differently. Whilst some prefer to label this agenda-setting process as ‘agenda-building’ (e.g., Cobb and Elder 1971; Lang and Lang 1981; Behr and Iyengar 1985; Turk 1986; Scheufele 2000), others prefer to describe it as ‘media agenda-setting’ (e.g., Rogers and Dearing 1996; McCombs 2004) as the definition concentrates on the media agenda as the dependent variable. To avoid the conceptual labelling issue, I will be using ‘media agenda-setting’ throughout this thesis.

In this ‘fourth phase’ (McCombs 2004) of the agenda-setting process, the media agenda is considered as the dependent variable. This inquiry is a further expansion of Walter Lippmann’s (1922) idea of the mass media as a major bridge between ‘the world outside and the pictures in our heads’. Although the central research theme in the majority of the previous studies has been an ‘object’ – a public issue (the first level), the objects have ‘attributes’ or ‘characteristics’. Attributes can be defined as the word or frame used to describe the object. The process of

journalists reporting news from a certain 'perspective and/or frame' is an example of an attribute. Due to a vast amount of daily news flowing into editorial offices and the limited space for story coverage in newspapers reporters highlight only the prominent aspects of any object, and thus the rest are neglected. As the objects vary in their salience so do the attributes. Therefore, the inquiry into 'perspectives and/or frames' that reporters use to highlight the importance of certain attributes of the objects in news coverage is called second-level media agenda-setting; in other words, it is an investigation of 'agenda of attributes' (McCombs et al. 2000). The main emphasis is on 'how' these issues are reported instead of 'which issues' and, in some cases, it's the likely effects on public opinion as well as public concern (McCombs et al. 1997). The claims of previous studies are based on the assumption that 'the media by filtering and shaping reality instead of by simply reflecting it set the public agenda of issues' (Weaver and Elliot 1985). This notion is further supported by McCombs (2005) who additionally argues that journalistic norms and values, as well as daily interaction of the media with other news sources, should be considered over and above the question of 'who sets the media agenda'. What is more, the literature on media agenda-setting suggests other factors that can influence the way in which the media agenda is shaped. These are: the structure of newsrooms; lack of resources; 'pack journalism' (Crouse 1973); cultural, institutional and organisational factors; journalism professionalism and the values of journalists.

How it Works

Up until the early 1980s, previous studies examined only two elements at a time: the media and the public in the agenda-setting process – i.e., effects – and hence have neglected this important part of the agenda-setting process. Only since the 1980s have scholars dug into this relatively new dimension of agenda-setting namely news sources and media dynamics. This type of research focuses on 'news sources', mainly the relationship between the public relations professionals and journalists, and concentrates on how and to what extent PR-sourced materials – in

other words ‘information subsidies’⁷ that are delivered to the media – achieve coverage in the news reporting. This relationship between PR practitioners and journalists is complex and rather difficult to pin down because the dynamics vary within different market and political settings. However, in most cases they have mutually beneficial relationship as to some extent they both rely on each other to function efficiently in their jobs. At election times news journalists are especially vulnerable and open to the influence of PR efforts, as governmental sources are in high demand for example speeches by Presidents and/or Prime Ministers.

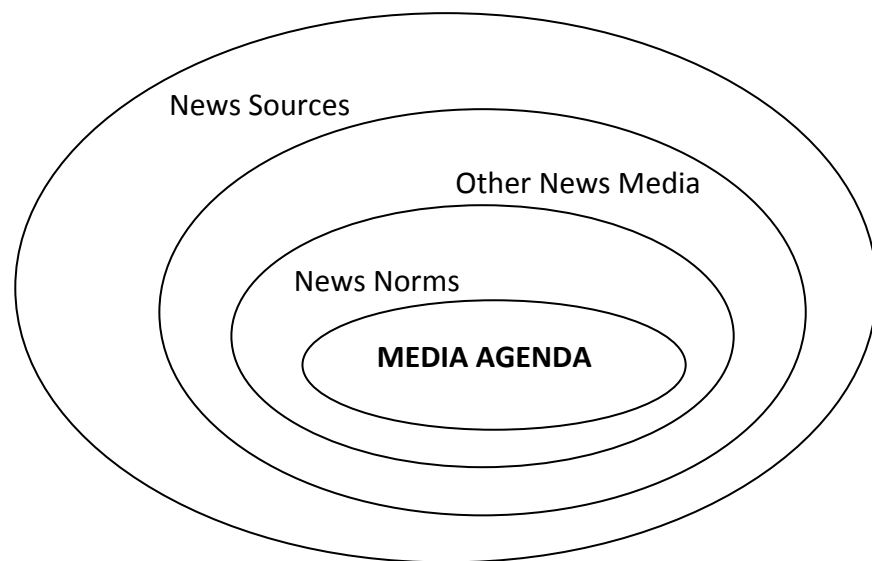
Journalists acknowledge that for many reasons (such as market pressure, lack of resources, deadlines pressure, to name but a few), and also because the PR sources are convenient and trustworthy, they start to use this prepared in advance material in news production. Consequently the media becomes subsidised. That’s why both professions are in a constant battle over who will have the final say over the media agenda-setting. Consequently, the focus of agenda-setting research has changed from the traditional journalistic investigation perspective to a PR perspective.

As mentioned, the previous studies’ claims are based on the assumption that “the media by filtering and shaping reality instead of by simply reflecting it set the public agenda of issues” (Weaver and Elliot 1985). However, McCombs (2005: 548-9) argues that this is not simply always the case as “the pattern of news coverage that defines the media agenda results from the norms and traditions of journalism, the daily interactions among news organizations themselves, and the continuous interactions of news organizations with numerous sources and their agendas”. Therefore, as mentioned, media agenda-setting should be examined before any claim of the media’s power on public agenda-setting is declared.

⁷ Gandy (1982), who coined the term, defines it as “an attempt to produce influence over the actions of others by controlling their access to and use of information relevant to those actions. This information is characterised as a subsidy because the source of the information causes it to be made available at something less than the cost a user would face in the absence of the subsidy” (cited in Negrine and Staney 2007). In other words, information subsidies in the context of political election can be described as pre-prepared materials of PR practitioners, i.e., press releases, political leaders interviews and speeches, the use of political parties’ website to provide updated information and so on.

To investigate media agenda-setting thoroughly, McCombs (2004) suggested “an onion model” (see Figure 2.3) which facilitates the examination of the effect of various factors on the news media’s agenda. This model proposes three fundamental layers to examine the influential factors on the media agenda-setting, namely: (1) News Sources (i.e. President, PR efforts and political campaigns), (2) Other News Media (i.e. elite media or newspapers’ news coverage; the impact of television news), and (3) News Norms (professionalism and its norms).

Figure 2.3 Peeling an Onion



Reviewing the literature on media –agenda-setting identifies that in the process of analysis scholars have focused on two major independent variables: ‘real-world and events’ and ‘the activities of political actors’ to assess the impact of the other sources on media agenda. Both approaches in the first case scrutinise the ‘correlations’ between the changes in the real-world indicators and events and the prominences of issues on the media agenda (first level analysis), and in the second case, they scrutinise the agendas or political campaign strategies of parties and/or candidates and the media agenda (second level analysis). Most media agenda-setting studies have been conducted in the first group, and many of those studies find a rather low correlation between the ‘real-world indicators’ and media agendas (Dearing and Rogers 1996).

Previous Studies' Findings in Media Agenda-Setting

In their landmark study, Lang and Lang (1981:448) claimed that previous research had neglected to examine “recognition of the process through which agendas are built or through which an object that caught public attention, by being big news, gives rise to a political issue”, and thus the question of how the public agenda is formed. In their proposed final stage of a four-step model for media agenda-setting they claimed that spokesmen and spin doctors are the crucial actors in promoting issues and symbols and in establishing a feedback in order to increase issue coverage in the media, or at least to generate continuous coverage of the issue. This process creates a powerful role for media in determining which issues will be covered and a need for the political actors (campaign managers, in other words PR professionals) to highlight the importance of an issue in the media agenda or intensify its importance. However, Dalton et al. (1998) found that although the press was an important participant of agenda setting, it was not the dominant one. In a concluding note they stated that all candidates' messages were well presented in press coverage of the campaign and the coverage was even independent of a newspaper's editorial endorsement of a particular party.

In their comparative study of the 1983 British general election and the 1984 US Presidential election, Semetko et al. (1991) found that British politicians had considerably more influence in setting the news agenda than American politicians. In addition, American journalists were significantly more discretionary in shaping the campaign news agenda than their counterparts. Cultural differences between journalistic approaches towards politicians and campaigns was one of the main differences in media agenda-setting process. In addition, the nature of media system (public vs. private) had also influenced the way the elections were covered. In contrast to Semetko et al. (1991), van Praag and van Der Eijk (1998) did not find big differences between public and private news organisations' campaign coverage during the 1994 Dutch national election. A further claim put forward by Ridout and Mellen (2007), is that different models of media systems may lead to different conclusions on the agenda-setting effects, and these differences have an influence

on media and candidate agenda-setting. In another piece of media agenda-setting research, Walters et al., (1996) claimed that the public did not engage in 'media tropic'⁸ behaviour as the agenda of the campaigns grew. Instead, an active public played a pivotal role in issue ordering, helping to determine the outcome of the presidential election. What is more, they also stated that previous studies on media agenda-setting did not recognise 'an active, empowered public' (Ibid: 21) and therefore called attention to areas such as audience reception research.

The influence of different political communication cultures on media agenda was also found in the comparative study of the US and Germany; although in both countries political communicators and journalists were key actors in media agenda-setting, different journalistic practices in the US and Germany were significant. In America, journalists' emphasis was more on the norms of objectivity, balanced content, diversity and conflicts of interest compared to that of German journalists (Pfetsch 2001). As mentioned previously, Semetko et al. (1991) also documented in their cross-national comparative study of British and American elections that different norms and interactions resulted in different political agenda coverage in news reporting.

Furthermore Walters et al. (1996) have also pinpointed lack of consideration of the extent to which media moguls act to reflect public desire in a market-oriented system which in turn influences the media agenda-setting. Therefore, they declared "the marketed public perspective not only recognizes that the agenda building process changes in harmony with the media business, it also changes in concert with society" (Ibid: 23). Complications arise during the media agenda-setting due to the structure of newsrooms (which can have an impact on the type of news coverage generated); journalists' 'pack mentality' (Shaw and Sparrow 1999) during the coverage of political campaign coverage; and lack of resources (Ridout and Mellen 2007). Meanwhile, scholars also claim that cultural,

⁸ This means that the audience grows to [do you mean 'grows in relation to?'] topics as delineated by the vehicles of mass communication. This process did not always work; numerous researchers found instances in which the public's agenda did not match that of the media, see Walters et al., (1996).

institutional, and organisational factors (Reese 1991) as well as 'traditions, practices, and values of journalism as a profession' have a strong impact on the media agenda (McCombs 1994:9). In their *Effective Public Relations* book Cutlip et al. (1994:239-240) have encapsulated four possible media agenda-setting consequences as follows:

1. Media coverage can elevate the public standing of issues
2. Changes in the amount of media attention can lead to changes in public priorities
3. The more concerned people are about something, the more they are likely to learn about it, form an opinion and take action
4. Media coverage can effect the standing on the agenda priorities of legislators, decision-makers and policy makers.

As outlined above, although many research studies have been conducted to pinpoint the power relationship between the agendas of the press, political parties/candidates and the public in media agenda-setting, the studies have produced rather mixed conclusions on the strengths and directions of the effects. According to McCombs (2004), agenda-setting is a vigorous and prevalent effect of mass communication, which arises from specific content in the mass media. The content of media is subject to the cultural and political setting of the media environment which has an impact on different agenda-setting effects. Thus, the political and cultural diversity of different countries causes plurality in findings and hence causes a mixed conclusion. Walters et al. (1996) further suggest that media agenda-setting involves editors, marketing departments, subsidisers, and audiences in a complex, dynamic, and perhaps cyclical process. Consequently, media agenda-setting research involves an investigation of a complex process of identifying and measuring the numerous factors. In this section, I attempt to provide a brief overview and to set the scene in a wide ranging international context. The use of information outlined impacts on my research and subsequently leads to important findings, particularly for the cross-national comparative research. In the following section, I summarise one of the inner layers of the media agenda-setting, that of intermedia agenda-setting.

INTERMEDIA AGENDA-SETTING

This process can be perceived as a subset of the media agenda-setting process. While searching for an answer to the question “who sets the media’s agenda?” in media agenda-setting research, another consideration the potential for the reciprocal influence of individual media agendas on each other’s agenda – intermedia agenda-setting. Scholarly activity has been conducted on various modes of intermedia agenda-setting effects within different settings. Some examples are documented here.

One of the earliest research studies on intermedia agenda-setting was conducted in 1950 by White on the influence of combined agenda of the wire services and the agent called Mr. Gates, the news editor of the wire service agency. The analysis concluded that the agendas of the wire services influenced the news selection of Mr Gates. 17 years later the study of Mr. Gates was followed up by Sinder (1967), although this time only a single wire service’s effects were assessed, and he supported the findings of White (cited in Weaver et al., 2004). Lopez-Escobar et al., (1998) investigated intermedia agenda-setting in the 1995 Spanish election at the first and second levels of agenda-setting between the two local newspapers and the national public television channel news, and also political advertising. Their conclusions were that (1) the newspaper agenda influenced the television news agenda, (2) the newspaper political advertising influenced the way in which television news portrayed the political candidates. Furthermore, Golan et al. (2007) investigated how the televised political advertisements broadcast during the 2004 US presidential elections, by the Bush and Kerry campaigns affected the public evaluation of the two candidates. They concluded that there was a significant support for an agenda-setting effect at the first level and mixed evidence of a second-level agenda-setting function. Lee et al. (2005) investigated the influence of Internet bulletin boards on newspaper coverage of the 2000 general election in South Korea at both first and second levels of agenda-setting. In their analyses they concluded that both communication mediums (newspapers and television) were influenced by Internet bulletin boards, but newspapers were

influenced at the first level of agenda-setting whereas television was influenced at the second level.

Although there is general evidence in support of intermedia agenda-setting effects, Weaver et al., (2004) claim that the outcomes of intermedia agenda-setting are not homogenous as its effect varies between countries and cultures. Supportive empirical evidence for this claim came from Peter and de Vreese's (2003) study of agenda-setting in five different nations. They asserted that different cultures and norms of political and journalistic practice were one of the main reasons for the considerable variation amongst the countries.

Further Consideration on Future Media Agenda-Setting Studies

During election campaigns, journalists and news organisations should not be considered solely as primary determinant factors. This is because various other factors affect the discretion and power of journalists and politicians in setting campaign agendas (Semetko et al., 1991; 2007). These determinant factors are categorised as macro-and micro - level influences. The macro level influences are:

1. The strength of the political party;
2. Public service versus commercial media systems;
3. Differing levels of competition for media audiences;
4. Differing degrees of professionalisation of the campaign;
5. Cultural differences.

On the other hand, micro-level influences, which boost or reduce the discretionary power of journalists and politicians, are:

1. The partisan or ideological leaning of specific media organisations;
2. The status of the candidate;
3. Journalistic norms of balance and objectivity;
4. The size of the newswhole;

5. Journalists' notions of what roles are most appropriate during campaign coverage.

Semetko et al. (1991) further warn of the danger of overestimating the power of journalists and news organisations in setting campaigns or other agendas in cases where researchers neglect to take these points into account in future studies. In short, there is a tendency for the oversimplification of journalists' influence on setting public priorities. Investigation of the media agenda-setting process also augments the question of whether the media is a passive transmitter of reality in their daily flow of information and henceforth take no notice of its journalistic professional values. Or is the media heavily involved in the course of news-making as an active political actor? This question has been one of the central research subjects in the field of mass communication and it is no exception in this research.

According to traditional liberal theory, the principal democratic roles of the media is to 'inform', 'educate', provide a 'platform' for political publicity and institutions, and be the server of the 'advocacy' of different political viewpoints whilst acting as a 'watchdog' on political power (McNair 1999). In addition, the press should supply 'diverse' opinions and 'promote' rational debates for public interest in order for the electorate to make informed judgments at election times (Curran 1991). Hence, it should act "neutrally on behalf of society" (Curran 2002:148). However, the media is faced with challenges in four ways in the process of fulfilling its 'ideal' role in liberal democracies and these are:

1. the high cost of market entry prevent publication of multi voices as the media institutions become a global conglomerate in the hands of few businessmen.
2. The free market challenges the provision of information. In other words, the less popular news subjects/categories are replaced with more universally popular subjects by news publishers.
3. The free market limits the partaking in public debate.
4. The market undermines the intelligent and rational debate as the media produce information that is simplified, personalized, and decontextualised, with a stress on action rather than process, visualisation rather than abstraction, stereotypicality rather than human

complexity. In other words, commodification of information (Curran 2002:226-7).

Furthermore, Curran (2000) claims that the market incentives work against the nature of the media's 'ideal' concept in practice. The free market system fails to provide a 'free press' due to; first, the media are themselves big businesses with close ties to state and corporate interests that consequently creates conflict of interests; second, its investigative role falls short as it effects its profit drive as the task is costly and this jeopardises it from generating advertising revenue. In addition to this, Curran (Ibid: 124) indicates that "the cost of gaining access to the media influences the ability of the media to present variety of views and opinions in its coverage". To put it in other words, the free market system challenges 'the freedom to publish', 'the circulation of public information', and 'participation in public debate' Curran (2000). In a parallel view to Curran's, John Kean in his pioneering work of *The Media and Democracy* (1999:89) argues that communication markets restrict freedom of communication by generating barriers to entry, monopoly and restrictions upon choice, and by shifting the prevailing definition of information from that of a public good to that of a privately appropriate commodity. Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky in their '*Manufacturing Consent*' ground-breaking book (1994) provide a 'propaganda model' to demonstrate how the news media function to serve the large propaganda requirements of the elite. They identified five filters of how the media serves for the interests of government and/or corporate elites, which are: elite ownership; funding (e.g., advertising); information sources (e.g., public relations); elite flak and finally elite ideology.

The mutual beneficiary relationship of elites (i.e., politicians and/or political parties with news media organisations) and the above highlighted factors, raise concerns on 'reflecting social reality' and 'journalistic objectivity' on news production. This can be viewed as producing 'favourable' news coverage, especially in the context of political issues where the news coverage can influence electorates' rational decision-making process on highly crucial subject matters, like policy changes and

even, arguably, more importantly on conflict resolutions, like the Cyprus Issue. So, as the free market media are subject to high pressures, this can subsequently lead to influence the journalistic professional norms of being 'objective' (neutral), independent and informative (factually correct), and fair (balanced diverse views) principles in its news reporting.

Thus, the free market system structure is confronted with many difficulties for journalists to practice the 'ideal' role of the mass media in liberal theoretical understanding. As Nimmo (1978 cited in Blumler and Gurevitch 1995:26) succinctly expressed it, "political news is the joint creation of the journalists who assemble and report events and other political communicators- politicians, professionals, and spokespersons – who promote them". Henceforth, the process of news media production on political issues requires a rich understanding of this complex course between these two dynamics, as they are inextricably intertwined to each other.

Overall, news media embrace different values and norms and serve them accordingly, based on their institutional structure –private versus public. The concept of agenda-setting provokes critical scrutiny of journalistic practices in an election context and their implication for a democratic society. As a consequence, the nexus of journalists/editors and other political actors (e.g., political campaign strategist and/or candidates) in the process of agenda-setting, the news production process and their role in the formation of public opinion raises a significant question of how these factors influence rational political decision-making and the political future of society. Thus, an inquiry into the research subject and above all the statements provide a *raison d'être* for the chosen conceptual framework. The next section of the thesis outlines a general overview of political campaign communication literature with a particular focus on the referendum campaign and referendums around the world and the opinion formation process in referendums.

CHAPTER 3

REFERENDUMS AROUND THE WORLD & POLITICAL CAMPAIGN COMMUNICATION

Introduction

This chapter is two-fold. In the first section, I outline the definition, classification and brief history of referendums around the world. This is followed by a political communication literature review, where I provide the definition of the concept; evaluation of political campaigning; variations in campaign effects; a brief overview of theories of political communication effects and where the employed agenda-setting theory fits within these theories.

REFERENDUMS

The history of referendums (as a means of making government decisions or giving legitimacy to them) has a historical root, which is almost as old as democracy itself (Butler and Ranney 1978). Referendum⁹ can be defined as “a measure passed by a governing body that does not become law until it is approved by a legally specified margin of voters” (Hahn and Kamieniecki 1987:1). Inherently it permits voters to accept or reject a proposal, which is proposed by a governing body, and the initiative enables citizens to prepare their own proposal and to take action on it (Ibid, 1987).

Tallian (1977 cited in Ibid, 1987:8) claims “this form of direct democracy survived from the time of Tacitus, who spoke German to his chieftains persuading rather than commanding their soldiers. The soldiers would vote by voicing approval or rattling their spears in disapproval”. However, South Dakota was the first modern state to adopt the referendum as part of its constitutional decision process in 1898

⁹ See Butler and Ranney (1994:1) and the Oxford English Dictionary, “referendum is logically preferable as plural from meaning ballots on one issue. The Latin plural gerundive referenda, meaning ‘things to be referred’, necessarily connotes a plurality of issues”. That’s why the researcher uses the term ‘referendums’ as a plural form of the term instead of ‘referenda’ throughout this study. Also, the researcher is going to use Referendum with a capital “R” to refer to 24th April 2004 Cyprus Referendum and in other cases the term will be used in a lower case. The researcher also uses the term referendum instead of plebiscite, because “in some countries the term [referendum] used has been *plebiscites*. Plebiscites got a bad name when the device was abused by Adolf Hitler, but in any case no one has produced a clear distinction between the two terms” (Butler and Ranney 1994:1). In addition, the ‘referendum’ term also used by United Nation General Secretary, Kofi Annan, when he referred his ‘*The Comprehensive Settlement of the Cyprus Problem*’ proposal.

(Ibid, 1987). Switzerland holds the most referendums in the world on different issues by holding more than 400 referendums since 1948, followed by California (Qvortup 2005).

Referendums can be held at national, state or regional levels. National referendums towards an integration of accession countries into the European Union (EU) can be given as an example for national level; in North America, referendums held, for example in California, are at the state level; and at a regional level, the 1979 referendum to establish the Welsh Assembly in Wales in the United Kingdom (UK) is a regional example.

“The referendum device may be used for a variety of subjects and purposes. The political and constitutional implications of the practice vary considerably according to the purpose it is intended to serve and the specific procedures associated with it” (Johnson 1981:19). In the literature, different scholars propose many different forms and classifications of referendums (e.g. Butler and Ranney 1994; Gallagher and Uleri 1996; Hug 2002) and the reason being for this can be explained by adopting Hug’s (2002) views that within the literature of referendums different terminology has been used based on the authors’ specialist area and, thus it is often idiosyncratic.

Classification of Referendum Studies

One of the classifications comes from Butler and Ranney (1994:2-3) who collect referendum studies under four main categories:

1. *Constitutional issues*: After a revolution or a territorial break-up, to legitimise the new arrangements and the rules of future independent states. The best way of providing a democratic authority to the new regime is a popular vote endorsement.
2. *Territorial issues*: For example: after 1918, President Woodrow Wilson’s principle of self-determination to solve the several border

issues by holding referendums and during the decolonisation period of post-1945.

3. *Moral Issues*: For example: alcoholic beverage prohibition, abortion, and divorce.
4. *Other issues*: Numerous issues have been referred to electorates to decide by holding referendum in some countries, such as Switzerland, Italy, and in a number of states in the United States. For example, hunting laws, property taxes, food subsidies and traffic regulation.

Alongside Butler and Ranney's (1994) referendum studies classification, Talvikki (1997:6-7) identifies different forms of referendum according to their contextual intention:

1. To solve territorial disputes after the First World War and especially the establishment of the League of Nations.
2. To legitimise the declarations of independence and the constitutions of the newly independent states during the decolonisation process in the 1950s and 1960s. A similar phenomenon occurred in Eastern Europe after the collapse of the Soviet Union.
3. To legitimise the transfer of national powers to European organisations and towards the integration process of the European Union.
4. To continue dictatorship power, e.g. in November 1963, Hitler used a referendum to establish the Nazi regime, and in 1995, Saddam Hussein held a referendum to legitimise his dictatorship.

By looking at both authors' classification, the 2004 Cyprus Referendum was a proposal 'to solve the territorial disputes' amongst the Turkish and Greek Cypriots and also to legitimise government of the (if it was established) 'United Republic of Cyprus' to transfer its national power to the European Union.

Brief History of Referendums Around the World

Historically, in North America, since the declaration of independence on 4 July 1776, referendums have been an integral part of the decision-making process, such as in California. In particular, interest and usage of referendum dramatically rose in the 1970s and onwards (Kobach 1993; Butler and Ranney 1994). For example, in 1974, Greek citizens voted to abolish the monarchy and the same phenomena occurred in 1976, when Spanish citizens voted to change their political constitution. Throughout the 70s, France, Ireland, Denmark and Norway held referendums to decide on the enlargement of the European Community (for more details see, Siune and Svensson 1993). In 1986, Spanish citizens voted to become part of NATO. During 1990 and 1991, many republics of the Soviet Union held referendums to determine issues related to their independence (Kobach 1993). In June 1993, Ireland held a referendum on the legalisation of abortion. Tunisia voted for constitutional reform and civil liberties by holding a referendum in May 2002. In 2004, three referendums took place in three different countries for different purposes. In November, Taiwan held a referendum on whether or not to buy ballistic missiles in order to defend itself from potential Chinese aggression; in May, Switzerland held a referendum to determine the usage of stem cell research in their country and in April, Cyprus held a referendum to measure support of a proposed means of concluding over thirty years of division on the island (Baines and Gill 2005).

Throughout Europe, the importance and frequency of referendums has increased since the end of the First World War. Their application in the daily life of the general public has become more direct and observable, in particular since the establishment of the European Union. In Europe, a total of 36 national referendums related to European integration have taken place in 2005 as a consequence of Europe changing from a trading bloc to a political alliance (ibid). For example, voting in referendums for currency changes from national monetary currency to the Euro (e.g., Denmark in 2000 and Sweden in 2003) constitutional changes of European power and trading within the European Union (e.g. Italy 1989

and Spain 2005). Not only have referendums been held for political integration, but also for shifting national constitutional power to the centre of the EU. One of the most recent important examples of this was the Irish rejection of the Lisbon Treaty¹⁰ in 2008, however, on the second attempt in October 2009 to ratify the Treaty 67%¹¹ voted 'yes' and consequently the Treaty was approved after this long drawn out process. In addition, France has announced her intention to hold a referendum with regard to deciding on Turkey's accession to the EU. In the UK, the Labour government has agreed a referendum will be held before adoption of the Euro currency. According to Butler and Ranney (1994), the scholarly studies of referendums during 1980s and 1990s doubled compared to the periods of 1920 and 1930. As the usage of referendum election increases so do scholarly studies on the topic. Referendums particularly have become an important part of the political process in Europe due the reason of their widespread usage as part of the decision-making process in many countries (Butler and Ranney 1994; Gallagher and Uleri 1996).

Kobach (1993:3) claims:

Obviously, the referendum plays a slightly different role in every state that makes use of it. Historical circumstances and national political cultures vary, as do modern governmental environments. Operating within different political structures and tethered by different constraints, the referendum can hardly be expected to have identical repercussion everywhere.

What is more, referendums are undertaken in an environment of information complexity and uncertainty; consequently the public opinion formation process shows complexity in referendum campaigns as political elites often leaves their voters in a state of uncertainty (Vreese and Semetko 2004, LeDuc 2005). Further to this, because of referendums' peculiar characteristics that can change from one issue to the next (Bützer and Marquis 2002) and depending on the issue fought

¹⁰ The Treaty of Lisbon will amend the EU's two core treaties; the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty establishing the European Community that would turn the EU into a bureaucratic super state.

¹¹ Ireland backs EU's Lisbon Treaty, (2009). Accessed from [need to provide date accessed]: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/8288181.stm>

over the course of campaigns, the campaign effects can be contingent (Farrell 2002). Election studies that were conducted on US, UK, Australia, and Switzerland found that campaigns are especially influential on late-deciding voters (McAllister 2002; Lachat and Sciarini 2002). In addition to this, it has been claimed that referendum campaign messages that are delivered by elites could be crucial to the outcome of a vote in opinion formation campaigns. Campaign pamphlets, newspapers and television adverts, editorials, and direct mailings are amongst the most frequently employed communication tools to deliver political messages in campaigns. However, voters not only take cues directly from these sources, but also from individuals, groups and organisations that they are associated with (LeDuc 2002). Also, John R. Zaller's (1992) in his well-known model of opinion formation, argues that the formation (and changes) of public opinion is driven by political messages delivered by the elites. Vreese and Semetko (2004) claim that the influence of media contents may affect citizens in three ways: (1) endorsement, (2) paid advertising, and (3) free campaigning. Furthermore, the authors (Ibid, 2004) state that news media draws attention to key issues and citizens make judgements and evaluation based on readily accessible information in the referendum elections (Vreese and Semetko 2004), which they refer to as 'priming' effects of the agenda-setting process.

Referendum campaigns differ in so many ways to general election campaigns and these differences have an influence on the formation of public opinion. In referendums, the information cues from political parties are ambiguous; for example, parties might be internally divided on the issue; two ideologically opposite parties may form coalitions; new political parties or movements may emerge; the issue is multi-faceted and henceforth, may cause different perceptions among voters. Whilst the long-term factors (i.e., partisanship or ideology) can be important in the decision-making process of voters in elections, the short-term impact of campaign strategies and tactics are determinant factors in the outcome of referendums – as no party name or candidates appear on the ballot. In referendums, voters must decide on sometimes unfamiliar alternative options and

this causes volatility and uncertainty in vote preferences compared to a general election campaign (Vreese and Semetko 2004; LeDuc 2005). Particularly party attachment is a less important factor in voters choice in referendums (Ibid: 2004). What is more, the authors (Ibid 2004) claim that:

Referendum campaigns and their outcomes are often unpredictable. Political elites often leave their voters in a state of uncertainty about whether or not to endorse the proposal put before the public. The campaign is therefore a central and often decisive process for defining the issue and crystallising public opinion.

This was also the case in the 2004 Cyprus Referendum. (See Chapter 6 for full details about the referendum context). As pointed out by Kobach (1993) none of the referendum studies is identical or has the same peculiarities. Henceforth, the study of the 2004 Cyprus Referendum campaign can shed light on other referendum campaign studies elsewhere. As a fascinating research area, agenda-setting provides an opportunity to investigate various influential factors in referendum information environment, to name two: the mass media and political campaigners, and the dynamics between them on the media and public agenda-setting process at referendum elections. And, with this research I intend to fill a long-lasting research gap in the comparative and referendum studies literature.

POLITICAL CAMPAIGN COMMUNICATION

The root of political communication studies date backs to ancient Greek times in Aristotle's work *Politics and Rhetoric*, however, it was not until the late 1950s that 'self-consciously cross-disciplinary' work started (Trent and Friedenberg 2000). While Norris (2002:128) defines the term 'campaigns' as "organised efforts to inform, persuade, and mobilise", the purpose of a political campaign is described by Schmitt-Beck and Farrell (2002) as a means to influence the process and outcome of governance by an organised communication effort which consists of one or more agencies (e.g., candidates, government institutions or special interest organisations) that aims to influence political decision-making outcomes by shaping public opinion. The historical evolution of political campaigning in elections, as certain factors transformed the way in which political campaigns are organised and conducted, has been classified under three core phases.

The Evolution of Political Campaigning

The three core phases of political campaigns are named as the pre-modern, modern and post-modern eras of political campaign communication.

1. The Pre-Modern Campaigning Era: This period of campaigning covers an era of the late 1800s to the late 1950s. The underlying characteristics of this period are: "the predominance of the partisan press; a loose organisational network of grassroots party volunteers in local constituencies; and a short, ad hoc national campaign run by the party leader with a few close advisers" (Norris et al., 1999:22). Also within this period of campaigning, the partisan press performs as a key communicator between parties and the public and the campaigns are locally organised on a face-to-face basis where volunteers engage in the campaign by distributing pamphlets, canvassing, and organising local party meetings and campaign rallies (Norris 2000; Norris et al. 1999). The main difference between this first phase and the second era is due to the invention of television and the

shift towards televised political campaigning in advanced industrialised democracies (Norris et al. 1999; Vreese and Semetko 2004).

2. Modern Campaigning Era: This phase of political campaigning dominates the time period from the 1950s until the late 1980s/early 90s. Modern campaigns are described as “those with a party organization coordinated more closely at a central level by political leaders, advised by external professional consultants like opinion pollsters” (Norris 2000:139). So, compared to the previous period the campaign planning was more centralised, controlled, lengthier, expensive and it became a more professionally designed process (Norris 2000; Norris et al. 1999; Vreese and Seemtco 2004). This centrally-organised national campaigning moved away from the ‘local-active’ (Norris 1997) role and strategic communication of the campaign run by various specialists. In this mediated campaigning phase modern means of communicating became evident, for example: electoral research; press conferences; staged media events and political style; news conferences; advertising design and photo opportunities; all of which became more dependent on television and the press to disseminate campaign messages through the news. Subsequent to this, even local campaigning activities were organised by the central team. However, the day-to-day activity of organising, canvassing, leafleting, telephone polling and mobilising support for committed party volunteers and candidates continued.

3. Post-modern Campaigning Era: This is a ‘still emerging’ campaigning period claims Vreese and Semetko (2004). In this phase, the political consultants become increasingly significant in campaign designing and instead of focusing on the short-term, campaigning is geared towards ‘permanent campaigning’ time-wise. Norris et al. (1999:23) state that the most noticeable features of this era are “the emergence of a more independent realigned press following its own ‘media logic’; the growing fragmentation and diversification of electronic media outlets, programmes and audiences; and in reaction to these developments, the attempt by parties to reassert control through strategic communications and media management during the permanent campaign”.

Typology and Variations in Campaign Effects

Alongside the phases of political campaigning in the literature of political communication – more specifically campaign effect studies – the typology of political campaigns is outlined by Schmitt-Beck and Farrell (2002:4) as follows:

Figure 3.1 A typology of political campaigns¹²

		Campaign focus	
		Single issue	Range of issues
Constellation of campaign actors	Competing actors	Referendums	Elections
	One actor	Information Interest-based	Image

In this typology, the referendum campaigns are competing sets of actors but only focusing on a single issue, unlike election campaigns where a multi-issue battle occurs (Ibid, 2002). In the literature of campaign effects, three types of referendum campaigns are outlined by LeDuc (2002). They are:

1. *Opinion formation campaigns*: voters cannot be expected to have fully formed opinions on the issue, as opinions form as the campaign progresses;
2. *Opinion reversal campaigns*: a referendum on a reasonably well-known issue takes on a new direction over the course of the campaign.
3. *Uphill struggle campaigns*: opinion is much firmer and less subject to rapid change or sudden reversal.

In addition to this, the author (Ibid, 2002) further outlined a framework, based on two-by-two categories to pinpoint variations in campaign effects at elections and referendums (see Figure 3.2).

¹² Schmitt-Beck & Farrell (2002:4) state that by producing this typology they aim to simplify the discussion of classification of political campaigning by focusing on a two-by-two typology based on the constellation of actors involved in the campaign and the focus of the campaign.

Figure 3.2 Variations in campaign effects

		Types of Effects	
		Intentional	Unintentional
Level of Analysis	Micro	Individual <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge gain • Perception change • Mobilisation • Persuasion • Activation • Reinforcement • Conversion 	Knowledge gain Perception change (De)motivation Support/alienation ...
	Macro	Success at elections and referendums Agenda-setting Framing of public debate Public knowledge	Decline of elite responsiveness (De)legitimation (De)mobilisation Elite transformation Party transformation

Micro-effects are short-term or have an immediate consequence that generally refers to tangible effects of campaigns such as persuading citizens to vote for particular parties, candidates, or referendum alternatives. On the other hand, macro-effects refer to long-term consequences of campaigns that might have on societies and the political process, such as aggregation of myriad individual occurrences of learning mobilisation, activation, reinforcement, and conversation (Ibid, 2002). Agenda-setting analysis in referendums, as can be observed, falls under the macro-effects studies in campaign effects. The next section documents a brief overview of the theories of political communication effects.

Theories of Political Communication Effects

The purpose of this section is to summarise previous major theories related to political behaviour and media studies. Within this, at least some major contributions regarding the influence of the media in understanding the nature of political campaign communication is documented. In doing so, it may be helpful to show in what ways the employed conceptual framework of 'agenda-setting' theory is different compared to alternative theories in the literature related to campaign-specific effects derived from the news media. It is important to understand that the focus of this chapter and the research is *not on voters* – therefore it does not fall within voting behaviour studies in political campaigning and also it is *not on the effect of candidates' or parties' agendas on voting behaviour*. Instead, as mentioned earlier, the focus is on the *campaigning process*, with particular attention to the dynamics between the two political actors within the campaigning: journalists and political campaigners.

One thing is noteworthy to mention here –early studies of mass communication and political science are intertwined, which in essence contributes to the theoretical diversity of political communication. Mass communication and political communication research becomes almost identical in their main concerns with media effects (Rogers 2004). This is mainly dominated by the forefathers and founders of both disciplines have a same intellectual research interest in media effects studies (Ibid, 2004). Media effect studies are the oldest and one of the most dominant approaches to the study of political communication (Crigler 1996).

Norris et al., (1997) identified three main schools of thought which have developed to account for the influence of political communication: pre-war theories of mass propaganda which outlines all powerful media effects phases, secondly post-war theories of partisan reinforcement, which documents 'limited effects' media era, and finally contemporary studies of theories of cognitive and persuasion effects within which includes agenda-setting.

Early Studies of Political Communication: All Powerful Media

Concerning the mass communication effects, the earliest study in terms of conceptualising the functions and possible effects of the media on public opinion dates back to the 1920s. Walter Lippmann (1922) in his pioneering work, *Public Opinion*, claims that “the world we have to deal with politically is out of reach, out of sight, out of mind” (p. 20), therefore the media (mainly focused on newspapers) is a powerful and manipulative tool. Thus, it is believed that the media has a ‘direct effect’ on the opinion of mass audiences by ‘injecting’ their messages, like a ‘magic bullet’. Lasswell, in his study *Propaganda Techniques in the World War*, which was published in 1927, analysed the potential effect of propaganda techniques in political campaigns and mass media during war times on the attitude of individual citizens. Within this understanding, the individual citizen is perceived as a mass audience and therefore open to direct mass media influence of propaganda campaigns. The “hypodermic needle effect” model dominated the periods from the end of World War I to the late 1940s (Lenart 1994). Bauer and Bauer (1960) claim, “the media were credited with considerable power to shape opinion and belief, to change habits of life and to mould behaviour more or less according to the will of their controllers” (cited in McQuail 2005). Furthermore, Norris et al., (1997:4) pointed out that “popular accounts in the inter-war years reinforced the notion that the mass media could have a direct and decisive impact upon shaping public opinion, and ultimately voting choices”.

Limited Effect Studies

With the invention of television, our society has been transformed enormously. This invention influenced every part of our daily life and the realm of politics is not an exception. The widespread existence of television sets in households changed political affairs greatly as people relied on television to attain information and subsequent to this, it obtained the centre stage of political campaign communication and created televised politics. Consequently, the political partisan reinforcement lost its importance in this new political climate. Norris et al.

(1997:4) state “yet propaganda theories came under strong challenge from the first systematic research using the modern techniques of sample surveys to examine public opinion”, which was conducted by Lazarsfeld and his colleagues. This pioneering study of Lazarsfeld et al., (1944) set the scene for voting behaviour research. Ever since the investigation of the mass media’s potential impact on voting behaviour, this research interest dominated the media effects research studies within the political campaign communication (Holtz-Bacha 2004).

In the 1944 and 1954 studies of Lazarsfeld et al., they concluded that “direct effects of exposure to campaign information were limited because voters would selectively process content based on predispositions” (Meadow 1989:258), because socioeconomic and personal variables influence voters’ decisions in early campaigns. Mass media has little influence on changing voter intentions, and if there is any influence, it is because of interpersonal communication (Meadow 1989). Their research results helped to invigorate the ‘minimal [or limited] effects’, which claims that campaigns and mass media are less likely to change citizens’ voting intention. Crigler (1996) claims that Lazarsfeld et al.’s 1944 study of *The People’s Choice* established the ‘effects tradition’ as the initial paradigm for mass and political communication research. The study *The People’s Choice* (1944) by Colombian school members; Lazarsfeld, Berelson, Gaudet, and Phee put an end to the era of the ‘powerful media’ claim and eventually introduced the model of ‘limited media effects’ to an investigation of the influence of news media on political behaviour during election campaigns.

The ‘Colombian school’ researchers’ studies were followed by the ‘Michigan school’ research. Campbell et al. (1960) produced the study of *The American Voter* and with this study they produced the concept of party identification. According to Campbell et al. (1960), party identification can influence voting choice, and it is unlikely to change in reply to short-term factors such as a political campaign, therefore political identification is perceived as a long-term attitude. However, the previous voting studies did not restrict these two, but they had a strong influence on work in following years. Franklin et al. (1994), Aardal et al. (1998), Pesonen

(1998), and Bartels (2000) also studied the voting behaviour in political campaigns, and have all made valuable contributions to the voting behaviour literature. In 1960, Joseph Klapper wrote his landmark study *The Effects of Mass Media* in the field of communication research and stated that the media could reinforce or produce “minor change” on an individual’s attitude or behaviour. Klapper (1960:8) concludes by saying that, “mass communication does not ordinarily serve as a necessary or sufficient cause of audience effects, but rather functions through a nexus of mediating factors” such as family, religion, friends, and education. Therefore, the effect of mass media on individual attitude or behaviour is limited (i.e. Zaller 1992).

Contemporary Studies; Agenda-Setting and Persuasion Effects

Trent and Friedenbergr (2000:126) state that “undoubtedly, the most popular contemporary approach for studying the relationship of media and politics is the agenda-setting hypothesis”. As mentioned, agenda-setting theory intends to investigate whether the news media influences public opinion through defining the main concerns of the political issues. Persuasion effects analysis in the agenda-setting process tries to pinpoint the ‘cause-effect’ relationship, and expects to discover the impact of political campaign ‘issues’ agenda or news media ‘issues’ agenda which shapes electorate’s political preferences. As the purpose of the study is not to measure the persuasion effects, consequently an overview of the literature related to this part is not documented. However, as the intention of the study is to investigate agenda-setting effects, further information is provided on the agenda-setting effects, particularly in the context of referendums.

Agenda-Setting Effects in Referendums

Research into referendum campaigns effects from a mass media and political communication perspective is rare. Only a handful of research has been conducted on political campaigning in referendums and their effects (e.g. Butler and Ranney 1994; Bowler and Donovan 1998; Farrell and Schmitt-Beck 2002; LeDuc 2002; Vreese and Semetko 2004). In terms of comparative context, despite the fact that the amount of research increased during the past decades, there is still a troubling lack of comparative political communication research (Strömbäck and Dimitrova 2006). Even though exceptional comparative studies exist (e.g. Esser and Pfetsch 2004; Hallin and Mancini 2004), the number of political campaign communication and election news coverage studies is limited. This is particularly the case for cross-national comparative research on agenda-setting in referendum elections.

As mentioned, a referendum campaign is markedly different from a general election campaign in that, in a referendum campaign context, the theme is defined *a priori*, whereas in a general election campaign context, disputes can occur over multiple issues (e.g. economy, health, etc.). In other words, in the instance of a referendum, the overall issue is defined in advance. (Vreese and Semetko 2004). “The agenda-setting dynamics may therefore be different sub-issues emerge *within* the broader referendum issue. The news media play a key role in defining and either reinforcing or deflating sub-issues as they are put forward by key campaign actors” (Ibid; p. 108). Since “election campaigns are highly amenable to cross-national political communication comparisons” (Blumler and McQuail 2001:238) and the news media and campaign incumbents have a direct influence on the information environment and the learning processes of voters, it is essential to examine the process of political agenda-setting and how the flow of election information influences opinion formation in a referendum campaign context.

Future agenda-setting research requires an outlining of collaborative influences of various agendas on each other, if indeed they do influence each other, as is claimed by scholars (e.g. Rogers and Dearing 1996; Werde 2002). Thus, this research aims to fulfil that expectation. Moreover, the dearth of previous studies in agenda-setting heavily focused on the general and presidential election studies and their findings produced mixed conclusions about the mass media's political effects. In this study, existing literature has been borrowed and adopted into a referendum campaign context in order to produce empirical findings on the dynamics between news media and political campaign professionals in the case study of the 2004 Cyprus Referendum. In the next chapter, I provide the historical information on the 'Cyprus Issue' and the referendum context.

CHAPTER 4

THE CYPRUS ISSUE AND ITS REFERENDUM CONTEXT

Introduction

In this section, I provide historical background information to readers, particularly to those who are not familiar with the 'Cyprus Issue' and the development phases of the referendum context. The intention is to introduce readers to this highly complex political subject in order to grasp the political battle of parties and the political campaigns.

A Historical Background of the 'Cyprus Issue'

Ever since ancient times, the geopolitical importance of Cyprus within the East Mediterranean region has been, and still is, causing problem for the islanders. This problem arises from the following significant features of Cyprus:

- It dominates the petroleum routes from the Middle East.
- It controls the axis between the East and Africa. This control extends to the surrounding areas of Anatolia, the Middle East and the Suez Canal.
- With regards to air space it is situated at an important strategic location as an air corridor to the Middle East and Orient destinations. This makes Cyprus resemble a stationary aircraft carrier.
- In the event of a war over Middle Eastern oil, it can serve as a logistic store.
- Any country possessing the island will have prestige among Middle East nations¹³.

¹³ Ismail Bozkurt, Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, (2002). Accessed from: <http://www.trncinfo.org/TANITMADAIRESI/2002/English/expertopinions2.htm>. Date accessed? For example, historically the Cyprus Island has been a gateway to Crusade (i.e., Richard the Lion Heart conquered the island on his way to the Jerusalem) and to conquer the 'old world'. In the 20th century, the long-lasting political battle over the control of the island in the international arena, has created a case where the 'winner' of the battle will gain a particular prestige in the field of public affairs within international diplomacy and relations but in particular within the close region of Middle Eastern nations where the close ties are historically linked to of trading and politics.

Many empires and nations have invaded Cyprus throughout history because of its importance. Cyprus has been conquered by the Assyrians, Egyptians, Persians, Ptolemies¹⁴, Romans and their Byzantine successor, Venetians and, finally in 1571, by the Ottoman (Turks). From 1571 to 1878 Cyprus remained under the Ottoman Empire and from 1878, it was leased to Britain. The British governed the island until 1960 when they relinquished the control over the island and handed over its governance to the 'Republic of Cyprus' in the form of a 'Partnership State' between the Greek and Turkish communities. Before the establishment of the Republic, two crucial international agreements, Zürich (1959) and London (1960), were signed and accepted by Greece, Turkey, Britain, and both Turkish and Greek Cypriots. Under these agreements the UK, Turkey and Greece were designated as guarantors under the Treaty of Guarantee.

So, the Republic was established based on a proportional representation of 70% Greek Cypriots and 30% Turkish Cypriots. This representation figure was also reflected in the membership of parliament and in the administration. The president was a Greek Cypriot and the vice-president was a Turkish Cypriot. However, the Republic of Cyprus did not survive long in this form. The question of what precipitated the collapse of the two communities living together in harmony under a single state has been, and still is a cause of international and internal political disputes. The two communities on the island have been consistently blaming each other and producing their distinctive differing version of 'what actually had happened and who was at fault'. According to the Turkish and Turkish Cypriot Governments this fall out was to due the issue of ENOSIS, a union with motherland¹⁵ of Greece, desired by the Greek military junta, which covers the

¹⁴ The Ptolemies were the final dynasty of Egyptian pharaohs, and their progenitor was a Greek by birth. The Ptolemies based the capital of their Egypt in Alexandria, a newly-constructed port on the Mediterranean Sea. Ptolemy I achieved the rule of Egypt as one of Alexander the Great's generals. When Alexander (323-282 BC) died without heirs, his generals divided all of Alexander's territory among themselves. Obtained from: <http://archaeology.about.com/od/ptterms/g/ptolemies.htm>. Date accessed?

¹⁵ The use of term 'motherland' also inherits a political meaning in the 'Cyprus Issue'. It is a narrative that is mainly employed by the right-wing parties and it has associations with the status quo rhetoric in the 'Cyprus Issue' case, whereas the left-wing political parties usually tries to avoid using "Anavatan-Yavruvatan: Motherland-Son-land" (it is not possible to translate the exact meaning of 'Yavruvatan'). This denotes a meaning of strong ties between Turkey and Turkish

period of 1967-74 where Greece ruled by the military regime. In order to fulfil their aim, they set up the underground organisation EOKA (Ethniki Organosis Kyprion Agoniston) in 1955. However, the initial attack of EOKA on the island was at the British to gain independence and thereafter to have full control of the island. They attempted to achieve this union of Cyprus with Greece two times in 1963 and 1974. When the first serious conflicts took place in 1963 many attacks were directed at Turkish Cypriot civilians in an attempt to take control of the regime. From then on, in March 1964 under Security Council resolution, the UN Peace-Keeping Force (UNFICYP) was sent to the island and currently is still on the island, to help to restore peace and normal conditions. In 1974, when the Greek military junta took control of the Greek Cypriot Government, the President Bishop Makarios had to fly out from the island to save his life and this started a process of “ethnic cleansing”¹⁶ to achieve the goal of EOKA. Relying on the Treaty of Guarantee, the Zürich and London agreements, Turkey “interfered” militarily in order to help and save the lives of Turkish Cypriots. Conversely, Greek Cypriots’ perspectives on the issue is that Turkey violated the UN Charter and all principles governing international relations as well as her contractual obligations by “occupying” the island with 40,000 Turkish military forces. As a result of this, about 40% of the island (the north part of the island) came under Turkish military control and in this process many Greek Cypriots were displaced, were killed or ill-treated and many people are still missing. Additionally, right-wing and nationalist Greek Cypriot parties and most civilians believed that Turkey pursued a deliberate policy aimed at “Turkifying” the north of the island and destroying Cypriot identity and culture.

Whereas once upon a time both communities used to live together peacefully on Cyprus, after the 1974 war, the island became divided between the south as Greek and the north as Turkish. Since 1974, there has been a cease-fire between the

Cypriots, where it challenges the stand of ‘Turkish Cypriot identity’ as separate from Turkish identity on the island.

¹⁶ This terminology especially is used by nationalist and rightwing political parties in North Cyprus and Turkish Government to ‘justify’ the reason of 1974 military act to save the life of Turkish Cypriots during the conflict on the island.

Greek and Turkish Cypriots. The Greek Cypriot Government has been recognised as a legitimate representative of the island, whereas the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, which was established in 1983, is only recognised by Turkey and has faced many international sanctions such as a trading embargo and the refusal of political representation in the fields of cultural and sporting activities.

In terms of how the issue started, unsurprisingly, Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot governments have different interpretations of the issue, see Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Two Interpretations of the ‘Cyprus Issue’

TURKISH CYPRIOT GOVERNMENT INTERPRETATION	GREEK CYPRIOT GOVERNMENT INTERPRETATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Cyprus Issue’ is a problem of over forty years, which takes the collapse of the Republic of Cyprus in 1963 as a starting point. • It interprets the issue as an intervention by Turkish troops to save the minority ethnic population of Turkish Cypriots. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Cyprus Issue’ is a problem of over thirty years, which takes 1974, when Turkish troops came to the island, as a starting point. • It interprets the issue as an invasion of the island by the Turkish troops.

Providing both perspectives on the issue is necessary to be able to understand the full spectrum of the conflict and hence understanding both governments’ political messages. Moreover, this allows readers to grasp why Turkish and Greek Cypriot political parties took particular stances’ during the referendum election.

Following on from the perception of both sides on the Cyprus conflict, it is essential to summarise the main political messages of both sides to aid readers’ comprehension of the referendum campaign communication. The Greek Cypriot Government’s political messages were mainly focused on the claims of: (1) the Greek Cypriot Government as the legitimate¹⁷ government of the Republic of Cyprus which represents the whole island and therefore the TRNC government is

¹⁷ As endorsed by the UN General Assembly resolution in November 1974 and the Security Council resolution 1975.

an illegal entity, (2) Turkish troops illegally occupied the North of the island and violated many human rights, (3) As a consequence of Turkish military 'occupation', many Greek Cypriots are still 'missing', (4) Since the 'occupation' lots of Turkish 'immigrants' or 'refugees' came to the island and were accommodated, which causes 'Turkification' of the island, (5) because of the geographical division caused by Turkish troops, a significant 'territorial' issue has arisen as many Greek Cypriots had to be dislocated. On the other hand, the Turkish Cypriot Government's political messages are mainly designed along the lines of a response to the claims of the Greek Cypriot Government. They can be summarised as: (1) TRNC is a legal entity and the Greek government does not represent the whole island, (2) The Greek Cypriot Government has violated the rights' of Turkish Cypriots in the creation of the 1960 Republic, (3) As a consequence of the Greek military act, Turkish troops came to the island to 'protect the Turkish Cypriot community' by using its 'rights to interfere' that it obtained in the 1960s international agreements of London and Zürich, (4) In the 1974 war, the Greek military caused the loss of many Turkish Cypriots lives by demonstrating brutality and by burying Turkish Cypriots alive in mass graves. In addition to this, there are also many Turkish Cypriots still 'missing', (5) Greek Cypriots eliminated Turkish Cypriot people from their homes who used to live in Larnaca, Limassol and Paphos cities which are currently under the control of Greek Cypriot Government, (6) More importantly, as the Greek Cypriot Government identifies the Turkish Cypriots as a minority and as the Turkish Cypriots are legally represented, the future solution to the 'Cyprus Issue' should and must be based on an 'equal partnership'.

The next section of the chapter presents the developmental phases of the fifth version of the Annan Plan until the day a referendum on the reunification of the island was proposed to the Cypriot public.

THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS OF THE ANNAN PLAN

The Cyprus problem, as one of the oldest peacemaking agendas, has been on the agenda of the Security Council for almost forty years and because of its “intractability and the variable geometry” of the issues, it is described as a “diplomatic Rubik’s cube” in the UN S-G 2003 Council Report¹⁸. Ever since the division of the island, a permanent solution to the ‘Cyprus Issue’ has been explored under the auspices of the United Nations. On numerous occasions Cypriot politicians and other international political figures have attempted to solve this longstanding problem. The UN S-G Annan’s latest intensive effort was undertaken between 1999 until March 2003 as part of his mission of good offices in Cyprus. Kofi Annan himself met the community leaders on 11 occasions during this time period. His Special Advisor on Cyprus, Alvaro de Soto, hosted 54 separate meetings during the proximity phase, 72 meetings in direct format, and called on each leader on more than 100 occasions during the entire period. Annan’s Special Advisor made around 30 trips to Greece and Turkey, dozens of trips to the capitals of Security Council members, the European Commission in Brussels, and European Union member states. The total budget of these efforts over the period was announced as \$3,148,500¹⁹. The involvement of the external actors as mediatory in the negotiation process of the Annan Plan and

The final attempt of the UN S-G to find the permanent peace on Cyprus was to publish the Foundation Agreement for “The Comprehensive Settlement of the Cyprus Problem”, initially called the Annan Plan in recognition of the then the UN S-G Kofi Annan. It was aimed at disentangling the division on the island. It was modelled on the principles of the ‘Swiss federal system’ that is based on two equal political partnerships, Greek and Turkish Cypriot States, under the name of United Cyprus Republic. In essence, Article 2(1a) of the Annan Plan V proposed the following to the Cypriot public:

¹⁸ The Report of the Secretary-General to the Security Council S/2003/398, “On his mission of good offices in Cyprus”, (1 April 2003), <http://www.un.org/Docs/sc/sgrep03.html>. Date accessed?

¹⁹ Ibid, 2003.

The United Cyprus Republic is an independent state in the form of an indissoluble partnership, with a federal government and two equal constituent states, the Greek Cypriot state and the Turkish Cypriot state. Cyprus is a member of the United Nations and has a single international legal personality and sovereignty. The United Cyprus Republic is organised under its Constitution in accordance with the basic principles of rule of law, democracy, representative republican government, political equality, bi-zonality, and the equal status of the constituent states²⁰.

It makes sense to provide more of a detailed context on what has been proposed with the Plan, as divergent interpretations of its consequences were put forward by the 'Yes' and 'No' camps cross-nationally. The following outlines the basis of the proposed Plan:

CONSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURE:

A structure that would bring together two constituent states, one for Greek Cypriots and one for Turkish Cypriots in a common federal state, to be called United Cyprus Republic, which would exercise only weak functions. The federal state would be indissoluble and would hold international sovereignty, but the constituent states would be given internal sovereignty like that of Swiss cantons, implying a high degree of autonomy. As in most federal states, constituent states would be responsible for all issues not specifically assigned to the federal state. The major responsibilities of the federal state would be external relations, including those with the EU; the central bank; common state finances, including the common state budget and all indirect taxation; most economic and trade policy issues; and citizenship and immigration matters.

INSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS:

The federal parliament would comprise a Senate with an equal number of Greek and Turkish Cypriots, and a Chamber of Deputies. This composition would broadly reflect the relative sizes of the Greek and Turkish populations. Federal legislation would usually have to be approved by a majority of present members in the Chamber and the Senate, with at least one-quarter of senators from both sides voting in favour. Certain vital

decisions would be taken by a special majority consisting of a simple majority in the Chamber of Deputies and a majority in the Senate of at

²⁰ See the (revised) UN plan, <http://www.cyprus-un-plan.org/>.

least two-fifths of sitting senators from both sides. The federal executive would consist of a presidential council with six members (ministers), four of

whom would be Greek Cypriots, and two Turkish Cypriots, to be elected by special majority. If no agreement can be reached in the council, decisions would be taken majority vote, but any proposal would have to be backed by at least one representative from each side. The post of president of the presidential council would be a ceremonial role without any special political rights. A Supreme Court would make interim decisions in cases of deadlock in federal institutions if required. Changes to the constitution would need to be approved by parliament and by separate majorities of the electorates in both constituent states.

TERRITORIAL ADJUSTMENT, RETURN OF REFUGEES, SETTLERS, AND COMPENSATION:

The Turkish Cypriot side would cede 8% of the new federal state's total state's territory to the Greek Cypriot side; many Turkish Cypriots living in these areas would be relocated. The adjustment would allow some Greek Cypriot refugees who left their properties following the Turkish invasion in 1974 to return. The share of Greek Cypriot refugees in the Turkish Cypriot component state would not be allowed to exceed a certain percentage, rising gradually to 21% after 15 years. The plan would allow for 45,000 Turkish settlers in the north to acquire Cypriot citizenship and to stay on the island, contrary to Greek Cypriot demands. Any remaining settlers would be offered financial incentives to return to Turkey.

SECURITY:

The new state would be demilitarised. Both the Greek and Turkish Cypriot armies would be dissolved. Greece and Turkey would each be allowed to keep 6,000 troops on the island. Implementation of the settlement would be overseen by a UN force. Greece, Turkey and the UK would act as guarantor powers.

Adopted from: The EIU, Country Profile 2005.

After five revisions of the Plan, the Annan Plan V was proposed to the Cypriot public to be voted at a "twin" referendum. Before the voting day, the Plan had gone through a long negotiation process. Below are the major landmarks when UN-sponsored peace talks and negotiations took between both leaders and some other political actors to finalise this agonising conflict and to attain reunified Cyprus:

1. The 1977 Makarios and Denktash meeting.
2. The 1985 Denktash and Sypros Kyprianou talks.
3. The 1989 Denktash and Georgios Vassiliou talks.
4. The 1992 Denktash and Georgios Vassiliou talks. At this time, both leaders signed, in April 1992, S-G Boutros-Ghali's 'Set of Ideas'.
5. The 1997 Denktash and Glafcos Clerides talks.
6. The 1999-2001 Proximity Talks. Denktash and Clerides agreed to begin direct talks with no preconditions and all issues to be solved on the table. These proximity talks led to the development of the Annan Plan. It is amended five times and thereafter it was called 'Annan Plan V'.
7. January 2002 and 2003 covers the period of 'Direct Talks' under the UN G-S Annan mediation. On January 2002, Clerides and Denktash met under the supervision of de Soto, where both leaders agreed to hold intensive peace talks. However, after the proposal of a Cypriot 'Partnership State' that was intended to be based on current two existing 'states' by Denktash, this was immediately refused by the Greek Cypriot leader as this implies the recognition of the TRNC.
8. On November 2002 the first version of the Plan was introduced to both sides.
9. In early December 2002 the Plan was revised a second time and proposed to both sides; however, it was rejected by both leaders.
10. In February 2003 the third version of the Plan was released after the Copenhagen Summit, where the Greek Cypriot administration applied for full EU membership as a representative of the whole island.
11. In February 2003, Denktash and Papadopolous accepted the invitation of Kofi Annan to come together to work on the revised version of the Plan.
12. On 19 September 2003, the talks between both leaders began under the supervision of S-G Annan's special adviser, Alvarado de Soto, for Cyprus.

13. In Börgerstock, 24 March 2004 the talks between leaders collapsed again and subsequent of this, S-G Annan acted as arbitrator to fill in the 'gaps' that both sides could not agree on and released the fifth version of the Plan to the attention of Cypriots on 31 March 2004.

According to Christophorou (2005), 12 December 2002, which was the final day of the EU Enlargement Summit²¹ in Copenhagen, and 16 April 2003, when the Accession Treaties of the ten new members²² were signed in Athens, were the dates set for the referendums. If the EU had stated in no uncertain terms becoming a full member of the EU could *only happen after* re-unification of the island, then there may well have been a different outcome.

A serious step was taken by both sides to resume negotiations in New York on 13 February 2004. In New York, both sides were agreed that the negotiations would proceed in three stages. Technical committees from both sides, where many specialist experts were involved, produced extensive documents on the federal legislation that would be put in practice under the new state of affairs. After both sides' completion of the technical studies, Turkish Cypriots proposed a long list of changes to the UN S-G to make relevant amendments in the Plan, however, Greek Cypriots had failed to present a 'clear list of demands', and instead proposed lengthy proposals on individual issues (the EIU, 2004). Unsurprisingly, their demands required substantial concessions from each other, which subsequently let down reaching an agreement. Heraclides (2004:48) comments on this occasion as:

If this presentation so far resembles what actually transpired, the New York experience (with Erdogan putting great pressure on Denktash to change his position) must have come as a huge shock to the Greek-Cypriot leader. His bluff was called, but obviously he could not stall in New York and thus reveal to the whole world that he had been conveniently 'hiding' behind Denktash [position] all along.

²¹ The EU Enlargement Summit in Copenhagen on 12 December 2002 was a crucial date because it was the last chance for the Turkish Cypriot and the Turkish Governments to prevent the Greek Cypriot Government joining the EU and representing Cyprus as the "only" legitimate government of the whole island.

²² Alongside Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia joined the old 15 members of the EU.

The New York agreement granted UN S-G, Kofi Annan, to 'act as an arbitrator' if they failed to agree at the negotiation table; and at the end of the talks the negotiations collapsed. Therefore, he used his 'discretion' to finalise the text where both sides could not agree (Christophorou 2005). Only in case of a "double yes" at the referendums would both communities join the EU as a United Cyprus Republic. As the 'No' scenario occurred, the Greek Cypriots have joined the EU as the only legitimate government of the island and have *de jure* right to control the North, but have no *de facto* control over it. Although for Turkish Cypriots this means that they are part of the EU on the books, in practice, they have been treated as citizens of different nation state.

After the New York talks, inter-communal talks were held in Nicosia, the capital city of both communities, between the Greek Cypriot president Papadopoulos and Turkish Cypriot president Denktash, however, these talks also ended in failure. Despite huge pressure from Turkish Government, Denktash refused to carry on negotiations and attend the Bürgenstock summit, as he believed that the acceptance of the proposed plan meant forsaking the TRNC. However, despite lack of his objection to participate in negotiations, four party representatives of each government carried out the negotiations at Bürgenstock, Switzerland in February 2004. For the first time, Turkish Cypriots were represented by prime minister Mehmet Ali Talat, who was and still is a strong supporter of the reunification of the island and the Annan Plan, and Denktash's son, Serdar Denktash, the deputy prime minister as the TRNC negotiators. Alongside Turkish and Greek Cypriot leaders, the summit was also attended by the UN S-G Anna, Turkish and Greek Prime Ministers Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Costas Karamanlis. As had happened so many times before, the four parties could not reach an agreement and therefore, by implementing the New York agreement, the UN G-S Annan, made 'bridging amendments' and on 31 March 2004 proposed a 9,000 page long fifth version of the plan, *The Comprehensive Settlement of the Cyprus Problem*, upon which the referendums would be held.

The fifth version of the Plan was proposed to the Cypriot public for the first time on the 1 of April 2004, literally just before the referendum campaigning on the Plan started. Political actors held the lead-up negotiations behind closed doors. Due to the likelihood of political leaders from either side ‘walking away’ or ‘calling the deal off’ the referendum could not have been anticipated in advance. That’s why the voters could not have been expected to have a sophisticated prior knowledge on the latest version of the Plan. As in the 1995 Québec referendum, the political parties put forward strong arguments on the sovereignty issue at the beginning of the campaign in the 2004 Cyprus Referendum.

On 24 April 2004, both Turkish and Greek Cypriots were given the historic opportunity to speak for themselves. This was a once-in-a lifetime opportunity for Cypriots because they were going to decide their future by voting in the referendums either for reunification or for rejection of the UN proposal, the so-called ‘Annan Plan’. As well as being backed by the UN, the Annan Plan was overwhelmingly backed by international communities (including the EU, US and UK) and they provided financial as well as political support to put an end the long-lasting international issue of the conflict in Cyprus. On the referendum day, the Cypriot public was asked to respond to the following question by saying either ‘yes’ to accept the Plan, or ‘no’ to refuse the reunification of the island:

Do you approve the Foundation Agreement with all its Annexes, as well as the constitution of the Greek Cypriot/Turkish Cypriot State and the provisions as to the law to be in force to bring into being a new state of affairs in which Cyprus joins the European Union united?

The Cypriot voters’ answers to this question were as follows (see Table 4.2):

Table 4.2 The Result of the Referendum

	YES VOTES	NO VOTES	TURNOUT
TURKISH NORTH CYPRUS	64.90%	35.10%	87%
GREEK SOUTH CYPRUS	24.17%	75.83%	88%

In this referendum, both the Turkish and Greek Cypriot voters had to approve the proposal by majority voting in order for its provisions to take effect. The Greek Cypriots, by rejecting the Annan Plan proposal, also refused the establishment of the ‘United Republic of Cyprus’, which would have been a confederation of two states, with separate republics handling domestic affairs and a central federal government that would manage international, legal and economic concerns.

So, when we look at why the Greek Cypriots said ‘No’ and Turkish Cypriots said ‘Yes’, the following elements occur as an answer:

The reasoning of ‘Yes’ for Turkish Cypriots can document as:

- Maintaining political equality as a ‘component state’ hence lifting the international isolation
- Economic benefits from the new Republic as well as being member of the EU
- Continuity of Turkey’s intervention right over Cyprus
- But, most importantly, the benefits of EU accession

The reasoning of ‘No’ for Greek Cypriots can document:

- Security
- Economic cost of the solution for Greek Cypriots
- Citizenship rights and right to return “home” for refugees

- Turkish troops removal

Opinion poll information presented by Lordos and Faiz in 2005 at WiltonPark Conference in Cyprus, they suggested that Turkish Cypriot yes voters were primarily motivated by the desire to become members of the EU, to escape economic isolation, to become master of their own home, to overcome the risk of another war, to be re-united with the Greek Cypriots (as secondary motive) and to be able to return to ancestral homes that are now in the South. On the other hand, Greek Cypriot no voters were mainly worried about the provisions for Turkish troops to remain on the island for some time after a settlement came into force, by the Treaty of Guarantee provision for Turkey's continued unilateral right of intervention, and by elements of the Plan relating to governance, Turkish "settlers" and the return of refugees to their properties (WiltonPark Report, 2004:3, Lordos, 2005).

The next section of the thesis documents the context of the referendum campaign in terms of the political party system and mass media structure in Cyprus.

CHAPTER 5

THE 2004 CYPRUS REFERENDUM CAMPAIGN CONTEXT

Introduction

After innumerable rounds of talks, which dates back to January 2002, finally with the presentation of the Plan to the Cypriot publics, the political parties started to show their colour of vote, within which indicated a long time ago. This section aims to document the juxtapose opinions of political actors at the referendum campaign as pro-Annan supporters: the 'Yes' Camps, and the rejectionists: the 'No' Camps. In conjunction, I present some pre-referendum public opinion polls results to demonstrate the political climate and how Cypriot public opinion was fluctuated on the Annan Plan at various timeline.

The political scenery of the referendum election campaign was complicated. It created some uncharacteristic merges even parties in different lines merged their powers, party members and some MPs fought in part by parties, many civil organisations, and academics took highly active role in campaigning alongside political parties to fight for their desired outcome at the election. Especially, powerful alliances made up of various interest groups and NGOs were vastly influential at the campaign. As in other election campaign studies, also at the Annan referendum, the mass media were at the heart of the political campaign battle. At the election, the mass media was not only the transmitter of the political campaigners' messages, but also an active political campaigner too.

The referendum campaigning had generated a huge interest in national as well as international arena. Polling day was the culmination of an intense three weeks campaigning period. The three weeks campaign fight involved not only the Turkish and Greek Cypriot political parties but also involvement of 'external forces' either directly or indirectly. These were the EU, US, UK, Russia²³, the Enlargement

²³ In 1998, Greek Cypriot Government attempted to purchase S-300 missiles weapons to from Russia which intended to set up the Joint Defense Doctorine with Greece (Heraclides 2004). More importantly, Russia not only involved as Greek Cypriot and Greek Government alliance in terms of military relationship, but more so in 2004 during the negotiation period of the Anna V Plan, Russia blocked the endorsement of Washington and UN Security Council's financial aid offer to ease the concern of Greek Cypriot voters by casting a 'no' vote at UN Security Council meeting.

Commissioner of the EU; Günther Verheugen and the UN S-G Cyprus special advisor de Soto, and most influentially, mainland Turkey and Greece had greatly participated in the campaigning process. The external actors not only engaged in the negotiation processes extensively, like Turkey and Greece, and the EU, US, and UK took an active role in campaigning process. The EU and US took important roles as political powers to encourage both governments to find a common platform. More importantly, they encouraged Cypriot electorates to vote in favour of the negotiated plan. The front-page headline news of KIBRIS newspaper²⁴ on 17th April 2004 demonstrates a good example of how much the US was involved in the campaigning process:

The Foreign Ministry of the US Powell warns the Cypriots again: If both sides miss this golden opportunity of 24th April, they will not have another further opportunity.

The US Foreign Minister Colin Powell urged both Turkish and Greek Cypriots to vote YES at the referendum in order to put an end to the 40 years of ongoing division on the island.

To demonstrate the intensive involvement of the EU, in particular the Enlargement Commissioner Mr Verheugen, at a donor's conference in mid-April 2004 in Cyprus he proposed "if the Annan Plan fails despite approval by the Turkish Cypriots, the EU would seek ways to ease the embargoes [on the Turkish Cypriots]" (The EIU, 2004 Country Report: 3). Christophorou (2005:88) documented the active involvement of the external actors as:

- (1) The UN wanted Cypriots to adopt their plan and insisted the a negative vote would mean the end of their good offices. On the eve of the vote, Kofi Annan called on Cypriots to seize the historical opportunity and adopt his plan,
- (2) The US warned that things would not be as before if any of the communities in Cyprus voted against the Plan,

²⁴ KIBRIS newspaper, 17th April 2004. Available from:
http://www.kibrisgazetesi.com/index.php/cat/2/news/8061/PageName/lc_Haberler.

- (3) The EU and in particular Enlargement Commissioner, Mr Verheungen launched an unprecedented attack against President Papadopolous, claiming that he had deceived him and disappointed him,

These highlight a brief synopsis of the external factors' involvement in the campaign, however, they were certainly one of the key campaign actors at the referendum election. Although it is important to examine the role and influences of the external actors in the political campaigning at the referendum, the investigation of their influences are excluded in this research due to word limitation and feasibility of the undertaken research.

In Cyprus, the reaction of the various political parties to the final version of the Plan was not a surprise. Away from at their historical root, it was expected that they would take a particular stance on the reunification of the island. Having said that, on the South side, AKEL's last minute decision not to support the Yes camp was a surprise, particularly for the CTP-BG political party in the North. This is due to their historically close relationship in seeking a common platform to solve the ongoing issue. On the North side, however, the DP party leader, Serdar Denktash, announced his personal decision as a 'no' vote for but he let party members and supporters make their own minds up on the reunification. As a right wing and hard line political party, it can be said that this was also surprising and, even more, confusing for its supporters. Additionally, both sides' leaders immediately expressed their wills on the Plan by advising to their citizens "to reject", which was not a surprise at all as both of them have very strong views on the issue based on their active involvement from the beginning of the conflict on the island.

The political actors and movements were mobilised to contest their forces in the referendum campaign were mainly plotted in "pro" or "anti" Annan Plan based on their stance on the Cyprus Issue and left-right political ideological division. The next section outlines the main actors in the campaign.

Setting the Scene of the Campaign

In TRNC, with December 2005 general election crucial changes happened in the North Cyprus political scene. This election brought power the minority coalition government of, which comprised of the two political parties, Turkish Republican Party and United Forces (CTP-BG) 35.2% votes and the Democratic Party (DP) 12.9%²⁵ votes. This new government has changed the long-lasting historical hard-line view on the Cyprus Issue and brought in power the pro-solution parties. This election indicated the will of Turkish Cypriot citizens for reunification as in the 2003 election campaign one of the elements of that fought over was the Annan Plan amongst the political parties. In particular, CTP-BP political party was very keen for reunification of the island. It is worth noting that both Turkish and Turkish Cypriot governments (although the government in the TRNC has changed and the UBP elected by the majority of the votes) still are, in favour of reunification and the Annan Plan. Another very important changes occurred when the Justice and Development Party (AKP) won the general election and form a new government by itself by gaining majority of the seats in the parliament. This newly elected government changed the Turkey's strategy on Cyprus and adopted a new pro-solution approach. This attitude of the government created a dissatisfaction amongst hard-line *status quo* supporters, namely for examples Turkish Generals, Bülent Ecevit (who made the decision as then the prime minister of Turkey to send the Turkish troops to Cyprus in 1974, and the leader of the DSP - Democratic Social Party) and Devlet Bahçeli, the leader of the MHP – Nationalist Movement Party. In fact, as the new government was more strongly in favour of reunification and joining the EU, the interest of conflicts between the AKP government and/or Recep Tayyip Erdogan and the Turkish Cypriot President Denktash caused serious tensions. One of the biggest opponents and soundly campaigner against the Plan was the incumbent president of the TRNC, Rauf R. Denktash, who was the chief negotiator

²⁵ In TRNC, any political parties to be able to set up government need to gain 50% of Turkish Cypriot votes. Also, CTP-BG political party gaining 35.2% of the vote was important, because CTP-BG supports the solution and the reunification of the island. Therefore, when the majority of the Turkish Cypriot voters supported the CTP-BG, they also indicated their wishes on reunification.

for the TRNC during the negotiations. Even in one point during the negotiations, he declared that the Annan Plan was 'dead and buried'.

However, Recep Tayip Erdogan and his government from the beginning of the negotiations gave their full support to the Plan and this support was manifested by day by day with his speeches on either television talks, newspapers or by sending his political advisers to assist the 'Yes' side of the campaign. On the other hand, the opposition party in Turkey, CHP - Cumhuriyetci Halk Partisi, and the Turkish military saw the drawbacks on the Plan and announced their concerns and hence called for refusal of the Plan. Their main reason of rejecting the Plan was on the principal of not representing the two 'equal sovereign' states, and henceforth they supported the 'No' camps. Thus, these governmental changes in Turkey and the TRNC have brought different dimensions to the negotiations of the Plan.

Despite these positive changes on the Turkish side, on the Greek side of the island, with the outcome of the 2003 presidential election, the 'pro-solution' Greek Cypriot president and the then negotiator Glafkos Clerides had been replaced with a 'hard liner' Tassos Papadopoulos. The president Papadopolous was an active member of the EOKA-B and he embraces a strong nationalistic viewpoint on the Cyprus Issue to the extent that sometimes he has been criticised for being a 'chauvinist'. Like president Papadopolod, president Denktash also have had an active role within TAKSIM²⁶ and henceforth has strong nationalist leanings to a degree that for some he is also a chauvinist. As a result of both leaders' historical roots within the development of the Cyprus Issue and having strong nationalist feelings, unsurprisingly enabled them to take position as the leader of both sides 'No' camps.

Where is in Greece, while the opposition party PASOK (The Panhellenic Socialist Movement) and the Greek government of Kostantinos Karamanlis, New

²⁶ The equivocal to ENOSIS means connecting the island to the mainland Turkey. Some Turkish military leaders and right wing parties have supported this view unofficially.

Democracy Party, after a long setback, took a neutral stance on the Plan. Furthermore,

The Communist party (KKE) rejected what it called the 'Americanisation plans', while the fourth party in the Greek Parliament, the Left Coalition SYN [commonly known as Synaspismos] following an intense internal debate, decided to support it. Politicians, academics, artists, and other personalities from Greece were also mobilised, signing manifestos, supporting or rejecting the Plan (Christophorou 2005:88).

Right from the start of the campaigning, the majority of the parties in the Turkish and Greek Cypriot politics sought a strong positioning on the Plan, where in North Cyprus this was 'Yes' and in the South Cyprus was 'No', this unbalance distribution of support towards acceptance or rejection of the Plan at the end reflected as the real outcome of the election.

One other important factor that could have influenced both the Greek Cypriot political parties' stance, and particularly the Greek public opinion, is that Turkish Prime Minister Mr. Erdogan, the diplomatic negotiator and also the Turkish media tone all presented the Plan as a diplomatic victory²⁷. On the actual day of the press conference to announce the Plan for the public voting, " a press report quoted a diplomat describing the situation as one where one side ended up with 'a five course meal with champagne and the other with a sandwich and a cup of coffee'" (Christophorou 2005a: 87). This was a rather exaggerated expression of the terms of the negotiated Plan. This kind of comment in the media reinforced the decision of those parties that had openly positioned themselves against the initial proposals of November 2002 and hence immediately took the same stance on the Plan. Moreover, at one of the most crucial times of the referendum campaign period on 7 April 2004 Greek Cypriot leader Tassos Pappadopoulos delivered a highly

²⁷ According to the EIU report (June 2004:14) "this plan took into many concerns of the Turkish Cypriots and Turkey, so that even some foreign diplomatic observers considered the plan to be unbalanced to the detriment of the Greek Cypriots". Additionally, it can be also claimed that Turkish government and diplomats had managed to play the diplomacy game fairly well as well as by leaking some news to the mass media had managed to create a negative atmosphere in the Greek Cypriots side. This situation presented in the headline news of the Greek Cypriot newspapers as "carrot and stick".

emotional speech on national television for 45 minutes and urged his citizens to reject the plan because “it was legalising and deepening the de facto partition instead of ending it...[and called on the Greek Cypriot community] to defend its legal rights, its dignity and history” (Christophorou 2005a: 89). Unsurprisingly, the president of the TRNC Denktash had, like his counterpart, urged his citizens to reject the Plan showing his emotions and also crying on national television. Having given the chief negotiators’ view on the Plan, the following part presents the Greek Cypriot political parties’ stance on the plan during the referendum campaign. Another crucial factor that needs to be mentioned is the active ‘no’ propaganda by the Greek Orthodox Church’s against the Plan. Alongside the President, many Bishops also called the Greek Cypriots to reject the Plan on various occasions and the Bishop of Kyrenia took part in many discussion programmes to stress the importance of rejecting the Plan and saving the Republic and not forgetting what the Turks had done throughout history to the Greeks.

At the period of referendum campaign, the print media was divided into two, as “black and white”²⁸, like the political parties cross-nationally. A detailed information is provided, in the section of Mass Media in Cyprus, on the Cypriot press stances on both the Cyprus Issue and the Plan.

THE YES CAMPS

In the North Cyprus, the Plan was supported by far the majority of the political parties in the Turkish Cypriot politics. The majority party within the coalition government, the CTP-BP (which in the December 2003 general election had increased its vote by 23% from 13 per cent to 35 per cent), was the leading party that campaigned in favour of the Plan. Alongside this, the TRNC Chamber of Commerce was also strongly campaigned in favour of the Plan. In addition, the BDH (Peace and Democracy Movement comprising of TKP, KSP & BKP political parties) was actively involved in the Yes campaigning process. Alongside these

²⁸ Interview with Ömer Bilge, Hürriyet newspaper report of North Cyprus, on 22.07.2008

main 'Yes' camp actors, ABP (Justice and Peace Party), KSP (Cyprus Socialist Party), YBH (Patriotic Unity Movement), and finally ÇABP (Solution and European Union Party) supported the Yes campaign. Alongside these political parties, TRNC Chamber of Commerce and "Bu Memleket Bizim Platformu – This Country is Ours Platform" took the lead in organising major rallies, media briefings, and many other activities to promote the 'yes' vote. 'This Country is Ours Platform' emerged from over 40 Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), academics, trade unions, and professional organisations' common desire to bring a 'yes' vote out of the referendum.

In South Cyprus, the second largest political force (by gaining 34 per cent of the vote in 2001), the DISY (Democratic Rally) was the main actor of the Yes camp. However, despite the attempts of the former President of the Republic and honorary chairman of the party, Glafcos Clerides, to persuade the members to have an unified decision to support the Plan, the members could not reached an agreement and henceforth the party decided not to make any recommendation regarding the Plan and allowed the members to make a personal decision. This caused internal division in the party. EDI (the United Democrat) as full supporter of the reunification left alone among parties after the 'no' decision of the AKEL (Progressive Party for Working People) party. The *Yes Platform for a United European Cyprus* was the platform where the Yes camps merged their forces. The members of the platform can be documented as the 'Movement of Political Modernisation, the platform 'YES to solution', the 'Movement of Democratic Citizens for Europe, Movement of Youth for a Reunited Cyprus, the 'Power of a United Cyprus' movement, the Citizens' Initiative All Cyprus Together, and on personal level, Mr. Lellos Dimitriades, former Mayor of Nicosia, Mr. Christodoulos Pericleous, Political Analyst and member of Green Part, Mr. Yinnos Ioannou.

THE NO CAMPS

In the North, the No campaign ran by two arms. On the one hand, the President Denktash was used his political position and personality to attract 'no' vote, whereas, on the other hand the UBP party was the main campaigner. Alongside the UBP (National Unity Party), small political parties, namely the UHH (National Patriotic Movement), MAP (Nationalist Justice Party), DHP (Democratic Populist Party), and KAP (Cyprus Justice Party) also took aside the No camp. As mentioned, the leader of DP (Democratic Party) party, Serdar Denktash and his party, had made a late decision on the Plan and consequently junior Denktash decided to support the 'no' vote. In addition, two movements, which set up by NGOs and businessmen, the Independency United and Farmers United Platform backed the No camp. As the Yes camp was overwhelmingly supported in North Cyprus, the No camp, particularly the leading figure of the No camp, President Denktash, called for the help of political and military forces from Turkey. Therefore, some political parties, (i.e., CHP, DSP, and MHP) and many individual politicians involved in the No campaign backed the attempt of the so-called 'save the country'. Because of this, President Denktash mainly conducted his 'No' campaigning in Turkey. As can be observed, the No camp in the North was in minority by number of support. So, this increased the chance of the professionally well-organised the Yes camp to persuade those voters and therefore, perhaps compared to the highly professionally run Yes camp, the No campaign side had limited potential to influence the mass media agenda and Turkish Cypriot public opinion.

Contrary to the Turkish Cypriot's No camps, on the other side of the island, the No camp was well organised and dominated the media with its activities. The No camp had overwhelming support from the Greek parties. The main actor was DIKO (the president's party – Democratic Rally). Alongside DIKO, the nationalist EDEK (the Social Democrat Movement), some members of the AKEL party, the Ecologist-Environmentalists and ADIK (the Fighting Democratic Movement), the NEO (Coalition Beyond Parties), many Bishops of the Church of Cyprus, and the

Pancyprian Citizens' Movement campaigned against the Plan. Moreover, an intensive 'no' campaign was run on the Internet by 'Oxi-No to the Annan Plan' (www.oxi-no.org) and the No camps were also supported by the London based organisation, Cypriot Citizen's Movement and Cyprus for Lobby. Table 1.3 provides an overview of the Yes and No camps supporters.

Table 5.1 An Overview of the Political Parties and Movements Stances on the Annan Plan

YES CAMPS		NO CAMPS	
TURKISH CYPRIOT			
CTP-BG		UBP	
BDH		UHH	
ABP		MAP	
ÇABP		KAP	
YBH		DHP	
TRNC CHAMBER OF COMMERCE		INDEPENDENCY UNITED & FARMERS UNITED PLATFORM	
THIS COUNTRY IS OUR PLATFORM		DP (majority members)	
GREEK CYPRIOT			
DISY		DIKO	
EDI		NEO	
AKEL (some members)		AKEL	
UNITED EUROPEAN CYPRUS PLATFORM		ADHK	
		EDEK	
		ECOLOGIST PARTY	
		CHURCH OF CYPRUS (except the Bishop of Morfou)	
		PANCYPRIAN CITIEZEN’S MOVEMENT	

Public Opinion Polls on the Referendum

Various versions of the Annan Plan were brought to the attention of the Cypriot public, since then there has been a plethora of opinion polls conducted. These polls have illustrated significant fluctuations on Cypriot publics' voting intentions to support or reject the Plan. In an uncertain political climate, like this, polls can form a dynamic to generate support or refusal by reinforcing undecided voters' beliefs. Although there were strong indications on both sides towards the colour of the Cypriot electorates' vote, 'Yes' in the North and 'No' in the South, taking into consideration of the host of factors that might have influenced the actual vote of Cypriot electorates, the fluctuation in Cypriot voting shows that there was room, to some extent, to close the gap or break even at the election. Below, various examples of opinion polls results are shown to pinpoint how Cypriot electorates changed their minds over the period of this development.

For example, In North Cyprus, the opinion poll survey²⁹ which run by the KADEM research company between 27th December and 3rd January 2003 revealed that if the 'Annan Plan' was proposed to the Turkish Cypriot voters as it stood, they would vote 'Yes' 65.4%, 28.2% 'No' and 6.4% undecided. A year later, according to the opinion poll³⁰ conducted by Raymond James Securities on 13-17 March 2004 in North Cyprus, if the 'Annan Plan' are put to Turkish Cypriots to vote on it without making any changes, 46.3% would say 'No', 40.8% would says 'Yes' and 12% remained 'undecided'. On the Greek Cypriot side of the island, according to the Ray Consultants Company survey³¹, which was produced for the "Phileleftheros" newspaper, and reported on 7 March 2004:

62% of the citizens would respond negatively to the referendum, while 24% would answer "yes". It should be noted however, that the percentage would change only if the President of the Cypriot Republic Tassos Papadopoulos, the Greek Government, and each voter's party encouraged the people to vote in favour of the Plan.

²⁹ 'Iste Referendum', *Kıbrıs*. Monday 6 January 2003, p.1.

³⁰ Available from: www.cyprusmedianet.com/EN/article/20474?printer_friendly=1

³¹ Availbale from: http://www.mpa.gr/article.html?doc_id=439993.

Whereas, the AC Nielsen poll carried out for the “Politis” newspaper, which was announced the same day, found that 53% would reject the plan, while 19% would vote in favour. Cyprus Mail³² newspaper on its March 14th 2004 online edition coverage summarised various public opinion results and reported them as:

In the poll conducted on February 19-20, opposition to the plan was 40 per cent while two weeks later it was 53 per cent. Another two polls published last Sunday also showed overwhelming opposition to the plan (62 and 54 per cent), while support was below 25 per cent in all of them. Another common finding was that about 70 per cent of respondents admitted not having much knowledge of the plan. Admittedly, a significant number of respondents had still not made up their minds

Another interesting point to highlight from this survey is that 82% agreed with the way President Papadopoulos handled matters so far, while 9% disapproved and 9% did not make any comment. Finally, according to the poll³³ of the Intercollege Research and Development Centre that carried out for the “Simerini” newspaper while 11% would vote ‘yes’ in favour of the plan, 54% would reject it. These surveys showed three completely different results about the Greek Cypriots voting intentions and indicated uncertainty about the Annan Plan. So, based on LeDuc’s (2002) classification of the referendums, the 2004 Cyprus Referendum campaign was an ‘opinion formation campaign’. Even though the Cyprus Issue is more than 40 year old and is ongoing it still dominates every political discussion of Cypriot citizens and political parties. Indeed, according to a recent opinion poll³⁴ which was carried out for the UBP (National United Party) by KADEM in August 2008, the Cyprus Issue is the most important subject in the eyes of the Turkish Cypriot public.

³² Editorial, ‘Negative climate could soon prove irreversible’, (2004). Accessed from: <http://www.cyprus-mail.com/opinions/editorial-negative-climate-could-soon-prove-irreversible>

³³ Greek Cypriot ‘No’ to the Annan Plan, (2004). Accessed from: http://www.mpa.gr/article.html?doc_id=439993.

³⁴ The opinion poll has been conducted by KADEM research agency in North Cyprus and the full information can be found on the web site of http://www.ulusalbirlikpartisi.com/arastirma/sosyalarastirma_files/frame.htm.

In an attempt to explain the underlying reasons of why Greek Cypriots rejected the Plan, Ker-Lindsay³⁵ (2004:1) argues that:

Although there are a complex range of reasons why the Greek Cypriots voted against the agreement, there can be little doubt that the rejection of the plan was at least in part due to a misrepresentation of the proposals and a concerted attempt to stifle free and fair public debate. In addition to a vociferous campaign against the plan that was launched by senior figures from politics, business, academia and the Church, the campaign also involved large numbers of groups, such as unions, business associations, political parties and refugee associations. Significantly, and contrary to the expectations of the international community, the government also appears to have played a role in the process of discrediting the plan.

Addition to this, Akçakoca (2005:7) pinpoints the reasons of rejection as:

a combination of long-standing distrust of Turkey, pressure from the Greek Orthodox Church in Cyprus, media dominated by anti-solution propaganda, and the last minute rejection of the Plan by the island's [south part] largest political party, AKEL (Communist), added to the uncertainty and fear. There was virtually no "yes" campaign and many people felt that foreigners were once again deciding their future.

On the other hand, the reasons of the 'Yes' outcome documented as (1) the solution would have brought to an end to the isolation of Turkish Cypriots and made them EU citizens and (2) the Plan offered economic independence, guarantorship by Turkey, stronger democracy and a solution to many other concerns, such as high employment, high inflation and hence the opportunity to reduce the youth emigration. As so many factors would have an effect on the decision-making process of the Cypriot voters, this study aims to find out who sets the press and Cypriot publics' agendas at the election, therefore to address this, it only concerns with dynamics between the two political actors over the course of setting the agendas.

³⁵ Dr James Ker-Lindsay is Director of Civilitas Research, a think tank focusing on South East European and the Eastern Mediterranean. He is also an Associate Fellow of the European Security Programme at the Royal United Services Institute for Defence Studies (RUSI) and covers Cyprus politics for the *Economist Intelligence Unit*.

CHAPTER 6

POLITICAL SYSTEM AND MASS MEDIA OF CYPRUS

CYPRUS – AN OVERVIEW OF POLITICAL SYSTEM AND PARTIES

The scrutiny of the political system in Cyprus allows one to comprehend its implications for campaign practices during the referendum election. The purpose of this chapter is two-fold. The first part outlines the political system of the Republic of Cyprus, followed by that of the TRNC. Within this section, it presents an overview of the histories and ideologies of the political parties' on both sides, which is subsequently related to their stances during the referendum election campaign. In the second part, it seeks to explore the political economy of the Cypriot press in order to highlight the intertwined relationship of media and politics in Cyprus. In the concluding part, it provides overall views of the press on the Annan Plan cross-nationally. This analysis allows us to comprehend the relationship and the power dynamics between politics and the media.

CYPRIOI POLITICS

The island of Cyprus was ruled by the Ottoman Empire between 1571 and 1878 and then leased to the UK. When the "sick man of Europe" was faced with to lease Cyprus to Britain as the price to pay for its support during its captivation with Russia. It was released by the Congress of Berlin to Britain. Cyprus was ruled by the British from 1878 until the establishment of the Republic Of Cyprus in 1960, however it was not until 1925 that Britain declared Cyprus as a colony.

As mentioned, on 16 August 1960 Cyprus became independent from the UK with the establishment of the Republic of Cyprus based on the 1959 Zürich and London agreements with Greece, Turkey and the UK as the three guarantors. The Republic's constitution was based on the representation of the Greek and Turkish communities in proportion to their numbers, and a set of Treaties of Alliance and Guarantee was created. A presidential election took place in December 1959 and was followed by the election of the first post-colonial parliament on 31 July 1960. The 1960 Constitution, the current institutional framework of the Republic of

Cyprus³⁶, provides for a House of Representatives (Vouli Antiprosópon/Temsilciler Meclisi) which elects its representatives in separate votes based on a ratio of 70:30 by the Greek and the Turkish Cypriot communities respectively. The House of Representatives has fifty seats and 35 seats for the Greek Cypriots and 15 seats for the Turkish Cypriots. Since 1964, the Turkish Cypriot seats have remained unoccupied due to the inter-communal conflict which broke out in 1963 following which the Turkish Cypriot representatives withdrew from the House (Christophorou 2001; 2007). Since the collapse of bi-communalism in 1964, a *sui generis* situation has arisen whereby the 1960 constitution remains in force for the Republic of Cyprus as the internationally recognised state that represents South Cyprus, and thus the Greek Cypriot community in the EU and the international arena. The island was, and still is, divided into two parts – by the ‘Green Line’ which is patrolled by UN forces called UNFICYP. As mentioned previously, a *de facto* government, the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus was established in the north in 1983. The self-declared state of North Cyprus governs itself and has a different political election ballot from the south part. Thus each community administers its own affairs and the Cyprus conflict occurs over the rival claims to authority rejection of each other’s governments.

³⁶ It provides for the division of the electorate and elections across community lines and as a result, two party systems and ethnic cleavage, see Christophorou (2006).

THE REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS

Political System

In the Republic of Cyprus a presidential system is in place and two types of national elections exist: presidential and legislative. Greek Cypriots elect their president every five years as the head of state who appoints the Council of Ministers to form the government. Although Archbishop Makarios III was elected as President in 1959, when he returned to the island from his deportation, he became the first 'popularly elected' president of the Republic of Cyprus in 1963. The current president following the February 2008 election is Demetris Christofias. However, during the referendum election the president and chief political negotiator was Tassos Papadopoulos. Up until 1985, the House of Representatives of the Republic of Cyprus was comprised of 56 deputies who were elected for a five-year term. However the Greek Cypriot representatives decided to increase the total number of representative seats in the House from fifty to eighty. Of these, 56 representatives are elected by the Greek Cypriot Community, whereas the 24 seats allocated to the Turkish Cypriots remain vacant and three are the observer members representing the Maronite, Roman-Catholic and Armenian minorities.

The Electoral System

The electoral system is the parliamentary system and within this, direct and proportional representation of electoral voting system exists. In 1981, the electoral system for parliamentary elections changed from the plurality vote to a proportional distribution of seats, with a threshold of eight per cent and compulsory voting (Christophorou 2005). Moreover, in the Republic of Cyprus, there is a multiparty system and it has been obligatory for all citizens aged 18 or over to vote since 2001 (Ibid, 2001; 2007). According to Christophorou (2007:113):

The present multiparty system is only 30 years old and is characterised by a persistent left-right cleavage, with the two major formations taking between 61 per cent (1985) and 68.7 per cent (2001) of the votes. The main features of the system are having a tendency to fragmentation of

the political forces, but also mergers and circumstantial alliances, based more on power sharing than on programmatic values. Despite recent signs of decline, party loyalty and mobilisation remain strong.

In the 2006 parliamentary election, for the first time since the division of the island, “Turkish Cypriots residing in the Cyprus government-controlled areas were given individual voting rights and a Turkish Cypriot candidate contested a seat on the ticket of EDI-United Democrats” (Ibid, p.113).

TURKISH REPUBLIC OF NORTHERN CYPRUS

Political System

Since the withdrawal of the Turkish Cypriot representatives from the House of Representatives under the Republic of Cyprus Constitution, the Turkish Cypriot community has been ruling itself. The period from 1963 to 1974 has been described as a ‘political limbo’ for the Turkish Cypriots; the 1975 presidential election and the 1976 parliamentary election were the first independent elections held by the Turkish Cypriots (Çarkoglu and Sözen 2004). Turkish Cypriots established the ‘Federal State of Cyprus’ and operated under this system during the period of 1975 to 1983. Afterwards, Turkish Cypriots declared their complete independence and established the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) in 1983. As mentioned before, TRNC is only internationally recognised by Turkey and has been living under social and political embargoes.

As the Republic of Cyprus, the political system in the TRNC is a parliamentary system and the electoral system is a proportional one. Similarly, multi-party elections have been held regularly in the TRNC every five years. The North part of

the island has also been divided into five voting districts like the counterpart of the island and the seats are distributed among the parties by the d'Hondt³⁷ method.

Since 1975, the president has been elected by popular vote for a five-year term. Rauf Denktash as the Turkish Cypriot leader and chief negotiator has represented Turkish Cypriots during the period 1975-2004. The current president of the TRNC, Mehmet Alit Talat, who still actively supports the reunification of the island, was elected president on 17 April 2005.

The Electoral System

The Prime Minister (Chief Executive) is the head of the Council of Ministers (cabinet) and the real executive power is vested in the Council of Ministers. The legislative branch of the TRNC, the Assembly of the Republic, has fifty seats and its members are elected to serve for five-years. The president is elected directly by the people, like the counterpart of the island. At the presidential election the voting age is 18+. The power and competencies of the president is limited and mostly symbolic (Çarkoglu and Sözen 2004).

The election system in the TRNC is a proportional representation system, which allows not only a vote for the bloc but also a preferential vote which can be for other political parties' candidates. This is similar to the party-list systems in Belgium and Luxembourg, which enables voters to choose between the candidates of each party (Çarkoglu and Sözen 2004). In this system political parties gain seats on the basis of their vote-share. Also, there is a five percent threshold in the

³⁷ Dr Sydney Elliot, senior lecturer at Queen Mary University explained the concept as "the d'Hondt, or highest average method, is named after a Belgian lawyer from the 1870s. Unlike single transferable vote, it does not use a quota or formula to allocate seats or posts. Instead, these are allocated singularly and one after another. The basic idea is that a party's vote total is divided by a certain figure, which increases as it wins more seats. As the divisor becomes bigger, the party's total in succeeding rounds gets smaller, allowing parties with lower initial totals to win seats. The divisor in the first round is one (i.e. it has no effect) and thereafter it is the total number of seats gained plus one". See http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/northern_ireland/91150.stm.

parliamentary elections. Historically, this election system has tended to favour coalition governments in North Cyprus.

The next section aims to give an outline of the existing political parties in Cyprus and what they stood for in the 2004 referendum election. This section enables readers to establish the link between the historical and ideological background of the parties and why, particularly, those parties took a certain stance during the referendum campaign.

POLITICAL PARTIES IN CYPRUS

The position of each of the political parties on the final (the fifth) version of the Plan after the General Secretary of the United Nation Kofi Annan presented it to both sides of the island at the end of March 2004 was not a surprise. By looking at their historical roots, it was almost to be expected that the UN would take a particular stance on the reunification of the island. Having said that, on the South side, AKEL's last minute decision to not support the 'Yes' camp *was* a surprise, particularly for the CTP-BG political party in the north. As they historically have close relationship and consequently they were trying to find a common platform on which to solve the ongoing issue. On the north side, as mentioned, the DP party leader junior Denktash had announced his personal decision as a 'no' vote for the reunification, hence party members and supporters were left to make up their own minds on the reunification plans. For a right-wing and hard line political party, it can be said that this was also a surprise. Additionally, both sides' leaders immediately and fiercely indicated and campaigned for their will that their citizens should "reject" the Plan, which was no at all surprising, as both of them have very strong views on the issue based on their active involvement from the beginning of the conflict on the island.

The following section of the thesis only covers main political parties that have been influential in Cypriot politics and were actively involved in the referendum campaign, as the intention of the research is to analyse the campaign communications of the 'Yes' and 'No' camps and their dynamics with the press. There have been some changes to the landscape of political parties and media in Cyprus since the referendum period; however these are not a main concern in this research.

POLITICAL PARTIES IN THE SOUTH

Since 1976, four parties have occupied centre stage of Greek Cypriot politics, namely the communist party AKEL, the socialist party EDEK, the centre-right Democratic Party (DIKO) and the right wing Democratic Rally (DISY) (Christophorou 2007).

AKEL (Anorthotiko Komma tou Ergazomenou Laou - The Progressive Party of the Working People)

The Communist party AKEL was founded in 1941, which makes it the oldest party on the island. During the history of the Republic AKEL has become one of the leading political forces (Christophorou 2005a). With 34.7 per cent share of the votes in 2001 parliament election, AKEL was the largest political force and it was in a coalition government with DISY during the referendum. AKEL and DISY together had the support of the 60% of the Greek Cypriot voters at the time. However, AKEL as a party had a difficult time coming to a decision on the proposal of the reunification of the island. Christophorou (2005a: 91) explains this by stating:

AKEL found itself in opposition to the choices and philosophy of the President. Its traditional values for rapprochement and a long history of common action with Turkish Cypriots were hardly in harmony with the rejection of the plan. Party officials stated that AKEL's appraisal of the plan was in disagreement with the President. In the course of campaign, the party denounced pressure on employees of the Central Bank and other public service department for a 'no' vote.

However, while the party tended slightly towards being a 'Yes' supporter, just two days before the referendum its Secretary General, Dimitris Christofias, called for a 'different no' vote in a public speech and thus caused ambiguity for its supporters (Ibid, 2005a).

DIKO (Demokratiko Komma - Democratic Party)

This was the president's party, founded in 1976 by Spyros Kyprianou. Mr Kyprianou was the Foreign Affairs minister during the Makarios government of 1960 to 1972. As mentioned, the president Archbishop Makarios was the first elected president of the Republic of Cyprus and had played crucial role in the history of the 'Cyprus Issue'. According to Christophorou (2007:99), "until Makarios's death in 1977, political life [in Cyprus] was shaped by this imposing personality, attempting to agree on the distribution of seats in parliament before the elections and, if possible, to avoid elections altogether in the name of the public interest". As a political stance, the party pronounces itself to be the pro-Makarios forces and the traditional right wing. It particularly distances itself from the Democratic Rally (DISY) and above all opposes, its leader, Glafcos Clerides', views (Ibid, 2007). As might be expected, on the referendum issue the party took the decision to follow the president of Republic and was the major actor in the 'No' camp during the campaigning.

DISY (Dimokratikós uSinayermós - Democratic Rally)

The conservative party DISY was also founded in 1976 by the former Greek Cypriot leader Glafkos Clerides. It is a traditional right-wing party that is mainly supported by conservative urban and rural forces (Christophorou 2007). Its current president of this right-wing party is Mr. Nicos Anastasiades. DISY was the second largest political force during the referendum period, gaining 34 per cent of the vote at the 2001 parliamentary election. Although the party leader was the major 'Yes' political figure at the referendum campaign, the party members were divided into two camps on the Plan, to either support it or not. Whilst the former president of the Republic had been in favour of the reunification, some of the party officials and deputies were strongly against the Plan.

EDEK (Sosialistiko Komma - The Social Democrat Movement)

EDEK was founded by Dr Vassos Lyssarides in 1970 and led by him until 2001. In 2001, the party changed its name to KISOS (Social Democrat Movement), however it reverted to EDEK in June 2003 (Christophorou 2007). The party's political ideology is based on socialism but with a confusion of Baath and European socialism and right-wing and leftist tendencies (Ibid 2001; 2007). However, although the party is mainly a socialist one, on the 'Cyprus Issue', it has a more nationalistic stance than any of the other political parties (Ibid 2001). Therefore, unsurprisingly during the referendum campaign, the party united by an overwhelming majority (107 to 16), behind a decision to reject the Plan. Moreover, the founder of the party, Lyssarides, developed nationalist slogans³⁸, e.g. "this exceeds every boundary of absurdity" and [the Plan] "does not withdraw a single soldier and does not return even an inch of territory" that became a source of inspiration for the Plan's opponents (Ibid 2005a).

Other Political Parties in the South

There are also other smaller parties which are: EDI, (Eleftheroi Demokrates – Free Democrats); KISOS (The Kinima Socialdemokraton – The Social Democrats Movement); Oikologoi-Perivallontiests (The Cyprus Green Party); Neoi Orizontes (New Horizons), and ADIL (Agonistiko Demokratiko Kinima - Fighting Democratic Movement). They also joined 'Yes' or 'No' camps of the big parties to either support or reject the Plan.

³⁸ Political Lunacy not the preserve of one party. It is obtained from: <http://www.cyprus-mail.com/cyprus/political-lunacy-not-preserve-one-party>, Cyprus Mail newspaper online edition published on January 22 2006.

POLITICAL PARTIES IN THE NORTH

In the 2003 TRNC parliamentary election, there were 24 political parties, however, after the election, some political parties either collapsed (e.g. DMP – Democratic Struggle Party) or merged to set up stronger political units (e.g. TKP and KSP became BDH). Due to the scope of the research only political parties that existed during the 2004 referendum elections are scrutinised below.

CTP (Cumhuriyetçi Türk Partisi – Republican Turkish Party)

As the longest-established Turkish Cypriot political party, CTP was founded by 12 members in 24 December 1970. Ideologically, it is closer to communism but has changed its political line over time due to internal conflicts³⁹ among the party members and henceforth positions itself more as a left-centre party. Up until the 1993 general election, the party had always been in opposition, however, by moving towards the ideological centre it became part of the coalition government (Çarkoglu and Sözen 2004) and moreover, it has dramatically increased its vote share from 18% in 1998 to 35% in 2003. It became the leading party (under the leadership of Mehmet Ali Talat, who is the current President of the TRNC) and founded a coalition government with the DP. Historically, CTP has been in favour of the solution, particularly a federal solution, and joining the EU as a United Cyprus (Christophorou 2005a). As mentioned in the historical background to the 2004 referendum, the Prime Minister Talat became chief negotiator on behalf of the Turkish Cypriots and has strongly argued for a 'Yes'. Indeed, it can be said that, CTP-BG with the 'This Country is Ours Movement' were the main 'Yes' camps' protagonists and the party organised a highly professional 'Yes' campaign.

³⁹ In 1992, despite opposition by the old guards, they enshrined in the constitution new ideological features, defining the CTP as a liberal socialist formation accepting the free market and privatisation see Çarkoglu and Sözen 2004:532.

UBP (Ulusal Birlik Partisi –National Unity Party)

Rauf R. Denktash established this conservative and nationalist political party in 1975. For a significant period in Turkish Cypriot political history – 1976 to 1992 – it has been the dominant governing party. It supports the status quo division on the island and favours a separate Turkish Cypriot state, ideally with international recognition of the TRNC, and has been supported by hardliners in Turkey, such as pre-AKP governments and the Army (Çarkoglu and Sözen 2004; Christophorou 2005a). Thus, it has always had a close tie with Turkey and furthermore, it can be said that its policy on the 'Cyprus Issue' reflects a vision of 'integration' with Turkey. During the referendum campaign, the party was under the leadership of Dervis Eroglu and followed the 'No' line of Denktash. However, the party members were split over the Plan and about a quarter of them declared just one week before the referendum that they would vote 'Yes' to the referendum. Despite of this, the party launched a 'No' campaign to the Plan and took a very active role in persuading Turkish Cypriot voters to reject it.

DP (Demokrat Parti – Democratic Party)

The DP party, CTP's partner in government during the referendum, was established in 1992 by nine politicians who had left the UBP. This party, like the UBP, ideologically considers itself as conservative and nationalist. The main policies are: (1) the recognition of the TRNC; or (2) a solution that is based on two states and separate sovereignty with political equality; and (3) the non-return of the Greek Cypriot refugees. As mentioned previously, its leader, Serdar Denktash, the son of Rauf Denktash, was involved heavily however in the negotiation process leading to the Plan and displayed tentative behaviour right from the beginning of the campaign, which left its supporters and the party members without a definitive direction. Although junior Denktash declared his neutrality on the Plan and called the party members to act in accordance with their conscience when making their choice, on 16 April 2004, the party decided to reject the plan. Henceforth, the DP

party did not run or get involved in any campaigning process, but the party's leading figures showed the colour of their indication on the Plan at the late stages of the campaign.

BDH (Baris ve Demokrasi Hareketi – Peace and Democracy Movement)

The BDH was established on 28 June 2003 on the basis of common vision amongst various political parties, unions and individual intellectuals to find the solution on the Island. Although it was initially established as a political movement, thereafter it turned into a political party. This movement, later the party, merged from the political forces of TKP (Toplumcu Kurtulus Partisi – Communal Liberation Party), BKP (Birlesik Kibris Partisi – United Cyprus Party) and KSP (Kibris Sosyalist Parti – Cyprus Socialist Party) under the leadership of Mustafa Akinci (the former leader of the TKP) to support the solution.

Other Political Parties in the North

The other smaller parties can be listed as: ABP (Adalet ve Baris Partisi – Justice and Peace Party); KAP (Kibris Adalet Partisi – Justice for Cyprus Party); KSP (Kibris Sosyalist Partisi -Cyprus Socialist Party); YBH (Patriotic Unity Movement); BKP (Birlesik Kibris Partisi - United Cyprus Party); ÇABP (Solution and European Union Party).

To sum up, I now provide an overview of parliamentary political parties on both sides at the time of the referendum – see Tables 6.1 and 6.2 overleaf. The next section of the thesis provides an overview of Cypriot media, particularly the press.

Table 6.1: Votes And Seats In The 2001 Greek Cypriot Parliamentary Election⁴⁰

Party	Share %	Seats
AKEL Progressive Party for the Working People	34.7	20
DISY Democratic Rally	34.0	19
DIKO Democratic Party	14.8	9
KISOS Social Democrats Movement	6.5	4
NEOI ORIZOTES New Horizons	3.0	1
EDI United Democrats	2.6	1
ADIK Fighting Democratic Movement	2.2	1
OIKOLOGOI-PERIVALLONTISTES The Cyprus Green Party	2.0	1
INDEPENDENT	0.2	-

Table 6.2: Votes and Seats in the 2003 Turkish Cypriot Election⁴¹

Party	Share %	Seats
CTP-BG Turkish Republican Party and United Forces	35.2	19
UBP National Unity Party	32.9	18
DP Democratic Party	12.9	7
BDH Peace and Democracy Movement	13.1	6
MBP Nationalist Peace Party	3.2	-
ÇABP Solution and European Union Party	1.9	-
KAP Cyprus Justice Party	0.6	-

⁴⁰ Obtained from: Christophorou, 2007.

⁴¹ Obtained from: Carkoglu, A. and Sözen, A., 2004.

MASS MEDIA IN CYPRUS

In this section of the research, I first provide an overview about the current scenario of Cypriot mass media. Then, I pay particular attention to the political economy of Cypriot print media, as this study concentrates on the press referendum news agenda analysis rather than other communication mediums (for its justification see 'content analysis' section in the 'Research Methodology Chapter'). This descriptive analysis enables me to conclude the influence of press ownership structure over the coverage of the referendum news agenda.

The type of media and the amount of media outlets are highly influential in election campaigns, because "the more differentiated the media environment the more sophisticated strategies of targeted communication can be expected" (Plasser and Plasser 2002:87). As mass media takes its place at the core of any political campaigning as either medium and/or 'message' (McLuhan 2001) it is highly relevant to investigate the ownership structure of the mass media in Cyprus in order to understand the degree to which a diversity and pluralism of voices are represented, if at all.

The type structure (i.e., civic, private or governmental) and concentration of ownership of the mass media highly influences on the 'storytelling' approaches to the news in its narrative forms in terms of how the news is framed and constructed. Also, the mass media, by selecting the news made available to its audiences and by emphasising and/or magnifying certain aspects of the news, exhibits its power over the agenda-setting process. Therefore, this descriptive analysis is essential to reach a conclusion on the degree to which the ownership structures influenced the campaigns communication professional's effort and strategies to set the news and the public agenda.

Current Scenario of Mass Media Ownership in Cyprus

In North Cyprus currently there are 12 Turkish local newspapers and two English language newspapers. Out of 12 dailies, half of them are independent. These are: *Kıbrıs* (Cyprus – has the highest circulation figure of around 8,000⁴² daily); *Kıbrıslı*; *Halkın Sesi*; *Vatan*; *Afrika*; and *Volkan*. In terms of political spectrum *Afrika* (radical left) and *Volkan* (fascist) represent the two most extreme newspapers. The remaining newspapers often belong to the political parties in the TRNC and hence they act as a mouthpiece for the ideologies of the parties. These are: *Birlik*; *Yeni Demokrat* (or previously known as *Cumhuriyet*); *Yeni Düzen*; and *Ortam* newspapers (see next section for detailed information about the Cypriot press). In addition, there are two weekly English newspapers available in North Cyprus, namely *Cyprus Today* (belongs to A-N Graphics, KIBRIS Ltd.) and *Cyprus Times*. Also, a large amount of daily Turkish newspapers as well as magazines and other forms of publications are available in the Turkish Cypriot media market. Some examples are: *Hürriyet*; *Milliyet*; *Cumhuriyet*; *Radikal*; *Sabah*; *Aksam*; *Günes*; *Zaman*; *Takvim*; *Türkiye*; *Fotomac*; and *Fanatik* (mainly reporting sport news, especially football) and the English language *Turkish Daily* newspaper. In terms of radio and television stations, 17 radio stations are on air in total, on the other hand, there are 7 local television channels that broadcast in North Cyprus. 3 of which are state television channels, (Bayrak Radio ve Televizyon Kurumu (BRT) – Flag Radio and TV Institution) BRT1 and BRT2. Commercial channels are: KIBRIS TV (part of *Kıbrıs* media group); GENC TV; ADA TV (belongs to Star Media Group in Turkey); and KANAL T (know as Tempo TV); AKDENİZ TV; AS TV; AVRASYA TV (ART); and SİM TV. Alongside these television channels, North Cyprus' top three universities also own their broadcast television channels – DAU TV, GAU TV and YDU TV. Beside this, all the television stations that are broadcasting in Turkey, for example all the main channels: ATV; Channel D; Show TV; TRT; Star TV etc. can be viewed thorough Turkish 1C satellite or digital television satellite boxes (like Sky or Virgin in the UK) in North Cyprus. However, there are no officially published rating figures available

⁴² Tumerkan, M., 2005. KKTC Medyası. Available from: http://www.byegm.gov.tr/seminerler/tuncelli_ix/tuncelli_12.htm. [Accessed 15 July 2006].

publicly. In terms of radio channels, out of 16, 5 of them are Government stations, (BAYRAK FM, BAYRAK INTERNATIONAL (English Broadcast), BAYRAK KLASIK, RADYO BAYRAK and BAYRAK 5), and there are 12 commercial stations⁴³. Last but not least, with regard to the new media information in North Cyprus, currently there is no official quantifiable data available. However, the number of internet service providers are increasing and many companies including print media are providing online services.

In the South, there are two state and five commercial television channels that broadcast island-wide coverage. Cyprus Broadcasting Corporation (CYBC) runs two of the public television channels, RIK1 and RIK2. These channels had viewing rates of RIK1 12.5% and RIK2 6.9% in 2004⁴⁴. Additionally, the public service CYBC runs four radio channels: Radio channel 1; Channel 2; Channel 3; and Radio Love. In terms of broadcasting features these channels demonstrate similar characteristics to BBC radio stations. The five commercial television channels and their ratings in 2004 are: ANT1 TV 20.3%; MEGA TV 15.9%; SIGMA TV (belongs to DIAS Publishing House) 25.4%; L TV (LUMIERE TV) and ALPHA TV (both subscription channels which had 54,000 subscribers in March 2003). What is more, the Church of Cyprus also owns TV Logos (The Verb) and Logos Radio. In addition to island-wide channels, there are six local television channels that broadcast in the South. According to AGB Nieslen Media Research (2010) viewing measurement, the Greek Cypriot television channels viewing shares are distributed as: RIK1 11.3%; RIK2 6.9%; MEGA TV 13.2%; SIGMA 17%; and PLUS TV 4.4%. In the field of commercial radio, nine island-wide, 34 local, and four small local stations broadcast in the south (Christophorou 2006). In terms of Internet media, in 2005 “there were 298,000 Internet users and 46,863 Internet hosts” (Vassiliadou 2007:205). However, the Internet usage has risen to 575,877 in 2008⁴⁵.

⁴³ These are: AKDENİZ FM; AVRASYA FM; COOL FM; FIRST FM; GÜNEŞ FM; KIBRIS FM; KUZEYİN SESİ; RADYO VATAN; KUZEY FM; RADYO GÜVEN; RADYO PLUS and DANCE FM and three of them (DAÜ FM, LAÜ FM, and GAÜ FM) belong to universities.

⁴⁴ Christophorou, C., 2005a. Media Systems (Country Report), Study on Co-Regulation Measure in the Media System. Obtained from: <http://co-reg.hans-bredow-institut.de>. Date accessed?

⁴⁵ Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), Usage in Households and by Individuals, 2004-2008. Republic of Cyprus, Statistical Service, 2008. Obtained from:

There is no official statistical data available on either side of Cyprus as neither of the respective governments has adopted any form of regulation regarding mass media circulation and accountability. However, according to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics of 2004 the newspaper circulation ratio was 124.7 per 1000 people. These figures indicate a high ratio of newspapers titles per capita cross-nationally. Indeed North Cyprus has one of the highest concentrations of newspaper titles per capita anywhere in the world (Vassiliadou 2007). Furthermore, in Cyprus there are no restrictions on publishing any paid form of advertising in the mass media during election. The only restriction is the financial constraints of the advertisers.

PRESS IN CYPRUS

A Brief Overview of the Press in Cyprus

The history of Cypriot press dates back to the last years of the Ottoman Empire, when the Turkish Governor of the Island, Safvet Pasha, gave his approval after the negotiation effort of the Committee of the KITIEUS Association of Larnaca and granted permission to Mr. Theodoulos Ph. Constantinides to bring the first printing machine on the Island (Sophocleous 2006). However, the first Cypriot newspaper was published in English (by the demand of British authority) with the arrival of the British Administration on the island in 1878, in accordance with the terms of the Anglo-Turkish Convention between Great Britain and the Sublime Porte (Ibid). Since that time, “more than 400 newspapers and periodicals” have been published in Greek, Turkish, English and Armenian (Vassiliadou 2007).

The first Cypriot newspaper, *Kypros* – Cyprus, began its life on the 29 of August 1878 as a weekly newspaper, with four pages and of a medium size (47X30cm) (Sophocleous 2006). This newspaper was published both in Greek (first two pages) and in English (last two pages). At the same time a Turkish Cypriot press was being

http://www.mof.gov.cy/mof/cystat/statistics.nsf/other_en/other_en?OpenDocument&sub=3&e=.
[Accessed by 12 March 2010].

developed. Soon after the commencement of British rule in Cyprus expansion of newspaper publication started on the island. Sahin (2009) claims that issues of the *Saded* (1889-1990) newspaper have been found in the archives of the British Colonial Office. However the *Ümid* newspaper was published in 1879, which actually means it was the first Turkish newspaper.

Historical Role of Turkish Cypriot Press

Azgin (1998:642) states “the history of the Turkish Cypriot mass media in a nutshell is one of the reactions to the ‘Enosis’ movement – and of refuting the Greek views on the Cyprus question”. An example of this is one of the oldest Turkish newspapers, *Zaman* (The Times), a weekly published newspaper that dates back to December 1891 (Ünlü, no date, Azgin 1998). Inside its first issue, it outlined its basic philosophy as follows:

- To fight against English colonialism
- To fight against the numerous Greek newspapers which were propagating the Greek view on the Cyprus question
- To resist the ‘Enosis’ movement
- To make known the Turkish Cypriot views to the world
- To make sure that the Turkish language survives on the island of Cyprus
- To be of help to the Turkish society socially, politically, ethically, and, educationally.

Historical Role of Greek Cypriot Press

The Greek Cypriot newspapers were and still are used to mobilise Greek Cypriot public opinion. This was used for the first time against the British Administration on the island. Sophocleous (2006:113) further pinpointed the importance of Greek-language press for Greek Cypriots as:

Because they acquired, for the first time after many centuries of servitude and oppression, a platform and a means of expressing their desires,

aspirations and visions. It was not fortuitous that from the start of their publication the first Cypriot Greek-language newspapers persistently and vigorously promoted the demand of the Greeks of Cyprus that the island should be ceded to Greece, thus achieving the vision of their national restoration with their incorporation into the metropolitan national body.

So, as one can understand historically, the Greek Cypriot press played and still is playing a special role in the political disputes of the Cyprus conflict by propagating the Greek Cypriot identity and the nationalist viewpoint of Hellenism.

Similarities and Differences Between the Two Sides' Press

In Cyprus, the Turkish and Greek Cypriot press share various commonalities. One of the similar characteristics of the press on both sides is 'party affiliation'. The party affiliation of a media organisation is a well-known feature of the media. Even though such connections are not always stated in, say, the letterhead of a newspaper or the ownership documents of the broadcast media, the relationship is still recognised by the public. This is not only because their content is shaped in a similar way to that of the political parties they are linked to, but also because the owners and managers of these organisations usually openly acknowledge that their editorial policies are in line with certain political views which they favour (Çatal, 2006; Hançer, 2006). The press is heavily partisan as half of the Greek Cypriot daily newspapers and nearly 50% of Turkish Cypriot newspapers are owned or have relationships with political parties. As strong and political ideological leanings exist on both sides of the island, they act as a mouthpiece for the political parties' policies in their news agendas. Apart from a political ideological classification, it is also possible to categorise the press based on their views on the 'Cyprus Issue'. In Cyprus, it is possible to classify the right-wing press as "status quo" supporters versus left-wing newspapers as "pro-solution" supporters. In these circumstances, the main aim of journalism is not to inform or enlighten the readers but to provide interpretation and commentary on events, in line with the ideology and discourse of the political party, and thus act, to an extent, like a propaganda machine.

Another commonality in the media of both sides is the way in which they portray each other as ‘the other’⁴⁶. Turkish and Greek Cypriot newspapers portray each other as ‘them and us’. In the more radical discourses of right-wing newspapers representation of each other as “the enemy” commonly occurs and even sometimes within state-sourced news it is possible to find examples of this polarisation which reinforces the continuous support from the public. Sahin (2009) claims that the continuous representation of Greek Cypriots as an ‘unchanging evil’ and a ‘continual threat’ helps to maintain the Turkish Cypriot state and to justify the status quo. This scenario is no different on the Greek side.

Comparatively speaking, the official news agencies, namely the TAK (Turk News Agency Cyprus) and the CNA (Cyprus News Agency), from Turkish and Greek Cypriot camps respectively, play an important role as a source of information to daily newspapers. Additionally, international news agencies use CNA as a regional base agent to obtain information about the Middle East (Vasiliadou 2007). Especially in North Cyprus, most newspapers rely on TAK’s daily bulletin to set their headlines or main stories.⁴⁷ This obviously makes it easier for the daily news agenda to be set quickly from an official and respected source. Additionally, the both Governments and political leaders are highly credible prime news sources for the print media, in particularly if they talk about the ‘Cyprus Issue’. As a source of ‘information subsidies’ to print media organisations, the governmental sources can be perceived as “communicators of enormous power” (Golding and Murdock 1997:23). The last, but not least significant common characteristic of the Cypriot press is the prominence of the ‘Cyprus Issue’ as a news subject. In the history of Cypriot mass media, ‘national identity’ and the ‘Cyprus problem’ have always been the two subjects that occupied a vast section of the coverage. Indeed, it is possible to show that arguments as to who is right and wrong about

⁴⁶ One meaning of the use of ‘the other’ term is the rejection of both sides’ Governments sovereignty over Turkish/Greek Cypriots community. The term also emphasises the differences amongst the both ethnic communities.

⁴⁷ Eda Hancer’s (2006) study of *Kıbrıs Türk Basınında Sahiplik Yapısı ve Haber Üzerindeki Etkileri – The Ownership Structure of Turkish Cypriot Newspapers and Its impact on News Content* provides a great overview on how press ownership and concentration influences the way in which press coverage shapes in North Cyprus.

the Cyprus conflict is not only happening in court (e.g. The European Court of Human Rights) or in political rhetoric of political parties, but also in the narratives and storytelling approaches of the mass media, nationally as well as at international level. Historically, the press in Cyprus has always taken a deficit political view in representing the 'Cyprus Issue'. As a wide variety of views across the political spectrum has been available in the Cypriot press, this has resulted in a multifaceted representation and framing of the Cyprus problem. As the Cyprus problem has not been resolved, most of the above statements are still applicable for today's Cypriot press and the realities of the Cypriot politics. The press not only identify themselves by their ownership structure, tabloid or broadsheet format, and political leaning but more importantly also by their views on the 'Cyprus Issue'. As mentioned, the left-wing and right-wing newspapers focus on 'Cypriotness vs. Turkishness' or the 'Turkish and Greek/Hellenic'. Subsequently, the newspapers can be categorised by the emphasis in their narratives and in their comments on 'federal solution – left-wing' versus 'confederation solution or status quo existence – right-wing'. Another classification was noticeable during the referendum election in North Cyprus where "newspapers of the left adopted the discourse of settlement and described Turkish Cypriots as 'Europeans', the newspapers on the right argued that a solution and joining the EU would achieve nothing but 'ENOSIS'. Despite this, the media in the North engaged in more open debate and reflected a spectrum of opinions during this [Annan referendum] period" (Sahin 2008). On the other side of the island, whilst the pro-solution newspapers used the prospect of a settlement to ending the division as a means to prevent 'Taksim' and described Greek Cypriots as 'Cypriots and Europeans', the right-wing anti-solution newspapers thrust was written in terms such as 'given up legitimate government and having administration', and 'a carrot and stick situation'⁴⁸. The Turkish and Greek Cypriot press, as well as their partisan alignments, also share a further cohesion in acting alike in the Governments' propagated tool to influence public opinion on the 'Cyprus Issue'. Needless to

⁴⁸ The carrot and stick phrase was also used in one of the headlines of the *Phileleftheros* newspaper, which indicates that for the 'no' supporters the Plan was unsatisfactory and it was full of sticks for Greek Cypriots and therefore there was not enough carrot (satisfactory sides of the Plan) for them.

say, this happens only amongst the newspapers that hold the same view on the issue as the government.

In the following section, I provide a brief cross-national overview of the Cyprus press as it existed during the period of 2004 Annan referendum. I describe their media concentration and ownership structure, views on the 'Cyprus Issue', and stance on the Annan Plan in order to set the print media scene at the referendum election.

THE STRUCTURE OF PRESS INDUSTRY DURING THE REFERENDUM ELECTION

IN NORTH CYPRUS

At the referendum, there were ten Turkish local newspapers available six of which were privately owned, namely *Kıbrıs*, *Kıbrıslı*, *Halkın Sesi*, *Afrika*, *Vatan*, and *Volkan*, and the remaining four belonged to political parties namely, *Yeni Düzen*, *Ortam*, *Birlik* and *Cumhuriyet*.

KIBRIS (Cyprus)

Kıbrıs newspaper was established on 11 July 1989 and has the highest circulation figure of around 8,000 daily, although this figure went up to 10,000⁴⁹ during the referendum period. *Kıbrıs* was the first local tabloid to be printed in full colour, and the most prestigious and credible local newspaper of North Cyprus. It is part of the private company AN-Graphics (Kıbrıs) Ltd, owned by the well-known famous businessman Asil Nadir. Mr Nadir is one of the most highly influential Turkish Cypriots so-called 'notorious' businessman and is known to have a close relationship with politicians, and also a strong influence on them. In particular, during the early 80s and 90s, he invested heavily in North Cyprus and as a result gained grand respect and credibility from various sections of the Turkish Cypriot society. *Kıbrıs* regard itself as 'liberal' (both politically and economically) and the 'nation's newspaper'. The General Manager of the newspaper institution is Bilge Nevzat and the Editor-in-Chief is Basaran Düzgün.

The Newspaper's Stance on the 'Cyprus Issue' and the Annan Plan

Up until the referendum, *Kıbrıs* used to support 'nationalistic-conservative' (Azgin 1989) policies. However, a radical overnight decision by Mr Nadir drastically changed the editorial leaning of the newspaper and it provided full support to the 'Yes' Camp. Although it claimed to be objective in terms of providing space to both

⁴⁹ The circulation figures were obtained from the Editor-in-Chief Basaran Düzgün and also from the main distributor of Yaysat Ltd.

camps in its news coverage, its editorial and columns were far from objective. The comment obviously supported to the 'Yes' Camp. It can be claimed that it attained a 'protagonist' status of the 'Yes' Camp.

YENİ DÜZEN (The New Order)

Currently, *Yeni Düzen* is owned by Yeni Düzen Ltd and the General Director and News Editor-in-Chief is Cenk Mutluyakalı. It was first published as a weekly in 1975 but, eventually, became a daily newspaper. It is a political-party aligned newspaper. It represents the left-wing CTP-BP political party's views. Azgın (1998:655) asserted that "as the organ of the CTP (now renamed CTP-BG), it quite often uses Marxist terminology and ideology, watered down to suit the realities of the Turkish Cypriot politics". It is the second highest selling local newspaper in North Cyprus (Hancer 2006).

The Newspaper's Stance on the 'Cyprus Issue' and the Annan Plan:

It has given long-lasting support to the unification of the island as a form of 'federal state'. It holds a strong view against the integration of the island into Turkey unlike right-wing political parties. In addition, it supports joining the EU. During the referendum election, as the CTP-BG was one of the core cast of political actors in the 'Yes' camp, *Yeni Düzen* became one of the hard-line supporters of the Plan and hence eagerly supported the 'Yes' camp in its news coverage.

KIBRISLI (Cypriot)

Kıbrıslı was established by Dogan Harman on 14 February 2000. It is a private entity and hence its editorial reflects the 'voice of its owner'⁵⁰. Although Mr. Harman has obtained a PhD degree in Philosophy from a Russian university, he does not replicate any socialist ideology in his newspaper agendas. He pursues right-wing nationalistic views.

⁵⁰ Interview held with Özgür Mutluyakalı on 12 July 2008, who is the Director of the Turkish Cypriot Journalists Association.

The Newspaper's Stance on the 'Cyprus Issue' and the Annan Plan:

As per *Kıbrıs*, *Kıbrıslı* also had a radical rethink and changed its discourse during the referendum election from the right-wing nationalistic narrative style to a pro-solution rhetoric favoured in the Plan. Thus it provided full support to the 'Yes' camp.

ORTAM (The Medium)

Although the *Ortam* newspaper was established on 24 December 1980 by Mehtmet Altınay as a weekly, it soon became the official organ of the TKP political party (which is now called TDP) on 9 July 1984 and became a daily. Mr. Altınay was the deputy leader of the party (Azgin 1989). The paper is owned by Toplumcu Ltd, its Coordinator is Mehmet Harmaci and the General Director of Publishing is Taner Ulutas. It is a left-wing aligned newspaper.

The Newspaper's Stance on the 'Cyprus Issue' and the Annan Plan:

Similar by to *Yeni Düzen* and *Ortam* it has backed the federal solution on the island, as opposed to integration of North Cyprus with Turkey. Moreover, it advocated maintaining Cypriot identity as a separate identity. As the TDP was one of the main political actors in the 'Yes' camp, the newspaper was in favour of the reunification of the island and thus fully supported the Plan.

HALKIN SESİ (The People's Voice)

It was established on 14 March 1942 by Dr Fazıl Küçük who was the first 'leader of the Turkish Cypriot community and then the vice-president of the Republic of Cyprus. Since its existence, *Halkın Sesi* has advocated "the voice of justice and the tongue of the people" (Azgin 1989:649). This newspaper has a special place in the history of the Turkish Cypriot community and the press. In the contemporary history of the Turkish press, it is the oldest newspaper institution in North Cyprus. Its historical importance outlined as:

Halkın Sesi dealt with all problems of the Turkish Cypriot community. It played an important role in cases in which the Turkish community regained the full administration (Evkaf, religious affairs and education) even before the independence of the island. It was instrumental in the promotion and spreading of Turkish nationalism, especially after the growth of the Greek Cypriot national movement EOKA in 1955 and EOKA-B in the 1960 and 1970s⁵¹.

Currently the newspaper institution belongs to *Halkın Sesi* Ltd firm which is owned by Dr Küçük's son. Its General Director is Dr Küçük's granddaughter, Selen Süheylal Küçük and the Editor-in-Chief is Sefa Karahasan.

The Newspaper Stance's on the 'Cyprus Issue' and the Annan Plan:

Halkın Sesi has always advocated *Milli Mücadele*⁵² - national resistance and/or great effort. As it is a right-wing newspaper, it was against the Plan.

AFRIKA (Africa)

This relatively young institution was established on 17 September 1997 by its owner Sener Levent. Although it is run by only five journalists, its news coverage is far-reaching and intense. This is mainly because of *Afrika's* "rational radicalism and far left"⁵³ rhetoric. It heavily criticises the ruling government to such a degree that Mr. Levent has been incarcerated at times. Moreover, *Afrika* has been closed down in the past due to its radical editorial content by a Turkish Cypriot court order.

The Newspaper Stance's on the 'Cyprus Issue' and the Annan Plan:

The General Publishing Director of the newspaper Mr Levent outlined the policy of the newspaper on the 'Cyprus Issue' as:

⁵¹ Ibid, 1989.

⁵² 'Milli Mücadele' refers to Turkish Cypriots living within their own independent state and governance without any interference from Greek Cypriots.

⁵³ Interview with Mutluyakalı, 2008.

Cyprus is a such a small island that violation is alive. It is a troubled and divided island. This is the main reason for its many problems. Consequently we have to end this issue. Therefore in our newspaper, we try to illustrate how we can solve it and in what ways we can solve it. The people that live on this island have to live together in peace at the end of the day otherwise there is always going to be a possibility of conflict⁵⁴.

As can be understood from the above, *Arfika* was pro-solution and thus supported the 'Yes' camp in the referendum election.

VATAN (The Nation)

It was founded in 11 December 2001 by Sabahattin Ismail. It is a private entity that belongs to Yorum Yayin Yonetimi Ltd. The owner of the newspaper institution is Erten Kasimoglu and the News Director is Ahmet Kasimoglu. Although it is an 'independent' institution, in terms of political ideology it is a highly right-wing newspaper. In particular, the newspaper is known to have parallel thoughts with the views of Denktash on political subjects.

The Newspaper's Stance on the 'Cyprus Issue' and the Annan Plan:

It pursues the argument that 'confederation' – two separate equal states representation – is the ideal solution model. Hence, expectedly, it was against the Plan at the referendum and took sides with the 'No' campaign.

VOLKAN (Volcano)

This 'extreme right-wing' or 'fascist'⁵⁵ newspaper was founded on 12 December 2001 under the establishment of Volkan Press Publishing Ltd. It is owned by four shareholders and two of them, Sabahattin Ismail and Aydin Akkurt, are responsible for daily publishing jobs, such as editorial and news writing.

⁵⁴ Cited in Hancer (2006:3). The original formation of the quotation was in Turkish, therefore it has been translated to English by the author.

⁵⁵ Interview with Mutluyakali, 2008.

The Newspaper's Stance on the 'Cyprus Issue' and the Annan Plan:

The newspaper supports the 'status quo' or 'milli görüş or ulusal görüş'⁵⁶ on the 'Cyprus Issue' and follows in the footsteps of Rauf Denktaş on the 'Cyprus Issue' solution. Needless to say, it was strongly against the Plan.

BIRLIK (The Unity)

It was established on 1 August 1980 and published as a daily newspaper. *Birlik* belongs to the conservative National United Party (UBP), hence it echoes the policies of that party in its agenda. As a right wing newspaper, it supports "Turkishness" and a close relationship with the motherland of Turkey.

The Newspaper's Stance on the 'Cyprus Issue' and the Annan Plan:

As an organ of a Conservative party, it voices a nationalist 'status-quo' perspective in its coverage on the 'Cyprus Issue'. Therefore, it stands against the 'federal' solution and most of the time in its narratives supports the idea of integration and even suggest 'unification with the motherland' as it is impossible to run a common 'State' with the Greek Cypriot administration. Thus, unsurprisingly, it was strongly against the Plan.

CUMHURİYET (The Republic):

Although it is not currently running, it existed during the referendum campaign. Presently it is publishing under the name of *Demokrat Bakis* and its owner is Bakis Yayıncılık (Publishing) Ltd. The General Publishing Director of the paper is Hüseyin Kaba. As one of four political parties' newspaper, *Demokrat Bakis* newspaper belongs to the coalition party of the Democrat Party (DP), which was established after a few MPs left the UBP. Hence it propagated the DP party policy, which

⁵⁶ "Milli Görüş or Ulusal Görüş" refers the political view of supporting the existence of TRNC regardless of the type of negotiation which will enable "two equal hegemony states".

advocates a 'liberal economy'. DP is a right-wing party and consequently the press provides right-wing leaning news coverage.

The Newspaper's Stance on the 'Cyprus Issue' and the Annan Plan:

Although it is difficult to nail down exactly the stance of the DP party and that of the newspaper on the 'Cyprus Issue', DP tend to look to a pro-solution. The party's roots tend to be against a solution under a 'federal system' which does not offer equal partnership. As mentioned elsewhere, the DP made its decision on the plan in the last week before the referendum, with the party members and its supporters free to make individual choices, which lead to some confusion in the press news coverage of the Plan. Having said that in the last week of the press coverage it is possible to see evidence of some reversal of previous reunification statements.

IN SOUTH CYPRUS

At the time of the referendum, there were six Greek language and one English language daily newspapers available in South Cyprus. Four of them were party affiliated. They are the *Politis*, *Haravghi*, *Machi* and *Alithia*. The only available daily in English paper was *The Cyprus Mail*.

PHILELEFTHEROS (Liberal)

This oldest circulating Greek language local newspaper began its publishing life in 1955 as a daily newspaper. This highly influential and highest⁵⁷ selling newspaper in South Cyprus belongs to Phileleftheros Public Co Ltd. It is a privately owned 'independent' newspaper. Its Chief Editors/Political Editors are Androulla Taramounta, Costas Venizelos, and Panicos Charalambous. Although it is not an officially documented fact, President Papadopolous is said to own 30% of the Phileleftheros Public Co Ltd.

The Newspaper's Stance on the 'Cyprus Issue' and the Annan Plan:

This commercial newspaper holds a politically liberal view in general, however, its view is expressed as:

We support a solution which will safeguard the human rights of all Cypriots. Implement the *acquis communautaire* and allow the country to operate without restrictions as a member state of EU. Solution without guarantees and without refugees⁵⁸.

During the Annan referendum election, it took a 'cautious' stance and it was the most objective newspaper compared to the other Greek Cypriot newspapers on the island. Having said that, in its editorial, the newspaper supported a 'Soft No' on

⁵⁷ Press and Information Office (PIO), Daily Newspapers. Available from: <http://www.moi.gov.cy/moi/pio/pio.nsf/All/F355FF35E1654225C2256D710020CDAA?OpenDocument>, [Accessed 24 December 2009].

⁵⁸ Interview with Costas Venizelos, the Editor-in-Chief of Phileleftheros, on 2 August 2008.

the Plan, which means that although the newspaper was trying to be as objective as possible, it concluded with a view against the Plan in its editorial coverage.

SIMERINI (Today)

It started its life in 1976 as a daily publication. *Simerini*⁵⁹ is a privately owned 'right-wing' newspaper. It is published by the Publishing House DIAS Ltd⁶⁰ and the president of the board is Costis Hadjicostis. *Simerini*'s political editors are George Ploutarchou, Costakis Antoniou, Michalis Papadopoulos, and Skevi Stavrou. Although *Simerini* is privately owned in its editorial it shows links to the right-wing party DISY.

The Newspaper's Stance on the 'Cyprus Issue' and the Annan Plan:

Simerini continued the EOKA-B line, in other words, hard-line right-wing in its editorial policy, hence it can be described as an 'extreme right-wing' newspaper.

The newspaper stated its view on the 'Cyprus Issue' as:

It intervenes whenever it deems that the public's good is in jeopardy, while its primary goal is the preservation of good governance and the survival of Hellenism in Cyprus⁶¹.

At the referendum, it strongly endorsed the 'No' campaign and provided extensive coverage of the 'No' camps.

⁵⁹ Press and Information Office (PIO), Daily Newspapers. Obtained from: <http://www.moi.gov.cy/moi/pio/pio.nsf/All/F355FF35E1654225C2256D710020CDAA?OpenDocument>, 24 December 2009.

⁶⁰ We have formed partnerships with the licensed companies that operate the radio stations Love Radio and Super FM, Sigma Television, Galaxy Productions Ltd, IMH Consultants Ltd, and Sigma live Ltd reaching over 400,000 people on a daily basis. These agreements stipulate the provision of free advertising time... Moreover, we represent the most recognizable international magazine titles, having formed strategic partnerships with Attica Publishing and Hachette Rizzoli in Athens, Hearst Magazine and Time Out International. Furthermore, we collaborate with several first-class global radio and television networks; and we have a seat on the Board of Directors of the International Academy of Television Arts and Sciences, the organisation that presents the EMMY Television Awards. Available from: <http://www.diasmedia.com/company/company.html>, [5 January 2010].

⁶¹ DIAS Publishing House Ltd, *Simerini*. Obtained from: <http://www.diasmedia.com/newspapers/simerini.html>, 5 January 2010.

ALITHIA (Truth)

It was established in 1952 as a weekly and became a daily newspaper in 1982. It is published by Alithia Ltd and is owned by Mr Socrates Hasikos⁶². The newspaper's director is Rena Koulermou Larkou and the Editor-in-Chief is Pambos Charalambous⁶³. It is considered as a right-wing newspaper.

The Newspaper's Stance on the 'Cyprus Issue' and the Annan Plan:

As *Alithia* has a close relationship with the DISY party, it echoes its view on the 'Cyprus Issue', which is "a federal solution on the Cyprus problem, while at the same time promoting the need to strengthen security to the island" (Christophorou 2001:101). The paper backed the Annan Plan and the unification initiatives, and maintained a "firmly positive attitude towards the Plan" (Officer 2005). This is despite the united efforts of Glafcos Clerides, the former President of the Republic of Cyprus and honorary chairman of the DISY party, party deputies and other officials determined to support the 'No' camp.

HARAVGHI (Dawn)

It was founded in 1956 as a daily Greek newspaper and is the mouthpiece of the AKEL party. Consequently in terms of political ideology representation it can be classified as a left-wing newspaper. *Haravghi* is published by TILEGRAPHOS Ltd and its Director/Chief Editor is Androulla Giourov⁶⁴.

⁶² Mr Socrates Hasikos is a former Minister on Defence, Vice-President of DISY party.

⁶³ Press and Information Office (PIO), Daily Newspapers. Obtained from: <http://www.moi.gov.cy/moi/pio/pio.nsf/All/F355FF35E1654225C2256D710020CDAA?OpenDocument>, 24 December 2009.

⁶⁴ Press and Information Office (PIO), Daily Newspapers. Obtained from: <http://www.moi.gov.cy/moi/pio/pio.nsf/All/F355FF35E1654225C2256D710020CDAA?OpenDocument>, accessed 24 December 2009.

The Newspaper's Stance on the 'Cyprus Issue' and the Annan Plan:

Although AKEL originally adopted the most accommodating stance on the Cyprus problem, this has changed since the late 1990s⁶⁵. *Haravghi* has also adopted a "soft no" (Officer 2005) position in its editorial. This can be explained by AKEL not reaching its decision on the Plan until the last week of campaigning. This ambiguity left the newspaper's approach in limbo. Like AKEL members it had no clear guidance on favouring or not favouring the Plan. Hence, like the party, the newspaper embraced a 'soft no' approach.

MACHI (Battle)

It was founded in 1960 as daily newspaper. It is a right-wing newspaper and belongs to ATROTOS Ltd. It was established by Greek military junta leader Nicos Sampson. Mr Sampson ousted President Makarios and become President during the 1974 military coup. *Machi's* General Manager is the daughter of Mr Sampson, Mina Sampson.

The Newspaper's Stance on the 'Cyprus Issue' and the Annan Plan:

As documented above, the paper was established by one of the most controversial political figures in the history of Cyprus and consequently its editorial policy echoes the views of ENOSIS and Hellenism. Unsurprisingly, the paper was against the Plan and strongly rejected the reunification.

POLITIS (Citizen)

As one of the most recently founded newspaper institutions, *Politis* was established in 1999 as a daily 'independent' paper. It belongs to ARKTINOS

⁶⁵ *The Economist Intelligence Unit, Country Report: Cyprus, June 2004.*

Publications Ltd and the main Chief Editors are George Kaskanis and Sotiris Paroutis⁶⁶.

The Newspaper's Stance on the 'Cyprus Issue' and the Annan Plan:

Politis was one of the first newspapers that declared a firm viewpoint in terms of supporting the Plan. It started to support the Plan by displaying a positive leaning towards the 'Yes' camp in its news coverage even before the DISY party finalised its decision on the Plan. After DISY's decision to support the Plan, *Politis* was the only newspaper that published any political adverts from the "Movement of Democratic Citizens for Europe" which was the leading NGO campaigning group in favour of the Plan (Alexandrou 2006). More interestingly, *Politis* newspaper, with the second highest circulation in the south, demonstrated its support for reunification by giving space in the paper to the Turkish Cypriot columnists to strengthen the arguments against the claimed weaknesses of the Plan.

In the following part of this chapter, I outline the potential influence of media regulations in legal and regulatory framework of elections in Cyprus, which can greatly influence campaign styles and practices as well as the news production process.

⁶⁶ Press and Information Office (PIO), Daily Newspapers. Obtained from: <http://www.moi.gov.cy/moi/pio/pio.nsf/All/F355FF35E1654225C2256D710020CDAA?OpenDocument>, [Accessed 24 December 2009].

THE LEGAL AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK OF ELECTIONS IN CYPRUS

In this section, a descriptive analysis of Turkish and Greek Cypriots electoral laws and legal restrictions that particularly relate to the referendum election is provided. Although some exceptional comparative country analysis on the topic exists (e.g., Plasser and Plasser 2002), the referendum election literature still lacks any cross-national comparative research.

The election law and legal campaign regulations of one country can greatly influence the ways in which political campaign practices develop. The amount of restriction put on campaign practices has a significant affect on the campaign style and strategies. More importantly, laws and regulations are crucial factors that influence what can and cannot be reported as news. Plasser and Plasser (2002) classify the regulation of campaign environments as: (1) strictly regulated; (2) moderately regulated, and (3) minimally regulated. Examples of strictly regulated campaign environments are Japan, South Korea, and Turkey. While Taiwan, Russia, Hungary and Romania are moderately restricted, the US, Australia, New Zealand and Canada are minimally restricted. In terms of regulation of the campaign environment, TRNC can be classified as minimally regulated. On the other hand, the Republic of Cyprus can be categorised as moderately regulated. The legal regulation of election campaigning covers areas such as public vs. private campaign financing; limits on expenditure; access to television advertising; time limits for official campaigns; candidate nomination, and primaries (Gurevitch and Blumer 2004). In addition, it is customary for there to be provisions for ensuring the fairness of election competition such as frequency and timing of campaign rallies; the use and amount of paid advertising in the media; direct mailings; campaign expenditure; donations; distribution of leaflets and/or poster display; a ban on publishing the results of opinion polls during the campaign period, and so on.

In Cyprus, none of the political journalists was faced with legal challenges within the phases of referendum news coverage. Focusing on political campaigning and

news reporting at elections in North Cyprus, ‘The Law of Election and Referendum, 5/1976’⁶⁷ provides a regulatory framework for political campaigns. This law was last updated in 2002 (No: 5/1976 Election and Referendum Law). The following legal paragraphs represent some of the core legal frameworks that are likely to influence political campaign practice in North Cyprus:

- Election campaigning is regulated under the law of ‘Election and Referendum’. According to this legislation, propaganda activities in election periods can start in the morning of the twenty-sixth day before the actual voting day, whereas in referendums (public voting) it can start on the next day after the decision to hold a referendum has been made, and end the day before the actual voting day at 18:00.
- In general elections, public opinion poll results can be published or announced in any form of communication up to the fifteenth day (inclusive) before the actual voting day. However, for referendums there are no restrictions.
- Oral propaganda activities are forbidden by this law in public service areas and institutions (e.g. government bodies), temples, on main roads and at any locations, except those that have authorised by local election committee.
- Any political parties that are running for elections or referendums are entitled to make propaganda on national television and radio stations during the periods that starts before the twenty-first day of the actual voting day till 18:00 in the evening of the day before the actual voting day.
- All political parties that wish to make propaganda on national television and radio station(s) need to inform the Electoral High Commission in writing before midnight on the twenty-first day before the actual voting day.
- By this law (section 74), the use of the Turkish flag symbol, religious signs/symbols and Arab letters and writings are forbidden on any street posters, leaflets, billboards, and other forms of publications.

In South Cyprus, the election campaign law and regulations⁶⁸ can be summarised as:

- Funding: the political parties receive an annual grant by the Government, according to the strength in the previous parliamentary

⁶⁷ These legal paragraphs were originally in Turkish, so they have been translated by the author.

⁶⁸ European Parliament,

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/elections2009/countries/electoral_laws/cyprus.htm;jsessionid=EB63867651800C6925E9E5432FEFAE54.node1?language=EN. [Accessed 23 March 2009].

elections. There is no reference to using the grant to fund their European election campaigns, although a part of this grant is usually used for their funding.

- Official campaign date: campaigns can start at any time but officially after the deadline for registration of candidates. They should be completed two days before the election day (at midnight).
- Media access: all candidates should have equal treatment as regards their access to media. This is regulated by the Law of 1998 on Radio and Television Stations and its Regulations of 2000 on Radio and Television Stations.
- However, equal treatment is not explicitly defined in the above law/regulations. The Cyprus Radio Television Authority is responsible for their application and examines, either on its own initiative or following complaints that may be put forward by political parties/candidates issues relating to their access to the media.
- Opinion polls: cannot be made public in the seven days preceding the election day.
- Exit polls can be made public only after all the polls have closed in Cyprus and in the member-state whose voters have voted last.

Compared to the regulation of the Turkish Cypriot broadcasting corporation regarding news reporting on the political parties, the South Cyprus broadcasting corporation is more regulated and structured on journalists' news reporting . The following are some of the examples that are relevant to election campaigns in particular:

- Party district conventions are covered in news bulletins lasting two-minutes and island-wide conventions are covered in news bulletins lasting five-minutes.
- Rallies are covered in the first part of the news bulletin on television and reference is made at the beginning and at the end of the bulletin. District rallies receive three-minute and island-wide five-minute coverage.
- Total time of reports on other party activities or press releases should be up to two minutes.
- Press releases on organisational or internal affairs activities of the parties are not referred to in news bulletins.
- Only parties represented in parliament are covered in news bulletins and participate in programmes. Their order of appearance will follow their vote share in the last elections, unless news value suggests a different approach.
- Speeches and press releases about the positions of the parties on current issues which have confront those of the government or other parties should be covered in news bulletins on television lasting up to three-

minutes.

- There should be no coverage of speeches in connection to memorial services or other such activities unless they have news value.
- The Corporation should invite the party leaders or their representatives to televised sixty-minute programmes.
- In the course of the electoral period the Corporation will accept, free of charge, party press releases and announcements of a total length of 35 minutes for each party per week.
- The Corporation will invite political leaders or their representatives to take part in the programme 'Meeting the Press' or other similar television programmes. Three or four journalists (the same number in all programmes) will question them. The programme will last 75 minutes and follow the main evening news bulletin.
- During the electoral period the Corporation will interview the party leaders or their representatives on key issues ('Cyprus Issue', economy, education etc.). The questions will be the same for all and the interviews will last up to 20 minutes. They will be broadcast both on radio and television during the first period of the elections.
- Towards the end of the electoral period the corporation will offer to the party leaders or their representatives up to 15 minutes free airtime on radio and television to address the people⁶⁹.

On both sides, there is no limitation in terms of paid political advertising. The only limitation is the financial budgets of the political parties. In addition, there are also no limits on campaign expenditures and the way parties can use their money. One interesting restriction formed by the TRNC Government is that no use of the Turkish flag or any Islamic symbols is allowed in North Cyprus during an election campaign period. On the contrary, in South Cyprus, the use of religious symbols is permitted. Indeed the Orthodox Church is heavily involved in elections, particularly so during the 2004 referendum campaigning when it called for the Greek Cypriot electorate to vote against the Plan. Moreover, on either side of the island, there are no restrictions or rules regarding the style (use of negative campaigning, like in Japan), substance, tone and format of campaign messages or speeches, such as exist in the US.

⁶⁹ Adopted from Christophorou, C., (2005), *Media and Elections: Case Studies*, (Ed). The European Institute for the Media, Paris.

Sometimes, a unique political speech style, combining a Cypriot accent and Cypriot colloquialism can be used in Cyprus politics. Typically, politicians can use aggressive language and can make personal attacks on each other. These types of attack occur at the level of searching for and digging out personal and family history to use against their counterparts during election campaigns. The mass media sometimes also join this bandwagon and both can create 'dirty politics'.

The next section of the thesis outlines the employed research method, triangulation, and the data collection techniques, as well as in-depth interviews, quantitative content analysis in detail and the original contribution to the body of knowledge.

CHAPTER 7
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter first outlines the aim and objectives of the research. This is followed by research method, 'triangulation method', and its justification. Following this, the chosen data collection techniques, 'in-depth interviews and quantitative content analysis' justification and objectives are provided. Principally, this chapter aims to bring to light the justification of the methodological employment and the data collection techniques along with their benefits and flaws.

Aim of The Study

This research study aims to:

Study mass mediated political campaign communication by exploring the dynamics amongst political campaigners and news media in the agenda-setting process during the referendum within a cross-national comparative perspective.

Objectives of The Study

- *To investigate the role of media in the formation of referendum election campaign agendas.*
- *To investigate to what extent cultural and political factors influenced the agenda-setting process.*
- *To investigate to what extent country-specific political journalistic norms and structures influenced the way the referendum was covered.*
- *To investigate whether the news media were more powerful agenda-setters than the political campaigners.*
- *To investigate to what extent the voters' issue-priorities were influenced by the issue-priorities of the news media.*

This study aims to achieve these proposed objectives by:

- I. Conducting content analysis to assess the relationship between the news agenda and the public opinion. To do this, I combined the findings of the content analysis with the referendum exit polls.

Furthermore, the content analysis and interview findings provide the opportunity to find out 'who set the media agenda' as well as the influence of 'other news sources' on the media agenda, which is called 'intermedia agenda-setting'.

- II. Interviewing media professionals and political campaigners to outline the news production process, political campaign communication development process and their dynamics over setting the election news agenda. Furthermore, interviews and document analysis were used to explore the influence of country specific political culture, legal and regulatory election frameworks on the agenda-setting process as well as political campaign communication practice and the influence of the election agenda of 'other news sources' on the election coverage and decision-process of media professionals.

The following part of the chapter outlines the employed research methods, triangulation, and data collection techniques of 'in-depth interview' as qualitative and 'content analysis' as quantitative methodologies to examine the research objectives stated above.

EMPLOYED RESEARCH METHOD

In this research, I employed the ‘triangulation method’ to analyse the stated research aim and objectives. The concept of triangulation has been derived from navigation science and successfully applied to social science inquiry (Marshall and Rossman 1989). The term originally “refers to a surveying/nautical process in which two points (and their angles) are used to determine the unknown distance to a third point” (Tashakkori and Teddlie 1998: 41). The literature documents various definitions of the term (Jick 1979; Denzin 1989; Marshall and Rossman 1989; Robson 2002). I share the view of Jick (1979) and Denzin (1989), which describes the triangulation method as the combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon, as my intention in this research fits perfectly into their definition.

Historically, the first implementation of ‘triangulation techniques’ occurred in the pioneering study of Campbell and Fiske in 1959, whereby they deployed more than one quantitative method to measure a psychological trait named the ‘multi-method-multitrait matrix’ (Marshall and Rossman 1989; Tashakkari and Teddlie 1998). Since then, four different types of triangulation methods are outlined in the literature, namely:

1. Data triangulation: the use of more than one method of data collection (e.g., observation, interviews, documents).
2. Observer (or Investigator⁷⁰) triangulation: using more than one observer in the study.
3. Methodological triangulation: combining quantitative and qualitative approaches.
4. Theory triangulation: using multiple theories or perspective (Robson 2002:174).

According to Robson (2002), the types of research questions that the researcher is seeking to answer influence the selections of the research method. Intrinsically, my stated research objectives require the employment of *methodological*

⁷⁰ Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998) prefer to use the ‘Investigator’ terminology in their book.

triangulation to scrutinise the research phenomenon. To investigate the dynamics between journalists and political campaigners, I needed to use “semi-structured in-depth interviews” (as qualitative) and “content analysis” (as quantitative) to investigate the battle between them over the media-agenda setting process as well as to identify the effects of agenda-setting. Therefore, the adoption of the triangulation method naturally presented itself as the option of choice.

The application of both qualitative and quantitative research methods in this study counter-balances each method strengths and weaknesses. That is to say, the use of multiple and independent measures do not share the same flaws or potential for bias (Jick 1979). For example, this methodology enables the researcher to encompass a combination of the best features of each method, therefore strengthening the research findings. According to Jick (1979) to some extent, the triangulation method provides multiple perspectives on the phenomena as well as allowing the researcher to enrich their understanding and to discover new or deeper dimensions. What is more, it can challenge all of the threats of validity issues Robson (2002) and consequently can contribute to methodological rigour Patton (2002).

Although the triangulation method is typically a strategy or test for improving the validity and reliability of research or evaluation of findings, it brings forward some weaknesses to the study, such as phenomenological criticisms. Therefore, it is crucial to comprehend the contribution of both the quantitative and qualitative methods to the investigation of the research question. Both research methods have their own unique features. One of the main advantages of using quantitative research is to facilitate systematic and reliable analysis and hence gain a succinct generalisation by using a small number of questions and therefore allowing statistical comparisons (Patton 2002). On contrary, the application of qualitative research inquiry allows the researcher to capture what is happening in the real world by getting close enough to the people and circumstances (Patton 2002). Additionally, the use of qualitative research within the cultural context is more appropriate and allows researchers to explore comprehensive portrayal and

detailed contextual information. Hence, it allows the researcher to portray the political campaign communication process of both sides' referendum campaigns within their cultural contexts and to identify both their resemblances and distinctive peculiarities.

EMPLOYED DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES

This research employs "semi-structured in-depth interviews" and quantitative content analysis. I hereby discuss the chosen data collection techniques and why and how these techniques are appropriate for this research investigation.

In-Depth Interviews

In the literature the 'interview' term is defined as "a method of data collection that may be described as an interaction involving the interviewer and the interviewee, the purpose of which is to obtain valid and reliable information" (Marshall and Rossman 1989:82). Yin (2003:89) claims that the interview is the most crucial source of information for case study research, as in this case, "key informants are often critical to the success of a case study. Such persons not only provide the case study investigator with insights into a matter but also can suggest sources of corroboratory or contrary evidence – and also initiate the access to such sources". Furthermore she states:

Human affairs should be reported and interpreted through the eyes of specific interviewees, and well-informed respondents can provide important insights into a situation. They also can provide shortcuts to the prior history of the situation, helping you to identify other relevant sources of evidence (Ibid, 92).

Additionally, the interviewing technique permits for following up interesting responses and investigating underlying motives compared to postal and other self-administered questionnaires Robson (2002). What is more, this technique presents the researcher with an opportunity to gain the perspectives of informants and to comprehend their beliefs and opinions about a particular situation (Daymon and

Holloway 2002) and finally to capture the data within its own social context. Consequently, this research technique is employed in this research to examine the research phenomenon.

Although there are various interview types available in social science, three of those used mostly frequently by researchers are: unstructured; semi-structured, and structured interviews (Robson 2002). In this research, the semi-structured interview technique is employed. It allows the researcher to focus on the studied subject as they are predetermined (Robson 2002) and henceforth the research topic can be explored without losing the attention on the main subject as well as saving time for researchers by allowing them to collect similar types of data from the informants (Daymon and Holloway 2002). Semi-structured interviews were held with the following interviewees (see Table 7.1) and the reason for why these interviewees were selected is self-explanatory.

Table 7.1: List of Interviewees

Interviewees' Names	Occupations & Role Within the Campaign
Basaran Düzgün	Editor-in-Chief, <i>KIBRIS</i> newspaper
Ali Baturay	News Director, <i>KIBRIS</i> newspaper
Hasan Hastürer	Top Columnist, <i>KIBRIS</i> newspaper
Tamer Altunay	'Yes' Campaign PR Professional, Point PR Agency, Istanbul
Tahsin Ertugruloğlu,	Chairman of UBP political party, No Campaign North Cyprus
Onursal Akdeniz	'Yes' Campaign, Political Advertising, also worked within various sections of the campaign design as well
Interviewee A (did not want to release his identity)	'Yes' Campaign Manager in North Cyprus
Ömer Bilge	Foreign Affairs and North Cyprus report of <i>HÜRRİYET</i> newspaper
Savvas Iacovides	Editor-in-Chief, <i>SIMERINI</i> newspaper
Georghias Colocassides	Deputy Vice President of DIKO political party
Costas Venizelos	Editor-in-Chief, <i>PHILELEFTHEROS</i> newspaper
Barbara Lillikas	'No' Campaign Director, the CEO of the Marketway Research, Advertising and PR company
Eleni Theocharous MP	MP from DISY party, acted individually against the Plan

Özgül Gurkut Mutluyakali	Journalist, TAK agency
Harris C. Georgiades	Deputy Press Spokesman, DISY party
Hasan Tacoy MP	MP, Head of Nicosia District of the UBP party

In total, 16 interviews were conducted and each of them took around thirty to fifty minutes. First, I identified which newspapers should be content analysed, thereafter, it was obvious to whom I should interview - the editor-in-chiefs, in some cases the top columnists and reporters of the newspapers. After interviewing journalists, I then adopted the “snowball”⁷¹ technique and asked journalists to provide me contact names of the political campaigners that they used during the referendum campaigning process. The use of this technique consequently enabled me to identify all the relevant informants for this research. David and Sutton (2004) claim that the result is a ‘biased sample’ as the researcher relies on others to make appropriate contacts and achieve the required population. Furthermore, they indicate that one of the weaknesses of this technique is those who agree to participate in the study will determine the sample characteristics and hence the contribution of others that refused to participate will be neglected (2004). Although, my request of interview has not been rejected by anyone, I only could not interview Hürriyet newspaper’s Editor-in-Chief and/Foreign News Editor due to their ‘busy schedule’ and ‘distance’⁷². In terms of increasing the reliability and validity of interview, all the interviews were tape recorded (Perakyla 1997).

On a further note about the appropriateness of why those interviewees were selected, although obvious from the ‘interviewee table’ that they were the main actors, the intention of the research is to scrutinise the dynamics between the two

⁷¹ See Robson (2002:265). The researcher identifies one or more individuals from the population of interest. After they have been interviewed, they are used as informants to identify other members of the population, who are themselves used as informants, and so on.

⁷² The distance was particularly an issue in collecting data from the Editor(s) of the Turkish newspaper. The reasons being were ‘financial constraints’ (I was restricted to fly to Istanbul, whenever they were available for interview); ‘time’ (I could only conduct my fieldwork during summer time as I was working); and ‘holiday season’ (summer is not the best time for research as many people have holidays).

agenda-setting actors during the referendum campaigning; this makes them ideal candidates for this study. The in-depth interview objectives were divided into two categories based on the two key agenda-setters investigation namely: (A) journalists, and (B) political campaign communication professionals as follows:

For the Key Members of the News Organisations (Journalists):

- To provide comparative scrutiny of the news production process of the press during the referendum campaign and the influence, if any, of Cypriot political culture on the news production process.
- To provide cross-national comparison of media coverage of the referendum campaign.
- To explore the journalistic and editorial approaches of the press during the referendum campaign.
- To outline the relationship between the political journalists and the political campaigners during the referendum campaign.

(B) For the Political Campaigners and the MPs (Political Campaign Communication Professionals):

- To identify 'Yes' and 'No' campaigns' themes and key issues in order to establish their referendum agendas during the referendum campaign.
- To outline the both 'Yes' and 'No' camps' referendum campaign strategy and tactics.
- To compare the campaign style and the organisation of the campaign in North and South Cyprus.
- To explore the news media's role within the referendum campaign communication.
- To outline the influence of, if any, the country specific political culture and its law and regulatory framework on the referendum election campaign.

To summarise, the use of qualitative methods – in-depth interviews - allows the researcher to gain insight into the referendum campaigns design, political journalists' roles and news production process during the referendum campaigning. In short, it enables the identification of the political camps' strategies and the news production process and/or gate-keeping process of the journalists, which in turn creates an opportunity to pin down the battle over the media

agenda-setting. Furthermore, quantitative content analysis permits the investigation of one of the most frequently asked question of 'did news media influence the concerns of the public' in agenda-setting research. So, as this study proposes a cross-national comparative analysis, the findings of this study will not only contribute to the literature of political communication effects and the referendum campaign effects studies, but it will also enrich draught research scope of comparative research studies.

Quantitative Media Content Analysis

A systematic and reliable analysis is needed to examine the diet of information available to the electorate and the general news environment and this can be achieved by employing content analysis (Vreese and Semetko 2004). Berelson (1996) states that a scientific method that explains diverse facets of communication content (which answers the *what* question of communication process) is called content analysis. Berelson (1966:263) defines content analysis as "a technique for the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of the manifest content communication". Furthermore, Berger (2000) argues that content analyses are most valuable within the scrutiny of either or both a historical and comparative perspective. As the intention of the research comprises both perspectives, it therefore offers a valuable contribution.

Traditionally, content analysis has been used to assess and portray media coverage of political campaigns (Hofstetter 1981). In a similar nature this research also aims to provide the news coverage analysis of Turkish and Greek Cypriot newspapers, but from a cross-national comparative. More specifically, I desire to explore 'who sets the press agenda' and 'whether the print media coverage was the cause of the Cypriot public's perceptions of the issue importance' in the referendum.

Which Medium to Study? Press, Television or Both?

The review of political communication literature shows that scholars' decisions on which communication medium should be selected to study in the content analysis is dependent on various factors. These are primarily money, availability and/or access of archive and more importantly, perhaps, linguistic skills. All of these factors have been influential on the decision process of communication medium selection. Additionally, the four daily national newspapers chosen are based on the criteria of (1) circulation figures, which is the main rationale in the literature; (2) their reputation, the fact that they provide the most important sources of political information, and finally (3) their credibility in the eye of Cypriot publics and politicians, and consequently their influence in Cypriot politics. However, financial and time constraints set the limitation of the research scope on content analysis. Above all, non-existence of national television archive collection on either side of the island was the main determinant reason to study press instead of television. It would have been ideal to scrutinise both communication medium's impact on the concerns of the Cypriot public and to provide more opportunity to compare their influence on the public's perception of what topics concerned them most. Having said this, newspaper analysis provides two significant advantages over television agenda-setting analysis. These are:

1) Readers can process information contained in newspapers at their own pace [and therefore] with the ability to stop and contemplate the full significance of a story, individuals should be more strongly influenced by the newspapers content than the television content [and] 2) readers can return to newspapers at more than one point in time... because the information obtained in television news stories has only one chance at influencing viewers, [whereas] newspapers have the potential to provide readers with an agenda of issues that is much more easily accessible (Wanta 1997: 142-143).

The Chosen Press

Based on previously stated factors, four daily newspapers were chosen. *Kıbrıs* and *Hürriyet* newspapers from the Turkish Cypriot side and *Phileleftehos* and *Simerini* newspapers from the Greek Cypriot side. It is worth mentioning at this point that

these newspapers had the highest circulation figures at the referendum period. See Table 7.2 for sales figures.

Table. 7.2 The Selected Newspapers Characteristics

Turkish Language Newspapers		Greek Cypriot Newspapers	
Name	Sales Figures ⁷³	Name	Sales Figures ⁷⁴
<i>Kıbrıs</i>	~9,000	<i>Phileleftheros</i>	25,000
<i>Hürriyet</i>	~4,850	<i>Simerini</i>	10,000

Kıbrıs is a local tabloid paper, whereas *Hürriyet* is a broadsheet Turkish paper that is sent to North Cyprus every day by plane from Turkey. On the other hand, both of the Greek Cypriot papers are in the format of broadsheets. One can question the choice of newspapers for the research subject investigation. In particular, one obvious criticism can be directed as to why I chose two Greek Cypriot newspapers, and why not two Turkish Cypriots newspapers too? First of all, the undertaken conceptual framework, namely agenda-setting, underpins the importance of citizens' 'message exposure', which consequently links to the sales and readership figures of the selected newspapers. The more Cypriot voters exposed to the political campaign messages, the more likely they are to have the same agendas of the Yes/No political camps in their minds, ideally in the same rank order. In addition, unlike on the north side of the island, the Greek Cypriot mass media is well established and the local Greek newspapers have always attained a high readership figure. Moreover, the media/papers from mainland Greece have never been so important in the history of Greek Cypriot and their readership, compared to local newspapers, has always been lower. Although all the Greek newspapers

⁷³ The information about the Turkish Cypriot newspapers circulation was provided by YAYSAT KIBRIS 1 Distribution company by Eliz Giritli. Also, the circulation figure of KIBRIS newspaper during the referendum campaign was provided by the Chief-in-Editor: Basaran Duzgun. The researcher collected this information during his visit to North Cyprus in July 2005 and gathered by first hand.

⁷⁴ Christophorou, C., (2005). www.hans-bredow-institut.de/recht/coreg/reports/1/-Cyprus.pdf is the source of the Phileleftheros newspaper circulation figure. DIAS Publishing House, <http://www.dias.com.cy/profile.asp> is the source of the Simerini newspaper's circulation figure.

are openly accessible to the population, “a small number of copies of each papers are imported, of which 60% is sold daily”⁷⁵. Furthermore, one of the most important reasons to include a newspaper from mainland Turkey instead of choosing two Turkish Cypriot newspapers in this analysis is that it was expected that there would be differences between the two newspapers in their news coverage of the referendum campaign news agenda. Furthermore, as one of Turkey’s most influential daily newspapers, one would expect *Hürriyet* newspaper to mirror the issue agendas of the Turkish Government on the Plan, which was different from the Turkish Cypriot Government. The paper can also be highly influential in Turkish Cypriot politics, as well as in influencing some segments of the public. Hence, the referendum news coverage of Turkish and Turkish Cypriot press would further enrich the analysis by demonstrating comparative findings amongst Turkish Cypriot press agenda and Turkish press agenda.

Period of Study and Problems of Access to Material

The content analysis covers the period of three weeks from the date the Annan Plan was officially announced until the last official day of political campaigning, from 1 April to 23 April 2004. Although I have stated that the content analysis covers just over a three week timeframe, this is only applicable to the analysis of *Kıbrıs*. The copies of *Hürriyet*, *Simerini* and *Phileleftheros* newspapers dated 11 and 12 April were not available in the Milli Arşiv (National Archive) or elsewhere in TRNC. As I cannot speak Greek, to obtain this missing data from Greek Cypriot National Archive was not possible. Therefore the content analysis findings of these newspapers reflect this limitation.

⁷⁵ Information is obtained via email: Louiza Fantis, Ifantis@pio.moi.gov.cy, Press & Information Office, on 13 September 2010.

Coding Procedure of the Content Analysis

A coding sheet was designed to outline the key issues and themes that were covered by the papers about the Annan Plan. One of the main intentions of the content analysis is to assess several important factors that are salient in the newspapers' portrayals of the referendum news. These are: (1) the overall amount of coverage, (2) the amount of headline news, (3) news types, (4) the tone of the coverage (favourability vs unfavourability), (5) sources of the news, and (6) issue priority given by each press. To do this, a team of coders was employed and trained on how to conduct content analysis for this study. Two of the coders for the Greek Cypriot newspapers analysis were native Greek Cypriots studying at post-graduate level in London, UK. For the two Turkish language newspapers' content analysis, alongside myself I also employed my friend and research fellow who is also a PhD candidate in North Cyprus. The unit of analysis and of coding was the election or news of the Annan Plan.

Measurement Procedure

To measure the press agenda, the main subjects of the Annan Plan were identified and the core themes categorisation was created for the content analysis (see Appendix 2 for content analysis coding framework). Originally, a total number of ten issue categories were formulated. However, during the press content analysis process, it was realised that both sides Presidents' speeches to the nation and their positioning on the Plan and also criticisms or favourings towards them were frequently emphasised. Therefore, this additional issue category was introduced to the content analysis. I further introduced the issue category of 'Don't want to live with Turks' for Greek Cypriot press agenda analysis. The reason for this being that firstly it was one of the top four concerns of the Greek Cypriot electorate at the result of the exit poll, and it was also difficult to treat it as sub-category of any other substantive issues. In the coding process, there were many cases where news stories may have had more than one topic. For example, one news story may have included 'Security', 'Economy', and 'Legal Subjects' (one of the sub-categories

of the 'United Cyprus') issues. Under this circumstance, each topic was recorded to overcome this problem. To overcome subjectivity and bias issues, the 'inter-coder reliability'⁷⁶ analysis was conducted to test the internal consistency of the selected themes. So, the inter-coder reliability (assessed based on percentage agreement) of the categories ranged from 0.84 for the Greek Cypriot papers and 0.88 for the Turkish language papers.

⁷⁶ See Neuendorf (2002). When human coders are used in content analysis, this translates to inter-coder reliability or level of agreement among two or more coders. This is important for two reasons; first is to provide basic validation of a coding scheme and second, for the practical advantage of using multiple coders, which allows more messages to be produced.

AN ORIGINAL CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE

This research is a unique subject due to the fact that the 2004 Cyprus referendum has not been scrutinised by academics from a mass media and political communication perspective. There have been only a few attempts to compare the contents of election communication in different societies (LeDuc et al. 2001), particularly for referendum campaigns communication (Vreese and Semetko 2004). Moreover, Werde (2002) states that there has been a dearth of research in the cross-cultural field of agenda-setting and according to Vreese and Semetko (2004), the dynamics of agenda setting has not been investigated in the context of a referendum. Thus, this study adopts a cross-national comparative perspective to cover this gap in the literature. The study of the news media and political communication within the referendum election campaigning debate by cross-national comparative perspective enables the researcher to understand: (1) the range of variation in the national setting, (2) the effects of different ways of controlling the mass media politically, (3) a set of dimensions specifying how linkages between political and mass media organisations may vary in different societies, and finally (4) it enables the researcher to identify those political agencies to which the media will be accountable, and the rights and obligations falling on both political and media personnel in the communication sphere (Blumer and Gurevitch 1995:60-61). So, the cross-national theoretical framework allows the researcher to examine variation of the two countries in terms of their political culture, political economy of the mass media system and the role of news media and political communication within the culturally-bounded social and political context of Cyprus. By doing this, the study contributes to the development of a literature of mass media and political communication in Cyprus which currently lacks an academically-produced body of knowledge on the subject. More importantly, the 'Cyprus Issue' still has not been solved, and political talks are currently ongoing between the two leaders of the communities which may result in another referendum being placed before the Cypriot public.

Moreover, by exploring the dynamics between political campaigners, politicians and the news media over the agenda-setting process I also explore to what extent cultural and political factors influenced the political campaign design and the agenda-setting power of the political actors. Thus, this study aims to shed light on future referendum campaign studies where currently there is a dearth of research. As this study employs a comparative perspective, its analysis can also contribute to an understanding of the variations within the structure and functions of the mass media and political communications among nations. So, as the different national settings influence the agenda-setting process this analysis will add value to comparative studies.

To sum up, this research will contribute to future referendum campaign and political communication studies elsewhere. Not only will this research provide insight from a cross-national perspective on this scholarly-neglected area, it will also contribute particularly to the literature of agenda-setting research within the context of referendum elections. Perhaps, most importantly, it will create a body of knowledge for likely future referendum study in Cyprus on reunification.

CHAPTER 8

ANALYSIS OF NEWS PRODUCTION PROCESS: INTERVIEWS

Introduction

The media are a product of politics and feed back in to influence politics as well.
(Cook 2006:159)

This chapter explores the degree of discretionary power of journalists in the formation of the daily news agenda at the referendum election. In this study an 'interpretive' approach has been adopted in order to explore the battle between journalists and political campaign professionals over the media agenda-setting at the referendum election. This type of assessment of media agenda-setting success that depends on matching the outcome of a political party strategy to the content of news agendas has so far produced 'subjective' conclusions, claims Scammell (1995), thus the outcomes cannot be generalised. On contrary, this approach allows more 'in-depth' analysis of the news production process of the selected papers. This, in turn, permits me to pinpoint the influence of the various factors on the discretionary power of the journalists over media agenda-setting. Although my findings from interviews with editor-in-chiefs and journalists at the news production process analysis provided some hints about the discretionary power of journalists, the juxtaposition of these findings, alongside the content analysis of news sources, enriches the overall conclusion of the media agenda-setting inquiry.

This analysis enables the news media's influence to be demonstrated as a key political institution that shapes and disseminates political messages. To do this, I adopt Semetko et al. (1991), a well-established cross-national analytical framework which consists of four variables: (1) the position of politics and of politicians in society, namely, the political culture, (2) newspeople's orientations toward politics and politicians, (3) the consequences of different levels of political and media competition, and finally (4) the degree of 'professionalisation' of election campaigns.

This comparative study explores in particular the news production process of four selected newspapers. As mentioned previously in the content analysis section of the thesis, the justification for the choice of newspapers used in the analysis is based on the criteria of circulation figures, their reputation, the fact that they cover the most important sources of political information and their influence in Cypriot politics. To do this, I interviewed editors-in-chief, key political reporters, politicians and political campaign incumbents in North and South Cyprus.

The role of journalists and news organisations is an unexplored subject in the context of the 2004 Cyprus referendum. Hence, It was a crucial election to be studied as the outcome could have brought together Europe's only remaining divided capital city, Nicosia. Election campaigns can be regarded as highly crucial and newsworthy events in both North and South Cyprus. This can easily be observed by the amount and significant placement of referendum campaign coverage in the newspapers. In particular, the press devoted extensive news coverage to the subject since November 2002 – the starting point of the negotiation process of the Plan. Needless to say, the referendum campaign also received a vast amount of attention from the press, hence this raises the concern of how well the media covered the Annan Plan; as well as questions of how the media content was produced; which factors, if any, influenced the news production process; and how influential the political public relations and political marketing techniques of Yes/No camps were in setting the press agenda.

1. The Position of Politics and of Politicians in Society: The Valuation of Politics

'Valuation of politics' shows a divergence in different societies which can influence the political communication process in terms of attracting or driving back, engaging or turning people off, and creating respect for, or hatred of politics in general (Blumler and Gurevitch 1975, cited in Semetko et al., 1991:5). The reason for considering whether 'the valuation of politics' differ in various countries is that the importance given to politics influences how the news organisations' cover

elections, and thus intrude into the media's agenda-setting power. The strength of the political party system is one of the factors that influence the *discretionary* power of journalists to set the campaign agenda (Ibid). Historically, either Turkish or Greek Cypriots have shown a high level of interest in politics, particularly in the 'Cyprus Issue'. And so, it has always been centre stage of any elections agenda. This is, arguably, one of the most important factors that can influence the Cypriot electorate's voting behaviour in a general election, as we witnessed in the 2003 Turkish Cypriot general election and the 2006 parliamentary election in South Cyprus. It can be said that there is even an obsession and a frustration with the politics of the Cyprus problem. Apart from the fact that it is compulsory to vote in elections by law on both sides of the island, there is also a very high degree of interest in politics among the Turkish and Greek Cypriot public. As a consequence of the great significance of the 'Cyprus Issue' in politics, it has always been at centre stage of both sides' domestic and foreign policies. Furthermore, due to its socio-historical bond and the ongoing 'prestige war'⁷⁷ in the international arena, not losing the island to the 'other side' is also a highly delicate issue and at centre stage of both sides motherlands' foreign policy. Thus, it can be concluded that the high degree of importance given to the 'Cyprus Issue' in the two communities influenced the role and responsibility taken towards the subject by the journalists and consequently the degree of their discretionary power within the election campaigns' coverage was affected.

Media professionals have highlighted the valuation of politics, but especially towards the 'Cyprus Issue' as can be seen in the statements below:

We think, talk, discuss and even sleep with the Annan Plan⁷⁸.

The referendum period was a vital cornerstone of alteration for the Turkish Cypriot community⁷⁹.

⁷⁷ It can be claimed that the 'Cyprus Issue' can be perceived as a prestige war between the two motherlands in international politics.

⁷⁸ Interview with Savva Iakovidi, the Editor-in-Chief of *Simerini*, on 31 July 2008.

⁷⁹ Interview with Hasan Hastürer, the chief political columnist, on 11 July 2008.

It was a very exhausting and stressful time psychologically and physically. This was the most difficult time of my career as a journalist. Everybody was asking what is happening, why is this, why is that? I was spending about two-three hours a day just responding to questions from all over the world via my email⁸⁰.

This high 'valuation of politics' in the eyes of Cypriots could therefore increase the orientation of mass media interest in elections, and hence its campaign coverage. This consequently could have influenced the intimacy of the relationships between the Yes/No camps and the political journalists during the election period.

2. News Media Professionals' Orientations Towards Politics and Politicians: Pragmatic Versus Sacerdotal Orientation

The degree of 'valuation of politics' in a society can reflect upon the reporting style of the news organisations' election coverage. Journalists' news reporting process has been described as having "pragmatic and sacerdotal" orientation in the literature (Blumler and Gurevitch 1987; Semetko et al. 1991). From a comparative perspective, I expect to find substantial similarities in journalistic attitudes, as Turkish and Greek Cypriots share more commonalities than differences⁸¹ in regard to the referendum election coverage. Essentially, then, the media may play a politically active and independent role in shaping the coverage of the referendum election campaign.

Cross-nationally, the construction of the referendum election news in terms of media reporting style demonstrates more similarities than differences; indeed, it was almost identical. While among the three selected Cypriot newspapers: *Kıbrıs*, *Simerini* and *Phileleftheros*, this was the case, the only analysed Turkish newspaper, *Hürriyet*, showed different reporting characteristics compared to the Cypriots. For example, as mentioned earlier, due to the high significance of the

⁸⁰ Interview with Savvas Iacovides, Editor-in-Chief, on 31 July 2008.

⁸¹ Further information about the similarities and differences between Turkish and Greek Cypriots can be found in Appendix 3.

'Cyprus Issue' and thus the referendum, the media professionals in Cyprus intrinsically regarded the referendum election campaign as the most important subject of the time, and therefore provided front page news coverage, as either headline or sub-headline news almost every day during the referendum campaign period (see also content analysis). However, this was not the case in *Hürriyet* newspaper. According to Ömer Bilge, the North Cyprus reporter of *Hürriyet*, "unless there was a high profile speech or campaign event that was more newsworthy than other stories, we would not carry it as our headline or front page coverage". Therefore, for this periodical the significance given to referendum election news was determined by the news values of election campaign events.

However, both Turkish and Greek Cypriot journalists perceived the referendum election campaign as inherently a highly significant event and thus regarded anything associated with it as vastly newsworthy. In other words, the political journalists did not take a set of journalistic news values into consideration whilst they were covering the referendum news. So, the campaign related news did not "fight its way" as it did in the Turkish language paper. These characteristics denote a sacerdotal approach, and so the referendum election campaign coverage represented a sacerdotal orientation in the press on both sides of the island. On the contrary, a pragmatic orientation was evident in Turkish journalist news reporting.

More evidence of the applications of the sacerdotal approach in the news reporting on both sides became apparent with the interviews that were conducted with the media professionals:

... It was very easy for me to see and arrange an interview or meeting with politicians, the Prime Minister, the president or indeed with important foreign politicians and people like the United Nations representative of Cyprus. Actually, there was a period when politicians were talking too much and also demanding to talk and express their views all the time, therefore, we even felt a little bit disturbed⁸².

⁸² Interview with Basaran Düzgün, Editor-in-Chief of *Kıbrıs*, on 11 July 2008.

It was easy to access politicians or political parties, but we tried not to have any close relations or connection to either government or political parties in order to avoid their interference in our job, because if we had done this, it could have been difficult for us as journalists. That is to say we are independent and reliable to our readers⁸³.

There was a big difference in journalism between daily practice and during the referendum campaign period. It was a very intense working period⁸⁴.

...during the referendum campaign, first we tried to find the news that was associated with the referendum and then later we looked for daily news stories. Indeed, we were searching all the news that was related to the referendum either directly or indirectly and tried to link them with 'no-solution'. And from time to time we even exaggerated the news for example: in that time, there was friction between the AKP political party and our President Denktash. We used to carry this political conflict in our headline or sub-headlines⁸⁵.

These statements clearly signify elements of a sacerdotal approach, because according to the pragmatic approach, if on some days there were no significant election stories available and worth covering, then it was possible not to devote any coverage at all to election campaign news. This was not the case in the 2004 Cyprus referendum election as can be seen from the above statements.

In a sacerdotal news culture compared to a pragmatic one, the reporting of political statements and activities are regarded as important, and worthy incidents that should be covered extensively. Consequently, candidates' statements are likely to be used more often in news coverage. Although the news reporting of the 2004 Cyprus referendum campaign demonstrated characteristics of a sacerdotal approach, in a sense, it does show some differences. Although all the news organisations used the Yes/No camps' materials, such as press releases or press conferences, the press did not purely rely on political campaigns sources or materials. Indeed, they showed some resistance to the influences of the Yes/No

⁸³ Interview with Ömer Bilge, Cyprus Reporter of *Hürriyet* newspaper, on 12 July 2008

⁸⁴ Interview with Costas Venizelos, Editor-in-Chief of *Phileleftheros*, on 31 July 2008.

⁸⁵ Interview with Ali Baturay, News Director of Kibris newspaper, date 11.07.2008.

camps' campaigns by simply not providing them with any, or very limited news coverage. This was particularly the case if the newspaper institution and the Yes/No camps were not on the same side of the referendum dispute. This approach does not fit either a sacerdotal or pragmatic understanding of news but could be described as being more like an advocacy role for media professionals. During the referendum the press demonstrated heavy use of their correspondents, other elite news media's stories, and expert opinions on various subject areas that were related to highly technical parts of the referendum plan. News professionals put this in words as:

We had the original Annan Plan in hand. Additionally, the booklets, which were prepared by the UN and the EU, were also provided to us from these bodies. And of course we got direct access to information from the legal negotiation team. So it was so easy for us to call and obtain interviews with all politicians even with President Denktash and Prime Minister Mr Talat on those days⁸⁶.

This newspaper has a capacity to obtain its own news sources. Therefore, we did not rely on the campaign sources... Instead of using their [campaigners] materials which in most times were provided to us the next day, we used to attend events such as the 'Yes' and 'No' camps rallies to collect our own news sources first hand. During many incidents, we used to delay our next day newspaper publications until one o'clock at night to be able to provide hot news to our readers on the following day. To sum up, we were not really dependent upon on the political campaigners materials/agendas. Instead, most of the time they used to derive public opinion from us⁸⁷.

We received and used lots of press releases from campaigns and NGOs. Almost every day there were one or two press conferences going on about the issue⁸⁸.

We had the Plan and we analysed it by ourselves, so we did not use the campaigners to obtain information about the plan. However, we used some experts/specialists like politicians, marketers, lawyers, so on to have clarifications on the technical information in the Plan... We used press conferences, meetings and sometimes press releases in our coverage⁸⁹.

⁸⁶ Interview with Bilge, 2008.

⁸⁷ Interview with Düzgün, 2008.

⁸⁸ Interview with Iacovides, 2008

⁸⁹ Interview with Venizelos, 2008.

What is more, a further similarity arises on both sides in terms of political journalists' approaches to the election coverage approach, that is, a 'horse race' news coverage style. This exhibits characteristics of a pragmatic approach. Since 2002, at the starting point of the Plan, the press reported the Annan Plan in terms of public concerns and desires for the solution by using a significant amount of opinion polls to demonstrate 'who is ahead'. This style of news reporting has been termed 'horse race' news coverage in the literature. More interestingly, the press, as an actor of the political campaign and/or a propaganda machine, used public opinion to highlight the power struggle between the 'Yes' and 'No' camps in order to influence public opinion in the direction of their own stance. To do this, they even used the public opinion polls results of Turkish/Greek Cypriot pollsters. One particular difference occurred in comparison to the other elections' news coverage (e.g. Semetko et. al. (1991) study of the British and American elections and Vreese and Semetko's study (2004) of the 2000 Danish referendum): the Cypriot press heavily employed 'vox-pop' techniques and provided the Cypriot public's day-by-day views and opinions on the various topics of the referendum plan.

Another point that suggests a sacerdotal approach in the news reporting of the political journalists in the 2004 Cyprus referendum is in regard to the scope of agenda-setting process, namely 'agenda amplifying'. This was evident with political journalists, by them exclusively influencing the news agenda by providing "exaggerated" (Baturay 2008) coverage to certain subject matters.

What is more, a conflict of interest between political journalists and politicians only occurred when the news organisations were not on the same side of the Plan. During the referendum campaigning period, politicians and Yes/No camps worked in cooperation with the news media organisations on both sides, for example: in North Cyprus *Kıbrıs* newspaper and the 'Yes' camp, and in South Cyprus the 'No' camp and *Simerini* newspaper. Therefore, the media professionals were not sceptical about the media agenda-setting attempt of the political campaigns; indeed, they operated together on the agenda-building process. However, if there was a conflict of interest or views on the Plan between the media institution and

political camp then the newspaper organisation acted almost as a 'complete blocker of opposition views' in Cypriot newspapers, except that this was less obvious case in *Phileleftheros*. For example:

...the 'Yes' camp side was very happy about our coverage policy, because we were constantly following them and actually we were even doing more and requesting interviews with them all the time. We used to read the AA (Anadolu Haber Ajansi - Anatolian News Agency) news in order to find particular news that support the 'Yes' camp and carried it in our daily news coverage. The 'Yes' camp was very happy because they were supported by us in a sense that they could not ask for more. On the contrary, the 'No' camp side sometimes used to complain about us so eagerly supporting the 'Yes' camp and providing them only a small space in our news coverage and saying that it was a mistake to change our coverage policy from 'No' status quo to support a new pro-unification⁹⁰.

...*Simerini*, as we are part of the biggest media publishing organisation of Cyprus, DIAS, and as we were at the forefront of the 'No' campaign, we felt we had to do this properly and lead the way. All the journalists in here were occupied with the Plan, writing about many aspects of the Plan⁹¹.

The next section addresses the 'variation of media competition' that has a direct influence on the way news would have been covered. So, this analysis intends to examine whether the variation of media competition in Cyprus had an impact on the way referendum news was covered by the newspaper organisations.

3. Variation of Media Competition

In this section, in addition to the above stated broader analysis perspective of Semetko et al. (1991) that I have employed, I have further adopted a sub-analysis perspective to assess the main features of the news production process of the news media organisations. These are (a) organisational structure of the news organisations and campaign coverage policy and (b) the news selection criteria,

⁹⁰ Interview with Baturay, 2008.

⁹¹ Interview with Iacovides, 2008

namely objectivity, impartiality, and providing a diversity of views for electorates to make a rational polity decision.

3.1 Organisational Structure and Coverage Policy of the News Organisations

Communication takes place at the core of any political campaign due to political parties' high reliance on it to deliver political messages to the electorate. Hence, the organisational structure of the news media is an important factor which can influence the political campaign's style and strategies because, "the more differentiated the media environment the more sophisticated strategies of targeted communication can be expected" (Plasser and Plasser 2002:87). So, as the mass media system plays an important role in the process of getting messages across to target audiences, it is essential to investigate the organisational structure of the press during the referendum campaign period in Cyprus in order to explore its likely influence on the political communication campaign. The media ownership structure (whether state owned, privately owned or a civic institution) and how they operate and generate news during elections times can influence the discretionary power of the political campaigns' agenda building process in terms of empowering or diminishing communication professionals' use of the media as a transmitter, as well as acting collaboratively to influence public opinion by constructing and framing messages. In their study of the comparative formation of campaign agendas Semetko et al. (1991:9) proposed a hypothesis that,

The high levels of competitive pressures are likely to render the media more audience oriented and therefore more likely to exercise discretionary powers vis-à-vis the politicians. Lesser competition could shift media orientations toward greater sensitivity to, perhaps respect for, political candidates and other spokespersons and could result in reduced tendencies toward discretionary reporting.

Accordingly, I am questioning the same point in the case of the 2004 Cyprus referendum to detect whether the media ownership had any influence on the

discretionary power of the press and if this has had an impact on the diversity of coverage.

One of the important similarities between Turkish and Greek Cypriot news media is the degree of commercialisation. All the analysed newspapers are privately owned institutions. Therefore, the structure of the print media system bestows a great opportunity on the big media barons to influence the political agenda. In addition, another resemblance occurs in terms of the political culture and the relationship between Turkish and Greek Cypriot journalists and politicians. Cyprus holds a different position in terms of political culture compared to most developed western countries, for example Britain and the US, which influences the dynamics between the journalists and politicians. In Cyprus, politicians and the news media organisations have a closer relationship compared to most western countries that in turn opens the door for politicians or political parties to influence the issue agenda of the news media. Although a similar influence can be observed in the UK, such as among Tony Blair and Rupert Murdoch during the 1997 general election, it still differs from the politicians and news media organisations' political affiliations in Cyprus. Within 'collectivist culture'⁹², like that of Cyprus, this close relationship can be highly influential compared to the one in an 'individualist culture'⁹³, like the UK. In other words, as Cyprus is a small island, politicians and media owners can be very close friends, family or even the partial owner of the institution. This interaction between the news organisation owner and families, friends, and politicians creates pressure, as people push forward ideas and preferences that can exert significant influence on framing news stories. For example, in South

⁹² The degree to which organisational and societal institutional norms and practices encourage and reward collective distribution of resources and collective action. The extent to which people place importance on extended families or clans, which protect them in exchange for loyalty; the 'in-group' – 'out-group' difference is salient. In collectivistic countries group cohesion has the premium value (Graham, 2001). Briefly this dimension reflects "I" consciousness versus "we" consciousness.

⁹³ <For some reason number 93 is repeated twice>? While individualism is the propensity to consider the self as the most meaningful social unit and stresses autonomy and primacy of individual goals and needs (Robert and Wasti, 2002), collectivism is the degree to which individuals are integrated into groups (Ashkanasy et al., 2000) and the degree to which collective action is encouraged by society (Aycan, 2005; House et al. 1999, 2004).

Cyprus, Mr Papadopolous, who was the president of the Republic of Cyprus, was the owner of three quarters of the highest selling news organisation, *Phileleftheros*. Although the Editor-in-Chief of the news media institution claimed that they aimed to provide balanced news coverage except in their editorial, it is highly controversial whether it is possible to project a balanced political discourse in the referendum election news coverage under these conditions.

In Cyprus, political journalism during the period of the referendum election can be classified as “intimidated journalism” (Plasser and Plasser 2002), where the media professionals are under pressure by either political elites or private owners. This can be seen openly in the analysis section of the ‘coverage policy’ below. Although all of the press are private institutions and hence they are naturally expected to be concerned about their circulation in the competitive marketplace, this was not the case during the referendum election coverage. The media did not treat the referendum plan as a regular referendum election, but instead acted as individuals and hence covered it by reflecting personal feelings and thoughts on the referendum plan. They perceived the plan, and hence the referendum election, as being about the will of the people towards the nation’s future interests and reflected their ideas in their news coverage. This was particularly the case in all the Cypriot newspapers analysed.

Journalists admitted that the referendum campaign was very different from a regular general election campaign. The campaign atmosphere and even the feeling of journalists were different towards the election coverage. They were more sensitive, susceptible and responsive to this highly delicate topic. For example:

All the journalists in here were occupied with the Plan, writing about many aspects of the Plan and also at the same time, we were publishing views from persons, political leaders, specialists and also from the readers who also were in favour of the plan so that we could give whole picture of what was going on at that time⁹⁴.

⁹⁴ Interview with Iacovides, 2008

On the night of 31 March 2004, when the Plan was officially announced to both sides of the public through mass media, journalists were faced with a 9,000-page long, highly technical reunification plan that needed to be digested, understood, and thereafter explained to their readers within the three weeks campaigning period. Moreover, on both sides of the island, the political journalists had to deal with the highly sophisticatedly organised 'Yes' and 'No' campaign management, the intense interest of the international press, and, most importantly, the curiosity and desire for observing and explaining what was happening on the "other side"⁹⁵. Thus, the political journalists and editors were under intense pressure to follow the referendum campaign and the arguments of not only the politicians and political campaigners on their side of the island but also on the other side of the island as well.

Another point concerning the similarities between the two communities is the press system and the preferred editorial decision-making processes of the newspaper organisations. In both North and South Cyprus, the press is predominately a national press and the system is different from the British press system which traditionally has a particular political party alignment.

The similarities occur between the two sides' journalistic approach in terms of their reluctant endorsement of the 'Yes' and 'No' camps, particularly in their editorials. There is a clear partiality in the editorial approaches of all the newspapers. All editors-in-chiefs immediately and openly admitted that they took a side and supported the Yes/No camp in their news coverage by acknowledging the fact that they were not practicing professional journalism. More commonality also occurs between both sides' political journalists in terms of the decision-making process of the editorial policy and who gave the final verdict on the decision. All three of the Cypriot newspapers' owners called a meeting of the organisation executive board members and, after a couple of hours of lengthy

⁹⁵ In Cyprus, when either Turkish or Greek Cypriot uses the word 'other side', not only does it signify the division and separation of the island physically by the UN borders, but also in terms of nationality, religion and politically.

discussion, based on the owners' political view, the 'final verdict' was announced or softly imposed on all the media personnel of the media organisation by the editors-in-chief.

In the case of *Kıbrıs*, although historically it had been supporting the status quo for decades, there was a sudden radical change in its editorial approach. The News Director of *Kıbrıs* put this in words as:

Since the establishment of the newspaper institution in 1984, we have in principle supported the right wing ideologies and the political parties in our news coverage, hence we were closer to conservative stance. In 2004, for the first time ever, we decided to carry news coverage leaning in support of left wing ideologies, political parties and NGOs. We did this by taking into account the desire of the Turkish Cypriot public of pro-solution. Previously while we were strongly supporting the recognition of the TRNC, now we back up the solution of federal government and United Cyprus⁹⁶.

Furthermore, this sudden radical change of the editorial endorsement was expressed by its Editor-in-Chief as:

The political development of the 'Cyprus Issue' and what our future will be on this island was the utmost crucial question for us. We have discussed this at length and by taking the changes in our political climate into consideration and the will of Turkish Cypriot public, we left the 'old right wing rhetoric' in our narratives and we started to use more democratic rhetoric and supported the 'Yes' camp... we had a news policy that aimed to demonstrate that in the case of 'solution' all the problems would have been lifted⁹⁷.

For the Turkish paper, Bilge (2008) has expressed the process as:

...the media was divided in Cyprus like black and white on the Plan. The Turkish media was also divided on the Plan too. Being objective or, in other words, observing the expectations of the people on the island made me take a side on the Plan, which was a very difficult position for me and I decided to support the reunification. This was also the expectation of the governing bodies and political figures of the Turkish Government which influenced our policy coverage.

⁹⁶ Interview with Baturay, 2008.

⁹⁷ Interview with Düzgün, 2008.

Similar approaches were also evident in the Greek Cypriot newspaper organisations. In the case of the biggest-selling newspaper, *Phileleftheros*, the Editor-in-Chief stated:

We discussed our position on the Plan with the owner and we decided to provide a balanced coverage, but in our editorial sections, provide our positions on the Plan. We believe that it was difficult to accept the Plan as it was, so in our articles we leaned towards 'No'⁹⁸.

The Editor-in-Chief of *Simerini* newspaper explained the process as:

At *Simerini* the decision was taken at the highest level, the owner of the newspaper, Mr Hagivanis, the biggest share owner and the president of the publishing group. He called all the chiefs to a meeting and I remember that we were 15 journalists/chiefs asking the question of what are we going to do? And what is the line that we are going to follow regarding this critical issue, not only for the group but also for the country? After a few hours discussion, the majority of the people at the meeting decided to oppose to the Plan⁹⁹.

So it can be claimed that, in general, the press defined its own position and what to report and not to report in the referendum election regardless of political camps' campaign agendas, unless they were on the same side. That is why all the Cypriot newspapers were 'political actors', but this was less the case with Turkish newspapers. The coverage policy of the newspapers, as expected, reflected their editorial stance. During the referendum campaigning process, each newspaper openly declared their stance in their editorials (see, Table 8.1).

⁹⁸ Interview with Venizelos, 2008

⁹⁹ Interview with Iacovides, 2008

Table 8.1 Editorial Positions of the Newspapers at the time of the Referendum

Editorial Positions of the Daily Newspapers	
	YES NO
TURKISH CYPRIOT	
KIBRIS	X
GUNES	X
VATAN	X
KIBRISLI	X
HALKIN SESI	X
AFRIKA	X
VOLKAN	X
YENIDUZEN	X
ORTAM	X
DEMOKRAT BAKIS	X ¹⁰⁰
HÜRRİYET ¹⁰¹	X
GREEK CYPRIOT	
PHILELEFTHEROS	X ¹⁰²
SIMERINI	X
ALITHIA	X
HARAVGHI	X
CYPRUS MAIL	X
POLITIS	X
MACHI	X

As can be seen from the editorial stance table, the majority of media organisations supported the ‘Yes’ camp in North Cyprus, whereas, a contrary situation was the case in South Cyprus. Although the four studied newspapers explicitly proclaimed their editorial stance in the referendum campaigning process, *Kıbrıs* and *Simerini* in particular acted vigorously and strongly as a propaganda machine to support the ‘Yes’ and ‘No’ camps, respectively. There was an absolute ‘editorial auto-control’ over the content of the referendum issues in their news coverage. Subsequent to

¹⁰⁰ Although its position was not clear-cut, it was leaning towards No.

¹⁰¹ This is a Turkish newspaper that publishes in Turkey daily and is sent to North Cyprus as a daily newspaper. This newspaper’s editorial position is added here as it was one of the selected newspapers for the content analysis, based on its circulation during the referendum.

¹⁰² Although the newspaper tried to maintain a ‘neutral’ position in its news coverage, in its editorial it supported the ‘No’ camp.

this, a journalistic control in the 'narratives and frame'¹⁰³ of the issues was also exercised. The verification of this can be found in the sentences of Editor-in-Chief of *Simerini* and News Editor of *Kıbrıs* newspaper.

...Mainly I was deciding about the news, of course in close cooperation and consultation with the owner of the newspaper... I was deciding which issues we were going to cover or if I thought that I had to consult Mr Cosilidus on the issues that were not only important for the newspaper but also for the whole campaign, then I used to consult him and say look I am going to print this type of news, what do you think?¹⁰⁴

In the case of *Kıbrıs* newspaper, the owner of the newspaper institution, Asil Nadir, went one step even further and used his own television channel twice, Kıbrıs TV, asking the Turkish Cypriot public to support the reunification. The News Director of the newspaper, Ali Baturay, further explained this as:

Our patron openly asked for full support of the Annan Plan. He ran two very long television programs and emphasised that this old political rhetoric would not allow us to achieve anything anymore, therefore we should support the reunification. Although he did not call me personally to state this policy change, after his meeting with the executive board, this was reflected upon us. That was an outspoken notification in a way.

In addition, one of the most striking and extreme examples was exhibited by *Kıbrıs* newspaper in terms of absolute dedication to support the 'Yes' camp by its "refusal to publish any 'No' camp political advertising"¹⁰⁵ and trying to prevent the 'No' camp from delivering their messages to the voters. Despite the fact that *Kıbrıs* is a commercial organisation which intrinsically should be concerned about generating high circulation, and making profit. Therefore, one could hardly argue that *Kıbrıs* might have had these worries at the referendum election. As it is the most influential and respected newspaper in North Cyprus and also having taken account the changing will of Turkish Cypriots towards 'reunification', all these

¹⁰³ Normally, researchers need to conduct "framing analysis" in order to make such a statement. However, in here, in the statement that was provided by Editors-in-Chief, the verification of such a claim can be justified.

¹⁰⁴ Interview with Iacovides, 2008.

¹⁰⁵ Interview with Baturay, 2008

factors enabled *Kıbrıs* to exercise stronger discretionary power in its news coverage and editorial, regardless of any market and political pressures. This was also the case for *Simerini*. Thus, this demonstrates that the referendum news coverage was not influenced by the variation of media competition as the print media divided in two, like 'black and white' on the Plan, but was highly influenced by the structure of the print media ownership, particularly in the Cyprus.

3.2 News Selection Criteria

As takes place in many developed countries, the Cypriot public also rely on media as a political news source about political affairs which allows them to form their opinions. Having already stated the prominence of the referendum election this simply justifies the necessity of investigating the media professionals' *news selection criteria* cross-nationally. This section's scrutiny consists of three parts; objectivity, fairness, and diversity of views for electorates to make a rational polity decision. Before examining the news selection criteria, it would be useful to explore the news preparation process of the press in order to understand the effort put in and its implications for the referendum news coverage.

3.3 News Preparation Process:

As happens in any electoral contest, news organisations allocate funding, staff, and resources to cover the electoral contests (Vreese and Semetko 2004) and this was the case in Cyprus as well. However, in terms of funding the press, particularly Turkish Cypriot media organisations, had very limited finance. In fact, despite being the best-selling newspaper, *Kıbrıs*, did not employ extra journalists to cover the intense referendum campaign process. Instead, political journalists had to work overtime to be able to provide its readers with the latest news¹⁰⁶. Working

¹⁰⁶ Interview with Düzgün, 2008.

more than 12 hours a day during the referendum campaign was a common feature for both side's political journalists. Although the Cypriot newspapers employed specialist people to provide 'expert views' on the different technical sides of the Plan, as Turkey's well-established and prestigious newspaper organisations, *Hürriyet* paper, has many specialist journalists in its institution. Omer Bilge further explained how he prepared the news production during the referendum election period as follows:

During the election time, I mean the Annan Plan referenda, I began to collaborate with local Turkish journalists and Cypriot Greek ones also. Early in the morning, I was searching local media both Turkish and Greek Cypriot – although I cannot read Greek, neither can most of my colleagues. And for that reason we were following reports, news and stories from Turkish Cypriot national news agency's translations from Greek media. During the referenda period the main source became local media local sources... Especially during referenda time on the ground – I mean in North Cyprus – I need help. I paid for two other staff and one more photographer. And of course, in Istanbul, our editors at the foreign news desk fed back information to me, coming from international agencies. We organised this months before the referenda. And especially for the last two months, many other columnists and reporters also came to the island to help me.

In addition, all of the three Cypriot newspapers studied produced 'special referendum issue editions' for their Sunday newspaper coverage. For example, *Simerini* produced 48 broadsheet pages and *Kıbrıs* 24 pages for a Sunday special edition to cover the Annan Plan issues. Whereas in *Hürriyet*, a daily Turkish newspaper, the election coverage was different from Cypriot newspapers; it mainly covered the referendum news as their headline or sub-headlines depending on the importance of the news for them, or in its regular 'world affairs' news section. This means that like all the other mainland Turkish newspapers, they treat North Cyprus as a separate political administration like Turkey, and hence have similar approaches to other countries' news coverage. Its referendum coverage was organised by its Cyprus reporter, Omer Bilge, who is in charge of the representative office in Nicosia, North Cyprus. Furthermore, eight columnists also reported on the referendum issue, one of whom was a diplomat and ex-Foreign

Affairs Minister of Turkey - Ilter Türkmen, as well as top foreign political news columnist Feraye Tunc, and one of the most influential political commentators of Turkey, Fatih Altaylı. Therefore, in terms of news resources and financial capacity, it had the highest substantive competence to cover the referendum election. Alongside this, all the news organisations used background research and experts' views and analysis such as lawyers, politicians, diplomats, etc. on different subject areas of the Annan Plan (e.g. security, sovereignty, representation, etc.). As happens in many countries during election coverage, the press agenda in many cases set the agenda of television news programmes as well as the other newspapers' agendas, particularly on each side of the island when the press provided an opinion poll result.

For example, Düzgün (2008) described their daily news production process of *Kıbrıs* during the referendum campaign as:

First, I used to attend the morning news programmes around 7:30am. Thereafter, I immediately came to my office around 9:00am, where we used have regular meetings with the reporters to discuss what topics we would have been following that day. Also, we used to scrutinise the news coverage of TAK and AA news agencies to see which news they covered. In the afternoon, we used to have a lot of visitors such as citizens, NGOs, etc. Additionally, we used to follow everyday both of the 'Yes' and 'No' camps daily political rallies and events. Then at night, I used to attend the television discussion programmes on the referendum.

One interesting incident that can be outlined here is that a particular restriction was exercised in terms of access to information, on Turkish-origin journalists during the referendum campaign period by the Greek Cypriot government. In fact, Mehmet Ali Birand, who is one of Turkey's most famous and influential journalists and also works for Dogan Media Holding Ltd, was the only journalist who managed to obtain special permission to enter South Cyprus. *Hürriyet* reporter, Omer Bilge, described this as:

In general, we have a restriction on the island, which is in accessing the South – Greek Cyprus. Greek Cypriot administration even today does not allow journalists if their nationality is Turkish. I think this is not just a

restriction against media professionals, but also a discrimination. On the one hand, Greek Cypriot politicians want their voice to reach Turkey and influence the public, but on the other hand, they are restricting the only way, I mean through the Turkish media. As a member of the media personnel of *Hürriyet*, CNN-Turk and Channel D, which is the biggest media group, they are refusing to let me travel free as a journalist and provide them with an opportunity to express their views to the Turkish people.

3.4 Application of Journalistic Norms: Objectivity and Impartiality

One of the key elements of the news media production process is the professional ethic of objectivity or impartiality. As mentioned, the 'editorial authority' was exercised after the decision of each media owner. Thus, the journalists selected the stories and wrote them from supporting perspectives based upon their stance on the referendum plan. It can be hardly argued that all the press were partial and not objective in their reporting on the Annan plan. Obviously, media corporations' coverage policies on the referendum election officially and openly accomplished this. Thus, the reporters had to dismiss, most of the time, the news value of the stories and had to take no notice of fairness and objectivity in their election news coverage.

To further prove this claim of objectivity, Mr Bilge (2008), who also used to report the referendum news to CNN Turk and Channel D televisions¹⁰⁷ stated that:

To be honest I cannot say that we, as journalists, are free from any agenda... The truth lies in the details. But, of course, in our television news reporting or in our newspaper news coverage, we have little option to communicate every detail. Our first duty is to be fair and objective. However, it is up to us how we do it. Willingly or unwillingly, it is very difficult for a journalist to be one hundred percent objective.

¹⁰⁷ *Hürriyet* newspaper, CNN Turk, Channel D are part of the Dogan Media Holding Ltd which is Turkey's biggest media conglomerate.

Moreover, one of the most interesting and striking manifestations of the objectivity of a journalist came from the top political columnist Hasan Hastürer of *Kıbrıs* newspaper. He stated that during the referendum election news coverage:

A serious level of exaggerated news was produced to support the 'Yes' and this was certainly a propaganda campaign exercise. Everything had been done in order to increase the believability. At the end of the day, we were not practicing our jobs in mosque, therefore, free from guilt I would say, everybody had tried their best to support the 'Yes'.

To the question of 'objectivity' practice at the referendum election coverage, Mr Venizelos (2008) commented:

We tried to be objective, however, we all have our personal views. But in my reports I tried to be balanced. OK it is difficult. It is easy to write about different political subjects but if you are trying to write on Cyprus' future it makes it very difficult. We all had a position in our newspapers, but what we were trying to do was to provide a balanced view on the subjects.

Consequent of subjective reporting, needless to say, there were various degrees of partiality in their referendum news coverage. After disclosing the difficulty to be 'objective' in reporting on the Cyprus conflict, Mr Venizelos (2008) further stated their partiality in their editorial and support of the 'No' camp as follows:

After we discussed our position on the Plan with the owner, we decided to provide a 'balanced' coverage. But, in our editorial section, we supported our own position on the Plan...we have relationships with all the politicians and during the referendum we tried to provide an equal and balanced coverage by providing different opinions.

One of the incredible examples for newspapers' impartial reporting comes from *Kıbrıs* newspaper. The News Director, Mr Baturay (2008) outspokenly and sincerely asserts that:

...Naturally, to support the Plan, we needed to make some arrangements in our institution. To do this, we took every step possible. For example: we set up a group of reporters and discussed how and from which angle

we could support the plan in our daily referendum coverage. Every day in our news coverage, we provided news that related to federal/pro solution and a United Cyprus. These were in the form of either interviews or the pursue of 'Yes' campaign events in our headlines or sub-headlines. Therefore, I can say that we had a specifically organised working environment for the referendum campaigning period, particularly to support the 'Yes' camp.

Mr Baturay (2008) further admits how keenly impartial they were in their referendum coverage, and in a regretful tone states that:

When I looked back years later at the news I wrote in my editorial column, I admitted that we were so focused and had so conditioned ourselves to solve the problem of Cyprus and act as part of the 'Yes' political campaign, that some of the news that we published was very harsh and gloomy towards our first president Mr Denktash and even in some cases toward the Turkish Cypriot public. I can say that the reason was this is: I felt like an iron curtain had dropped into our eyes at that time.

In addition to this, the Turkish newspaper's impartiality on the referendum campaign is described as:

On the north of the island, local media was divided into two on the referendum, like black and white. There were no other colours. Today it is the same. Also, the people were divided into two; on one hand, the supporter of the Plan, on the other, people who were against it. This was the case for the media in Cyprus. And the expectations from the Turkish media were the same. Being objective and/or supporting the expectations of the people of the island made me take a side on the referendum issue. The decision we made and our position was very difficult for me. In addition, there was an expectation from governing bodies and political figures of Turkey for me to support the 'Yes' camp¹⁰⁸.

3.5 Diversity of Views:

As described above and by looking at the editorial stance as represented in the table, it can be seen that the press was disproportionately divided on the referendum issue. In North Cyprus, the press coverage heavily gave voice to the

¹⁰⁸ Interview with Bilge, 2008.

'Yes' camp, while on the contrary, the press profoundly supported the 'No' camp in South Cyprus. This is one dimension of the unbalanced press coverage. Of course, having being 'non-objective' or 'partial', the press was also far from acting as a watchdog or providing a platform for discussing of a diversity of views. In fact, the journalists acted as 'gatekeepers' of the decision as to what makes the news. However, this was not accomplished through professional journalistic norms (e.g. newsworthiness, objectivity, etc.), it was performed based on the reason of 'Cypriot nationalism', which apparently intended to secure the nation's interest and identity in South Cyprus. On the contrary, in North Cyprus, the journalistic practice was exercised in order to propose questions surrounding the welfare of both future generations and Cyprus itself.

4. The Degree of Professionalisation of Election Campaigns

This section of the research provides a cross-national analysis of political campaigns' attempts to set the media agenda and thereafter the public agenda during the referendum. Firstly, the overall commonalities and differences between the 'Yes' and 'No' camps' campaign practice on both sides of the island is outlined, and then each political camp's campaign communication strategy and tactics, political advertising and political PR practices are set out, and finally, the 'issues' agenda of the 'Yes' and 'No' camps in the referendum campaign are presented. This section aims to present the essential features of the 'Yes' and 'No' camps in order to set the foundation for an 'agenda-building' analysis.

As previously mentioned, a fundamental goal of political communication is to set the public agenda that will enable an organisation to attain its goals. It follows that politicians are very devoted to getting their agendas accepted and endorsed by the media (McNair 1999). Consequently, political parties employ highly skilful and professional campaign incumbents and spend significant amounts of money on political campaigning to achieve their desired goal(s). Of course, in elections, either general or referendum, the ultimate goal is to gain a majority of votes in order to

obtain lawful force to either change policy, to be elected or re-elected, and so on. Within this process, the political incumbents play a pivotal role by organising the strategic political campaign communication to influence public opinion. Thus, they assist and advise politicians or political parties in various areas such as image-management, event management, political speech, campaign themes, communication tactics and so on to fulfil their aims. This is why the political incumbents are at the centre stage of any elections. Notably, this was the case during the 2004 Cyprus referendum campaign on both sides of the island.

4.1 Commonalities and Differences Between the Political Camps

The first striking feature of the referendum campaign in Cyprus which differentiates it from referendum campaigns elsewhere is that, in some cases, both sides of the political camps, particularly the Turkish Cypriot 'Yes' camp and Greek Cypriot 'Yes' camp, organised joint campaign activities such as press briefings and political meetings. For example, under the title of "for the existence of all Cyprus within the European Union say 'Yes' in the referendum" both sides' political parties' representatives organised a joint press briefing and called on the public to say 'Yes' at the Ledra Palace hotel in the United Nations buffer zone in Nicosia.

Another commonality that occurred is on the one hand, the 'Yes' camp in North Cyprus and the 'No' camp in South Cyprus were both highly professionally organised, whereas on the other hand, a lack of a professional touch was evident in the organisation of the 'No' camp in North Cyprus and the 'Yes' camp in South Cyprus. This, arguably, may be reflected in the outcome of the referendum result where a high percentage of 'Yes' votes in the North and 'No' votes in the South were obtained.

While this historical referendum campaign goes way back to the date of 2002, right after the announcement of the first version of the Plan, the actual battle among the 'Yes' and 'No' camps on both sides over the crystallisation of public

opinion began right after the announcement of the fifth version of the Plan on the island, on 1 of April 2004. Another noticeable common feature of the referendum campaign on each side of the island is the start time for the campaign preparation of both camps. On the Turkish side of the island, it can be said that the 'Yes' camp had been preparing itself for a referendum since 2003. The 'Yes' camp began its activities under the title of "Ortak Vizyon Platformu – Common Vision Platform" by organising various meetings throughout the period of 2003 and April 2004. Although the 'Yes' camp's financial cost and funding has never been released, it has been claimed that the US provided 30 million dollars for the CTP-BG political party to be used in the campaign. Additionally, the government bank of "Kıbrıs Vakıflar Bankası" funded 105,000 Euros to the campaign¹⁰⁹. Monies also came from the EU enlargement commission. However, it is not possible to say the same for the 'No' camp in North Cyprus.

A further similarity between the cross-national campaigns during the referendum was 'a lack of funds and resources' amongst the political camps. This significantly limited the power of the 'No' camp to fight against the 'Yes' camp over the Turkish Cypriot public opinion formation. This difficulty affected the 'No' camp's campaign organisation, which caused them to start their campaigning an entire week after the date that the announcement of the Plan was made to the public. The main, actually the only, campaigner as a political party for the 'No' camp was the UBP political party. Like its counterpart, the President Rauf R. Denktash rigorously campaigned for the 'No' camp. He personally spent an enormous amount of effort in campaigning against the Plan. The former President Mr Denktash, as a well-respected and high profile politician in Turkey, made many lengthy journeys between Turkey and North Cyprus to explain why the Turkish Cypriot electorate should vote 'no'. As the 'No' camp did not find its expected support on the island from the media, Mr Denktash turned to Turkey and the hard-line status quo supporters to back him up on the plan and express his view, as the main advocate of 'No' to the Plan, in the Turkish media. Of course, there were other 'No'

¹⁰⁹ This information is obtained from the turkishform.org Internet blog, written by the top columnist Sabahattin Islaim, Volkan Gazatesi. Do you need to say when it was accessed?

campaigners in the North such as bureaucrats, some journalists, volunteers and, more importantly, NGOs.

The people who actively engaged in the campaign had different professional backgrounds. They approached the political party executive committee and asked to work within the campaign. The committee took the decision of who was appropriate to work within the organisation of the 'No' camp by simply considering the fact of who was more likely to contribute the highest standard of work in order to prepare the best possible campaign¹¹⁰.

In frank and sincere terms, the *raison d'être* of why the campaign was organised in this way was expressed as follows:

We simply did not have any funds to employ a professional communication workforce, hence we did our best to obtain the highest 'no' vote percentage under this circumstance¹¹¹.

While this was the case in the north, a contrary scenario occurred on the other side of the island. The 'No' camp was enjoying economic subsidy particularly from the DIKO political party and activists' fundraising efforts. Additionally, the 'No' camp also enjoyed a minimal outlay in terms of campaign expenditure, as the Marketway Research company ran the 'No' camp for the DIKO party¹¹². Here, it is necessary to point out one significant detail that Ms Lillikas, the founder and owner of the company, is the wife of Mr Yiorgos Lillikas who was the Cypriot Minister for Foreign Affairs during the referendum period. Thus, this gesture by the Marketway Research company towards the 'No' camp is not really surprising. Ms Lillikas, during our interview, furthermore explains her involvement and why this campaign was different from any other campaign projects for her and for the company:

¹¹⁰ Interview with Tahsin Ertugruloglu on 22 July 2008, during the referendum campaign Mr Ertugruloglu was the opposition party's Foreign Minister at that time.

¹¹¹ Interview with Hasan Tacoy, Lekfosa Ilcebaskani (Head of Nicosia District of the UBP party), on 3 August 2008

¹¹² Interview with Ms Barbara Lillikas, the founder and owner of the Marketway Strategy, PR and Advertising company, on 2 August 2008

...we as professionals [when] we are talking about the formula that we can apply – no matter whether it is a product or service – at the end of the day, we have to meet our campaign objectives. However, this was beyond that this was affecting the lives of the people, not only us who were working on the campaign, but also lives of our children, grandchildren and everyone else. So, we felt that we were not working ‘them-us’ as the Marketway company and the client, but working as people who were concerned about the future and felt responsible for our part in contributing a little or even a significant bit towards establishing a future, where there will be a future for the generations... I firmly believed and I still do that the plan was not benefiting anybody’s interest but only the political interests of certain situations...[such as] Turkey’s progress towards its accession to the EU... because I was personally involved, I could not personally sit as objectively, and I felt that I had to take a stand.

On the contrary, the ‘Yes’ camp did not have any time for fundraising activities, because the DISY party, the main leading ‘No’ camp political party, had an internal division over whether to support the Plan or not. After lengthy disputes, a majority of the party members voted to support the reunification.

We were only the political party that came out in favour of the ‘Yes’ vote. That is one of the most important facts. There were also a number of NGOs and citizen activists¹¹³.

This late decision and the internal division of the party significantly affected the ‘Yes’ campaigning process. Subsequent to this, a lack of time and financial constraints drastically influenced the way in which the ‘Yes’ campaign was organised. Mr Harris C. Geogriades, a deputy spokesperson of the DISY party, has explained this as:

I cannot say that we were campaigning like we normally run campaigns in parliamentary or presidential elections. First of all, there was an issue of party discipline. We took a ‘Yes’ vote by acknowledging and respecting contrary view holders at the same time in the party and in our supporters. We considered this when campaigning. Secondly, the very short time frame was another crucial factor that did not really allow us to run a fully fledged campaigning for a ‘Yes’ outcome. The third and the final restriction was the financial aspect. Basically, the ‘Yes’ campaign was run with a significantly low budget. The party had no funds at all at its

¹¹³ Interview with Geogriades, 2008.

disposal to throw into the campaign, so how we campaigned was basically by coordinating volunteers and activists' activities. So, under this very difficult campaigning climate, our campaign was rather basic.

Another commonality between both sides' referendum campaigns was the Cypriot print media's approach towards the political campaigns. Cross-nationally, the print media had an outspoken and forthright editorial stance and the decision of the print media institutions influenced the relationship, news framing and the balance coverage in their referendum news reporting. As mentioned in the news reporting analysis section, the Cypriot print media, particularly *Kıbrıs* newspaper from the north and *Simerini* from the south, did not accept requests to publish the political advertising of the 'No' camp and the 'Yes' camp respectively.

In addition to this, three of the political campaigns' communication exhibit similarities in terms of political campaign theme and strategy adaptation: the 'Yes' and 'No' camps in South Cyprus and the 'No' camp in the North. These three political campaigns designed their campaign concept and themes by drawing a thematic issue agenda from the Plan itself in order to put forward compelling arguments to persuade the voters. However, the 'Yes' camp in North Cyprus, which exhibits essential differences in its theme and strategy design, focused on the 'future and the future benefits of the Plan for the next generations' in the case of saying 'Yes' to the Plan.

Cross-national political campaigners had 'priority and privilege' in terms of news coverage, editorial support and in news framing by some groups of news media organisations during the referendum campaign. In particular, the 'No' camp in the South and the 'Yes' camp in the North immensely enjoyed the full support of powerful news organisations; for example, *Simerini* and *Kıbrıs* respectively. Consequently the counterpart camps were treated disadvantageously and hence its discretionary power to influence their news agenda was very unlikely. However, those endorsements eased the task of the political campaigners that were of the

same opinion as the press and endowed them with power to crystallise the Cypriot public opinion even more strongly.

During the referendum campaigning process, various types of campaign activities demonstrated characteristics common to each side of the political camps. For example one of the most important features was the speech of each side's leader on national television, and their highly emotional appearances which ended with tears in their eyes when they were calling on their citizens to vote 'No'. More interestingly, both leaders in their speech emphasised the same concerns, such as 'sovereignty' and 'independence'. During his highly emotional and tearful speech, the former president Mr Papadoupolos said:

I have been elected by you to represent a nation, but if the outcome of the referendum election is going to be 'Yes', then I will be representing a "community"¹¹⁴.

Secondly, a typical traditional media communication strategy approach was employed, such as the use of outside billboards, radio and television political debate programmes, numerous rally organisations and finally, unlike most developed western countries and American campaigns, visiting villages and the traditional coffee houses to discuss the Plan where the atmosphere is more personal and intimate. This particular political communication strategy represents the traditional route of Cypriot politics. It is unlike American campaigning, for example in the case of Barack Obama's Presidential election campaign, where the intention of meeting at coffee houses was to provide a photo opportunity and provide an image that a politician listens to ordinary citizens and does not live within the world of a top hierarchy. By contrast, in Cyprus, political leaders and parties have traditionally visited villages, and will continue to do so where it is a

¹¹⁴ President speech to nation on 7 April 2004. This information is obtained from *Kıbrıs* newspaper, 8 April 2004.

custom to arrange a meeting with the local public and talk to politicians in a comfortable atmosphere while drinking Turkish coffee¹¹⁵.

Another resemblance between the sides is the “issues agenda” of the camps amongst the three political campaigns, the ‘Yes’ and ‘No’ camps in South and the ‘No’ camp in the North. These campaigns more or less focused on the same issue agendas, such as security, governance, Turkish troops, land exchange, etc. Conversely, the ‘Yes’ campaign’s focal point was “the future and the likely benefits that might be obtained in the case of voting ‘Yes’ for the future generations”.

Overall, the political campaign practice demonstrated a degree of professionalism in the Turkish and Greek Cypriot political campaigning as both side’s professional consultants were employed to design and run the campaigns. Additionally, their degree of ‘control’ in overall campaign design also indicates degree of professionalism. Last, but not least the application of ‘political marketing’ techniques to the campaign strategy planning and implementing was one of the indications of professionalism in political campaigning in Cyprus.

The next section of the thesis outlines cross-national political camps’ campaigning activities in order to set the media agenda, and subsequently the public agenda, during the referendum campaigning period. This section is particularly important as it enables us to comprehend the ways in which political campaigns were organised and what kinds of sophisticated communication techniques they used to influence the news agenda and the public agenda. Also, this analysis provides further indication on the level of professionalism in political campaigning at the referendum election.

¹¹⁵ Although Greeks and Greek Cypriots might call it Greek coffee or Cypriot coffee, it is known worldwide as Turkish coffee. Like with so many other things, this is an area where both nations are fighting over its ownership.

CHAPTER 9

ANALYSIS OF POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS' ACTIVITIES INTERVIEWS WITH POLITICAL CONSULTANTS

POLITICAL CAMPAIGN COMMUNICATION ANALYSIS

This section explores the cross-national process of campaign communication at the referendum. It aims to outline the 'Yes' and 'No' camps' campaign strategies and agendas. To do this, interviews with campaign managers and politicians were conducted. Based on the obtained data, both sides' political campaign agendas and their relationship with journalists during the course of referendum also documented. So, this analysis consequently permits an assessment of the effectiveness of the political campaigns at the referendum election.

POLITICAL CAMPAIGN COMMUNICATION IN NORTH CYPRUS

THE 'YES' CAMP

As previously mentioned, the leading political campaigning party for the 'Yes' camp was the CTP-BG party. All the other parties' activities to support 'Yes', eventually merged their forces under this campaign umbrella. Hence, in this analysis I only examined the efforts of this political campaign. The party sought a Turkish company to run the referendum campaign for them as an effective way to obtain the majority of the Turkish Cypriot votes. Subsequently, the CTP-BG party hired the KOLONI advertising company to run its political advertising and the Point Istanbul PR agency to cooperate with it. The interviews with the communications professionals revealed that they had complete autonomy over the design and implementation process of the CTP-BG political party's referendum communication campaign. The political campaign design process (e.g. strategies and tactics, message development and advertising creation) was not interfered with by the CTP-BG political actors, by party members or even by the political party leader. All prepared forms of communication messages (visual, audio, written) and ideas (public meetings, conferences, visiting villages, etc.) were proposed to the CTP-BG political party's referendum campaign committee members like a professional business proposal and all the communication strategies, messages and ideas

suggested by the KOLONI Advertising Agency and CTP-BG political party's communication staffs were accepted without any changes being demanded (Interviewee A 2006).

In the 2004 Cyprus Referendum, the 'Yes' campaign messages were communicated to voters in multiple ways by disseminating them through every possible communication medium. These can be outlined as: television; radio; print media (newspapers); street posters; direct mailing; conference organisation; public meetings; meeting arrangement according to target audiences/voters (such as meetings for youths and different job categories and visits to villages by the political party members and leader); concerts; organising meetings in coffee houses; organising flag-waving events around big roundabouts, as well as web designing to disseminate campaign's messages on the internet to wider (international) audiences (Interviewee A 2006).

The 'Yes' campaign preparation process was described as:

First, public opinion polls were carried out for the CTP-BG political party by private opinion poll agencies in order to understand Turkish Cypriot voters' perceptions, expectations, and feelings towards the Annan Plan. Afterwards, based on findings from opinion polls, 'the concept and strategy of the referendum campaign' were decided by political consultants.

At the final stage of campaign preparation, professional advertisers and some Turkish Cypriot campaigners became involved in the process of graphic design, words, slogans, and colours based upon the previously decided campaign's concept and strategy.

This professionally designed political campaign represents the 'developmental phase' of the political campaigning process in North Cyprus. Like post-industrial countries such as the US and the UK, this campaign also demonstrated a characteristic of 'political marketing' – identifying the mood of voters and accordingly implementing campaign strategy. Furthermore, it is possible to claim

that the 'Yes' political campaign exercise blended in various elements of different phases of political campaigning techniques in the political campaigning designing process. For example, the political campaign incumbents used a variety of communication tactics that epitomised pre-modern campaigning such as local public meetings and local canvassing and party meetings, and also demonstrated modern campaigning methods for example: occasional opinion polls; news management; almost daily press conferences and finally post-modern campaigning features such as a higher costs of professional consultants and nationally-coordinated but decentralised operations.

Campaign Strategy

The campaign strategy was designed based on the information obtained from the market research conducted. The market research, both qualitative and quantitative, brought to light the significant discovery of voters' attitudes towards the referendum and likely future solution. The outcomes enabled the campaign team to compose a campaign strategy emphasising the *"future dreams of the Turkish Cypriot public; their desires, hopes, but particularly their aspirations for their children's future"* (Interviewee A 2006). By focusing on 'the future and hence the solution', the campaign was designed to acquire the continuity of already decided 'Yes' voters' support, obtain the support of undecided and swing voters and finally persuade the Turkish settlers to vote yes. This was prepared under the campaign strategy title of *"Connect Yourself to the World"*. Within this broad campaign strategy, 'the theme of the solution being based on hopes for the future', was injected into the 'Yes' political campaign communication messages. Hence, the concept of the campaign was to exhibit all the possible positive outcomes of saying yes at the referendum election by using all communication mediums. Consequently, these positive outcomes were strongly emphasised in the 'Yes' camp's political advertising campaign. The subsequent adaptation of these sophisticated marketing techniques within the 'Yes' campaign reveals the first application of a political marketing concept in the context of Cyprus politics. Although the first professional employment of image-making and political

marketing were apparent in the 2003 general election of the CTP-BG political party campaign in North Cyprus, at the referendum election campaign, the application of political marketing techniques such as targeted advertising strategy and message design, segmentation and positioning of the product (in this context, the 'Yes' camp versus its opponent), and so on were used extensively for the first time ever.

As stated previously, the 'Yes' camp had started well in advance to campaign towards the referendum. The first campaigning attempt occurred as early as 2003 where the video clip of EY HAYAT (Oh Life) song was sung by Sevingül Bahadır and broadcasted on the national government television channel. This song was integrated within the general campaign strategy of the CTP-BG 'Yes' campaign. It aimed to provide "a hope, national togetherness, and a hope at national level" (Marketing Türkiye, 2004) after the campaign incumbents discovered that there was a big question mark in the minds of Turkish Cypriot public. The song was cheerful and contained positive lyrics to boost the hopes of the public for the future. Hence the video clip was shot in such a way that it would catch and reflect the same feeling. It was shot of course in North Cyprus where a large number of people were employed to demonstrate that there was a high level of attendance in the 'Yes' camp demonstration. The video clip ends with a very strong emotional punch to further convey the sense of insecurity that Turkish Cypriots felt in reference to future generations by showing a close-up shot of a child saying 'for me mummy'. What is more interesting is that, Vakıf Bank and the state television BRT funded this video clip. Additionally, BRT produced hundreds and thousands of copies of this song on a CD and delivered it to the public. Inside the CD single [?], there is a statement that "this has been produced by BRT which aims to contribute to achieving nationwide peace". This music video CD was given free to all private television channels on the premise that they should broadcast it. And not surprisingly, the music video was broadcasted at BRT free-of-charge many times.

The 'Yes' camp was so sure that the UN-led efforts would be concluded as a call to hold referendum that they decided to introduce another follow up communication strategy by creating "fake news" through both audio and visual formats and

broadcast it through the Turkish Cypriot media, particularly the state channel of BRT TV and radio stations. This activity started one month before the actual start date of the referendum campaign. The campaigners organised and ran this “fake news” in the format of real news programme, but instead of actual news stories, put on air the ‘Yes’ camp messages. In order to make the events appear even more reliable, the political campaign incumbents used the communication channel’s own news readers and studio to create the “fake news”. What is more, each “fake news” announcement was concluded with one of the campaign slogans: ‘For this news to become real, all you need to do is to say yes’.

Campaign Objective and Target Audiences

The aim of the campaign was to gain a ‘Yes’ vote from over 65% of the Turkish Cypriot voters in the referendum election. Furthermore, three main audiences were identified as targets for the campaign objective¹¹⁶:

- (1) Turkish Cypriots and Settlers
- (2) The CTP-BG political party
- (3) Turkish public opinion

Campaign Management

The ‘Yes’ campaign was organised and run by two arms: on the one hand, PR professionals and on the other, advertisers. The campaigners used typical communication media as had never been seen before in Cypriot political campaigns. Firstly, the ‘Yes’ campaign started with the launch of ‘political announcements’. They were in an identical format to Turkish Cypriot newspapers and were either placed on the cover page or the last page of the newspapers as a source of daily news coverage.

¹¹⁶ *Marketing Türkiye Magazin*, May Issue, 2004

Political Advertising

The 'Yes' campaign advertised extensively and endorsed its political adverts in national newspapers, particularly *Kıbrıs* paper. In addition to local media usage, various media channels such as Açık Radyo and NTV news broadcast from Turkey were also utilised. Additionally, other mass communication channels were also used to advertise the 'Yes' campaign's political adverts (Akdeniz 2008)¹¹⁷. The most widely-used communication media were television and newspapers. However, radio channels were also utilised together with the Internet (particularly news portals).

In these adverts, the main theme and slogan was:

"Bir Evet'le, Dünyaya Bağlanın" which means:
"With one Yes, Connecting to the World".

The emphasis was on the 'future' of Cyprus, which is why the main theme of the campaign was: "Connecting to the World". In addition, the following advertising slogans were produced:

"Evet Bizi Dünyaya Bağlar": Yes Connects us to the World.

"Korkma, Evet de, Dünya Seninle": Do Not be Scared! Say 'Yes', the World is with You.

"Sandıktan Evet Çıkacak, Kıbrıs Dünyaya Bağlanacak": The Outcome from the Election Box will be Yes, Cyprus will be Connected to the World.

"Evet'le Yeni Güne Gunaydin, Dünyaya Bağlanın": With Yes, Good Morning to a New Day, Get Connected to the World.

"Hersey Çocuklar İçin...": Everything is for Our Children.

¹¹⁷ Interview with Onursal Akdeniz, on 16.07.2008

What is more, two of the CTP-BG political party's 2003 general election campaign's most memorable sound-bite slogans were also used in the referendum campaign. These were:

“Benim için evet de anne”: Say Yes for Me Mum

“Yes be Annem”: Yes My Mum¹¹⁸

In these adverts, the use of logos and colours strengthened the symbolism of the slogans. For example: the image of the island of Cyprus, without the borderlines shown (see Appendix 4) was used to produce a hanging open/closed sign for a shop in the colour green. Green is associated with the CTP-BG political party as it is the corporate colour of the party, but is also associated with Cyprus, because Cyprus is known as “the Green Island” among local people. These slogans, logos, and visually communicated images, together with plenty of other signs and symbols both explicitly and implicitly referenced various characteristics and values of Turkish Cypriot political culture. These strategically formulated slogans and images contained “hidden cultural meanings and values” (Interviewee A, 2006). Furthermore, they embraced the party ideology on the ‘Cyprus Issue’: to reunify and live together with Greek Cypriots which was reproduced in the images of some political adverts as “no borderline” on the map of Cyprus. This indicates culturally constructed meaning for the particular political culture. However, a careful consideration was applied to the formation of semiotic meaning in the constructions of the political advertising and this was outlined as:

The potential target audiences of the ‘Yes’ campaign which emerged from our political opinion poll results demonstrated that there are Turkish Cypriot voters as well as Turkish settlers who also support the political party and henceforth the ‘Yes’. So, we did not produce any messages that contained obvious references to Cypriot culture. Instead, we produced a ‘Cyprus map’ and it was used as a logo. With this logo, we tried to communicate a hidden ‘Cypriotness’ message. Furthermore, we used

¹¹⁸ In here, the word “be” is not possible to be translated due to being Turkish Cypriot dialect characteristic.

‘characters that belong to Cyprus and Cypriot people’, and colours that represent Cyprus, like green. Through these techniques, we created a hidden ‘Cypriotness’ message and used the values, attitudes and language of Cypriot culture in the campaign’s strategic theme, concept and advertising design¹¹⁹.

Kitchen and Pelsmacker (2004) state that expectations and attitudes towards advertising can be different because of cultural differences. For example, while Japanese people favour emotion-based soft sell advertising, Americans and Europeans prefer a logical and direct-selling approach to advertising. The frequent use of the word “Mum” in the political adverts of the ‘Yes’ camp appeals to the collectivist value orientation in Turkish Cyprus. As the above political adverts’ messages contain the values, attitudes and the language of the Turkish Cypriot culture, they are more likely to appeal to, and therefore influence, the Turkish Cypriot electorate.

Overall, the use of political marketing techniques, as Scammell (1995) claims in the example of Prime Minister Thatcher’s three election victories in the UK, enabled the ‘Yes’ campaign to identify their target voters, offering strategies, tailored appeals and slogans to win them over and vote yes. In this political campaign, the successful and effective designs of political advertising depended on the knowledge of the local cultural climate and use of cultural values. The use of the historical metaphor, “Connecting to the World”¹²⁰ as a strap line, used alongside many visual images, created and enhanced the targeting towards the Turkish Cypriot voters. Thus, the ‘Yes’ political campaigning was culturally case-specific.

¹¹⁹ Ibid, 2006.

¹²⁰ The “Connecting to the World” strap line was derived to encapsulate the prevailing beliefs of Turkish Cypriots. These could be summarised as the feeling that fifty years’ suffering is enough in terms of not internationally being recognised as a ‘legitimate’ state, except by Turkey, and the need to live like other nation states with the abolishing of all embargoes by all means (economical, social, political). It further reflects a long-lasting desire for Turkish Cypriots to have the ideological and political freedom to rule themselves without any political and military influence from motherland Turkey. And maybe most importantly, the strap line alludes to the desire for freedom of travel for Turkish Cypriots. All these messages reflect the majority of Turkish Cypriots’ perspectives on the ‘Cyprus Issue’. Thus, all these messages were embedded in the ‘Yes’ camp’s political advertising.

Last but not least, it is important to point out that although the ‘Yes’ campaign expenditure has never been released due to the lack of accountability in the political system and election law, political parties do not have to publish their campaign expenditure. Cross-nationally, political advertising spending at the referendum campaign by far outweighed the ‘No’ campaign political advertising spending. The evidence is documented at the newspapers’ content analysis chapter with the quantity of political adverts published in the newspapers.

Political Public Relations (PPR) Activities

Given the general importance attributed to the political advertising in campaigning, political public relations was also integrated within the overall campaign management effort to enhance the synergetic effect of campaign communication strategy. The POINT ISTANBUL PR agency was employed to run the PPR activities. Mr Tamer Altunay¹²¹, who worked as one of the PR professionals in the election campaign, has claimed that the overall campaign preparation process for the referendum took about two months. This process, of course, included the campaign strategy planning and advertising strategy planning. “To prepare ourselves for this campaign as communications professionals, we analysed the previous election results, collected statistical information, talked to civic associations and unions” (Ibid). The PR agency ran press briefings on a regular basis to news editors, journalists, and local and Turkish reporters and the international press to express the views of Turkish Cypriots. Additionally, daily media coverage was observed, and any changes in the media narratives were highlighted to be used within the campaign rhetoric (Ibid). Furthermore, the role of the agency was expressed as:

We have attended all the meetings, especially advertising ones, however, our focus within the ‘Yes’ campaign was on the media communication planning and publicity¹²².

¹²¹ Interview with Tamer Altunay, held in Istanbul, on 6 September 2008.

¹²² Ibid, 2008.

What is more, the 'Yes' camp organised a wide range of events from daily press conferences to briefings, from interviews with the Turkish journalists touring the island, and these were harmonised to achieve the outlined PR objectives and thereafter the overall campaign aim. It is very apparent that this professional body of the campaign used high profile PR activities. Mr Altunay (2008) expressed the objectives of political PR as:

The core concept of the campaign was lifting isolations. Hence, within this campaign we aimed to change dogmatic thinking or, in other words, to provide information and create awareness among the Turkish public and Turkish news media about the Turkish Cypriots regarding how and under what conditions they are saying yes to the referendum campaign.

Target Audiences of PPR:

The planning of the PR activities began with the identification of the right target audiences for the campaign. For this, the PR professionals defined two target audiences:

Mainly we decided on two target audiences, namely Turkish and Turkish Cypriot news media. However, as the campaign attracted huge attention in the international arena, we indirectly also aimed to reach the international news media¹²³.

PPR Strategies and Tactics

The 'Yes' campaign's PPR activities can be summarised as:

- Daily press briefings to both local (Turkish Cypriot) and Turkish media.
- Informing and arranging the interview demands of journalists with Prime Minister Mehmet Ali Talat.
- An almost daily demonstration or rally, which was organised by either the PR firm or the political parties themselves. The intention was to inform the local media (Turkish Cypriot) about these activities.
- Up-to-date information was provided to the media regarding the progress of the referendum plan.

¹²³ Ibid, 2008.

- Press kits were prepared which included general factual information about Cyprus for the Turkish journalists, such as current political situations, economic, trade and workforce, etc.
- Surveys and news analysis were conducted.
- Political news analysis was conducted on a regular basis, regarding President R. Denktash and Prime Minister Mehmet Ali Talat.
- On the 5 April 2004, Turkey's Justice Minister and Government spokesperson Cemil Çiçek produced a report, which turned into a little booklet, under seven headings which outlined the positive points of the Annan Plan to the Members of Parliament and journalists. This report was later distributed to journalists and all the news media institutions.
- A tour of the Karpaz Peninsula organised for Turkish journalists brought in from Turkey; they especially travelled to the parts where it was considered that there would be no vote..
- A demonstration was organised in Nicosia under the title of "Kıbrıs'ta Çözüm ve AB Üyeligi – Solution and EU Membership in Cyprus".
- A conference was organised in Nicosia under the title of "Çözüme Doğru Kıbrıs – Cyprus Towards a Solution" which was broadcast on almost every news television channel.
- A demonstration was organised by "This Country is Ours Platform" on the 15 April 2004 in Nicosia under the title of 'Yes to the Referendum'.
- On the 17 April 2004, both sides' 'Yes' camps organised an event under the title of "A United Cyprus is A New Life" at the conference centre of the capital city of Nicosia (Greek side). In this event, bi-communal music choruses performed in Turkish and Greek, and Greek and English. There were also banners displayed which had the slogan of "Nobody can prevent the solution in Cyprus".
- On the 23 of April 2004, a joint press briefing was arranged at the Ledra Palace Hotel, the buffer zone of the UN, by Turkish and Greek Cypriot 'Yes' camps and called for a 'Yes to the referendum for the full membership of the EU within the existence of the whole of Cyprus'.

One of the striking differences from other referendums in the world is that both Turkish and Greek Cypriot 'Yes' camps united their workforces to facilitate a 'yes' vote in both electorates. On the side of 'Yes' camps, were also external forces, such as Mr Verheugen and Mr de Soto, UN special negotiators for Cyprus, who put in a great deal of effort to explain, especially to the Greek Cypriot voters, why to vote yes. They attended various meeting and discussion programmes and composed speeches with positive messages on the Plan to enhance the voice of

the 'Yes' camp on the south side of the island, where all the public opinion measurements were indicating low support for a 'yes'.

Overall, the campaign was mainly a market-led campaign, as most of the activities were designed based on the findings of market research. In the 'Yes' campaign, this was particularly evident with the organisation of rallies and demonstrations; they took centre stage of the campaign. Afterwards, the campaign team obtained information from their own market research analysis that the most influential aspect on the Turkish Cypriot public were rallies and large demonstrations (Interviewee A, 2006).

THE 'NO' CAMP

One of the significant differences between the 'Yes' and 'No' camps was that the 'No' camp was designed and run by the UBP political party members' efforts. The communications effort, where the team of party volunteers operated alongside the "Varolus ve Dayanisma Hareketi – Existence and Solidarity Movement", significantly lacked a professional campaign design especially when compared to a very professional 'Yes' campaign. Similarly to the 'Yes' camp in South Cyprus, the 'No' camp in the North was decentralised and initiated as a "leader-oriented" campaign strategy. President Rauf Denktash was the key political activist in the 'No' camp and had pursued a media-centred communication approach. However, it is necessary to state that Denktash's actual focus was oriented around the persuasion of Turkish politicians and the military. Hence, he organised various visits to mainland Turkey in order to gain the support of the Turkish Government and the supporters of the status quo. Yet he faced the harsh reality that the AKP political party had changed the forty years foreign policy of the Turkish Government and the hard-line nationalist status quo support.

Campaign Management and Strategy

Compared to the opposition camp, the efforts and professional campaign management of the 'No' camp fell seriously short. Admittedly, a good referendum campaign communication was not sufficient to shift the majority of voters' opinion in such a short period of time. There was a lack of funding which limited the capability of the 'No' camp to employ and run a professional communication campaign and thus fight more strongly against a highly professionally run 'Yes' campaign (Ertugruloglu 2008). This consequently influenced the design of the 'No' campaign, with the campaign and communication strategies determined within UBP party politics. This has been described thus:

During the referendum campaign, due to the fact that we did not believe that the plan would have brought a permanent solution to the island, and as it would have rejected the rights of Turkey over Cyprus, we sought every party affiliate's opinions and suggestions on how we could express our reasons for a 'No' to the Plan. To decide this, we held various meetings¹²⁴.

What is apparent here is that the campaign significantly lacked the employment of political marketing principles and sophisticated marketing research techniques that could have better understood the electorates' opinions and therefore reached them meaningfully by implementing clear campaign message design and strategy.. Once again, like its counterpart, the 'Yes' camp in the South, the 'No' camp was showing the characteristics of a decentralised campaign communication operation. The campaign was prepared and managed by the UBP political party's MPs, who would have contributed at their optimum capability based on their knowledge and personal experiences that they had gained from their previous election campaigns. All this caused the 'No' camp side to suffer from a lack of a proper determination and implementation of a co-ordinated campaign communication.

¹²⁴ Interview with Tahsin Ertugruloglu, Chairman of the UBP opposition political party, on 22 July 2007

Despite this, the 'No' camp built-up a 'leader-centred' campaign towards the end of the referendum campaigning period and united its power with that of the coalition of NGOs. As President Denktash was a high profile person, he was at the centre stage of the many campaign activities, and acted as a key figure. Particularly, his service in the Presidency of TRNC for almost 30 years ensured high media attention and continuous media coverage during the referendum election. It can be said that President Denktash quickly became the 'No' camp leader with his speeches, declarations, meetings arranged with Turkish politicians and the military, and the arranging of, and/or cooperating in the organising of rallies in Turkey as well as the TRNC. Although the activities of the 'No' camp, particularly those of President Denktash, led to some interest in the media, a more centralised management of the decision-making process would certainly have helped the 'No' camp to assure a high percentage of a 'no' vote at the referendum election.

Communication Strategy

The communication strategy of the 'No' camp can be described as providing a 'factual and rational debate' whilst integrating the emotions of 'nationalism' and 'sense of sovereignty' into the campaign messages. The main campaign theme was:

I will say No, because this Plan presents an enduring spectre of the island being ruled by Greek Cypriots¹²⁵.

The campaign messages intended to attack the opponent camp and highlight 'the flaws and traps of the Plan'. Thus, the 'No' camp's campaigning presents a 'negative' campaigning pattern.

¹²⁵ Interview with Hasan Tacoy, the UBP Nicosia District Leader and MP, but currently he is the Minister of Public Works and Transportation in the government, on 3 August 2009.

Campaign Communication Messages and Political Advertising

Unlike its counterpart, the 'No' camps were weak and too financially restricted to employ professional consultants to prepare the political campaign communications. This significant drawback left the 'No' camps' political campaign planning in the hands of a few politicians, who had some degree of experience in campaign designing. Because of this, the 'No' campaign demonstrated patterns of pre-modern campaigning. More importantly, the 'No' campaign did not have a strategically prepared set of goals and strategies for political advertising and political public relations. As mentioned, because of financial limitation the 'No' campaign significantly suffered in fighting against the intensive political advertising campaign of the 'Yes' camp. Only a handful political advertising was placed in some newspapers and they were funded by NGOs and/or movements and President Denktash himself.

The UBP party, the leading 'No' campaigning organisation, organised a press briefing on 8 April 2004 to outline the 15 reasons why they would say 'no' to the Plan and why voters should also reject the Plan. Some of these key messages were converted into slogans and used during public meetings and demonstration. The 'No' camps' campaign messages emphasised the following points:

- The Plan does not offer a solution on the basis of an 'equal and sovereign' state.
- It does not satisfy the Turkish Cypriot public's need for security and the continuation of Turkey's guarantor right is not clear cut.
- With the proposed new map of united Cyprus, over 50,000 people would be obliged to migrate.
- It is not outlined in detail when, where, under which conditions, or who will be funding the migration of those people to a new location.
- The big problem of compensation for the loss of property and land is not properly stated, nor who will be responsible for paying this billion dollar bill.

- The solution for the rehabilitation problem is only outlined in abstract terms and again financial funding of the proposed solution is not based on a robust foundation.
- On the subject of property and land, the Turkish Cypriot public will greatly suffer within the proposed social and economic system.
- The proposed Plan stipulates the complete governing of four Turkish Cypriot villages, namely Yenierenkoy, Dipkarpaz, Sipahi, and Adacay, in the Karpaz Peninsula. Additionally, there will be no restriction of the amount of Greek Cypriot settlement in those villages.
- The Plan offers an opportunity for those Turkish Cypriots who are first relatives and accompanied by those aged over 65 to live in the North permanently after two years.
- The Plan imposes an obligation on Turkish Cypriots to prepare and supply a list of 45,000 Turkish Cypriot citizens' names to the UN, which is against the TRNC law.
- The exchange period is short, and consequently it will create an adoption problem.
- Derogation offers in the Plan have been removed with the pressure of Greek Cypriots. Additionally, the proposed agreement does not fully secure that the Plan will become a primary law of the EU.
- Without Turkish Cypriots' inputs and agreements, it is expected that they will sign 131 new law articles.
- Last but not least, external forces and political parties that are in favour of the Plan compel Turkish Cypriots to call a referendum which is against Turkish Cypriot constitutional law, as well as getting rid of the sovereign TRNC.

The campaign encouraged supporters of the 'No' campaign to state:

- I am saying 'No', because the rights that are given with this Plan will be demolished under the norms of the EU.

- I am saying ‘No’, because I am not sure how and in what ways the 9000 page long prepared plan by the EU and the Greek Cypriot administration will influence our future¹²⁶.

In addition to this, the NGOs and Movement’s ‘No’ campaigning used more precise and succinct campaign slogans:

“Rum Hakimiyetine Hayır”: NO to the Greek Cypriot Hegemony.

“Özgürlüğümüz Satılık Degildir”: Our Freedom Is Not For Sale.

“Hayır Ülkemizi Mezara Sokacak”: No will Put our Country into a Grave.

PPR Activities

Unlike the ‘Yes’ camps, the ‘No’ camps were not prepared well in advance for the possibility that there could be a referendum. It could be that President Denktash, who had left the negotiating table, had assumed that both sides would never come to an agreement for a referendum. Thus, with this opinion in mind and with a lack of financial resources, it left only days to prepare the referendum campaign. This campaign exercise perhaps, not too surprisingly, did not lead the ‘No’ camps or its volunteers to the outcome they had perceived. Principally, the political public relations activities of the ‘No’ camps were planned and organised to respond and compete with the activities of the ‘Yes’ camps, in particular the organisation of rallies and roundabout gatherings.

The ‘No’ campaigners had to confront two issues in the initial process of political advertising design: the lack of professional input and financial constraints. This is contrary to the ‘Yes’ campaign, which received considerably more money to spend on political advertising and which enjoyed a highly professional input, enabling it to produce an effective and innovative advertising campaign. What is more, the ‘Yes’

¹²⁶ Interview with Tacoy, 2008

campaigners also had to cope with an initial significantly low 'Yes' figure in the polls. All of this made it an uphill struggle for the less professional and ill-prepared 'No' campaigners. However, the 'No' camps managed to put together a relatively good campaign, considering the difficult circumstances, and put forward some quite successful political PR events. The 'No' camps' PPR campaign activities can be outlined as:

- President R. Denktash subsidised the publication of 'No' brochures. He additionally personally attended meetings, demonstrations, television programmes and finally arranged interviews/talks/briefings with journalists and various political actors to explain the reason for voting 'No'.
- The 12 organisations that were united under the movement of "Independence Alliance" published a declaration and called for a 'No' vote, on 4 April 2004.
- On 7 April 2004, Turkish Farmers United organised concerted activity under the slogan of "Topraksiz Vatan Olmaz, Turkiyesiz Kibris Turku Var Olmaz – Without A Land Cannot Be A Country, Without Turkey, Turkish Cypriots Cannot Continue to Exist" to endorse a 'No' vote.
- President Denktash attended many demonstrations in Turkey which were organised by his supporters and Turkish political alliances. For example, on 18 April 2004, he attended a mass meeting which was titled "Kibris Mitingi – Cyprus Meeting" in Silifke, Turkey.
- The 'No' camp organised a meeting at the International Fair Area in Nicosia under the title of "Logic, History, Sentiment and Honour, Approve of a NO vote" on 22 April 2004.
- The biggest and most crowded event organised by the 'No' camp was implemented on 23 April 2004: a mass demonstration in the capital city of Nicosia. It was called 'Varolus ve Dayanisma – Existence and Solidarity'. Alongside Turkish Cypriot political leaders, Denktash and Eroglu, around 5,000 people and many important political figures from Turkey graced the 'No' camp with their presence. Attendees included DSP party leader and ex-Turkey Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit and his wife Rahsan Ecevit; MHP

general leader Devlet Bahçeli; YP general leader Sadettin Tantan; an old member of the MHP party, MP Nazif Okumus; BBP Leader Muhsin Yazıcıoğlu and SP party vice-deputy chair Ms Oya Akgönenc¹²⁷.

Overall, the approach and attitude of the Turkish Cypriot news media towards the 'No' camp – in some cases by refusing to deal with them and by not providing space in their news coverage, or the possibility to publish political advertising, was that it was a blundering campaign, and the 'No' camp did not gain much praise.

The 'No' camp appeal to voters was based on issues of sovereignty, national identity, independence, guarantorship, and not on the economic benefits that were championed by the 'Yes' camp. Hence, all the campaign activities such as press conferences, advertising, speeches, and public debates were centred on those basic issues. On a final note, the interview with the leader of opposition party and the 'No' camp revealed that:

Nowadays, political communication techniques are key features of modern politics and we, as a political party, were aware of the weakness of not being able to employ professional communication personnel in the referendum campaign¹²⁸.

In the next section, I outline Greek Cypriot 'Yes' and 'No' camps' political campaign activities during the Annan Plan referendum.

¹²⁷ *Radikal* newspaper (2004). Accessed from: www.radikal.com.tr, on 24 April 2004.

¹²⁸ Interview with Ertugruloglu, 2008.

POLITICAL CAMPAIGN COMMUNICATION IN SOUTH CYPRUS

The political campaign communication in South Cyprus exhibited a feature common to its counterpart in the north of the country. One side benefited from a highly professionally run campaign, while the other was faced with financial and time constraints during the campaigning process. But this time, it was the 'Yes' camp that had to compete against the exceptionally professionally organised campaign of the 'No' camp. Compared to its opponent, the efforts of the 'Yes' camp were undersized. As mentioned, this was caused by purely financial constraints, the internal division within the DISY political party over the backing of the Plan and, as a consequence of this, a lack of time to prepare the campaign. Subsequently, no professional communication company was hired for the 'Yes' camp to run their campaign, instead, as the only political party campaigning in favour of the referendum, DISY relied on the efforts of political party organisation, volunteers, activists and some NGOs in the campaigning process.

As happened on the north side of the island, the role and approach of the newspaper organisations towards the political camps influenced the way in which political campaigners ran their campaign communications. In particular, the 'Yes' camp was only supported by two newspaper institutions, *Politics* and *Alithia*¹²⁹. Furthermore, the 'Yes' camp was faced with restrictions from the news media in terms of time allocation. For example, on the national television channel of South Cyprus, RIK TV, the time allocation for each campaign was not balanced and "the total number of the related 'No' interviews was 123 whereas the 'Yes' campaigners had 89" (Alexandrou 2006: 48).

One of the interesting points concerning the political campaign was the active role of the Greek Orthodox Church. As Turkish Cypriots have a secular state and government, there is a constant effort to severely restrict the influence and role of 'religion' on politics and government. However, on issues affecting Greek Cypriots

¹²⁹ Interview with Geogiades, 2009.

there has always been a strong influence and active role by the Greek Orthodox Church, and the referendum election was no exception. Indeed, this was one of the most important differences between each side of the political camps.

THE 'YES' CAMPS

While the DISY political party was the only campaigning party in favour of the 'yes'¹³⁰, the 'Yes' camp was also backed by many individual politicians, volunteers, activists, academics, NGOs and movements. Among these there were vigorous campaigners however, arguably the most important one was the "United European Cyprus Platform", under the umbrella of which many political forces united. However, this did not happen until almost the end of the referendum campaign period. This platform was formed by the following political forces: the 'Movement of Political Modernisation'; Mr Lellos Dimitriades, former Mayor of Nicosia; the platform 'Yes to a Solution'; the 'Movement of Democratic Citizens for Europe'; the 'Power of a United Cyprus' movement; the Citizens' Initiative 'All Cyprus Together'; Mr Christodoulos Pericleous, Political Analyst; the left-wing politician, Mr Yiannis Ioannou, a member of the Green Party of Cyprus (Alexandrou 2006:38).

Campaign Management

Similar to the nature of the political campaign environment in North Cyprus, the 'Yes' campaign had about two weeks to organise a pro-solution campaign, whereas the 'No' camp had already been actively campaigning for years in the south. Furthermore, as stated earlier, the Greek Cypriot media did not dedicate 'equal' amount of coverage to the supporters of the 'Yes' camp. This was evident in one empirical research study which explicitly showed the correlation between voting at the referendum and the level of awareness about the Plan: "among those who did not know about the plan at all, 78% voted 'No' and only 22% voted 'Yes', [furthermore] among those who knew the Plan extremely well, only 60% voted

¹³⁰ Interview with Geogriades, 2009.

‘No’ while 40% voted ‘Yes’” (Lordos 2004). By looking at this result, it is possible to interpret that:

those who did not study the Plan much were influenced by the various negative comments which were being heard about it, whereas those who devoted more time and attention to the Plan discovered its positive elements and the various balances it seeks to maintain.

Additionally, Lordos (2004) concluded his finding by stating;

...We may therefore conclude that the problem with the UN Plan is not that it has not been thoroughly examined by Greek Cypriots.

Campaign Strategy

Every campaign needs a strategy to reach its stated objectives. The strategy entails positioning the campaign issue/candidate/policy of the political party and assigning resources wisely to maximise its strengths against the opposition party. In the ‘Yes’ campaign, the campaigners wanted to focus on “*highlighting the choice*”¹³¹. The party campaigners wanted to concentrate on the positive elements as opposed to the ‘No’ camp and wanted to emphasise the conflict-ridden reality of what would have happened in the case of having no solution on the island. In frank and honest words, this was expressed as:

This is what we have in our hand [the Plan], so we ought to compare the prospect of a far from perfect plan with a very bleak alternative, which would have been a continuation of the current situation on the island, continuation of the presence of the Turkish troops in the north and everything that is entailed by the current situation, basically. This would have caused a worse situation with a passage of the time and maybe, another better opportunity would not be granted. So the choice that we have to make is realistic and pragmatic – for our country and for our future generations.

The shortcomings of decentralised campaigning were apparent when the ‘Yes’ camp tried relentlessly to fight against the ‘No’ camps in the referendum

¹³¹ Interview with Harris C. Geogiades, 2009.

campaign. Subsequently, the 'Yes' camp tried to orientate the campaign around the key political figures. Indeed, it is fair to describe the 'Yes' camp as a 'leader-oriented' campaign. Of course, there were two major causes for this, also mentioned previously; financial and time constraints. During the pre-referendum campaign and during the actual referendum campaigning period, the two veteran former presidents of Greek Cyprus, Mr Glafkos Clerides and Dr George Vassiliou, took centre stage in the campaign. In addition to these high profile politicians, the current leader of the DISY political party, Mr Anastasiadis, Mr Takis Hadjidemetriou, a former head of the negotiation team for the EU accession for Cyprus, the AKEL MP and a former Minister of Transportation and Communication, Mr Kikis Kazamias, and another AKEL MP and Minister of the Interior, Mr Andreas Christou, were amongst the politicians who were also highly involved in the 'Yes' campaigning. Alongside these, former Attorney General, Mr Alekos Markides, who formed the political 'Regeneration Movement' and the spokesperson of the previous government, Mr Christos Styliandies, who created the 'Movement of Political Renovation', were amongst the key 'Yes' campaigners (Alexandrou 2006). Last but not least, one of the important key partners in the 'Yes' camp was the 'Movement of Democratic Citizens for Europe'. Because the 'Yes' camp was a decentralised organisation, the campaign advocates were offering two different campaign strategies. These movement campaign strategy efforts were focused on other 'issues' such as 'reunification', 'free movement and returning their property and lands', 'security', and 'de-militarisation'.

The 'Yes' Campaign Slogans and Messages

As the campaign activities were organised on an arbitrary or ad-hoc basis (Geogriades 2009), there was no central campaign message. However, the core intention of the campaign was to highlight the comparison of "what would happen after a 'Yes' vote and what will happen with a 'No' vote". So, Mr Geogriades (2009) expresses the core message of the campaign as:

A Future Solution for Our Future Life

Thus, overall the 'Yes' campaign aimed to convey information that would *"highlight the choice"* (Geogiades 2009). The political messages below demonstrate some examples that were used by the 'Yes' camp by the DISY leader Anastasiadis on the last few days of the referendum campaigning:

- "Each No vote, it constitutes one more stone on the wall of divided Cyprus".
- "Each No vote, it deprives of the return right of 122 thousands immigrants under the Greek Cypriot administration and many thousands under the administration of Turkish Cypriot authority".
- "Each No vote, it deprives of thousands of our immigrated or non-immigrated citizens' right of obtaining 1/3 their properties back and for rest of our citizens' to get any compensation for their properties".
- "Each No vote, it will abandon us in getting back 9% of our land".
- "Each No vote, it will strengthen the existence of a 45,000-strong Turkish army on the island".
- "Each No vote, will not only abolish 122,000 settlers, indeed, it will encourage new people to settle in".
- "Each No vote, it will remove the opportunity to get back all our churches, monasteries, and holy places".
- "Each No vote, it will mean enabling a pseudo state to come one step closer to a danger of becoming recognised"¹³².

In his speech, Mr Anastasiadis further claimed that "Each Yes Vote" would enable the following:

- "Each brave Yes vote, it will fracture the wall of invasion and division".

¹³² These messages are translated from Turkish to English by the author and obtained from TAK News Agency Archive, 18 April 2004.

- “Each brave Yes vote, it will register as a definite reunification and deal optimistically with the issues within the EU”.
- “Each Yes vote, it will open a space to build a future all together for our children and for us”.
- “Each Yes vote, it will save every mothers’ concern about losing the lives of their beloved sons, for nothing positive can be attained thereafter”.

Political Advertising

Although the ‘Yes’ camp ran some advertising campaigns, the number was considerably less than the ‘No’ camp. Mr Geogriades (2009) frankly, and even with some feeling of regret, stated:

We were running some promotions of the yes campaign but far less than the ‘No’ camp... The ‘No’ campaign was much more affluent than us and they were running television, radio, and electronic media messages, which we were unable to do.

What is more, although the publication request of the ‘Yes’ campaign adverts were not openly rejected by any press institutions, the explicit and strong support of the ‘No’ camps by some press organisations, such as the hard-line *Simerini* newspaper, created a negative atmosphere and feeling of ‘rejection’ towards the ‘Yes’ camp. Consequently, this could have influenced the strategic media planning for the ‘Yes’ camp. Ironically, the same problem occurred in the North for the ‘No’ camps. Several different political advertising slogans were used within the ‘Yes’ camp’s referendum campaign. Some of them were:

“NAI – YES”

“The Future is Now”

“My guarantee is Europe”

“A United Cyprus in Europe”

“Free Movement and Settlement”

PPR Activities

The ‘Yes’ camp accused the Greek Cypriot news media of ‘censoring their voices’, in particular by providing ‘imbalanced’ devotion of airtime and new coverage towards each camp. Although journalists admittedly confirmed their bias in the press editorial, it is not surprising to find evidence of ‘imbalanced’ referendum news coverage in Greek Cypriot television too – please see media content analysis section for further details – especially considering that Mr Papadopoluos owned 30% of the biggest media group, DIYAS. Indeed, there were also claims from the ‘Yes’ camp supporters that the government put journalists under pressure to support the ‘no’ vote in their news coverage. Thus, all these tools were in the hands of PR professionals to exploit their views and hence influence setting the agendas of both the media agenda and the public. Under such circumstances, the ‘Yes’ campaign benefited greatly in their attempt to influence the Greek Cypriots’ public opinion.

The PPR activities of the ‘Yes’ campaign during the referendum election entailed:

Demonstrations and Rallies

These were the most widely used and common features of the 2004 Cyprus referendum campaigns. And this was no exception in the ‘Yes’ campaign either. As these activities were relatively cheaper to run and brought more voices to the news media, the ‘Yes’ camp tried to utilise these activities as much as possible. Hence, relentless effort was put into organisation of mass demonstrations and rallies in order to activate higher participation within the ‘Yes’ campaign, to generate news, and subsequently to influence the Greek Cypriot electorate to vote ‘yes’. This was put into words by Geogriades (2008) as:

Some events were organised to generate free coverage in the press and in the electronic media. For instance, our campaign was gearing up to a big rally, a public event with an attendance of a number of keynote

speakers, let's say the leaders of political parties who were supporting the 'Yes' vote. This became one of the main events of the campaign.

Having been faced with the biased political decisions of the press, the political campaigners tried to create 'pseudo-events' to generate news to influence the press agenda and deliver their campaign messages to a wider spectrum of the electorate. For this, the 'Yes' campaign followed a 'marketing-oriented' strategy by, knowingly or not, focusing on the 'character and images of politicians', in particular, the previous two veteran presidents in Greek Cypriot politics. Political leaders engaged in various media-staged debates, however, the mass rallies and demonstrations constituted the main appeal of the 'Yes' camp towards the electorate.

In addition to this, to engage DISY supporters and other electorates, the 'Yes' camp relied on large numbers of activists, non-paid volunteers, various professionals (e.g., lawyers) and the political party members to mobilise the electorate. Predominantly, the non-paid volunteers and the youth political party members fought at the forefront of the campaign by delivering leaflets, brochures, and stickers at street junctions to drivers and pedestrians. Thus, it is possible to describe the 'Yes' campaigning as "personnel-intensive" (Espindola 2006) campaigning.

Booklets, Brochures, Leaflets and Stickers

In addition to demonstrations and rallies, the traditional methods of publicity, namely booklets, brochures, stickers, and leaflets were also produced in order to influence the formation of public opinion by the 'Yes' camp.

Booklets:

- Dr Vassiliou produced a booklet called *The Response to the Public Speech of the President* in order to reply to all of the President's points in his televised speech to the nation.

- *Ten reasons why to be sure about the Annan Plan* booklet was also produced by the 'Yes' camp and inserted in the *Phileleftheorous* newspaper.
- *Yes, No: Emergency Publication* was published by *Phileleftheorous* to convey information to the public in order to enable them to make their decision on the Plan (Alexandrou 2006).

Leaflets:

"I am Thinking, I am Thinking, and the harder I think, the more positive aspects there are" was one of the examples of the 'Yes' camp.

Stickers:

They were designed in various sizes and illustrated 'Yes' in three different languages: Greek, Turkish and English. For example: *"NAI, EVET, YES."* These stickers were designed to be attached either to t-shirts or to be stuck on shops, cars and lorries' windows (Alexandrou 2006).

Posters:

Many billboard posters were displayed at the side of motorways and at junctions, as well as at very busy central locations in the capital city of Nicosia.

"NAI" (YES) appeared by itself in huge, emboldened capital letters.

"Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots should Co-operate Together: vote for 'Yes'" – this poster was sourced by the "Movement of Democratic Citizens for Europe".

Additionally, the various PPR activities of the 'Yes' camp to influence the media and public agenda setting can be summarised as:

- On 19 April 2004 the 'Yes' camp organised a panel discussion at the Hilton Hotel in Nicosia to answer all the concerns of the Greek Cypriot public regarding the Annan Plan. In this panel, one of the key slogans of Mr Anastasiadies, "No opens the door to a Taksim¹³³" was introduced.
- Joint event organisation at Ledra Palace, the buffer zone area, with the attendance of 'The Political Modernisation Thinking Society', OPEK and 'This Country is Ours' from Turkish Cyprus, under the title "We are negotiating for a United Cyprus. We are making plans for the future," 21 April 2004.
- Also on 21 April 2004, Mr Verhenguen called for a 'Yes' vote in his press briefing.
- The political campaigners sent SMS text messages to DISY political party members, urging them to vote 'Yes' and encouraging them to increase the participation numbers in the upcoming rally of the 'United European Cyprus' platform, 22 April 2004.
- Also on 22 April 2004, a mass demonstration was organised by the 'United European Cyprus' platform in the famous Eleftheria Square of Nicosia. The slogans were "Hristofyas, You Too Come with Us" and "Do not be Scared Tasos, Resign".
- On 23 of April 2004, common press briefings were organised in the buffer zone of Ledra Palace Hotel. Under the title of "Within the Existence of All Cyprus, for the membership of the EU, 'Yes' to the referendum".
- A common press briefing for the 'This Country is Ours' platform and OPEK.
- The 'Yes' camp unified all the 'Yes' supporters under the umbrella of "United European Cyprus" platform and the former president Glafkos Clerides called for a 'Yes' vote under the slogan of "The Future is Now".
- A press briefing by Mr Anastasiadies in response to Tasos Papadopolous' speech in which he urged the Greek Cypriot public to vote 'No' in the referendum. The strap line of his speech which gained coverage in many

¹³³ Taksim is a nationalist right-wing political view of partition of the Cyprus and joining the Turkish Republic's political regime fully.

newspapers was “A response to the speech: It is an act intended to burn the Plan in a grave”.

The ‘Yes’ Camp’s Media Relations

The relationship with the mass media was ‘two-routed’: (1) press briefing exercises and (2) political debates and talk-show invitations by the news media institutions. This happened on TV channels and on radio talk shows excessively (Geogriades 2009). Further Mr Geogriades (2009) commented on the way in which Greek Cypriot media was unfair and biased towards them as:

The media organisations claimed that by inviting both sides’ participants to their discussion programmes they were providing balanced voices... however, there were indirect references to the true opinions of the media organisation. This was evident, for instance, in the evening news programmes by the way that they narrated the news about the referendum or when they were portraying the political events of the day. There was a clear indication in their narratives that they were supporting the ‘No’ vote.

Undeniably, this was the case especially when we take into consideration the uneven political support towards the ‘Yes’ and ‘No’ camps among the political parties and the NGOs. Furthermore, these formats have always been under the control of programme coordinators in terms of panellists and the way that discussions are structured. In addition to this, a further important comment was made (Ibid) as:

It is very easy to cross the line of reporting on public opinion and try to influence the public opinion. This is not something of which the effect can be measured easily.

Another fracture in the relationship between the news media and the ‘Yes’ camps came as a consequence of the former’s refusal to publish the latter’s political advertising. Although the Greek Cypriot press did not openly refuse the publication of the ‘Yes’ camp political adverts in their newspapers, there was clear evidence of the absence of any political adverts in the investigated newspapers. That said, the lack of ‘Yes’ camp political adverts in the news media is not actually surprising,

particularly in the *Simerini* newspaper, which openly and vigorously supported the 'No' camps. This is exceptionally significant as political advertising is not prohibited in South Cyprus and the only restrictions should be the campaign budget. Therefore, the publication of any political advertisements in this commercial enterprise by the 'Yes' camp confronted the question of partiality in political affairs.

However, a more damaging consequence of the poor relationship between the media and the 'Yes' campaign, was being evidently unable to advertise in the Greek Cypriot's most prestigious daily newspaper, *Philelefttheros*. This restricted the 'Yes' campaign from being able to disseminate its 'controlled political messages' to a wider audience and in turn, this affected its likely influence on public opinion formation and voting. On a final note, which underpins the relationship between the news media and the 'Yes' campaign, the DISY party spokesperson stated that:

I would have not said that we have been denied by the media in terms of access. In particular, they provided news coverage when our party leader made speeches. However, there was definite imbalance in favour of the 'no' vote, which was a result of the decisions of the majority of the mass media organisations... Particularly in the editorial of the newspapers and the reporting process of the political news in the electronic media they were biased... I remembered very well that one week the media made a statement about the criticisms towards it saying it was their democratic prerogative to be supportive towards a 'no' vote¹³⁴.

In short, it is evident here that the 'Yes' camp had suffered from lack of capital and subsequently this influenced its campaigning style and effects. The biased media environment and political journalism in particular limited the extent to which the referendum news campaign was covered and the way in which the news was broadcast. Consequently, the attitude of the news media, particularly the press and the electronic media, significantly influenced the effort of the campaigners.

¹³⁴ Interview with Geogiades, 2009.

THE 'NO' CAMPS

In this particular case, President Papadopoulos' political party hired the Marketway PR and marketing company to run the 'No' campaign. This company is one of the leading private marketing consultancies in South Cyprus. Right up to the present day, Marketway have had many clients from various fields of business and politics. As would be expected, this highly experienced and skilful professional company operated a highly professional 'No' campaign. The Marketway company applied extensive political marketing approaches in the political campaign design, from campaign strategy decisions to successful media management. The professionalism of this political campaign communication was evident in the development of a strategy to achieve certain levels awareness about the campaign messages. For this, the Marketway company operationalised a 'frequency' of message dissemination. Mrs Lillikas (2008) outlined this as:

As the issue attracted awareness and the people needed to know and find out more, we safeguarded immediate awareness from the first two days of the campaigning and reached 97% frequency. Additionally, we had 12 different messages and we had a medium frequency of average 7.2 per message.

This indicates a professional strategic communication planning to deliver the campaign messages to the right target audiences. Additionally, it also demonstrates level of professionalism in campaign design.

Another important detail that enabled the 'No' campaign to become successful was that the final verdict on the political communication campaign design was in the hands of the campaign staff. Although Marketway sought advice from various experts, mainly from the DIKO party members on a range of highly technical issues, this cooperation proved to be more efficient and effective as the professional communication experts constructed their efforts without any interference from politicians.

One further significant point was that the 'No' camp employed a local company to run their media campaign, instead of using either renowned and successful PR or advertising companies from mainland Greece or the international arena. This approach by the DIKO party outlines the recognition of a highly delicate issue that is wrapped in a unique set of historical circumstances within the country's specific political culture, which could be better understood and thus explained with the employment of a local company.

Campaign Design and Management

In this particular case, the campaign director was very closely involved in the design of the campaign, both emotionally and physically. For the Marketway company, but particularly for its director, the 'No' campaign design "was not another exercise of communication" instead it became a more "personalised" subject matter as it impacted on the lives of all campaign staff and the Cypriot people (Lillikas 2008). This personalised campaign commanded extensive debate and caused the campaign director sleepless nights over the decision-making process on the campaign strategy approach and on other campaign-related decisions. Although overall the Marketway company put substantial effort into designing the campaign communication, Mrs Lillikas, (2008) claimed:

...We did not have enough time, we had only three weeks. Moreover, for us, it was an Easter week, which meant that it was very difficult to organise many things. We had to undertake quick actions, actions that were very straight to the point. Even technically, there was not enough time to be creative or innovative or use a multiple of tools in order to generate and strengthen the awareness that could be achieved. The achieved awareness level was reached purely using a straightforward advertising medium.

In terms of the budgeting of the campaign:

It was a very inexpensive and low budget campaign. I required only a minimal amount of money to cover the costs. This was provided by the fundraising effort – not by us of course. It functioned only as a civic cause that had been promoted.

Campaign Strategy

The 'No' campaign strategy was to use various media, but essentially advertising, to highlight the "issues" inherent in the plan by proposing a "question-led" strategy to raise concerns over its reliability (Lillikas 2008). An illustration was given in the following quotation from Mrs Lillikas (2008) on the 'No' campaign's main aim and the strategy employed:

Our aim was to *convey* [emphasised] information that would enable people to judge and make a decision based on their opinion...Basically, we chose the chapters [of the Plan] that were the backbone of the Plan [and] we tried to make people consider the main aspects of the Plan, the ones that would have affected their lives, their children's lives and the future. [For this], we posed questions that were intended to create a need to find answers, in order to make a rational political decision.

Political Advertising

As mentioned previously, the 'No' campaign messages were conveyed to their target audiences through the use of political advertising. However, on occasion, political public relation techniques were adopted, but at an insignificant level. In particular, they were used to deal with foreign media and local media alongside some press briefings and conference activities (Lillikas 2008).

The political advertising strategy of the 'No' campaigning was expressed as:

There were not lots of slogans, instead, there were various questions and at the end, there was our position [NO] to the Plan. However, the focus was on the visual element of the question. The political advertising's messages and slogans were designed to question voters' decisions by providing them with an answer that enabled them to make a judgement against the Plan. The political adverts were hard-hitting in order to rationalise a decision and raise emotional questioning of the will of the Greek Cypriot electorate about their future¹³⁵.

¹³⁵Interview with Lillikas, 2008.

The design of these political adverts exhibits an understanding of the political thinking, bound by the culture and fears of the electorates. This was reflected in the way that highly sensible and rational questions were presented. In addition to this, a London-based Cypriot Citizens' Movement also ran a very aggressive online negative political advertising campaign to support the 'no' vote. Their messages ran under the slogans of;

*"Say No to the Dissolution of the Cypriot Republic" and
"An OXI-NO Vote is a Vote for a Just and Speedy Solution".*

They used these slogans at the end of each political advert, highlighted in bold capital letters. Below are some strong and eye-catching examples of the 'No' camps' political adverts¹³⁶ that were published in various publications of the Greek Cypriot press:

Example 1:

**Referendum of 24 April 2004
Are you going to vote for...**

**A plan that does not guarantee and does not enforce the return of the
occupied lands?
You Decide!**

**The United Cyprus Votes
NO
To the Annan Plan**

Example 2:

**Referendum of 24 April 2004
Are you going to vote for...**

**A plan that enforces you to pay the cost of the invasion and occupation of
your country?**

¹³⁶ All these Greek political adverts have been translated by native Greek who is a visiting lecturer at Westminster Business School.

You Decide!

The United Cyprus Votes

NO

To the Annan Plan

Example 3:

Referendum of 24 April 2004

Are you going to vote for...

A plan the materialisation and the right implementation of which depends on the good will and political credibility of Turkey?

You Decide!

The United Cyprus Votes

NO

To the Annan Plan

Alongside the DIKO party, the main 'No' camp campaigner, , there were also other political advertising campaigns run jointly by various movements for a 'No' outcome. For example:

**"The Plan of the Annan is not the last one. There is an alternative solution that we can submit an application for.
NO: new generation starts with us".**

"Heroes: They are cheating on heroes, the people that fight for you. They are supporting refugees".

"If it is 'Yes', we are killing ourselves, with No just illness".

"Erdogan, Gul, Ozkok: Guarantors" [Also their pictures were provided in the political advert].

**"Someone else trust them but we don't: Denktash, Erdogan, Gul, Ozkok and the historical development of the 'Cyprus Issue'".
[Also their pictures were provided in the political advert].**

PPR Activities

Unlike any typical political campaign communication, in the 'No' campaign, the strongest emphasis was on the use of political advertising as the strategy to grab the attention of the electorate and set the agendas. Hence the Marketway agency of the 'No' camp chose not to benefit much from political public relations techniques. So the 'No' communication campaign was more advertising-oriented, therefore relied less on using PR techniques to deliver their campaign messages. Mrs Lillikas (2008) asserted that:

No press releases or conferences, we used just advertising actually. We only employed very little PR activity like interviews on the radio with international people, and that was it really. It was not a normal campaigning process. We did not want to direct the attention, and run it like a normal communication exercise. We wanted to be plain, serious and to the point, so that people would understand the seriousness of the manner rather than the professionalism of the effort.

The 'No' campaign use significant amount of advertising on various media platforms, which indicates the significant campaign budget of the 'No' campaign. Furthermore, none of the political camps in South Cyprus were faced with any legal barriers during the campaigning period, like their Turkish counterparts. The interviews with all the political campaign actors displayed a good knowledge of the lawful restrictions of election campaigning and also political culture. This was particularly evident in the 'No' campaign. Indeed, Mrs Lillikas (2008), explained this by stating "if you are professional, you simply know and find out all the relevant information before you decide to go ahead with any decisions that include some forms of conflict". Nevertheless, although the 'No' campaign had no restrictions legally and politically, as was evident in other political campaigns, they did also have to deal with the partisan press' disadvantageous treatment in their campaign efforts. An illustration of this was expressed as:

The obstacle that we had was the use of some media in our campaign communication. Although it was not a real obstacle, some of the press did not accept to host any of our political advertising. These media were the *Haravghi* and *Alithia* newspapers. *Haravghi* newspaper belongs to AKEL and at that time AKEL did not make any decision so they did not want to accept any advertising from us and *Alithia* was openly in favour of the 'yes' vote so refused to accept our advertising¹³⁷.

To summarise, drawing on the interviews from the political campaign actors in the referendum, there was a commonality in the degree of professionalism amongst the 'Yes' and 'No' campaigns in North and South Cyprus respectively. Comparatively speaking, there were four crucial factors that influenced the discretionary power of the political campaigns, namely: (1) financial constraints and as a consequence of this (2) the differences in professional design of the campaigns. (3) the partisan press and the way the print media treated the political campaigns. Finally and arguably more importantly (4) unevenly distributed number of political parties' support or rejection towards the Plan. On a final note, Mrs Lillikas (2008), made a prominent statement regarding the way in which politics and political communication in Cyprus is different from other places in the world. She said:

It [Cyprus politics] is part of our life. Unlike Americans, we sit around the table with a cup of coffee and talk about government policies. We cannot ignore it as it includes you, our children, our future and me. Naturally, it is therefore something that we live with all the time and that makes us, as ordinary citizens, like little politicians in Cyprus...Hence, we cannot purely focus on the communication aspect of the campaign, because it was not just about a communications exercise.

To sum up, I provided below Table 9.1 for cross-national campaign agendas of 'Yes' and 'No' camps and Table 9.2 for cross-national campaign communication activities at the referendum.

¹³⁷ Interview with Lillikas, 2008.

Table 9.1 Cross-National ‘Yes’ and ‘No’ Campaigns Agendas at the Referendum

	TURKISH CYPRIOT POLITICAL CAMPS’ ISSUES AGENDA
NO CAMPS	Nationalism/National Identity
	Sovereignty
	Equal Partnership in Governance
	Turkey’s Gurantorship Right
	Land and Property Exchange Issues
	Unlimited numbers of Greek Cypriots will be moving to live in the North
	Loss of the TRNC’s existence
	45,000 our citizens will be forced to leave the island
	Security & Trust, Yes will be turning back to the old times
	Rehabilitation problem
	Derogation problem
YES CAMPS	
	Economic Independency
	Joining the EU
	Living like a world citizen
	Removing all embargoes and hence travelling freely all around the world
	Becoming equal partner of internationally recognise state
	Solutions for the next generation in terms of employment, economic migration, etc.
	GREEK CYPRIOT POLITICAL CAMPS’ ISSUE AGENDA
NO CAMPS	Sovereignty
	Turkey’s Guarantorship and Implementation of Guarantees
	Losing Representation of Legitimate Republic
	Economic Costs of the Plan for Greek Cypriots
	Political Trust to Turkey
	Property Rights
	Immigration & Settlers Issue
	Legal Status, Residence and their voting rights
YES CAMPS	
	No Solution would strengthen the division
	Return of the hundreds of Greek Cypriots immigrants to their lands and homes
	No solution means a change of “pseudo state” to be recognised
	If No, continuity of Turkish Troops existence
	If Yes, a permanent future solution for the next generations
	If Yes, easing the worries of mothers’ about losing their children in a likely war
	Reunification of island within the EU membership

Table 9.2 Cross-National Overview of ‘Yes’ and ‘No’ Camps’ Activities

	Turkish Cypriot		Greek Cypriot	
	Yes Camps	No camps	Yes Camps	No Camps
Meetings/Rallying	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Information Materials¹	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Street Happenings	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Internet Usage	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Political Ads in the Press	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Car Convoys	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Press Conferences	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Press Briefings	Yes	Yes	Yes	Some
Opinion Polls	Yes	No	No	Yes
Attending Discussion Programmes on TV/Radio	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Visiting Villages/Coffee Houses	Yes	No	Yes	No
Organising PR activities for International Media²	Yes	No	Some	Some
Media Monitoring	Yes	No	No	Yes

¹Information materials refer to booklets, book, leaflets, brochures, etc.

² These activities include various things such as organising Karpaz village visit for Turkish journalists, press kits for mainland or international news media.

CHAPTER 10

NEWSPAPERS' CONTENT ANALYSIS

Introduction

This chapter presents findings of the content analysis of the four selected newspapers. A cross-national comparative analysis of the news coverage of the 2004 Cyprus Referendum was conducted. As mentioned, content analysis period covers the dates of 1 April to 23 April 2004, the date the Plan was officially announced to the Cypriot public until the last official day of political campaigning. It is a 'quantitative' content analysis and the chosen papers were two Turkish language newspapers, *Kıbrıs* and *Hürriyet*, and two Greek Cypriot newspapers, *Phileleftheros* and *Simerini* (For the rationale of newspaper selecting criteria, please see the Methodology Chapter). This section of the thesis is four-fold; first, I provide the overall scenario of the referendum election news coverage in the press. Then, I present findings of 'media agenda-setting' and 'intermedia agenda-setting' and finally, I provide the achieved outcome on the assessment of 'public agenda-setting' effect in the referendum election.

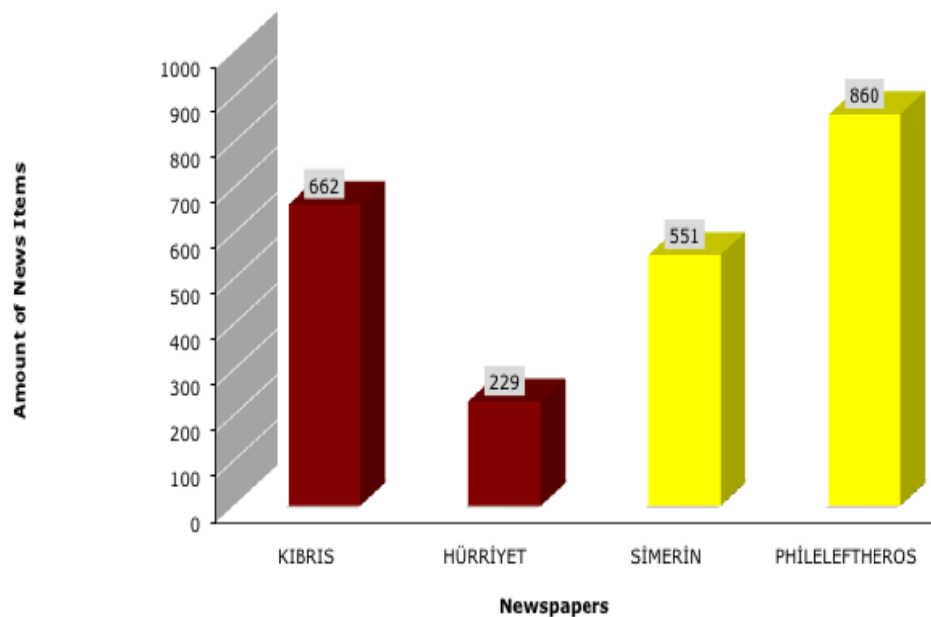
The Scenario of the 2004 Referendum Election News Coverage

This study's starting point is the lack of the systematic analysis of news content in Cypriot elections. Hence, it aims to provide the general scenario of the newspapers' referendum coverage. To do this, the 'visibility' of this historically crucial event in the history of the 'Cyprus Issue' was measured. The 'number of news items' related to the Annan Plan in the papers was identified. Thereafter, the amount of 'headlines', 'sub-headlines' and the 'other front-page' news coverage of the referendum election was assessed. The outcome of this measurement indicates the importance given by the press towards the referendum election. Additionally, the 'tone of the news' in the press was examined to reveal the extent of press' bias and impartiality towards the political camps during this time. And finally, an overview of the papers referendum 'issues' agendas and their importance ranking order was outlined. This analysis demonstrates which referendum 'issues' were emphasised and which ones the papers ignored.

The Prominence of the Referendum Election News in the Press

Not surprisingly, the 2004 Cyprus referendum election was the most significant news story and hence received a colossal amount of attention cross-nationally. Semetko et al., (1991) outlines two ways of understanding the importance given to an election campaign; (1) the total amount devoted to it and (2) the extent to which campaign-related news importance is placed in the press, for example if it makes the headlines. Both of the suggested methods were measured. As mentioned, all the referendum election-related news items as well as their 'location' were identified. This provides an indication for overall attention devoted to and the importance given to the referendum election by the press. This is illustrated in Figure 10.1.

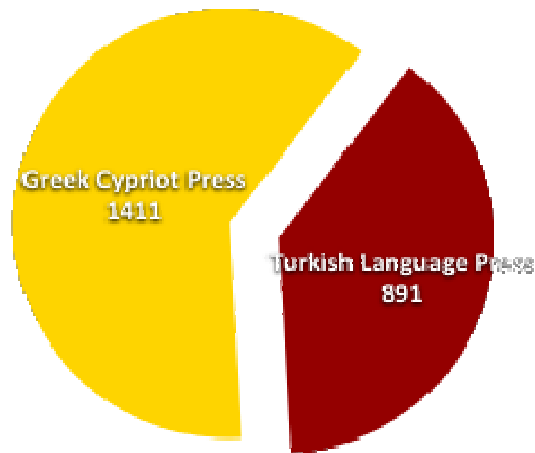
Figure 10.1 The Total Amount of News Items in the Four Newspapers



This content analysis confirms that a vast amount of attention was paid to the referendum election. Overall, it comes to 2302 news items in the papers over a period of more than three weeks. The two Turkish language newspapers produced in total 891 news items in which 662 of them came from *Kıbrıs* and 229 items from *Hürriyet*. In contrast, Greek Cypriot newspapers contributed in total 1411 news

stories of which 551 of them were published in *Simerini* and 860 news stories in the *Phileleftheors* newspaper. This is exhibited in Figure 10.2.

Figure 10.2 Total News Items in Turkish Language and Greek Cypriot Press



Cross-nationally Ç devoted the highest amount of news items in its coverage of the referendum election whereas *Hürriyet* allocated the least as a broadsheet newspaper. One of the most striking differences occurred in the proportion of news coverage by the two Turkish language newspapers. *Hürriyet* newspaper dedicated (229) a quarter of the amount of news coverage to the referendum election news compared to *Kıbrıs* (662) newspaper. This may be explained by a different journalistic approach to the referendum election with *Hürriyet* being a mainland-based news publication. An additional assessment method of ‘news length’ measurement by inches or centimetre would have provided better indication on the amount of space devoted to the referendum election as the papers’ sizes were different – tabloid versus broadsheet. Additionally, some of the news stories’ length that counted as ‘one’ news item in the content analysis were up to two pages in length. Having said that, it was not possible for researcher nor the trainees to measure the news length, as all the newspapers’ daily issues were scanned at the National Archive in Kyrenia, North Cyprus and transferred to the memory stick to carry out the research in London. Therefore, it was not possible to measure the actual length of each news item.

The 2004 Referendum Election News in the Front-Page Headlines

It is a well-known fact that if news stories are highly newsworthy then journalists will report them as headline news. One thing worth mentioning here is that during the content analysis process it was noticed that Greek Cypriot newspapers published numerous front-page articles although the actual font size was small. In contrast, most noticeably in *Kıbrıs* newspaper although the number of articles on the front page was less, some of the news stories' length that counted as one news item in the content analysis were up to two pages in length. Table 10.1 shows the frequency distribution of the 'headline news', 'sub-headlines news' and 'other page 1 news' that were related to the referendum election.

Table 10.1 Cross-National Frequency Distribution of the Referendum News Stories on Front-Page of the Newspapers

	NEWSPAPERS			
	<i>Kıbrıs</i> (n)	<i>Hürriyet</i> (n)	<i>Simerini</i> (n)	<i>Phileleftheros</i> (n)
Headlines	21	13	21	20
Sub-Headlines	19	10	10	23
Other pg 1	49	10	99	160
Total	89	33	130	203

In total, 75 front-page headlines were related to the referendum election in the four newspapers. With 13 days use of front-page headline *Hürriyet* newspaper used the least amount of front-page headline in relation to the referendum election, followed by *Phileleftheros* twenty days, finally *Kıbrıs* and *Simerini* allocated 21 days of its everyday front page headlines. However, as mentioned, the two daily issues of the Greek Cypriot newspapers were missing (11 and 12 April), therefore the Greek Cypriot papers carried the referendum news to their front-page headlines more than Turkish language newspapers. This amount is significantly different when it compared to mainland Turkish newspaper *Hürriyet*. This vast distinction in front-page headline news coverage in *Hürriyet* not only

indicates the difference in attention assigned to the referendum election between Greek Cypriot press, but also among the two Turkish language papers. Additionally, as it can be seen in the Table 10.1, in total 381 news items were covered about the referendum on the front page of the four newspapers. A significant variation occurred in the number of front-page news coverage amongst Turkish language and Greek Cypriot newspapers. The highest number of news coverage given at the front-page came from *Phileleftheros* newspaper with 203 news stories, whereas again the lowest amount of front-page news coverage, thirty, came from *Hürriyet* newspaper. In addition to my findings, I also refer to the content analysis research undertaken by the IMME research centre¹³⁸ about the mainstream newspapers' positions on the Annan Plan during the period of the New York Agreement and a week after accession to the EU (i.e. South Cyprus) in Cyprus. The IMME report employed the KADEM research agency to conduct the analysis of Turkish Cypriot press and according to this report (2005), 95% of front-page titles were devoted to the Plan and related issues in Turkish Cypriot press. In total, 167 positive, 98 negative and 77 balanced headline news framed in daily mainstream Turkish Cypriot newspapers, as illustrated in Figure 10.3. For overall detailed information on the news headline titles' positions in Turkish Cypriot press, see Table 10.2.

¹³⁸ IMME is a Greek Cypriot non-profit scientific research organisation on Media and Communication which was established in 1999. On 31st of March 2005, IMME research team organised a press conference to announce their findings and this document was provided to me by the Editor-in-Chief of *Phileleftheros*, Mr Costas Venizelos, who also published the findings of the research in his newspaper. The document was in a form of press release which was sent to him by the research organisation.

Figure 10.3 Total Amount of Positive, Negative and Balanced Headline News in Turkish Cypriot Newspapers

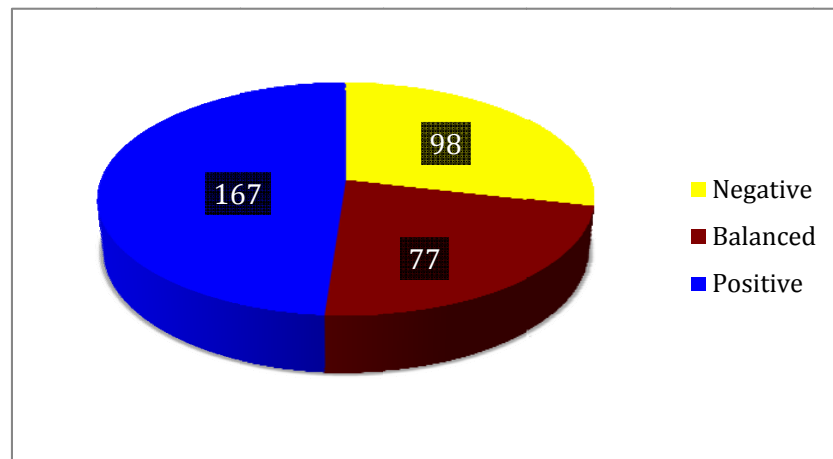


Table 10.2 News Headline Titles' Position in Turkish Cypriot Press

Newspapers	Turkish Cypriot News Headlines' Position
<i>Kıbrıs</i>	38 positive; 29 balanced; 1 against
<i>Ortam</i>	52 positive; 9 negative
<i>Cumhuriyet</i>	8 negative; 1 positive
<i>Volkan</i>	70 negative
<i>Vatan</i>	30 negative; 7 positive; 24 balanced
<i>Afrika</i>	29 positive; 24 balanced; 2 against
<i>Yenidüzen</i>	40 positive; 1 negative

As illustrated in the above table, the majority of the Turkish Cypriot press provided positive news coverage in their headlines news towards the Annan Plan. Along with the headline news analysis, the researchers also claimed that whilst only 30% of the titles were against the proposed solution or the procedure, 39% were in favour of the Plan and the remaining 26% were balanced news coverage. Furthermore, almost half of the statements either belonged to Denktash (his own press release against the proposed solution or people who were in favour of the Plan) or about himself (criticisms against Denktash and his negative attitudes). Out of 228 news that were in favour of the Plan, 21% criticised Denktash and 16% were about his position on the Plan. On the other hand, 179 news titles were against the Plan and one third of the negative statements came from the newspapers that

belong to Denktash. Nevertheless, this study did not include analysis of Greek Cypriot newspapers' headlines on the referendum election.

Furthermore, during the content analysis process it has been noticed that so often an attention-grabbing "OXI – NO" word occurred on the front-page headline of *Simerini*. Although it was not the intention to separately investigate the emphasis of the *Simerini* paper's front-page headlines, the striking appearance of the word "OXI" led to a desire to scrutinise further how many days the publication referred to "OXI" during the election campaign, which clearly strongly supports the 'No' campaign. This investigation found out that *Simerini* used the wording of "OXI" in total 11 days in its front-page headlines. This is more than fifty per cent of the examined campaign period. This finding further confirms its partiality and the link between its editorial endorsement and news coverage. As the other newspapers' headlines did not noticeably use any campaign related and/or associated word(s), no further investigation carried out for the other newspapers.

Types of Referendum Election Stories

This analysis demonstrates the journalistic characteristics of the examined four papers. The identified 2302 referendum-related news items were distinguished based on the following categories: Hard News, Feature News, Commentary and Editorials, Letter to the Editor, Political Advertising, Caricature, Columnists, Public Opinion Poll, Interviews with Political Leaders and as Others (e.g., expert analysts on different subjects). This is shown in Table 10.3.

¹³⁹ News mainly falls into two basic categories; hard and soft news. Carole (2010) defines ‘hard news’ as that which describes what happened, why it happened, and how the story will influence readers. On the other hand, ‘soft’ or feature news is more concerned on human interests and novelty and less immediate than ‘hard news’. Semetko et al. (1991:152-3) defines the concept further as “Straight news offered a predominantly descriptive account of events within the 24-hour period,[whereas], feature stories may have focused on a particular issue, constituency, or region, or may have been a profile or an interview with a candidate or party leader”.

referendum election with the highest number of columnists¹⁴⁰ with 15.8%. This feature of 'signed columns' by famous journalists in *Hürriyet* newspaper consequently produced one of the main differences in reporting style between Turkish and Cypriot papers. Although the 'hard news' reporting style usage in all press was the highest compared to other types of news reporting style, significant amount of 'feature news' employment in all the papers perhaps is an indication that by adopting this style the press could pursue its own narrative in storytelling more easily and in an opaque way. More importantly, with feature storytelling reporters can be biased by sensationalising certain referendum issues from a particular perspective.

Another difference between Greek Cypriot press and the Turkish language papers appeared in the proportion of 'Letters to Editors'. A considerably higher number of Greek Cypriot citizens expressed their opinions, feelings and/or concerns on the Annan Plan compared to Turkish Cypriot and/or Turkish citizens. The overall average proportion of 'Letters to Editors' in Greek Cypriot newspapers was 7.5% whereas 'Letters to Editors' accounted for less than 1% in Turkish language newspapers. A further important difference occurred amongst the newspapers in the amount of 'interviews' held with political leaders. The number of 'interviews held with political leaders' in *Phileleftheros* was considerably higher (11.7%), when compared to the other newspapers (less than 3%). The overall total amount of the three newspapers did not even add up to the same amount of *Phileleftheros* newspaper's use of 'interviews with political leaders'. One way to interpret this is that its 'barrier to entry' of its 'news gate' diminished for political leaders and therefore facilitated better opportunity for political campaigners to get across their message into news through the use of political leaders.

One of the greatest differences arose from the political advertising variable analysis in the content analysis. This analysis put into perspective one of the

¹⁴⁰ The names of the columnists are as follows: the top political and foreign policy columnist Ferai Tinc; Fatih Altaylı; Emin Colasan; Sedat Ergin; Ertugrul Özkök; Nur Batur; Hadi Uluergin; Oktay Eksi; Zeynel Lüle; Bekir Coskun, and Cüneyt Ülsever.

biggest differences that emerged amongst political camps cross-nationally in terms of the sheer volume of political advertising that circulated in the papers. In total 41 political adverts were placed in the Turkish language newspapers. The number of political adverts in *Kıbrıs* was 39. Out of 39, 34 political adverts belonged to the 'Yes' camps and only four to the 'No' camps. Once more, as the Editor-in-Chief of *Kıbrıs* said, "we have done everything to support the 'yes' outcome from every angle", and along with the editorial endorsement already referenced, the paper chose not to circulate political adverts much at all and none if possible of the 'No' camps political advertisements; all of this evidence has been verified with the systematic analysis carried out for this study. Additionally, there were just two full-page political adverts published in *Hürriyet*, and both of them were funded by various Turkish NGOs to support the 'Yes' camps. So, in total, 41 political adverts circulated in the two Turkish language newspapers which shows great difference in political advertising distribution between the 'Yes' and 'No' camps. This indicates a better opportunity for the 'Yes' camps to present their messages and also a higher possibility to be exposed to the voters.

On the contrary, on the south side completely the opposite scenario presented itself. Overall, there were 53 political adverts circulated in the Greek Cypriot newspapers. Within this, 31 of them were circulated in *Simerini* and out of the 31 political adverts, thirty of them were for the 'No' camp, 26 of which being full-page. There was only one political advert that was funded by the Greek Cypriot 'Yes' camp for the entire referendum campaign period. The reasons for this could be related to the 'low budget' of the 'Yes' camp as well as *Simerini* newspaper's motivation not to circulate much at all and none if possible of the 'Yes' camps' political advertisements. Furthermore, 19 'No' camps' political adverts against 3 'Yes' camps' political adverts were apparent in *Phileleleftheros*. Likewise, on north side of the island, there was significant difference between the political camps in terms of political advert circulation numbers. Thus, the content analysis further scientifically documented the significant campaign budget expenditure difference between the 'No' camps and the 'Yes' camps cross-nationally. More interestingly, this indicates a parallel link between the amount of adverts of the 'Yes' and 'No'

political adverts in North and South Cyprus respectively and the outcome of the referendum election in each side.

The Nature of News Stories: Partial or Impartial Press?

The assessment of 'the nature or tone' of referendum election news stories in the press can reveal whether the press was partisan and hence provided partial news coverage. The overall 'tone' of the news was measured by classifying them as 'favourable or unfavourable'. To do this, a five-point scale was used to calculate the 'tone' of the news from the political campaign perspective. This analysis enables the researcher to portray the news coverage direction in the papers towards the 'Yes' and 'No' camps cross-nationally. Although Norris et al. (1999:80) stated that "the theory of agenda-setting is only concerned with salience, not direction", the analysis of news tone is particularly important to present the partiality or bias of the press during the referendum election. Especially, this analysis would facilitate commentary on the 'impartial and balanced' representation of different views and/or arguments on the referendum election. This is essential for a rational decision-making which in turn provides a healthier democratic outcome. Figure 10.4 and Figure 10.5 show overall tone analysis of the news of four papers in relation to political camps' stories. The figures on the tables show frequency distribution of the number of stories.

Figure 10.4 The Tone of News Analysis in the Turkish Language Press

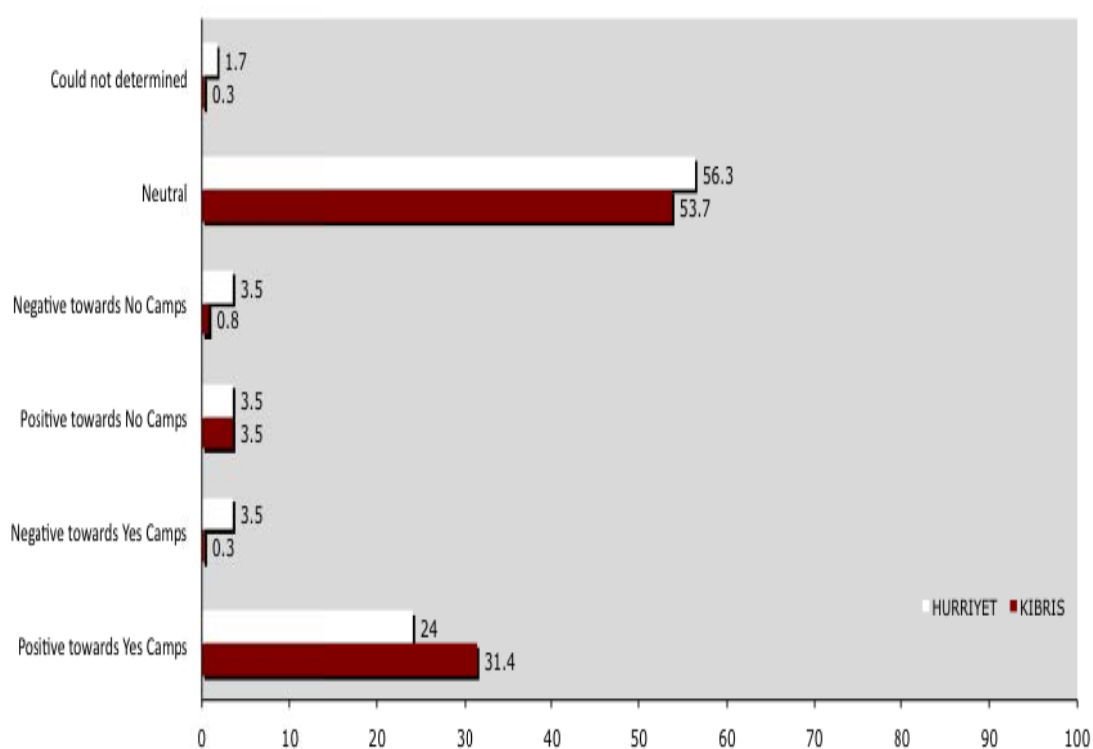
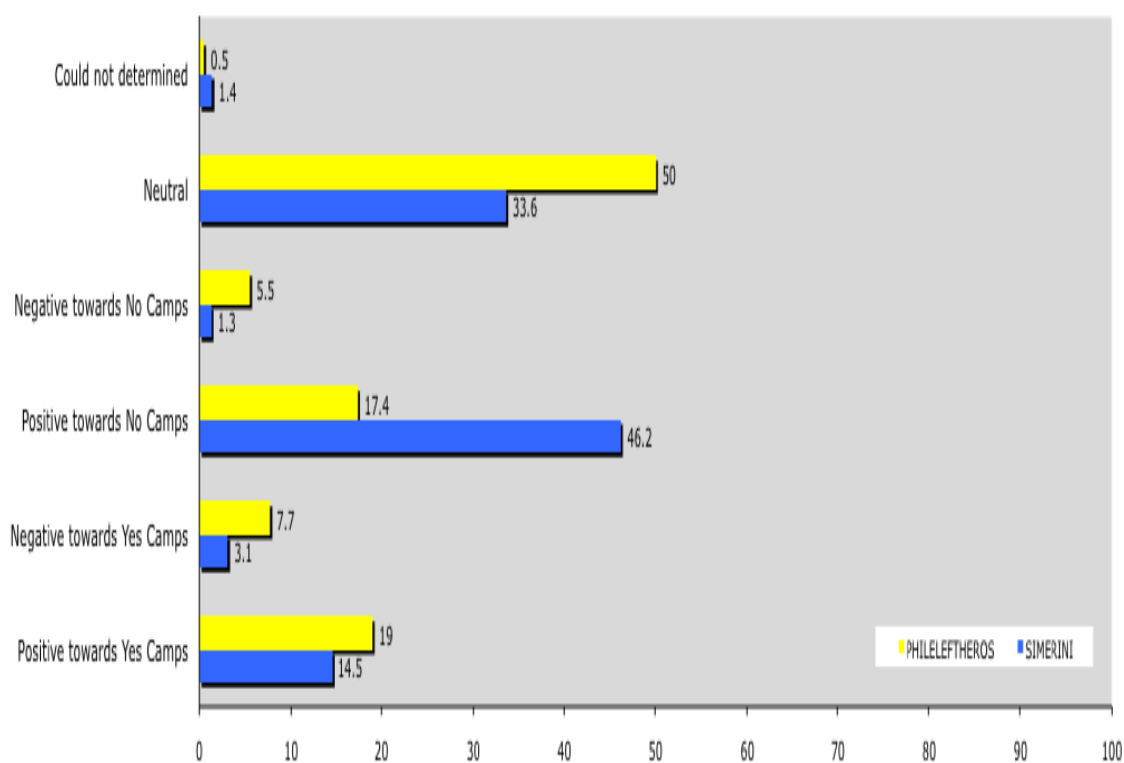


Figure 10.5 The Tone of News Analysis in the Greek Cypriot Press



The results demonstrate that the only partial newspaper in its news coverage during the election towards the political camps was *Simerini*. *Simerini* was biased in substance reporting with 46.2% providing 'positive news leaning towards the 'No' camps in its news coverage. So, this analysis shows that only the 'No' camp in south received positive news from one out of four newspapers. As widely observed and discussed by opposition political figures and commentators, this partiality in contents of its news columns in addition to its editorial policy of *Simerini* did not come as a surprise. However, the rest of the papers were 'neutral' in their news coverage. Although two of the Turkish language papers provided a 'balanced' coverage towards the political camps at the election (56.3% for *Hürriyet* and 53.7% for *Kıbrıs*), it is worth mentioning here that they presented substantial amount of 'positive' news stories, 31.4% and 24% respectively, towards the 'Yes' camp in the north, whereas, almost none (0.3%) and a significantly low amount (3.5%) of 'negative' news provided towards the 'Yes' camp in each paper respectively. Their 'neutrality' in news reporting towards political camps can be explained by their use of a significantly high number of 'hard news' style in their referendum coverage. The 'cautious' or 'soft Yes and No' support of both *Hürriyet* and *Phileleftheros* papers favouring 'Yes' and 'No' camps respectively in their editorials was also reflected in their news coverage towards the political camps. Overall, the press cross-nationally was more positive than negative towards the 'Yes' camps compared to the 'No' camps. Whilst in North Cyprus the referendum news stories leaned more positively towards the 'Yes' camps, on the contrary, the overall evaluative tone of the press leant more positively towards the 'No' camps in South Cyprus.

In the next section, I provide systematic investigation of the media agenda-setting in the election.

MEDIA AGENDA-SETTING

In the first section, I assessed the effectiveness of ‘campaign-initiated’ efforts over the news media agenda. The literature on media agenda-setting research is heavily dominated by systematic analysis which attempts to assess the factors that impact on media agenda-setting, namely ‘real-world conditions and events’ and ‘activities of political campaigns’. I have already provided some hints about the battle between the media professionals and campaign professionals to set the referendum media agenda at the interviews analysis chapters. In this part, I additionally provide systematic scrutiny of campaign professionals’ efforts to set the media agenda at the election. As mentioned, I adopted three fundamental layers of the ‘onion peeling’ model analysis that has been proposed by McCombs (2004),) These are; (1) political leaders, (2) routine public relations activities, (3) political campaign efforts. With this analysis I examined the following question:

Was the 2004 Cyprus referendum election news coverage more geared towards carefully organised media events of the political campaigns and therefore were they subsidised by this action?

To do this, I ran frequency analysis to find the aggregated number of news articles that featured in the election news stories. I measured the frequency of ‘campaign-initiated efforts’ that are listed in the content analysis. These were: ‘political leaders’ statements/ announcements’; ‘campaign activities’; one of the core PR activities of ‘press briefings and announcements’, and finally, ‘interviews with political leaders’. Table 10.4 below provides the outcome of this statistical analysis.

Table 10.4 Cross-National News Sources in the Four Newspapers

	<i>Kıbrıs</i>		<i>Hürriyet</i>		<i>Simerini</i>		<i>Phileleftheros</i>	
	(n)	(%)	(n)	(%)	(n)	(%)	(n)	(%)
News Reporters	57	9.2	65	28.4	109	19.7	150	17.4
Columnists	67	10.8	75	32.8	67	12.2	215	25
Press Briefings & Announcements	74	11.9	12	5.2	35	6.4	18	2.1
Political Leaders' Speeches/Announcement	103	16.6	8	3.5	27	4.9	93	10.8
Interviews with Political Leaders	11	1.8	3	1.3	9	1.6	76	8.8
Campaign Activities	73	11.7	7	3.1	16	2.9	64	7.4
Other news organisation Based sources	73	11.7	8	3.5	53	9.6	37	4.3
Not Given	124	19.9	44	17	164	29.8	53	6.2
Others	40	6.4	12	5.2	71	12.9	154	17.9
TOTAL	662	100	229	100	551	100	860	100

This table illustrates the overall amount (in percentage) of campaign-initiated news that featured in the press. It indicates that the total proportion of soundbite usage in *Kıbrıs* was 42%; 13.1% in *Hürriyet*; 15.8% in *Simerini*; and 29.1% in *Phileleftheros* newspaper. So, among the four newspapers, *Kıbrıs* referenced more heavily a wide range of sound bites compared to the others. Almost half of the referendum news originated from campaign-initiated sources in *Kıbrıs*. The majority of these were more likely to be sourced from the 'Yes' camp, as *Kıbrıs* strongly endorsed the 'Yes' campaign. This is also based on my observation during the content analysis. However, a further scrutiny of campaign-initiated news sources, whether they were 'Yes' or 'No', could have provided a better indication for an overall conclusion on which political camps were more successful in getting their messages into the news. *Kıbrıs* was followed by *Phileleftheros* and *Simerini* papers from South Cyprus and again, as already demonstrated in other analysis

outcomes, *Hürriyet* also showed different journalistic patterns from other Cypriot newspapers by using the minimum (13.1%) amount of campaign-initiated sources in its referendum news election coverage. Having considered *Hürriyet* newspaper's impressive resources, staff numbers and facilities, especially compared to all the Cypriot papers and also compared to many newspaper institutions in Turkey, its diminished reliance on information subsidies is therefore somewhat to be expected. So, the content analysis reveals that the Cypriot newspapers were more subsidised by the political campaigns compared to the Turkish newspaper. Thus, the Cypriot newspapers seemed to exercise less discretion in their news reporting against information subsidies. Additionally, while all the Cypriot press devoted large amounts of space to the voice of political leaders, this was notably low in *Hürriyet*. So, it can be said that the Cypriot press provided 'opinionated' news stories, as political leaders represented a certain viewpoint on the referendum issue, although this was less evident in Turkish newspapers.

Overall, the political campaigners seemed to be powerful over the course of media agenda-setting during the election campaign as the news coverage was more geared towards carefully crafted media events of the political campaigns. However, caution is required over the claim of the degree of political campaigners' power over the media agenda-setting as the news media were at least partially from their sources in producing the content of the news.

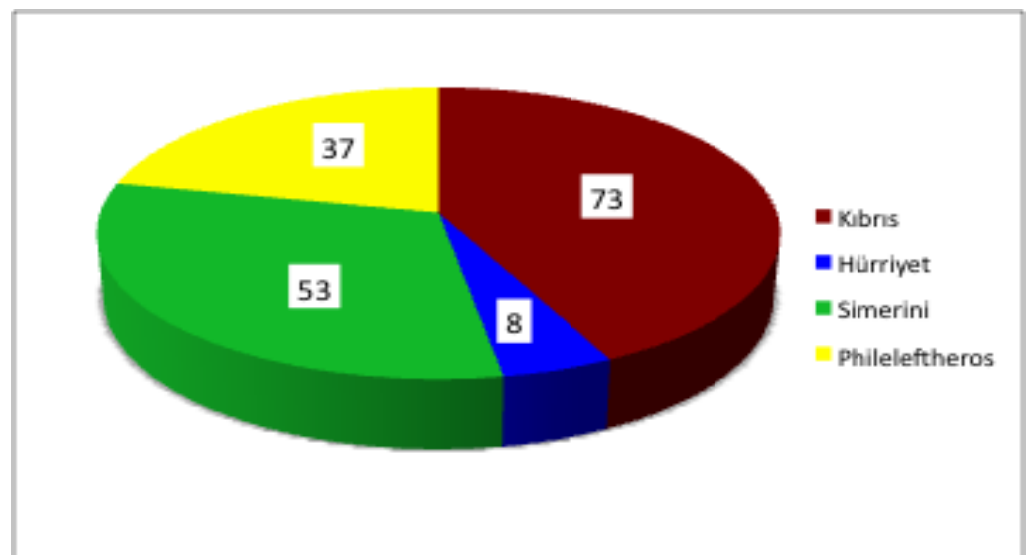
To sum up, although the political campaigners had some discretion to set the media agenda with its carefully crafted campaign communication strategies, the press demonstrated its discretionary power over the course of media agenda-setting by following certain campaign activities by devoting lengthy or shorter news coverage on them, and re-shaping or framing the political leaders' speeches in their news reporting. In the next section, I outline the outcome of the investigation into whether 'other news sources' had any influence on the media agenda in the referendum.

INTERMEDIA AGENDA-SETTING

In this section, I examine whether 'other news sources' influenced the way in which the press covered the election news. This provides a further answer to the question of 'who sets the media agenda'. To find this out, first I used the content analysis to measure the amount of news referenced to the 'other news sources' in the press election news coverage at election. This analysis only provides quantification, therefore it falls short in indicating to what extent the news coverage of 'other news sources' influenced the decision-making process of the newspapers' editors. So, to overcome this issue, I blended the information that I gained from the interviews with the media professionals to add 'in-depth' understanding on their decision.

In the literature, the systematic content analysis is heavily employed to assess the impact of other news agencies' news agendas on the agenda of the examined news medium. To apply this kind of research in this study requires full access to data archives, for example TAK and CNA, Turkish and Greek Cypriots news agencies', of their daily news agendas at the election campaign. As it was not possible to conduct a comparative analysis due to lack of access to Greek Cypriot news archives and more importantly, the language barrier, I alternatively measured each news item as to whether they were sourced from 'other news agencies' to show overall proportional indications of the level of reference that was made to 'other news agencies' in the four newspapers. Figure 10.6 illustrates this.

Figure 10.6 The Frequency of the Use of Other News Sources in the Four Papers



This pie chart shows that out of 662 new stories, 73 of them were obtained from 'other news agencies' in *Kıbrıs*, 8 out of 229 in *Hürriyet*, 53 out of 551 in *Simerini*, and finally 37 out of 860 new stories in *Phileleftheros* were attained from 'other news agencies'. This figure clearly indicates that *Kıbrıs* newspaper used more 'other news sources' by far compared to Turkish newspapers, and also a substantially higher amount than the Greek Cypriot newspapers during the election news coverage. Although this figure does not specify any association between the press and the 'other news sources' agendas, it is useful to illustrate how often newspapers relied on the other sources to cover the election. One interpretation of the high amount of references to 'other news sources' in Cypriot newspapers compared to Turkish paper can be that they demonstrated an example of 'pack journalism'. This, in most cases, related to 'staff numbers' and 'lack of resources'. However, all the analysed Cypriot newspapers allocated more or less ten journalists to cover the election. Therefore, there must be another underlying reason for the high level of usage of other news sources. The answer to this emerged from the interviews. Both Turkish and Greek Cypriot editors-in-chief stated that they were curious about what 'the other side' was covering about the Plan and would like to present 'the other side's' views. Especially, the newspapers were keen on highlighting the views/opinions of 'the other side', in particular where the news stories were beneficial for them to fight against the opposition camps. Under these circumstances, regardless of where the sources originated, i.e.

from international or national news agencies, they utilised the information by demonstrating, in particular, different sources' similar views on the Plan. The importance, use and influence of 'other news sources' news stories on the election news coverage of the newspapers was outlined by each papers' editor-in-chiefs, except *Hürriyet* where I gathered the information from its North Cyprus reporter.

For *Phileleftheros*, Mr Venizelos expressed the role of 'other news sources, particularly news agencies' in their referendum news coverage as:

Yes, of course, we used other sources and agencies, especially the Turkish Cypriot press. We used to publish translated versions of news articles from the Turkish Cypriot press every day. We believed that it was important to do this, and our intention was to provide the views and opinions of Turkish Cypriots on the Plan, as well as the reunification of the island¹⁴¹.

Furthermore he stated:

[We wanted to] provide 'different angles of the puzzle' and to do this, mostly we used to like using 'Cyprus News Agency'; 'Anatolia'; 'Athens News Agency'; 'Rioter'; 'Agency France'; 'Turkish Cypriot press' and 'Bayrak (BRT) television', and more than about 'five-ten news items' a day.

Mr Basaran stated his view on this as:

Of course we observed what other news organisations and agencies covered about the Plan. I would say the most influential was the Greek Cypriot media. We used to follow what the Greeks said about the Plan, how they scrutinised the Plan, which issues they were particularly interested in, and from what perspectives they were analysing the Plan, etc... The 'No' camps used to draw the attention of the Turkish news media to negative points that were highlighted by the Greek Cypriot media. Because of this, we used to cover particular news stories to demolish those negative points¹⁴².

For *Hürriyet* newspaper, Mr Bilge, said that:

¹⁴¹ Interview with Venizelos, 2008.

¹⁴² Interview with Basaran, 2008.

Although we used the other news agencies, in particular international news agencies, my Foreign News Editor fed me with information from international news agencies' coverage of the Plan. So, the purpose of following other news sources was more like monitoring and using relevant information accordingly¹⁴³.

Additionally, at the time of the 2004 Cyprus referendum, Mr Zeynel Lüle, who was the EU reporter of *Hürriyet* was covering the Annan Plan-related news from Brussels. The above statement of Mr Bilge explains in a way the reason why *Hürriyet* newspaper had a low levels of subsidies from other news sources.

Mr Iacovides responded to my questions on the importance and influence of 'other news sources' to their coverage as:

We gathered information from various sources - political, diplomatic, and governmental, from Press reports in the Turkish, Greek, British and other foreign Press and also from EU and UN officials¹⁴⁴.

Thereafter, he outlined the importance ranking order of the other news sources and agencies as:

As much as I remember, I would list them as (1) Other sources: political, diplomatic, EU, UN, Turkish and Greek Press, (2) International news agencies (usually Reuters or Agency France Press or Association Press, (3) Turkish Television, (4) TC press and finally, (5) TC television news.

Having said all of this, Mr Iacovides further felt it important to emphasise:

We did not allow other foreign media to have any influence on *Simerini* because as you know, *Simerini*, from the very beginning, was strongly opposed to the Plan. Our selection criteria were based on the interest these news or reports presented for our readers. Our aim was to provide our readership with as much information as possible from all news sources, including of course Turkish, Greek and many foreign sources. Whatever was written or broadcast or televised it was written about in *Simerini*. The speeches of Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot leaders [were an example of some sources] of information. However, we were very careful regarding their statements, speeches or declarations because they were either in favour on against the Annan Plan.

¹⁴³ Interview with Bilge, 2008

¹⁴⁴ Interview with Iacovides, 2008

Overall, both sides of the press constantly monitored 'the other side's' news stories on the referendum issues, and used relevant news articles in their news report. This indicates cross-national congruent journalistic practice between both sides. Also, it seemed that Greek Cypriot papers' editors perceived the 'voices of foreign news agencies' more important than others, as they ranked them ahead of other news agencies. Additionally, the interviews also revealed that television channels' news agendas appeared to be an important news source for the Cypriot press. Unlike Cypriot papers, *Hürriyet* newspaper referenced the least amount of news from other news agencies. Although what other news sources were covering of the election was 'observed' by *Hürriyet* newspaper, because of its resources, *Hürriyet* managed to set its own news agenda and was not influenced, to an extent, by other sources election agendas.

Having provided the cross-national overall scenario and media agenda-setting findings of the 2004 Cyprus Referendum campaign news coverage, in the next section of the thesis I present agenda-setting effects investigation at the election. First, I outline the Cypriot electorates' issues agendas and thereafter the press issues agendas at the referendum election.

PUBLIC AGENDA-SETTING

As the referendum election in Cyprus was one of the most historical incidents for both communities, it presents an optimum case study to be examined in short-term agenda-setting effects of the media. Although the 'Cyprus Issue' was hardly new to voters, the 5th version of the Plan and its content were new not only to voters but also to the politicians who were not involved in the negotiation process of the Plan.

The core hypothesis of the agenda-setting theory is that public agenda-setting means the amount devoted to certain issue agendas in the press which will increase the saliency of the issue among the voters. So, as stated previously, I intended to assess:

H1: There was a positive relationship between the prominence ranking order of press referendum 'issues' agendas and the ranking order of Cypriot electorates' topmost concerns.

To measure the impact of the news agenda on the Cypriot electorate's concerns, firstly the four papers' issues agendas were identified. Thereafter, the correlation between the ranking order of the papers referendum issues agenda and Cypriot electorates' most important issues ranking order on an aggregate level¹⁴⁵ was assessed. So, to investigate the effect of the agenda-setting, the following sections of the thesis first outlines the 'Cypriot Electorates Agendas', then 'Press News Agenda' and finally provides the outcome of the correlation analysis between the press and the public's agenda.

¹⁴⁵ It was not possible to measure the relationship at individual level, as this test requires public opinion surveys outcome, in which a sample of various questions are asked to individual people. I simply could not do this, as no secondary data existed.

Cypriot Electorates' Referendum Election Agendas: Exit Poll Results

The exit poll results are ideal for this task, as it measures the Cypriot electorates' thoughts and views immediately after they cast their votes. As mentioned, the exit poll results of the 2004 Cyprus Referendum election were obtained from the chairman of the KADEM research agency, Mr Muharrem Faiz. This cross-national exit poll originally was conducted by the KADEM research agency for the CNN news television channel from Turkey, and by the RAI research consultancy for Greek Cypriot television channel Sigma. The Figures 10.7 and 10.8 show Cypriot voters' most important agendas in the 2004 Cyprus Referendum election exit polls.

Figure 10.7 Greek Cypriot Electorates' Referendum Agenda: Reasons for No

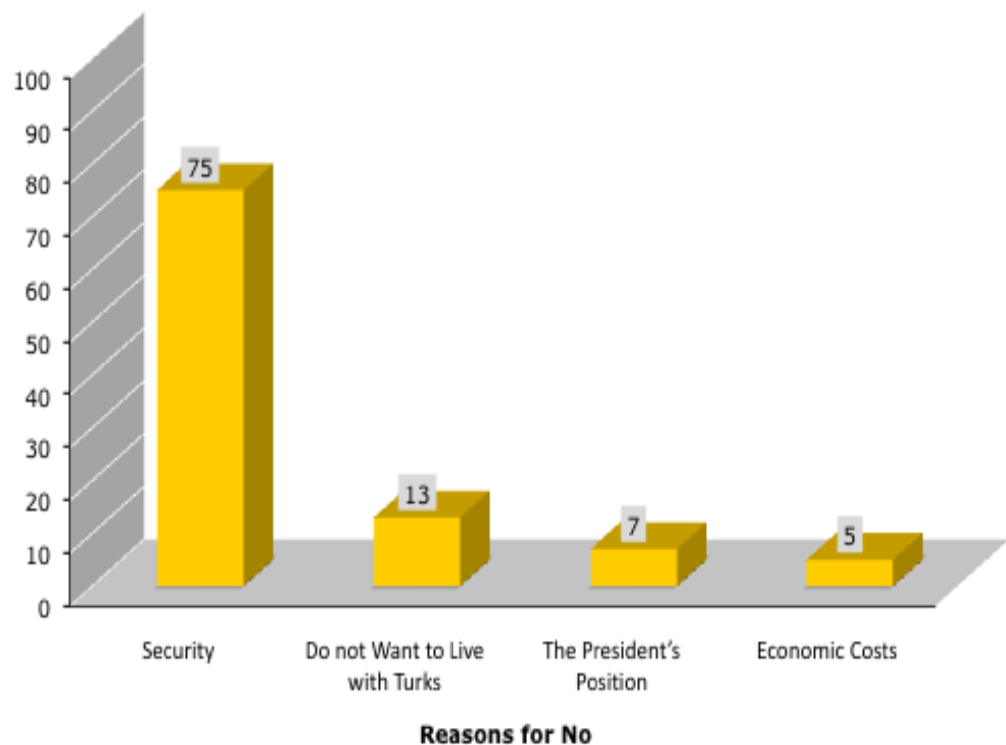
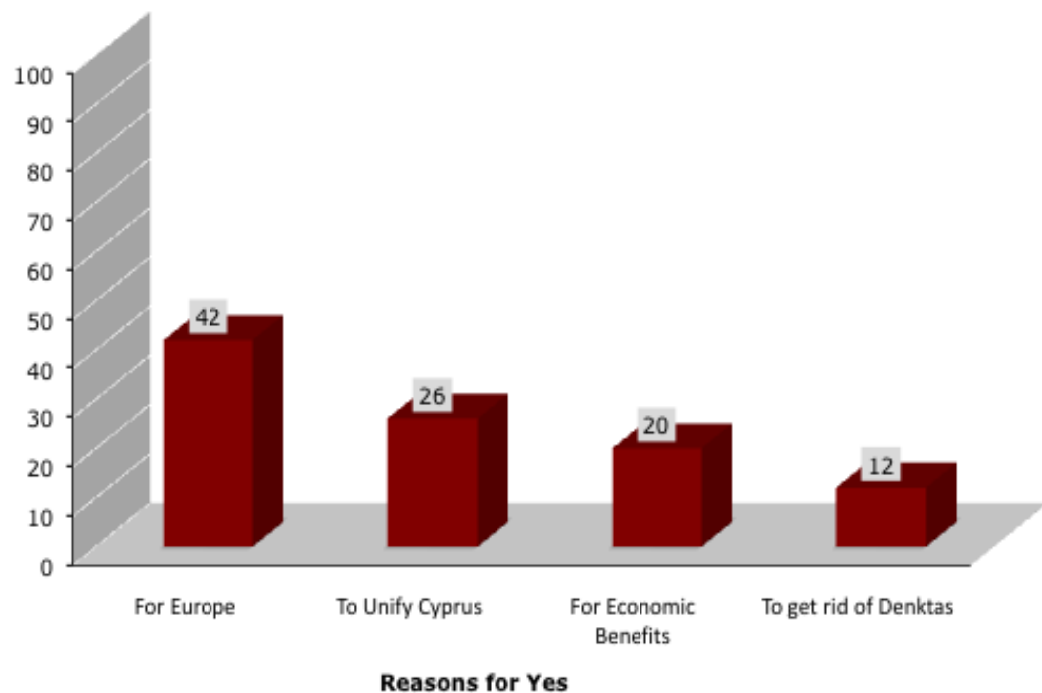


Figure 10.8 Turkish Cypriot Publics' Referendum Agenda: Reasons for Yes



Figures 10.7 and 10.8 show that the 'issue' agendas of Turkish and Greek Cypriot were significantly different on the Annan Plan. Greek Cypriots rejected the proposed Plan based on these following concerns: the vast majority of Greek Cypriots were concerned about the 'Security' (75%); then 'No desire of living with Turks' (13%); 'The position of President' (7%); and 'Economic Costs' of the Plan (5%). On the contrary, Turkish Cypriots' acceptance of the Plan depended on completely different reasons which were most importantly 'For Europe' (42%); 'To unify Cyprus' (26%); 'For economic benefits' (20%) and 'To get rid of Denktash' (12%).

The Press Agendas At the Referendum Election

This section addresses the question of 'what was the agenda of the press?' at the referendum election. To answer this, as mentioned, content analysis was conducted, and the outcome of the analysis of the four newspapers is illustrated in Table 10.5.

Table 10.5 Press Issue Coverage in the 2004 Cyprus Referendum

NEWSPAPERS								
	<i>Kıbrıs</i>		<i>Hürriyet</i>		<i>Phileleftheros</i>		<i>Simerini</i>	
	(%)	Rank	(%)	Rank	(%)	Rank	(%)	Rank
Security	8.7	9	7.0	5	27.3	1	16.4	1
Governance	6.9	6	1.9	3	16.2	5	11.2	4
Property and land	5.9	7	1.8	11	15.1	7	7.9	7
Settlers	1.8	11	6.6	6	8.0	10	4.5	11
Economy	11.2	5	5.7	7	14.5	8	12.3	3
Education	4.0	10	0.9	12	2.4	12	1.8	12
Legal subjects	12.5	4	12.1	3	15.2	6	5.9	9
Denktash/Papadolopous	14.5	3	30.6	1	19.9	2	13.3	2
United Cyprus	28.6	1	4.4	9	16.7	4	5.6	10
Sovereignty	2.5	12	9.2	4	17.7	3	7.8	8
EU	18.3	2	12.2	2	9.2	9	9.2	6
Do not want to live with Turks	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	5.8	11	9.8	5

*Although the total number (N) of stories is based on the number of stories mentioned, the percentages of 'issues' for newspapers are based on the frequency of which each 'issue' was apparent. Therefore, the overall total percentage of 'issues' does not add up to hundred percent.

Taking a closer look at the comparison of the press and the top four issues in the Cypriot public's agendas (see Table 10.6 and Table 10.7) there is a significant variation in the importance given to the referendum issues in the press cross-nationally.

Table 10.6 Ranking Order of Public & Press Agendas in North Cyprus

<i>Issues</i>	Public Agenda Ranking	Press Agendas Ranking	
		<i>Kıbrıs</i>	<i>Hürriyet</i>
For Europe	1	2	2
United Cyprus	2	1	9
Economy/Benefits	3	5	7
To get rid of Denktas	4	3	1

Table 10.7 Ranking Order of Public and Press Agendas in South Cyprus

Ranking <i>Issues</i>	Public Agenda Ranking		Press Agendas	
		<i>Phileleftheros</i>	<i>Simerini</i>	
Security	1	1	1	
Don't want to live with Turks	2	11	5	
President's position	3	2	2	
Economy	4	8	3	

As can be seen in this data, the priorities given by the two Turkish language papers to issues relating to the Plan were significantly different. It can be noted that there is a significant similarity between the issues ranked in *Kıbrıs* and the agenda of Turkish Cypriots. However, it is not possible to say the same for the Turkish mainland paper. 'For Europe' was first on the agenda of Turkish Cypriots, however, it ranked second in the agendas of both *Kıbrıs* and *Hürriyet* papers. Furthermore, while the 'United Cyprus' issue ranked second on the public agenda, it ranked first

in *Kıbrıs* and ninth in *Hürriyet*. In addition, although ‘Economic Benefits’, ranked third on the public agenda, it came fifth and seventh in *Kıbrıs* and *Hürriyet* respectively. Last but not least, the fourth issue on the public agenda – ‘To get rid of Denktash’ – ranked third in *Kıbrıs* and first in *Hürriyet*. The only substantive issue subject that did not make the top four of the public agenda in *Kıbrıs* paper was the ‘Economy’, which was very closely ranked fifth. On the other hand, two issues in *Hürriyet* paper had a much lower emphasis than in the public agenda, and these were ‘Economy’, which ranked seventh and ‘United Cyprus’ which was eighth in order.

On the other side of the island, both Greek Cypriot papers’ highest emphasis was on the ‘Security’ issue, which also ranked as the most important concern of the Greek Cypriot public. While the issue of ‘Don’t want to live with Turks’ was ranked the second greatest concern on the public agenda, it was only reflected in the agendas of the Greek Cypriot press in eleventh and fifth place in *Phileleftheros* and *Simerini* respectively. These were followed by the issue of the ‘President’s Position’ on the public agenda, which ranked second in both papers’ agendas. The fourth issue, and the one of the least concern to the Greek Cypriot public, was the ‘Economic Cost of the Plan’ and the corresponding substantive issue of the ‘Economy’ was ranked eighth and third on the agendas of *Simerini* and *Phileleftheros* respectively. The only cross-national similarity occurred with the issue of ‘Education’, which all the press focused on the lowest amount.

So, Did The Press Influence the Cypriot Electorates’ Concerns?

To measure this, a systematic analysis of Spearman’s Rhos correlations was run between the press agendas and the Cypriot electorates’ agendas. The top four ranked subjects in the press agenda correlated with the exit polls. The Spearman’s Rhos between the Turkish language papers and Turkish Cypriots agendas ranged from .6 to -.4 (a perfect correlation would be 1.0). This indicates that the rank order of the *Kıbrıs* paper and the Turkish Cypriot public agendas is much more similar compared to *Hürriyet* paper’s rank order. In other words, there was

somewhat similarity in the order of prioritisation of issues between the agendas of *Kıbrıs* and the Turkish Cypriots. In the south, both of the newspapers showed a somewhat strong correlation ($Rho = .4$) between the press agendas and the Greek Cypriot electorate's agendas. However, these correlations were statistically insignificant (because $*p < 0.5$ should be smaller to produce a statistically significant result). The Spearman's Rho analysis statistically produced insignificant outcome in this analysis, because in practical terms, it is very hard to find a significant correlation with Spearman's Rho if the amount of variables is low in the compared two pairs. So, the strength of the correlation should not be seen as the sole indicator of 'relationship' between agendas over the issue salience, as there were only five substantive issues used in this analysis. Therefore, instead of indicating the strength of relationship whether the newspaper's issue priorities were the issue priorities of the Cypriots public. Having said this, however, it is possible to claim that although all the press managed to bring some 'issues' to the fore in the minds of Greek and Turkish Cypriot voters, *Kıbrıs* and *Simerini* newspapers managed to bring more to the forefront.

To summarise, the content analysis cannot solely enable me to pinpoint whether the press set the public agenda due to methodological limitation of the study. However, by taking everything into account in this study it is possible to say that the press managed to bring some issues to the fore in the minds of Cypriot publics on the Plan. Furthermore, what can be concluded from the analysis of the news professional interviews and the content analysis? First, as Norris et al. (1999) concluded the news media is fairly autonomous in its news priorities, following its own 'media logic' rather than the priorities of any party. This conclusion also applies for the 2004 Cyprus referendum. Second, as mentioned, the content analysis reveals that the press were more objective in their reporting despite the findings of interviews with news professionals where the press seemed highly partisan and partial in their reporting. This might be due to the fact that the press employed a vast amount of hard news reporting where the news is reported as factual basis. Third, although the interview with the Editor-in-Chief of *Kıbrıs* paper reveals that the newspaper had enough resources to run its own stories, hence

during the election campaign did not rely on political campaign sources/materials, the content analysis contradicted this. Because, according to the result of the content analysis of *Kıbrıs*, the newspaper used sound bites in 42% of its news stories coverage. Although overall this seems that the analysed four press had a tendency to provide an 'easier ride' to political campaigners over the media agenda-setting by using a high amount of information subsidies, especially taking into consideration the findings with the interviews, the press was partisan and to some extent disregarded its basic principles of journalistic norms and values, i.e. impartiality and objectivity during the referendum election. What is more, it devoted more news space and often granted lengthy¹⁴⁶ news coverage to the political camps that they were affiliated to in election news coverage.

The content analysis further confirms what has been found out in the interviews that the strategic political decision of the press on the publication of political advertising towards the opponent political camp. What else, the notion of balanced is altered in the context of a referendum campaign because as voting in a referendum based on 'yes or no' votes, hence the question of balance as dramatically changes with the representation of the 'Yes' and 'No' camps in the media (Vreese and Semetko 2004). So, this situation where emphasise can be put on smaller parties or individual can create an intended 'magnifying glass' effect. In this study, the content analysis of news sources discloses an evidence that the press used this 'magnification' effect by providing more and positive leant information towards the political camp that they were in favour of. What is more, this is more apparent with the 'columnists, editorial and commentary' news sources findings. In addition, the interviews with Editors and journalist further also revealed that newspapers received high demand of interviews or more chance to express their viewpoints by political camps who felt that they have been treated disadvantageously, like in the case of 2002 Danish referendum (Vreese & Semetko 2004). On a final note, the findings of content analysis provides a further evidence to the interviews that the campaign issues that were emphasised by the press

¹⁴⁶ Although the length measurement of news items was not conducted in this research, it was apparent.

demonstrates a significant similarity between the 'Yes' and 'No' camps and the press referendum issue agendas that they were in favour of.

CHAPTER 11

CONCLUSION

An inquiry into the comparative agenda-setting process and the political communications leading up to the 2004 Cyprus Referendum election produce the following conclusions and I present them in three main sections: (1) Political campaigning practice (2) Journalistic approaches and news production process, (3) Agenda-setting effects during the 2004 referendum election.

1. Political Campaigning Practice At The Election

As referendum elections have different political environment settings from general elections, in the 2004 referendum the political parties set up coalitions to campaign fiercely either in favour of, or against the Annan Plan cross-nationally. Alongside the parties, various new movements also emerged and actively campaigned to support or turn down the Plan for the reunification of the island cross-nationally at the referendum election.

The investigation of campaign communication practice during the course of the election reveals that the degree of power among both camps differed significantly cross-nationally. The 'Yes' camp in the north and the 'No' camp in the south had a considerable advantage over their opponents by being prepared in advance for election campaigning and, more importantly, through their financial resources. These two factors substantially influenced the way that the political camps were prepared, and how they ran their campaigns at the election, which in turn influenced the contest over the course of media and public agenda-setting. What is more, these reasons perhaps created an even wider gap in Cypriot public opinion over the referendum issue.

One of the cross-national similarities in political campaign communication was the hiring of professional political consultants and their control over the sources of campaign design. The employment of professional news management techniques, the political marketing technique of using market research analysis to determine campaign communication strategy, and centralised campaign management to coordinate communication messages were commonly used by the 'Yes' and 'No' camps in North and South Cyprus respectively. These are key indicators of modern campaigning practice

being utilised in the referendum election. As the 'Yes' and 'No' camps in the north and south respectively were centrally coordinated, and hence more consistent; they managed to stay 'on message'. This consequently resulted in the most effective political campaigns cross-nationally.

Furthermore, they demonstrate an increasing trend of employing professional campaign personnel, and the consequent professionalisation of political campaigning in Cyprus. However, the level of professionalism has not yet reached that of post-industrial countries, like the UK. In particular, political campaigners benefited significantly less from new technologies, such as the Internet in campaign communications compared to these countries. Additionally, the use and ever increasing application of political marketing techniques has also been evident once more in this political campaigning practice at the election. Both sides of the losing political camp's campaigners acknowledged the importance of employing professional consultants and implementing strategic communications to run an effective political campaign.

The 2004 election study reveals that media structure was highly influential on the campaigns' communications. As the press was characterised as partisan and partial, this consequently influenced the efforts of political camps to gain access to the news. The press exercised censorship in terms of 'space' allocated to each political camp's events in their news coverage, as well as refusing, or allowing only a minimal level of advertising to the opposing political camp's adverts. These are two core examples of the press using its discretionary power over the campaign professionals over the course of the political campaign. The political systems, the presidential election (which consequently focuses extra attention on the head of the each state) and, arguably most importantly, the 'valuation of politics' – in other words political culture, which was of particular interest in regard to the 'Cyprus Issue' – were among the factors that were influential over the course of the referendum campaign. Furthermore, obligatory voting, which is a feature of the election system in Cyprus, encourages, to an extent, the attention of the Cypriot electorate to the political campaigns' rhetoric and presents an opportunity to influence the voters in general, and especially those who are less interested, and less well-informed.

One of the interesting findings of the research was that to fight against the negative climate in the South about the Plan, the 'Yes' camps on both sides of the island merged their forces to combat the counter camps and to increase the likelihood of obtaining a double yes vote at the outcome of the election. The interviews with political campaigners revealed that even though the mass media was at the centre of the political camps' communication strategies, the actual contest to influence Cypriot public opinion took place on the streets of Cyprus. The turnout to the rallies and demonstrations was a sign of the effectiveness of the political campaigns, and this in turn dominated the news agenda of the mass media the next day.

Comparatively speaking, the political camps adopted a range of sources to reach and persuade the Cypriot electorate, from leaflet distribution on the street by volunteers, to advertising on-billboards, and, at the heart of the communication strategy, advertising in national newspapers. And as in all other Cypriot election campaigns, without exception political campaigners created a buzz by car convoying; gatherings and flag waving at roundabouts; rallies, and most importantly, mass demonstrations at historically important squares (i.e. Eleftheria Square and İnönü Square on both sides of the capital city, Nicosia) . One of the most common aspects of the political campaigns was the daily press releases, and also press conferences which were exercised cross-nationally. On both sides of the island, the political camps strategically oriented their campaigns around the political leaders to raise the news profile of their campaign issues and themes as the leaders were perceived by the press as important news sources. Unlike during other elections in post-industrial countries, (i.e. Britain, Sweden, as well as at the 2000 Danish referendum campaign), in Cyprus, paid political advertising is by no means a prohibited form of communication, therefore 'unmediated' means of persuasion were available cross-nationally.

One of the resemblances between the political camps – the 'Yes' and 'No' camps in the South and the 'No' camp in the North – was the campaign strategy and theme: 'insecurity and fear'. These campaigns focused on messages of fear and insecurity that summed up the historical conflicts among the Turkish and Greek Cypriots. This consequently led to resemblances between the issues agendas of each of the political

campaigns as well. Indeed, they focused on more or less the same issues agendas of security, governance, land and property, and guarantorship that have been at the centre of the long-lasting Cyprus conflict. Conversely, the 'Yes' campaign in the north focused instead on 'the future and the hopes that the future holds' for Turkish Cypriots if they were to say 'Yes' at the election. A key point of similarity, however, between all the professionally organised political campaigns was the use of market research to ascertain Cypriot voters' feelings, emotions, and needs, in order to design overall campaign strategy.

During the fierce battling between campaigns over agenda-setting, one interesting finding was that to fight against the negative climate in the South about the Plan, the 'Yes' camps on both sides of the island merged their forces to combat the counter camps and to increase the likelihood of obtaining a double 'yes' vote at the outcome of the election.

What is more, as stated in the political communication literature, developments in electronic media have had a profound effect on the manner of political campaigning in general. In the case of the 2004 Cyprus referendum, however, this was not evident. That said, the 'No' campaign in the South utilised the electoral database to send 'text messages' to the electorate to inform them about campaign activities by avoiding legal restrictions and did not even get penalised as a consequence of this action.

2. Journalistic Approaches and News Production Process During the Election Coverage

Many media organisations in liberal democracies are subject to various countervailing influences on their discretionary powers of agenda-setting. The potential influences on the discretionary power of journalists over agenda-setting during the 2004 election campaign can be outlined as:

1. Ownership Structure Influence: one of the important similarities between the press is the degree of commercialisation within them, and that they are privately- owned

institutions. Therefore, the structure of the print media system in Cyprus, as well as the analysed Turkish press organisation, bestows a great opportunity on the big media barons to influence the political agenda of the day. As the press is a commercial enterprise, there was a 'top-down' hierarchical control over the editorial policy and content of the news. This was one of the common elements in terms of journalistic approach to election communication in both the north and the south. The interviews with editors-in-chief and journalists reveal that the owners of the print media had the final verdict over editorial policy decisions during the election campaign. It follows that the privately-owned news organisations dictated the 'control' of the news content during the election. The referendum news reporting was arranged according to the interest/views of the private owner and this consequently created manufactured news content by the demand of the press owners' on favouring specific political camps on the referendum issue. Although the television news medium was not studied in this research, as stated previously it was under the control of the governments – so both sides' campaigns, the 'No' and 'Yes' in the south and the north respectively, had enjoyed their privilege to use it as a propaganda tool in order to disseminate their political messages. So, the media ownership structure, both private and state, was a highly influential factor in the news production process and the manufacture of its content. Simply put, the news media in Cyprus served the ends of a dominant elite, which practiced the monopolistic control over the newspapers' content by filtering out some of the news to be printed, magnifying other news, and ignoring, or only devoting a small space to other news, and then framing it according to the interests of the news media owner. Therefore, there is, perhaps, a need to adopt an alternative structure, or at least discuss the possibility of one – like the example of the civil media structure of the BBC in Britain. This is because, in either of the available media models in Cyprus, journalists sought to satisfy the interests of the social elite and consequently fell short in implementing the normative role of the media in a liberal understanding of the media's role.

2. Mass market pressures on news coverage: The media and journalism literature outlines that the private ownership structure in the media market faces pressure to appeal to a wider audience in order to increase readership and circulation, which in turn

will generate profit. Despite the likely pressures, the newspapers still took sides and disregarded the risk of losing their readership at the election campaign. Nevertheless, despite *Kıbrıs* newspaper's outspoken editorial endorsement favouring reunification during the referendum campaign period, its circulation figure reached its highest point in the history of the paper's existence. And, actually, cross-nationally there was a significant increase in newspapers' readership during the election period.

3. Advertising Influence: In free-market and/or capitalist systems the media are dependent upon advertising revenues to survive, so the media become oriented towards advertisers' interests, and this creates financial pressure on the media. Although to date, the actual political advertising, or even the overall budget reserved for political campaigning cross-nationally is not known, the content analysis in this research documented significant differences between the political camps in terms of the amount of political adverts appearing in the press cross-nationally. Not surprisingly, the 'Yes' and 'No' camps in North and South Cyprus respectively advertised the highest amount in the election. As revealed from the interviews that were conducted, some newspapers (based on their stance on the Plan) refused to advertise, and/or diminished the opposition camp's paid political advertisements to a minimum amount.

4. Rising Importance of Political Consultants: In Cypriot politics, in general there is an increasing tendency to hire political consultants in elections. This research investigation found that, on both sides of the island, hiring professional firms and consultants to run political campaigns at elections was considered highly important and would be likely to create a difference in the outcome of elections.

5. Journalistic Approach and Professionalism at the Election: During the referendum election campaign, the press was partisan which influenced the way journalism was practiced. This partisanship was a feature of editorials, commentaries and signed columns. Although the amount of news sources referenced from the different campaigns was not assessed, the interviews with the editors revealed their partiality in terms of the amount devoted to each camp at the election. Additionally, the emphasis put on certain issues was also disclosed by the content analysis as well. The referendum

election the 'valuation of politics as such' influenced the reporting of the stories. Cross-nationally, there were more similarities between the three Cypriot papers compared to the Turkish ones. One of the important examples was the 'news value' given to the election campaign by them. For the Cypriot press, the referendum was the most important news story, whereas for the Turkish press, the significance given to the election news was determined by the fact of news values of the election news stories and treated accordingly. This consequently influenced their employed news reporting approach, sacerdotal versus pragmatic approaches.

There was a powerful sign of agreement on regarding the position of the newspapers on the Plan amongst the owners and journalists. By taking a particular position, either to support or reject the Plan, the journalists did not see themselves as really neglecting their professional journalistic norms and values. This is because the referendum was historically highly significant, and so they believed that it was their responsibility, like politicians, to 'defend and/or attack' the Plan. Hence, it is possible to call what was practiced by journalists as more like 'agenda-shaping' and 'agenda-amplifying' rather than 'agenda-setting'. This is because the press provided 'sided' analysis and on some occasions, 'magnified' certain issues within the referendum topic, such as the benefits of saying 'Yes' to the Plan in the north and the cost of the Plan for Greek Cypriots in the south. So, the press were unquestionably one of the key political actors at the election and particularly strong partisan press, i.e. *Kıbrıs* and *Simerini*, were very active in campaigning 'Yes' or 'No' depending on their stance on the issue. Although the journalists acted as so-called 'gatekeepers' of the decision of what went through their news gates at the election, this was not aimed to accomplish their normative roles, for example, to resist the temptation of using information subsidies under the immense pressure of 24-7 news production process, like in the 2004 Cyprus referendum, and give an 'easy ride' to PR professionals to dominate the campaign agenda, instead of acting like 'advocates'. Not just in this case, but in most election incidents, Cypriot journalists could not, or did not have the opportunity to implement most of their normative roles of the press within the liberal understanding. This is because there has traditionally been a struggle for journalists to abide by their professional journalistic norms and values

against the owners' financial and political goals. Although reporters are expected to act independently and provide a diversity of views on various subjects to inform and educate the public, as employees of private enterprises, their activities and ability to function in the normative role of journalism in liberal democracies under free-market economies are restricted, like in the case of Cyprus. More importantly, arguably, the overall underlying motive and journalistic approach of Cypriot journalist can be summed up as either continuing the nationalist ideology of 'Greek/Turkish Cypriotism', which represents the 'No' and 'Yes' camps in South and North Cyprus, or the rejection of that idea, and the favouring of the national identity of 'Cypriotism' which represent the reunification and solution. Thus, as journalists believed that the Plan did not adequately secure the national interest and identity, they moved away from professional journalistic standards and it can be argued that, at the 2004 Cyprus referendum, journalists adapted a 'utilitarian' ethical understanding of 'objectivity' in their professional journalistic manner and acted as 'advocate journalists' unlike any journalistic role outlined by Semetko et al. (1991).

Overall, like previous studies' claims that are summarised by Weaver and Eliots (1985), in the case of the 2004 Cyprus referendum the press also set the news media and the public agenda of issues by filtering and shaping reality instead of simply reflecting it. However, this case study also challenges the argument of McCombs (2005) that the patterns of news coverage that defined the press agenda resulted from the norms and traditions of journalism, but proves McCombs' (2005) further claims that the news media agenda is a pattern of daily interactions among news organisations themselves and the continuous interactions of news organisations with numerous sources and their agendas (i.e., news agencies and other papers' referendum coverage).

What is more, there is a particularly extreme example of journalism incident during the election in North Cyprus in the form of death-threats. These were made towards *Kıbrıs* newspaper's Editor-in-Chief, News Director and its top political columnist. In addition, there were other isolated incidents, including the Greek Cypriot government preventing Turkish origin journalists from 'accessing Greek Cypriot information' by forbidding them from crossing the green line border on the island.

This study identifies several additional similarities in news coverage and approaches used by the press, these are:

- Like in any elections, at the 2004 Cyprus referendum, the polls were the soul of the referendum campaign. The Cypriot partisan press, by emphasising 'who is ahead' in the polls and reporting them as headline news in most cases showed strong evidence of a 'horse race' reporting style during the election campaign. One of the main reasons for this strategy being used by the partisan press could be that the political camp that happened to be ahead at the polls shared their same viewpoint on the Plan. However, the portrayal of the campaign as a game did not have much emphasis in the other press.
- A commonality arose among the Cypriot journalists in terms of their news orientations at the election. They demonstrated what may be termed a 'sacerdotal approach' where anything related to the referendum campaign automatically has a 'sacred' status, and is therefore inherently newsworthy, regardless of its independent value as news. Also, another instance of this orientation was evident regarding political leaders and their speeches and announcements, which they perceived as inherently newsworthy to report. On the contrary, Turkish newspapers adopted a pragmatic approach where the election news stories had to fight its way to be reported based on their news value.
- Another similarity was the application of a 'vox-pop' technique in news reporting style. The Cypriot press employed this technique to provide the day-by-day opinions of the Cypriot public on the various topics of the Plan and more importantly, whether they were pro-solution, or against the reunification.
- Within the Cypriot press, *Kıbrıs* and *Simerini* newspapers' directional comments about the political camps contained more deflating comments against the opposition political camp, however, *Hürriyet* and *Phileleftheros* took a softer approach in their remarks.

More importantly, this research study documents evidence on how political systems of Cyprus and its media systems influence the way in which campaign agendas are shaped.

Thus, it confirms a further verification to the one of the concluding remarks of the study by Semetko et al. (1991), where the authors stated that agenda-setting should be conceived as a dynamic process because it will occur differently in different societies, depending on differences of political systems and the positions of the media within those systems (journalistic professional culture, size of newsroom, etc.). In addition, after taking into consideration of the suggestion made by Semetko et al. (1991) to scrutinize the number of factors that might affect discretionary power of political actors in setting campaign agendas, this study reveals, at the system level, the following findings:

- The strength of political party system did not grant politicians more power to influence the campaign agenda. Indeed, journalists had the final verdict by using their 'gatekeeping' facility in the news production process during the referendum election.
- In terms of media system, all the analysed newspapers were commercial products and there was a strong tendency by editors-in-chiefs and journalist to set the campaign agenda. The size of the newspaper (tabloid versus broadsheet) was not an issue in terms of generating a massive amount of referendum-related stories.
- Differing degrees of professionalisation of the campaign between 'Yes' and 'No' camps cross-nationally demonstrated strong evidence of professional management of political campaigns and strategically designed media communication plans to influence the news coverage. Although the 'Yes' and 'No' camps were professionally organised, this did not grant them more discretionary power over the campaign agenda. As stated previously, journalists acted as "advocate journalism", hence this reduced the discretionary power of the political campaigners significantly.
- Cultural differences were more apparent between Cypriot journalists and Turkish journalists. As there was a high interest and respect to politics cross-nationally, this reflected in news coverage of the referendum election as "horse race" as well as more "soundbite" coverage.

At the system-level:

- The partisan news media, namely *Kıbrıs* and *Simerini* papers more openly used their editorials, feature columns and commentaries to provide their support to the political camps that they were aligned with, however, *Phileleftheros* and *Hürriyet* adopted a softer approach by using their editorials to show their supports towards the political camps.
- As indicated by Semetko et al. (1991), the incumbent presidents and prime ministers in Cyprus had a better chance to influence the campaign agenda compared to their challengers. They benefited greatly from their political position and used their stature to get their messages across to the mass media.
- In terms of journalistic norms of balance and objectivity in the referendum election coverage, although the interviews with editors-in-chief and journalists revealed that the journalists were partial in their news reporting and the amount of space allocated to the political camps was not balanced, the content analysis documented a different scenario. One explanation to this might be the type of news reporting in the papers. The highest amount of news reporting that was employed by all the papers was 'hard news'. Therefore, as intrinsically hard news reporting requires factual story reporting, this might be the reason.

3. Agenda-Setting Effects At The Election Campaign

The referendum issue was indisputably the most important news at the time. Cypriots were obsessed, completely wrapped up with the Plan, and talked about it 24-7. The press coverage analysis of the Cyprus referendum clearly documents this. The importance given to the referendum election in the press was evident in the overall amount of news stories covered – 2302 news items – and also in the amount of headlines devoted to it; on average 95% in the Cypriot press. One significant finding was the difference on attention devoted to the election amongst the Cypriot papers versus the newspaper from mainland Turkey, *Hürriyet*.

Another conclusion is drawn from the analysis of the tone of each news story in the four newspapers towards the 'Yes' and the 'No' camps. There was evidence that on both sides of the island, daily circulated newspapers displayed a mainly balanced viewpoint, although *Simerini* newspaper, which belongs to the biggest news media conglomerate in South Cyprus, was negative towards the reunification in its referendum election news coverage. In addition, the evaluative tone analysis of the news content resulted in another interesting finding – that the overall negative and positive news coverage in the press drew a parallel with the outcome of the referendum election cross-nationally. Although media pluralism does exist in Cyprus, traditionally newspapers have shown strong partisanship patterns, like their European counterparts.

This analysis puts in perspective one of the biggest differences that emerged amongst political camps cross-nationally, in terms of the sheer volume of political advertising that was circulated in the papers. In total there were 41 political advertisements in the Turkish language newspapers. Out of 41, 36 political adverts belonged to the 'Yes' camps and only five to the 'No' camps. On the contrary, on the south side, completely the opposite scenario existed. Overall, there were 52 political adverts circulated in the Greek Cypriot newspapers. Within this, 49 of them were for the 'No' camp, three of them for the 'Yes' camp's political adverts. Likewise on the north side of the island, there was a significant difference between the political camps in terms of political advert circulation numbers. Thus, the content analysis further systematically documented the significant campaign budget expenditure difference between the 'No' camps and the 'Yes' camps cross-nationally. More interestingly, this indicates a parallel link between the overwhelming 'Yes' and 'No' political adverts' amounts in North and South Cyprus respectively, and the outcome of the referendum election in each side. Therefore, this finding suggests a potential research scope – the impact of political advertising on media and/or public agenda – which may be investigated in future studies.

Overall, the content analysis of the press issues salience revealed that although there was some similarity between the issues emphasised between the two Turkish language papers and also Greek Cypriot papers, overall the press focused on divergent issue salience at the election. More importantly, the priority of importance had shown on

issue salience amongst Turkish and Greek language papers were significant different. This difference occurred not only cross-nationally but also, more importantly, within the local Turkish Cypriot paper and Turkish paper.

So, Who Set the Media Agenda at the Referendum Election?

The content analysis revealed that the press used many political campaign-initiated activities in their news reportage. This was particularly evident in the Cypriot papers compared to the Turkish papers. The content analysis shows that the overall proportion of sound bite usage in *Kıbrıs* newspaper was 42%; 13.8% in *Hürriyet*; 21.8% in *Simerini*, and 29.1% in *Phileleftheros*. So, among the four newspapers, *Kıbrıs* newspaper more heavily relied on a wide range of sound bites compared to the others.

The political campaigners seemed to be powerful over the course of media agenda-setting during the election campaign as the news coverage was more geared towards carefully crafted media events of the political campaigns. However, caution is required over the claim of the degree of political campaigners' power over the media agenda-setting. Although the press had a tendency to provide an 'easier ride' to political campaigners over the media agenda-setting by using a high amount of information subsidies, especially taking into consideration the previous findings, the press was partisan and to some extent disregarded its basic principles of journalistic norms and values, i.e., impartiality and objectivity, during the referendum election. What is more, it devoted more news space and often granted lengthy news coverage to the political camps that they were affiliated to in election news coverage. So, although it seems that the political campaigners had some discretion to set the media agenda with its carefully crafted campaign communication strategies, the press demonstrated its discretionary power over the course of media agenda-setting by following certain campaign activities by devoting lengthy or shorter news coverage on them, and re-shaping or framing the political leaders' speeches in their news reporting.

Was there Evidence of Intermedia Agenda-Setting?

The content analysis shows that out of 662 new stories, 73 of them were obtained from other news sources in *Kıbrıs* paper; seven out of 229 in *Hürriyet*; 53 out of 551 in *Simerini*, and finally 37 out of 860 new stories in *Phileleftheros*. This figure clearly indicates that *Kıbrıs* newspaper used more 'other news sources' by far compared to the Turkish newspapers and also substantially higher amounts than the Greek Cypriot newspapers during the referendum election news coverage. In addition to this, the interviews with media professionals further revealed that both sides of the press constantly monitored 'the other side's' news stories on the referendum issues and used relevant news articles in their news report. This indicates cross-national congruent journalistic practice between both sides. Also, it seemed that Greek Cypriot papers' editors perceived the 'voices of foreign news source' more important than others, as they stated their importance ahead of other news sources. Additionally, the interviews also revealed that television channels' news agenda appeared to be an important news source for the Cypriot press. Unlike Cypriot papers, *Hürriyet* newspaper referenced the least amount of news from other news agencies. Although *Hürriyet* newspaper 'observed' what other news sources at the election were covering, because of its resources, *Hürriyet* managed to set its own news agenda and was not influenced, to an extent, by other sources' election agendas.

Were there Agenda-Setting Effects at the 2004 Cyprus Referendum?

Although it is not possible to pinpoint whether the issue priorities of the press set the issues priorities of the Cypriot public at the election due to methodological limitation of the study, one thing was clear: that the press, to some extent, managed to bring some issues of the Plan to the forefront of the Cypriot public's mind.

To conclude, during the 2004 Cyprus referendum election campaign, all the news organisations were pro-active political actors, and used discretionary powers in selecting which news stories to highlight and how to report these issues in elections. The political

campaigners seemed to be powerful over the course of media agenda-setting during the election campaign, as the news coverage was geared more towards carefully crafted media events of the political campaigns. However, the press showed its discretionary power in the news production process by tailoring the election news stories according to their stance on the Plan. Moreover, this discretionary power of the press to set the media agenda in the election has been influenced by the media ownership structure, and the application of professional journalistic values and norms. Comparatively speaking, there were four crucial factors that influenced the discretionary power of the political campaigners, namely; (1) financial constraints and as a consequence of this (2) the differences in professional design of the campaigns; (3) the partisan press, and the way the print media treated the political campaigns. Finally, and arguably more importantly, (4) unevenly distributed number of political parties' support or rejection towards the Plan.

On a final note on the journalism practice at the election, the press were partisan and partial, hence provided an 'unfair' discussion platform, where plural voices were limited and had reduced opportunities to express their views on the Plan. So at the time of the election, the Cypriot press mainly did not assume the role of the media in a normative liberal understanding of the word. . As mentioned, one of the rationales behind the employment of agenda-setting theory was to enable a critical scrutiny of journalistic practice within the understanding of the liberal theory of press. This scrutiny, which was neglected by previous studies, contributes to our understanding of democratic norms of media performance at elections, in particular referendums. The comparative case study of the 2004 Cyprus referendum reveals that although the press provided a 'forum' for public debates about the issues of the Annan Plan, it hardly fulfilled the 'education' role. As the press served for the interests of ruling elites' political agenda(s), one can hardly argue that Cypriot voters were able to make an informed decision. Moreover, the partisan press fell short to 'facilitate a neutral platform' to enable Cypriot voters to articulate their opinion fully on this complex plan, as one form of impartiality occurred in the form of transmitting elites' political discourses on the referendum issues. This was especially apparent in the *Kıbrıs* media organisation, where its owner Asil Nadir, had expressed his opinions strongly in favour of the Plan a few times by using this media

channels (i.e. television, radio, and newspaper). So, as critics attained to the liberal theory of press, the press undoubtedly served according to the interests of the elite groups. That's why the notion of journalistic ethics and norms were faced with challenges to be practiced without any inferences or conflict of interests with the dominant elite. At the election time, the views expressed in each paper were in terms of political preference accompanied with the elite groups' stance on the issue. This political intervention was reflected in each newspaper as a political campaigner, some more actively than others, on behalf of their preferred political camp and they criticised the opponent political camp. This structure created a 'top-down' journalistic practice, where the owner of the press organisation indicates his/her will on the issue to Editor-in-Chief, than he/she makes sure that journalists report the news accordingly. Subsequently, this has influenced the diversity of voices that were provided in the papers (at least in terms of space allocated) and the way in which news were framed/shaped. As the news became a facilitator of political discourse for the interest of the ruling class, this raises a concern over its political 'hegemonic' role. As a consequent of this, the role of the 'fourth estate' of the press within liberal theory of the press was abused as a political power by elites and the journalists in extreme cases can be described as 'pawns' within the world of big media mogul players.

Therefore, this case study analysis verifies that in liberal market economic structure, although the advocate of the model defends the view that the political elite is not homogenous and hence the ideological division can be reflected by pluralism in the media reporting, there is, however, a danger especially in the case of the referendum elections, where there were only two options are provided: Yes or No, whereby the majority of the political elites can support the same stance (yes or no). Hence the challenges would occur for mass media in representing a balance and plural views in political voices. In particular, as Blumler and Gurevitch (1981) outlined, in a news-hungry media the political arena is the potential source of news, and especially where the demand for news is so high, the political sources become even more important, like in the case of the 2004 Cyprus referendum. Subsequently, a mutual relationship is derived from this desire-demand relation. Hence, the journalistic investigation or 'watchdog' role of the press gets caught up in the responding to, and using, an easy supply of

information, especially in cases where deadlines are tight and exclusive news reporting is getting increasingly important. As a consequent of all these factors, journalists' professional ethic of objectivity is open to interference and/or corruption, especially having considered that there was a strong indication of 'propaganda war' not only between political camps but also within the print media. Thus, journalists despite their professional values, are "reduced to virtual channels of propaganda" (Blumler and Gurevitch 1995:103). All these factors might have had influenced the rational decision-making process of Cypriot voters, and consequently the level of democracy achieved. Therefore, in the information environment where propaganda was heavily used either side of the island by the press and political campaigners, this study not only illustrates an important contribution to the political communication and agenda-setting literature that is heavily derived from American and western countries, but sadly also illustrates another missed opportunity for the citizens of Cyprus to solve more than fifty years' conflict at this historical point, arguably due to the partisan press and the unbalanced power of political campaigns.

Future Research Considerations

This study contributes to comparative studies in agenda-setting effects and political communications at referendum campaigns. As mentioned, the agenda-setting theoretical framework is complex and multifaceted. Therefore, it is not possible to study every aspect in one research thesis. Consequently, there are further possibilities of expanding this research and providing further findings. First, the content analysis could have been extended to measure the impact of political campaigns' agenda on the press agenda and also public agenda. What is more, as political advertising was one of the major communication strategies of the political camps, so future research studies can assess the impact of political advertising on public agenda-setting. As this study undertook the traditional route to investigate agenda-setting research, further research will undoubtedly concentrate on the new media aspect of the research. Last but not least, as this research is intrinsically an interdisciplinary research subject (i.e. political science and communication science) it carries with it a great potential to be scrutinised from different perspectives, and by different academic disciplines. One of the limitations

of this research was not being able to pin down the 'role and influence of external factors' during the referendum election. Although it has been briefly touched upon in the role of external factors in political campaigning (i.e. the EU funding the 'Yes' campaigns and heavy involvements of the EU enlargement commissioner Verhunger in campaigning), this rather superficially indicates their role during the election. Hence, this aspect of the research topic holds a great potential for future research. Moreover, due to diverse outlook of this research subject, this aspect of the research topic is vast and complicated (i.e., data collection from official sources), hence it could not be integrated into this research investigation.

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APPENDIX 1

Interviewees' Names	Occupations & Role Within the Campaign	Date of Interview
Basaran Duzgun	Editor-in-Chief, <i>KıBRİS</i> newspaper	8 July 2008
Ali Baturay	News Director, <i>KıBRİS</i> newspaper	11 July 2008
Hasan Hasturer	Political Columnist, <i>KıBRİS</i> newspaper	11 July 2008
Tamer Altunay	Yes Campaign PR Professional, Point PR Agency, Istanbul	6 September 2008
Tahsin Ertugruloglu,	Chairman of UBP political party, in 2007	22 July 2008
Onursal Akdeniz	Yes Campaign, Political Advertising, worked within various sections of the campaign design as well	16 July 2008
Interviewee A (did not want to release his identity)	Yes Campaign Manager in North Cyprus	8 July 2006
Omer Bilge	Foreign Affairs and Turkish Cyprus brunch journalist, <i>HÜRRİYET</i> newspaper	22 July 2008
Savvas Iacovides	Editor-in-Chief, <i>SIMERINI</i> newspaper	31 July 2008
Georghias Colocassides	Deputy Vice President of DIKO political party	4 August 2008
Costas Venizelos	Chief-in-Editor, <i>PHILELEFTHEROS</i> newspaper	2 February 2008
Barbara Lilikas	No Campaign Director, the CEO of the Marketway Research, Advertising and PR company	2 August 2008
MP Eleni Theocharous	from DISY political party, acted individually against the Plan	29 July 2008
Ozgul Gurkut Mutluyakali	Journalist, TAK agency	30 July 2008
Harris C. Georgriades	Deputy Press Spokeman	14 January 2009
Hasan Tacoy	Head of Nicosia District of the UBP party	3 August 2009

APPENDIX 2

THE CONTENT ANALYSIS OF THE NEWSPAPERS (CODING SHEET)

Technical Data:

Newspapers:

1= *Phileletheros*, 2= *Simerini*, 3= *Kibirs* and 4= *Hürriyet*

Variable 1

1.1 News Date

Variable 2

2.1 Number of News Item:

Variable 3

News Location:

3.1 Headline

3.2 Sub-headline

3.3 Other page 1 news

99 Others

Variable 4

News Format (See below for explanations)

4.1 Hard News

4.2 Feature News

4.3 Commentary & Editorial

4.4 Letter

4.5 Paid Advertising

4.6 Caricature

4.7 Columnists

4.8 Public Opinion Polls (all public opinion polls that related to the Annan referendum campaign)

4.9 Interviews (i.e., with political leaders, campaigners, and other political figures, for example De Soto Cyprus UN representative)

99 Others (For remaining other subjects).

(Hard News if article relates to events over previous 24-hrs; Feature News if article has current information combined with substantial background information and often includes interviews with several protagonists OR if article contains attributes of the main actor with no interviews or substantial background information (e.g. 'Day in the Life' type articles); Commentary/Editorial if article is specifically titled as such or if article appears to be the journalist's opinion without being a Signed Column or Editorial/Leader

article; Interview if article is mainly a one-to-one interview with a main actor; Columnists if article is an explicitly named column).

Note: The above descriptions are adopted from Content Analysis of the Press Coverage of the 2001 British Election that was undertaken by the Government Department at the University of Essex.

Variable 5

News Tone: Negative/Positive/Neutral

5.1 Positive-leaning news towards 'Yes' camps

5.2 Negative-leaning news towards 'Yes' camps

5.3 Positive-leaning news towards 'No' camps

5.4 Negative-leaning news towards 'No' camps

5.5 Neutral

99 Cannot determine

Variable 6

Substantive Issue Subjects:

Note: Please tick each option if the news contains more than one option.

6.1 Security (Turkish troops removal; guarantorship; National Security Forces; and mistrust to Turkey)

6.2 Governance (equal States and partnership; Federation; comparison of systems (Federation and Co-Federation, losing current regime)

6.3 Property and and (returning and/or not returning to 'home' for Greek/Turkish Cypriots; 'exchange value')

6.4 Settlers (refugees, 40,000 TC citizens sending back to Turkey; also so many Turkish originated settlers will be staying on the island)

6.5 Economy (the cost of the Plan; removal of embargoes; EU green line trading proposal; the economic benefits of reunification; international financial aid; the cost of rehabilitation)

6.6 Education

6.7 Legal Subjects (e.g. guarantorship; legislation; rules and legislations about how new 'United Cyprus'; citizenship; representation; voting rights etc.)

6.8 Denktash/Papadopolous (their stance on the Plan; criticisms/support towards them; their campaign; their criticism/attack on their opponents; referring them as 'old' politicians; and describing their ideas on the Plan as 'old politics')

6.9 United Cyprus (solution; live in a peace together; future implications to their lives; i.e. no more feeling insecure; no military etc.)

6.10 Sovereignty (recognition of TRNC; Mentioning Taiwan Model proposal; nationalism rhetoric/status quo referral for either side; refereeing Hellenism or not losing the ties with Turkey)

6.11 EU (Turkey and EU; Cyprus relationship with the EU; future implication of saying Yes/No on Turkey's membership; Greek Cypriot veto; anything related to the EU)

6.12 Don't want to live with Turks (within the news story if it mentions this phrase or any desire of Greek Cypriots not living together with the Turks)

99 Others (Any other subjects that cannot be classified under the title of the above mentioned main themes).

Variable 7

News Sources

7.1 News reporter

7.2 Columnists

7.3 Press briefings/Announcements

7.4 Political leaders' speeches/announcements

7.5 Interviews with political leaders

7.6 Campaign activities (e.g. meetings/rallies/demonstrations, etc.)

7.7 Other news sources based news (i.e., TAK news agency or CNA Greek Cypriot news agency, etc)

7.8 Not given

99 Others

APPENDIX 3

TURKISH AND GREEK CYPRIOT CULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS

Turkish Cypriot culture, which can be categorised as moderately power distant, collectivistic, feminine, and weak-uncertainty avoidant, differs from the Greek Cypriot and the mainland Turkish cultures in many ways, and these differences have an effect on the perception of the 'Cyprus Issue' both directly and indirectly.

There are two ethnic components on the island: *Turkish and Greek*, which is based on their territorial component: *Cypriot*. Turkish and Greek Cypriots represent two geographically defined regions within Cyprus each with separate political representation. In terms of international representation, only the Greek region is recognised as a nation state and legitimate government, however, the Turkish region is only recognised by Turkey and this unresolved issue was the basis of the referendum.

The Turkish Cypriots mainly belong to the Sunni denomination of the Islamic religion. Compared to the Orthodox Greek Church and its leaders, religious leaders have a minimal influence to the daily lives and attitudes of the Turkish Cypriot people. The best example for this is that during the referendum campaign none of the Muslim leaders in North Cyprus delivered any messages in any form of communication, whereas in South Cyprus, the leader of Kyrenia Orthodox Church called the public to vote 'No' on national television.

Language is also a distinguishing characteristic of Turkish Cypriots. Although Turkish Cypriots speak Turkish, they have distinctive accent, dialect, and phrases from the mainland Turks.

Historically, Turkish Cypriots consider themselves direct descendants of the Ottoman Turkish conquerors (Salih 1978:25).

Both Turkish and Greek Cypriots have embryonic nationalism towards their motherland, Turkey and Greece (Groom 1993). These embryonic nationalisms have complicated the 'Cyprus Issue' even more. Instead of this embryonic nationalism, Turkish Cypriots identify with and emphasise their Cypriot identity.

Although the customs of Turkish Cypriots may have many similarities to the motherland Turkey's customs in essence, the customs *are* different. Meanwhile, Turkish Cypriot customs also present many similarities when compared to the Greek Cypriots in terms of their folklore (music and dance) and gastronomy (cooking, food, and eating habits). This can be explained simply as a consequence of living together for more than 400 years until the division of the island. Moreover, due to the fact that Cyprus was a colony of Britain for 82 years, it has inherited British customs and British institutional understanding; this has been inherited by both of the communities.

Many Turkish Cypriots see themselves as different and compare themselves to the settlers who came from mainland Turkey after 1974. So, from the general public's point of view, there are differences between the identities of 'Turkish' and 'Turkish Cypriot', or in some cases just 'Cypriot'. This creates commonality between Turkish and Greek Cypriots, where in both side, 'Cypriotism' becomes a preferred term to identify their identity.