

# Voting Under Isolation: The Case of The Güzelyurt Community of Northern Cyprus

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## Abstract

In Morphou, Güzelyurt region, where the negative effects of the Cyprus problem are severely felt by the local population, there exists an atypical voting model which is formed around certain regional realities. This study aims to describe this model by explaining how the voting preferences of the fragile Güzelyurt community are formed, bearing in mind that this community does not own a common past and lives in an isolated region whose future is uncertain due to the complications of the Cyprus problem. In such a non-natural community, political references reflect the effects of passed or potential distresses, and as a result, “policy” and “quality of public services” gain only a secondary importance compared to “politics”, “strive for power”, and “political ideologies”.

**Keywords:** Voting behavior, Cyprus, community, demography, political party.

## 1. Introduction

### *1.1 Why is there a need to analyze the voting behavior in the region?*

In the Güzelyurt (Morphou) region of Cyprus, a mixed community of immigrants dwells in a realm which was almost entirely inhabited by Greek Cypriots before the division of the island in 1974. This mixed community is composed of Cypriot Turks, who, after the division had to leave their homes now remaining on the Greek administered zones of Cyprus, and of Turks from Turkey, who migrated to the island for economic reasons, and under political supervision<sup>1</sup>. The Hellenic identity of the region is often emphasized by Greek Cypriot politicians, who clearly

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<sup>1</sup> “Until the 2000s, the immigration policy has decisively been applied in cooperation with Turkish Governments. Although there are no exact figures, (...) although its speed is reduced, the immigration continued at a considerable level until the 2000s”. According to the census of 2007, around 42 000 (of 90 000) Turkish Cypriots have Turkey born parents (Hatay, 2007:42)

demand it's handing over to the Greek administration and to its old Greek inhabitants<sup>2</sup>. The handing over was also programmed in the Annan Plan<sup>3</sup>, which was voted by Greek and Turkish communities of Cyprus and rejected by the former in 2004.

The total population in the region, named as "area of deprivation"<sup>4</sup> by its residents, is around 31000 habitants (Rural Development Support Team, 2010:6). The demography is composed of a rather "economically inactive" age group compared to other parts of Northern Cyprus. Only 10.7 per cent of those older than 15 years in Northern Cypriots live in Güzelyurt (In Nicosia this rate is 33.7 per cent, in Famagusta 24.2 per cent, in Girne 23.6 per cent, and in İskele 7.8 per cent). In other words, the economically active population (between 15 and 64 years old) is lower than the North Cyprus average (Rural Development Support Team, 2010:8). This indicates the high rate of emigration from the region which has very few to attract younger generations. The unemployment rate of the young population (between 15-24 years old) is particularly high, 22.7% for Güzelyurt against 19.7 % for N.Cyprus (Rural Development Support Team, 2010:8). As one official from the Ministry of Agriculture has expressed in our interview, "young people have difficulties in finding job and thus prefer living in more central areas like Nicosia, Girne, or Famagusta"<sup>5</sup>. With such a level of outmigration, the region risks even further isolation in near future. The area has the second highest unemployment rate in Northern Cyprus with 14.4 per cent, after İskele where the unemployment is 15.5 per cent. (The N.Cyprus average is 12.4 per

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<sup>2</sup> "Güzelyurt Rumlara verilmeden çözüm olmaz" (there will be no solution unless Güzelyurt is handed over to the Greeks), ntvmsnbc.com; "Rumlar Güzelyurt'u istiyor" (The Greeks want Güzelyurt), Yenişafak. "The Greek Cypriot Leader Dimitris Christofias' aide told in his statement that the handing over of Morphou to Greek Cypriots is one of the Greek government's priorities that it is out of question that the Morpohou region and its villages will not be given to the Greek part". In "Rumlar gözünü Güzelyurt'a dikti (Greeks long to possess Güzelyurt)" www.turktime.com.

"In his statement on activities that will be undertaken during the 'Memory days' the (symbolic) Morphou mayor Haralambos Pittas expressed that there was an intensive effort to change the character of Morphou, that he qualifies as under invasion: 'New buildings and houses are constructed and our invaded land is used by Cypriot Turks and Turkish settlers'". Kıbrıs Gazetesi.

<sup>3</sup> "Annan Planı ile KKTC'deki 65 köy Rumlara bırakılıyor (65 villages in the TRNC will be handed over to the Greeks with the Annan Plan)", www.kenthaber.com.

<sup>4</sup> "Güzelyurt yeniden doğar mı?" (Can Güzelyurt be born again?), kıbrıspostası.com; "Öfkenin merkezi:Güzelyurt" (The centre of anger: Güzelyurt), havadis, 19.01.2011 ; "Çarşı Boş" (The Market is empty), Star Kıbrıs; "Mahrumiyet Bölgesiydi, İktisadi kalkınma Bölgesi Oldu" (The area of deprivation has become the area of economic development), İnşaat Dergisi.

<sup>5</sup> Interview with a responsible from The Northern Cyprus Community's Ministry of Agriculture, November 26, 2010, Nicosia

cent)<sup>6</sup>. Considering the economic activity, the area is mainly agricultural and rural. There are only two industrial areas, one being in the Guzelyurt town centre and the other in the village of Gemikonağı (Rural Development Support Team, 2010:6-7). Moreover, this low level of economic activity is undertaken in a chaotic environment due to the increasing problems faced by the agriculture sector<sup>7</sup> and the international embargo imposed on Northern Cyprus<sup>8</sup>. When the ambiguity about the future combines with economic problems, residents of Güzelyurt fall into a rising pessimism and become reluctant about even the simplest investment in their region. This pessimism is so obvious and well known that even the leader of the Turkish Cypriot Community, Derviş Eroğlu, expresses that “people of Güzelyurt have even begun to stop burying their dead in their region”<sup>9</sup>. Probably because of this dominant pessimism, the residents voted in favor of the Annan Plan that would bring a definite solution to the Cyprus problem (and as a result integrate Northern Cyprus in the EU member Cyprus Republic), although they would have to leave their current homes<sup>10</sup>.

This initial presentation of the region indicates that the non-native residents of the region constitute an “erratically clustered” human grouping whose cohabitation is socially desultory, since it is devoid of a historical and traditional dimension and not based on shared experiences or a common cultural legacy. Within this synthetic social structure there is no sign of any concrete and generalized loyalty to a specific nation, meaning to an “imagined community” whose affiliates would attribute the same meaning to their communion and consider themselves as indivisible parts of an exceptional group which has a high degree of distinctiveness (Anderson, 1991:224). While members of a nation identify themselves with one another, share certain attributes in impenetrable ways to outsiders and distinguish clearly between themselves and outsiders (Jasiewicz, 2009: 492 ; Puchala 1970: 741 ; Deutsch, 1953), in Güzelyurt, even the line between insider and outsider is blurred. As stated earlier, the

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<sup>6</sup> Figures from 2009, *DPÖ Hanehalkı İşgücü Anketi*.

<sup>7</sup> “Tükenişin Merkezi Bostancı” (Bostancı, the centre of bereavement), [medyatext.com.tr](http://medyatext.com.tr); “Güzelyurt Yeniden Doğar mı?”, *op. cit.*

<sup>8</sup> By using its position of being the internationally recognized body, the Greek Cypriot Government continued to impose an economic blockade, as well as a political one, on the Turkish Cypriots aiming to force them to renounce their independence. Their embargo gained an international character by the mid-1990s, which has very negatively affected northern economic and social life. (Çolak, 2004: 7). For further reading on the juridical implications of the embargo see Talmon, 2001: 728-736.

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.basaranpress.com/haber/1813-kktc-haber-basbakan-eroglu-yakinlasma-yok-umutlu-olmak-mumkun.html>.

<sup>10</sup> In the referendum of 2004, residents of Güzelyurt have voted in favour of the Annan Plan with a percentage of 64 per cent. However, the huge disappointments during the post-referendum period have reduced their support for the plan. According to a survey, in 2006, only within two years after the referendum, only 33 per cent of Güzelyurt population were in favour of the Plan. <http://www.cypriot.org.uk/Documents/Haber6/08-Subat.htm>.

residents originally come from two different countries of two distinct nations (Cyprus and Turkey) who have different “memories of experiences” and incompletely shared cultural tradition. Besides, the community they compose is fragile and decomposable: economic forces or new developments with respect to the Cyprus problem may change the demographic characteristics in Güzelyurt, and the residents may be dispersed as a result of voluntary or compulsory migration from their territories.

Within this social environment, the main glue holding the residents together becomes their cohabitation in a specific geographic area. In this regard, “adjacency”<sup>11</sup> appears as the main factor susceptible to contribute to the development of a communitarian feeling, particularly through daily interactions and discussions about regional issues. The communion between the residents may thus gain a meaning through politics, as the residents confront similar problems resulting from regional difficulties and are likely to develop collective beliefs about their solutions. This presumption increases the research interest of two very basic facts about Güzelyurt's residents:

Firstly, as citizens of the (unilaterally declared) TRNC (Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus), the residents are integrated in a political community which has a decision making centre controlling public resources, thus able to find solutions to the problems of Güzelyurt by their adequate allocation<sup>12</sup>.

Secondly, this political community is considered as the “superior focus of political identification for the large majority of residents”<sup>13</sup> as they have constructed an allegiance towards its decision-making centre from which they have concrete expectations. This allegiance is best illustrated through elections, when residents, though voting, manifest their engagement in the problems of the community and express their preferences about which political candidate is most likely to find solutions.

In this paper, our objective is to distinguish different forces affecting political beliefs and voting behaviors in such an atypical social environment. Are political parties apt to play the typical bridging function, create an embracing discourse and serve as a common dominator for the members of community? What are the political motivations and expectations of the members of desultorily formed and fragile Güzelyurt community, which was totally inexistent in less than 40 years ago?

### ***1.2 The work plan and methodology applied in the study***

Our study is composed of three stages:

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<sup>11</sup> Etzioni considers “adjacency” as an important factor for the development of a political community, since it is susceptible to reinforce the degree of integration among the members of a human grouping (Etzioni, 1962: 53-55).

<sup>12</sup> For the characteristics of political community see Ibid: 45.

<sup>13</sup> For “political community as superior focus of political identification” see Ibid.

I. We made an analysis on the demographic factors of the residents in order to identify the characteristics of the Güzelyurt community, and detected possible problems they may be confronting given these factors and the complications of Cyprus problem.

II. During January 2011, we carried through our field research in several villages and districts of Güzelyurt. The research was based on “convenience sampling” and face-to-face interview method. As its name implies, convenience sampling refers to the collection of information from members of the population who are conveniently available to provide it (Sekaran, 2003:276). Convenience sampling is a “non-probability” sampling. This means that “the elements in the population do not have any probabilities attached to their being chosen as sample subjects”, and therefore, “the findings from the study of the sample cannot be confidently generalized to the population” (Sekaran, 2003:276). Nevertheless, convenience samples are useful to researchers in developing a research hypothesis, defining series of alternatives, and identifying various issues surrounding the research subject (Schonlau et al., 2002:9). Generally, convenience samples are used to test ideas or gaining ideas and impressions about a subject of interest. This methodological choice contains indications about our aim: we intend to put ourselves into the work of “deriving casual explanations” and “diagnosing specific characteristics”<sup>14</sup> of voting patterns in Güzelyurt. This way, we aim at conducting “an exploratory research that can be considered as a preliminary study of an unfamiliar problem”<sup>15</sup>, and thus contributing to the understanding of political beliefs and attitudes of a fragile community.

Other than the research objective, our methodological choice was also practical due to the specificities of the region. Convenience sampling was more feasible than probability sampling since we did not own enough data regarding the distribution of population in Güzelyurt area, like for instance if there were any districts where specific groups of residents were clustered. This lack of sufficient data about demographic details points to the difficulty for conducting research on Northern Cyprus. Unfortunately, there are very few statistics about demographic facts, especially those of Güzelyurt. Due to this considerable obstacle to prepare a probability sampling design, our surveys were filled on the basis of the availability of samples to answer the questions, without calculating the probability of their belonging to a certain group of the population.

At the conclusion of our field work, we obtained 240 valid surveys composed of three sections. The first section was about the demographic profile, where questions on place of birth, parents' place of birth, education, monthly income, and self-considerations (with which nation or community the voters identify themselves) were asked. The second section concentrated on political views and comprised questions on the political opinion/ideology, previous votes,

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<sup>14</sup> “Research does not always call for a hypothesis. It may also be carried out for the formulation of hypothesis”. (Krishnaswami et al, 2010:2-3)

<sup>15</sup> Such an attempt could be a fundamental reason for choosing “convenience sampling”. Ibid: 12.

confidence in politicians and political parties, the party considered for voting in next elections, the main reasons of the Cyprus question, possible solutions to the question, and the political party that became closest to bring a solution. The third section was devoted to the factors affecting voters' choices. 16 effective items were used in the questionnaire as possible factors influencing the voting behavior. In this part we used the five point Likert scale ranging from "totally ineffective = 1" to "totally effective = 5" in order to assess the effect of these items on the sample's voting behavior. The basic analysis and tests utilized in the assessment process included percentage analysis, "one sample *t* test", "independent-samples *t* tests", "One-Way ANOVA test", and "reliability analysis".

III. We provided an interpretation of the data in order to explain the patterns of voting behavior. The population was divided into three sub-population categories according to demographic facts and self-considerations (Turkish, Turkish Cypriot and Other). Then we studied general political tendencies in the region. At last, we determined the role of these tendencies and the 16 items influencing each category's votes. This way we obtained a model for interpreting the election results of the past and tried to comprehend the dynamics of voting behavior for each category.

## **2) Review of Literature**

### ***2.1 Factors That Affect Voting Behavior***

When beginning to make a research on the voting behavior of an electorate, it is important to take into account the duality of the voting action: it is political and social at the same time. In a democratic multi-party system voting citizens politicize themselves through elections, when they participate to the functioning of the political system by deciding which candidate is better or worse for making the government. While they decide, they develop collective attitudes that can be categorized and interpreted by social scientists.

Basically, voters' decisions are based on comparison among different alternatives who aspire for decision-making power of a political community. Voting can thus be conceived as a two-sided activity which implies both electing and eliminating, and the voters feel concerned that the better alternative outrivals worse ones. This is a fundamental characteristic of multi-party systems: citizens are obliged to take sides and build a preference about who they would like to see as decision makers. When the preferences are built, certain long term and short term forces intervene in the way voters evaluate competing alternatives.

### ***2.2 Long term forces that affect voting behavior***

Among the long-term forces that affect the voting behavior, party identification (PI) is the most influential one because it may make the voters neglect many important aspects of elections and control their political thinking. PI causes the construction of an allegiance without deep comparison between competing alternatives. Party-identifying voters prefer the same alternative repeatedly because they have well-established affective connections with it.

Party identification is therefore a psychological state and can be defined as a person's psychological attachment and feeling of allegiance to a political party (Asher, 1992:60), or the individual's affective orientation to an important group-object in his environment (Campbell et al., 1960:121). This point of view is based on the assumption that individual perceptions, evaluations, and behavior are determined in large part by the standards and values of the groups with which the person identifies, especially the family (Belknap et al., 1951-1952: 617). Party identification can be thus inherited from an individual's parents through unknowing absorption during their formative years. Most people develop their PI early in life and prior to their awareness and preferences of political actors and their proposed policies (Shun Chiu et al., 2010: 37). PI is assumed "stable, affectively based, and relatively impervious to change except under extremely stressful conditions such as major depressions" (Campbell et al., 1960:p.151). Individuals who have a significant party identification usually determine their voting choices before a campaign even begins, because their voting decisions are firmly established by party affiliation and less likely to change (Shun Chiu et al., 2010:37).

Personal values, including religious ones, may also determine how voters build a preference or allegiance towards a competing alternative. Personal values may be defined as "an enduring prescriptive or proscriptive belief that a specific end state of existence or specific mode of conduct is preferred to an opposite end state or mode of conduct for living one's life" (Rokeach, 1973:5), or "as abstract ideas, positive or negative, tied to any specific object or situation, representing a person's beliefs about modes of conduct and ideal terminal modes" (Rokeach, 1968:p.547). They constitute the references according to which individuals conceive what is good or bad, wrong or right, acceptable or unacceptable. As a result, they guide actions and judgments.

In multipartite politics, voters' personal values influence their voting choices in many ways. They may have a specific concern for the candidate's personal values, and evaluate similarities and differences between their own values and those of the candidate (Shun Chiu, 2010: p.46). Research on certain societies indicates that voting behavior may also be related to voter's sense of civic responsibility (Schachar Ron et al., 1999:525). For example, voters perceive that they are responsible for the voting outcome by making a wise and logical decision. Values are also more directly associated with party choices. A research made on American presidential elections has shown that those who voted for Democrats believed that their decision fulfilled their personal values such as equality and being broad-minded, forgiving, helpful, and loving. In the same way, individuals who voted for Republicans considered that this judgment carried out their personal values such as family security, national security, freedom, and salvation (Shun Chiu et al., 2010:47).

Other long-term forces concern demographic characteristics of the voter, mainly his or her social class, religious adherence, regional or ethnic loyalties, and age and gender. Considering the social class, research has shown that there exist powerful links among class position, party identification, and voting behavior (Clarke et al., 1998:10). For example, the working class is

more likely to support a left-of-center party and the middle classes are more inclined to the right-of-centre parties in industrial liberal democracies (Butler et al., 1974: 323-37).

In certain countries, ethnical variables have a significant effect on the voting behavior. There exist many well known regional and nationalist parties in Europe which favor certain ethnical/regional identities, such as Scottish, Basque, Corsican nationalist parties or the Tyrolean separatist parties of Italy (Ball, 1992:136). In some political systems, the major parties split along ethnic or linguistic lines, reflecting English-Boer differences in South Africa or Walloon-Flemish differences in Belgium (Ball, 1992:136).

### **2.3 Short term variables that affect the voting behavior**

Short-term variables concern the nature of political competition and specific characteristics of the competing alternatives. Their significance should not be neglected, since party identification may be updated over time when other factors such as voter satisfaction may determine the outcome of elections due to the increasing importance of policy issues, notably economic ones (Clarke et al., 1998:11). When voters feel concerned about the utility of their choices and consider themselves as adequate to make a difference for living in better conditions, they are capable of going beyond the classical limits of the voting act (party identification, voting along demographic lines or personal values) and make personal evaluations about leader and party performances and promises (Walker et al., 1986:24). In this case, they actively search for information about: 1) political and economic issues related to both national and personal welfare and 2) policies and goals offered by each candidate. Based on the information they receive, voters develop for themselves “a cognitive map in which such information is matched with personal preferences and degree of fit is established between the individual’s outlook and the perceived policies of each contending party” (Walker et al., 1986:24). People vote for the candidate with the highest “degree of fit” and offering the greatest subjective expected utility to them (Shun Chiu et al., 2010: 36-37).

Explanations of voting behavior in terms of utility find their origins in the works of Anthony Downs, J. M. Buchanan and G. Tullock who attempted to apply economic-rational model to the study of politics (Downs, 1957 ; Buchanan et al., 1962). According to the model, the political process is a process of exchange, where vote becomes a type of money that can be exchanged for service that voters expect to get from competing alternatives, such as allocation of resources, optimizing of social welfare, rise of employment, public health, foreign policy, protection of environment and education (Clarke et al., 1998:19). In this regard, the electoral choice is mainly influenced by voters’ subjective evaluations about prospective and retrospective performances of candidates in service provision.

Public presentation of leaders, parties and their performances by the mass media should also be emphasized as a crucial short-term variable. Voters may also evaluate the candidates’ prospective and retrospective performances according to their appearances and discourses, based on the way they are seen and heard in the public sphere (Clarke et al., 1998:12).



Television now takes the major share in political advertising and election campaigns are increasingly fought through the television screens. If economic conditions and perceptions about candidate competences become more predominant than class and religious membership and party loyalties, then the media and particularly television must be considered as especially important actors in influencing elector trends (Ball, 1992:139).

#### **2.4 General elections and voting in Northern Cyprus: a two-dominant party system**

After a quick glance on the short history of elections in Northern Cyprus, we observe a strong consistency in the votes, which make us believe that party identification takes an important place in the composition of voting choices. Since the unilateral declaration of "Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus" (TRNC) in 1983 and the organization of the first parliamentary elections in 1985, the political competition has been dominated by two major parties representing two major ideologies. Both ideologies are formed around identity perception, the right-wing UBP (*Ulusal Birlik Partisi* - National Union Party) having its ideological basis on "Turkishness", and left-wing CTP (*Cumhuriyetçi Türk Partisi* - Republican Turkish Party) voicing the "Cypriotness". These are the only political parties that could head the government until today, UBP doing so seven times and CTP only once in 2005.

UBP declares itself as Turkish nationalist and considers Turkish Cypriots as an indelible part of the Turkish nation. The "Turkishness" is seen as an identity, which was under threat on the island and was protected through a long struggle (against EOKA and Greek Cypriot nationalists). The memories of this "heroic" struggle are the most important sources for the composition of Cyprus Turkish identity. The end of the struggle, which came through the 1974 military intervention of Turkey, is defined as the beginning of a new and free life for the Turks living on the island (Çolak, 2010:7). For UBP, the mainland Turkey is the sole guarantee for the independence and sovereignty of the Turkish Cypriot community, which, as a savior, protected the Turkish Cypriot community from "genocide" and prevented the annexing of Cyprus by Greece. UBP declares that it will "fight against every deviant and antagonist attitude that will tend to weaken Northern Cyprus' ties with mainland"<sup>16</sup>.

While the Greek leaders and their supporters may put in a claim for the whole of the island, UBP tends to link the Turkish Cypriots to the borders of the unilaterally declared TRNC. In this sense, the UBP emphasizes the geographical closeness of Cyprus to the mainland Turkey and uses the Ottoman-Islamic sites on the island as the evidence of "Turkishness" of Northern Cyprus. The main argument of this nationalistic ideology is the refusal of an eventual minority status that may be dictated in the future (Çolak, 2010 ; Samani, 1999). For UBP, Turkish Cypriotes are equal partners to the Greeks of the island and the Cyprus issue can only be solved by a federation composed of two founding States<sup>17</sup>.

<sup>16</sup> [http://ubp2000.tripod.com/ubp\\_program.html](http://ubp2000.tripod.com/ubp_program.html).

<sup>17</sup> The main idea asserting equal rights and refusing the minority status is as follows: although the Greeks constitute the majority on the island, due to its geographical closeness to Turkey and its historical and cultural ties

UBP's nationalism manifested itself most prominently in the party's past policies regarding the encouragement of immigration from Turkey. Mainly, these policies aimed at reinforcing the ties with the Turkey and assuring the population balance on the island. During 1985-2003, when UBP-headed governments were permanently in power, this immigration movement was considered as the integration of two parts of the Turkish nation (Çolak, 2010:7-10).

Assuring ourselves about the authenticity of UBP's nationalistic discourse demands a comparison with the other significantly dominant political movement among the Turkish Cypriot community, which is the left wing represented by CTP. This movement considers Cyprus as a common homeland shared with the Greeks. The cooperation between the two communities for certain social activities and the togetherness of the past prove that the communities are capable of living together. However, external interventions have increased ethnic nationalism on the island, and prevented the cohabitation. Within this framework, Turkey and the Turkish immigrants that arrived to the island after 1974 appear as "others" of this Cyprusness, which is a non ethno-cultural identity. Unlike UBP, CTP is distant towards settlers from Turkey and is in favor of a Cyprus without Turkey and Turkish soldiers (Çolak, 2010:10). When CTP came to government in 2005, the principles mentioned above have composed the basis of its policy towards immigrants from Turkey.

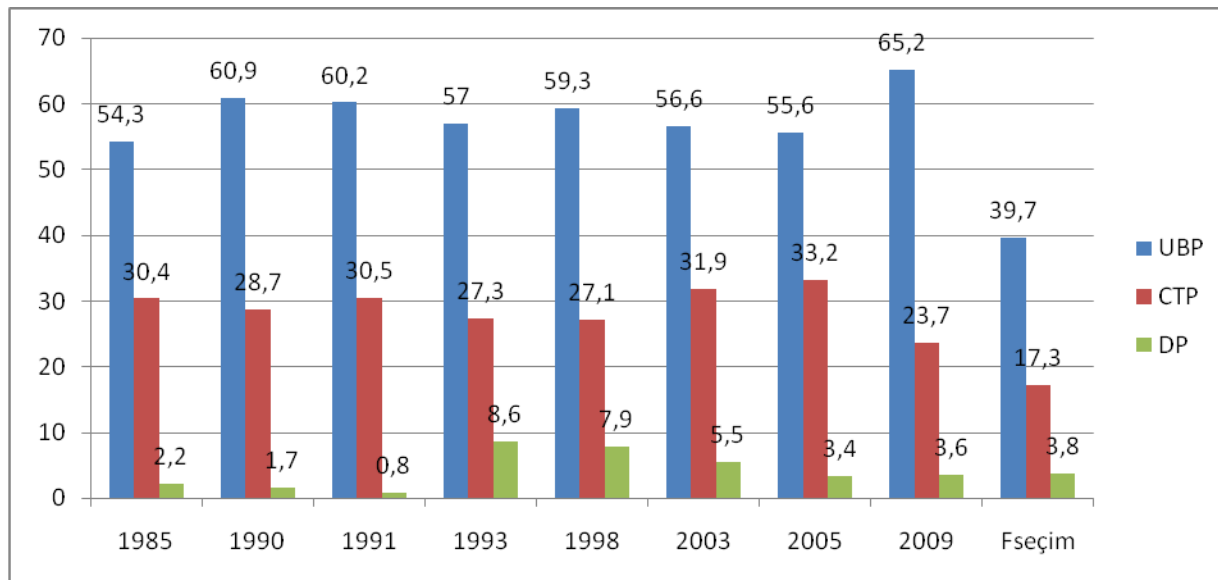
### ***2.5 UBP and CTP competition in the Güzelyurt area***

Our survey indicates that since the first election held in 1985, residents of Güzelyurt region have consistently been voting predominantly for UBP as their first choice and CTP as second. A third party, DP, which was founded in 1993 by 9 deputies who left UBP, is also visible. However, this right wing-nationalist party sharing the same ideological legacy as UBP remains far behind the two dominant parties. During the elections of 2003 and 2005, we see a slight regression in UBP votes, as a result of the discussions over the Annan Plan and a general support to the Plan that is widely defended by CTP<sup>18</sup>. In the same context, UBP votes have spectacularly increased in 2009, after the rejection of Annan Plan by the Greek side and a rise of pessimism about a solution to the Cyprus problem:

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with it, Cyprus is also a Turkish island. So, specific ties and connections with Turkey are an important aspect of this nationalism. The most important guarantee of the continuation of Turkish presence on the island is Turkey. From this point of view, Turkish nationalists are very much in favor of the Turkish army's presence on the island. (KKTC Dışişleri ve Savunma Bakanlığı, 2002).

<sup>18</sup> In 2005, CTP has won the parliamentary elections in Northern Cyprus.



**Figure 1: Voter Preferences towards Political Parties in Güzelyurt**

In our research, in order to discern the basis of the allegiance to UBP we firstly focused on demographic profiles, considering them as the “long-term factors” that are most likely to influence voting behavior in Güzelyurt.

The data on the demographic profiles of the respondents is shown in Table1.

According to the Table, over 70 per cent of the voters and their parents are born in Northern Cyprus. Over 75 per cent are graduated from high school. Nearly 80 per cent of voters have an annual income of 30 000 Turkish Liras, meaning they do not earn more than 1400 dollars a month.

Due to the important role of identity in Northern Cyprus politics, we also asked the voters several questions about their identity perception. 54 per cent of the voters felt themselves “Turkish Cypriot”, 21, 3 per cent as "Turkish" and 21, 3 per cent as "Cypriot". A reference to the "Turkishness" in self-perception can be seen in 75 per cent of voters, which points to a position closer to UBP than CTP. The role of this self-perception in party identification is effectively understood through an analysis of the personal evaluations on political and economical issues.

**Table 1: Demographic Profile of Voters**

<b>Birth Place</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Average annual income (TL)</b>	<b>%</b>
Turkey	12,9	10.000-20.000	47,1
TRNC	79,2	21.000-30.000	30,5
Other	7,9	31.000-40.000	11,0
<b>Mother and father's birthplace</b>		41.000-50.000	7,6
Turkey	17,5	Above 50.000	3,3
TRNC	70,8	<b>The way of expressing voter identification</b>	
Other	11,7	Cypriot	21,3
<b>Education of Voter</b>		Turkish Cypriot	54,4
Primary School	24,3	Turkish	21,3
High School	46,9	Other	2,9
University/undergraduate	26,4		
Graduate/Postgraduate	2,5		

Political views of voters are indicated in Table 2. The table reveals that 3 over 4 voters do not trust politics and politicians. This means they do not believe in the utility of their votes and do not consider themselves as adequate to make a difference for living in better conditions. For this reason, it can be said that “public-policy making” and “public services” have limited importance. However, the voters have political opinions and preferences. Above all, the region is marked by the pre-eminence of an ideology, which is “nationalism”, with a percentage of 37,6 per cent. The voters' reflections on the Cyprus issue gives also indications about the role of ideologies. More than half of the voters believe that two separate states constitute the best model for the solution of the Cyprus question. This belief corresponds with the UBP approach of considering the Turkish Cypriotes as equal partners of the island and proposing a solution on the basis of a federation of two founding States.

The adoption of UBP's position is also observable in the voters' considerations on the reasons of the Cyprus question. The Greek side is considered as the most important reason with 37 per cent, followed by the property issue with 28,1 per cent. Although UBP appears as the most preferred party since 1985, CTP is considered as the party which came closest to find a solution to the Cyprus question. Probably due to this reason, votes for CTP slightly increased during the Annan Plan period. However, a strong and consistent preference of UBP and attributing the responsibility of the Cyprus question to the Greek side indicates that a solution does not necessarily have a popular support. Besides, there is a sharp difference between the residents' political tendencies and CTP's perspective. While CTP's discourse is marked by a strong confidence in Greek Cypriotes and a belief in the possibility of peaceful cohabitation with them, the Güzelyurt community shows significant reluctance towards the “other” side.

**Table 2: Political Views of Voters**

<b>Political view</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Responsibility for Cyprus question</b>	<b>%</b>
Liberal	3,8	Property	28,1
Socialist	13,7	Greek side	37,0
Social Democrat	23,1	Turkish Cypriot community	1,3
Nationalist	37,6	Turkey	5,5
Humanist	3,4	Turkish Army	6,4
Turcist	3,4	Foreign states	16,2
Conservative	1,7	Other	5,5
Extreme Nationalist	1,7	<b>Party that came closest to solve the Cyprus question</b>	
Islamist	0,4	UBP	28,2
Statist	3,8	CTP	42,7
Democrat	3,8	TDP	2,1
Populist	1,3	NONE	26,9
Other	2,1		
<b>Confidence in politics and politicians</b>			
Yes	23,0		
No	75,3		
<b>Best model for the solution of Cyprus question</b>			
The problem was solved in 1974	8,5		
Confederation with two communities	14,5		
Confederation with two zones	18,7		
Two separate states	54,5		
Going back to before 1974	3,8		

After the demographic profiles of voters and their political views, the study focused on the relative importance of several items susceptible to be effective in voters' choices. In this part, we tried to identify which factors could be effective in the Northern Cyprus context, within the theoretical framework exposed in section 3.

Before assessing the role of each item we first tested the reliability of the answers. The overall alpha coefficient reflecting the reliability of scale consisting of possible effective items in party choice was 0.792. Reliability coefficient above 0.7 is considered sufficient (George et al., 2001:217). Next, we applied "One-Sample t-test" to test the means of items with the test value of 3 (Table 3). According to test, means of 4 out of 16 items proved to be significantly higher than 3 at the  $p < 0.05$  level. In other words, 4 items were found to be effective on political party preference. The ranking of means in descending order can be cited as "approach to the Cyprus question", "party's ideology", "past performance", and "inflation".

**Table 3: Effective Factors on Voter Behavior in Party Preference**

Items	Mean <sup>1</sup>	Std. Deviation	Sig. (2-tailed) Test Value = 3 (p)	Ranking Means in Descending Order
1-Friends	2,17	1,248	,000	
2-Religion	1,74	1,047	,000	
3-Parents	2,10	1,225	,000	
4-Media	2,20	1,144	,000	
5-Turkish army	2,18	1,246	,000	
6-Turkey	2,57	1,378	,000	
7-Party promises	2,35	1,351	,000	
8-Personal problems	2,66	1,331	,000	
9-Inflation	3,19	1,414	,046	<b>4</b>
10-Economic situation/problems	2,67	1,351	,000	
11-Unemployment	3,18	1,466	<b>,066</b>	
12-Past performance	3,37	1,263	,000	<b>3</b>
13-Party's ideology	3,55	1,277	,000	<b>2</b>
14-Image of the party leader	3,11	1,328	<b>,242</b>	
15-Approach to the Cyprus question	3,65	1,312	,000	<b>1</b>
16-Intraparty names	3,01	1,434	<b>,925</b>	

**Values of Scale:** 1= totally ineffective, 2= Ineffective, 3= Undecided, 4= Effective and 5= totally effective.

The final part of the study is devoted to determine the casual relationship between demographic variables on the one hand and the items being effective on political party preference on the other. Here, we used variance analysis. In this respect, "One-Way ANOVA test" was used to determine if the means of items varied among different demographic profiles and political views. The results can be seen in Table 4.

**Table 4: The Impact of Demographic Variables on the Item effecting political party preference**

	<b>Approach to the Cyprus question</b>	<b>Party's ideology</b>	<b>Past performance</b>	<b>Inflation</b>
<b>Birth Place</b>				
Turkey	3,96			
TRNC	3,70			
Other	2,67			
<b>(F)</b>	<b>6,301*</b>			
<b>Mother and father's birthplace</b>				
Turkey	3,92			
TRNC	3,71			
Other	2,93			
<b>(F)</b>	<b>5,306*</b>			
<b>The way of expressing identification</b>				
Cypriot	3,26			3,58
Turkish Cypriot	3,63			2,89
Turkish	4,18			3,56
Other	3,33			4,17
<b>(F)</b>	<b>4,142*</b>			<b>5,301*</b>

\*\*  $p < 0.01$

\*  $p < 0.05$

*Note: Means are represented in terms of items' average reflecting its effect on political party preference*

According to results of "One-Way ANOVA test, the following can be inserted about the connection between demographic factor and factors effective in voters' choice:

The most important political factor having an effect on the voters' choice is the party's approach to the Cyprus question. The importance of the question is highest for those having an affective or demographic connection with "Turkishness", meaning for those who were born in Turkey, whose parents were in Turkey or who consider themselves as "Turkish" above all. The Cyprus question is also important for those born in the TRNC, whose parents were born in TRNC, or feeling themselves as "Cypriot". Nevertheless, political parties' approach to the Cyprus question is more effective for those having an affective or demographic connection with Turkishness. This indicates the relevance of the dominant UBP ideology for the region. UBP did not change its Cyprus policy since 1985 and its firm position on two separate states and "Turkishness" corresponds to the expectations of the majority of the electorate. Consequently, as the survey suggests, the voters have repetitively been voting for UBP since 1985.

To turn to another category, those who were not born in the TRNC or Turkey, the party's approach to the Cyprus question has no effect on the voting behavior. This is also valid for the electorate whose parents were born in a third country.

For the overall Güzelyurt community the second most important factor is the party's ideology. However, the role of party ideology does not change according to demographic differences. Therefore, a party's ideology can be considered as a binding factor influencing the overall residents; it is not more or less important for any specific category. There is one dominant ideology in the region, which is nationalism, and this situation also indicates a harmony between the region's electorate and UBP as both sides consider themselves as "nationalist".

For the overall Güzelyurt community the third effective factor is past performances of competing alternatives. This factor reminds us of the economic rational model where voters are concerned with the service that they expect to get from competing alternatives. In this sense, it may be considered that retrospective evaluations are important in determining the voting choices, but not merely in terms of the governmental action or quality of public services provided. If the voters would feel concerned about these issues, the weight of prospective evaluations in party preference would be higher. On the contrary, party promises do not have an affect (below 3) on the voting choice. Since the voters in the region do not trust politicians for finding solutions to their problems, it is important to consider that other factors than "expected governmental action" construct the allegiance to UBP.

It should also be emphasized that the effects of past performances on party preference is equivalent for each demographic category. It is a binding factor like the ideology. Additionally, when one considers the disinterest for "governmental action" or "quality of services", party's past performances are more likely to be evaluated in view of their ideological discourses and their approach to the Cyprus problem.

The fourth factor is inflation. This can be seen as in line with the economic rational model. Since inflation has direct influence on the voters' purchasing power and living quality, it is very likely to affect the voting behavior. In Güzelyurt, the effect of inflation does not change according to the voters' or their parents' place of birth and origins. On the other hand, it changes slightly according to the way of expressing identification, having more influence on the choices of those who feel themselves as Cypriot.

However, the importance given to inflation is not very meaningful compared to the other three items. The inflation rate did not go through any dramatic change during 2003-2009 when there were two different parties in power, i.e around 12% (Süreç, 2010). Still, during the same period the majority of Güzelyurt community continued to vote for UBP although the party's inflation policies were not more successful than that of CTP.

Other than these most effective factors, there exist also factors that are not effective in the voting behavior of the overall community, but indicate divergent sensibilities between different categories. These items may not have considerable effect on voting behavior, nevertheless they



are important for our research since they disclose certain characteristics of the Güzelyurt community.

As seen on the table 5:

Compared to TRNC-born voters, Turkey-born voters feel more concerned with religious factors and Turkey's and the Turkish army's attitude regarding the Cyprus problem. This is an important difference, pointing to the heterogeneity of the Güzelyurt community and its lack of common cultural legacy.

Religious factors are also more important for voters whose parents were born in Turkey, as they have adopted similar cultural codes under their influence.

Turkey's and the Turkish army's attitude is the most effective for those who express their identity as Turkish, which also points to the heterogeneity of the community in terms of attachment to the country of origin.

**Table 5: The Impact of Demographic Variables and Political Views on the Items Related to Country of Origin Effect**

	Religion	Turkish army	Turkey
<b>Birth Place</b>			
Turkey	2,57	2,71	3,29
TRNC	1,57	2,08	2,53
Other	2,12	2,25	1,82
<b>(F)</b>	<b>14,441*</b>	<b>3,427*</b>	<b>6,667*</b>
<b>Mother and father's birthplace</b>			
Turkey	2,15		
TRNC	1,63		
Other	1,81		
<b>(F)</b>	<b>4,121*</b>		
<b>The way of expressing voter identification</b>			
Cypriot		1,64	2,16
Turkish Cypriot		2,16	2,47
Turkish		2,78	3,29
Other		2,00	2,7
<b>(F)</b>		<b>6,949*</b>	<b>6,540*</b>

\*\*  $p < 0.01$

\*  $p < 0.05$

*Note: Means are represented in terms of items' average reflecting its effect on political party preference*

According to the results of our research, the local circumstances reinforce residents' inclination and allegiance towards UBP. However, whether this allegiance results from party identification or any specific affection shown by the residents for UBP remains doubtful.

In Güzelyurt, the reasons for allegiance to one political party are different from the ones proposed by preeminent theories of voting behavior. Voters do not construct an allegiance to the UBP through imitation or under the influence of any group with which they identify themselves. Neither family nor friends have an influence in their choices (according to one-Sample t-test the means of these items were below 3), meaning that there is no evidence about an inherited or absorbed party identification. When the allegiance becomes a collective attitude, its reasons should be sought in shared local facts rather than different cultural codes of each sub-category. According to us, the long term factors influencing the voting behavior are not party identification, values, or demographic facts, but the dominant psychology of the region, which is a nationalistic reaction to the negative effects of Cyprus question. Residents are actively engaged in the functioning of their political community and able to develop ideas about politics. Nonetheless, their interest is limited to the Cyprus question and a political party's ideological position reflecting their vision on the question. Other than this, they are hardly motivated by short-term forces such as candidate profiles or expected utilities.

Within an environment marked by uncertainties and "deprivation", the Güzelyurt community needs guarantees and this is accommodating with the results of our survey. This need does not overlap with the "Cyprusness" discourse conducted by CTP and its opening up to the Greek community of the island. The main pole of attraction becomes the ethnic nationalist discourse reproaching the Greek part as the main cause of the Cyprus problem and the UBP ideology suggesting the protection and promotion of the achievements of the Turkish community since 1974.

### 3. Conclusion

As stated in section 2, the author of the article is well aware that in convenience sampling is not as credible as probability sampling since the analysis of the results depends on the researcher's subjectivity and personal interpretation. Therefore we do not aim at generalizing the findings of our survey to the whole of Güzelyurt community, but simply at feeling various conditions that manipulate the voting behavior of a fragile community.

The assumptions of the article stem from the results of a field research, but obviously their validity can still be tested by future investigations. On the other hand, we believe that our work can illuminate interested researchers on several topics. First of all, the social phenomenon that it is dealing with has connections with more "well-known" issues, particularly the cases of democratic multiparty experiences in other fragile communities like many Sub-Saharan African countries or the shaken Iraq and Afghanistan, or in "newly building" nations like the tribal Southern-Sudan, Kosovo, East Timor or South Ossetia. Our research suggests that in such communities or nations, political unification might be possible even in the presence of serious difficulties for national unification or nation-building. However, the institutionalization of

multipart democracy may be hard and time demanding, because the development of economic-rational voting behaviors and internalization of the characteristics of political competition would most probably depend on the residents' capacity to overcome the abnormality of the situation they are in.

Secondly, the article points to the specific case of Güzelyurt's residents. This may interest researchers who have a particular familiarity or curiosity regarding Cyprus. According to our findings the ethnic-nationalism is considerably strong in this part of the island because of UBP's devotion to Turkishness and to the achievements of the Turkish part of the island. Although the residents do not reveal any self-adherence to any specific nation, the "Turkishness" constitutes a broad identity which does not necessarily refer to the mainland Turkey and its cultural codes, but to a human grouping suffering the side effects of Cyprus problem. In this mental construction, the solution of the daily problems depends on the way "Turkishness" will be imposed on the interested parties of the Cyprus problem, especially on the Greek side. The governmental action and policy making for services will not make a big difference in their lives as long as the status quo on the island continues. In this context, the perception of Cyprus problem appears as the most important long term factor influencing the voting behavior and the political party which defends the broad identity of Turkishness receives the highest support.

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