

Composition, Recruitment and Career Patterns of the Political Elite in Cyprus (1988-2010)

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Abstract

The aim of the paper is to explore the composition, the recruitment mechanisms and the career patterns of those people who comprised the political elite in Cyprus over a period of 22 years, extending from 1988 to 2010. The analysis in the present paper provides a useful database on the social and political elite of Cyprus. The Cypriot political elite is small in number and its members have a particular profile and seem to follow certain paths with regard to their political recruitment and advancement. The most significant independent variable explaining membership in the political elite of Cyprus appears to be the political parties.

Keywords: Cypriot political elite, Cyprus, political parties, recruitment, career patterns, cabinet, parliament

Political Elites has been a controversial area of studies in political sociology. Primarily, the origins of elite theory lie in the writings of Gaetano Mosca (1939), Vilfredo Pareto (1935) and Robert Michels (1962). Whereas Mosca emphasised the elite's material, intellectual or moral superiority, and the ways in which these small minorities outwit large majorities, Pareto suggested that in ideal circumstances the elite would consist of the most talented individuals. But, in actual societies, elites embrace those who are most proficient in employing the two modes of political rule, force and persuasion, and those who enjoy advantages, such as inherited wealth and family connections. In his study of the social democratic party of Germany, Michels, acknowledged that large organisations need a small number of leaders and experts in order to operate efficiently. He styled those persons as 'oligarchies' (or elites). As these individuals gain control of funds, information and other aspects of organisational functioning, power concentrates in their hands.

In contrast to Cyprus, where very little has been written on the subject (e.g. Papaioannou, 1984; Lyssiotis, 1990; Choisi, 1995; Faustmann, 2010), research on political elites in other countries has progressed significantly, both empirically and theoretically. Political scientists have examined elites in two broad directions (Parry, 2005, p. 1): the first is to examine the socio-demographic inventory, career paths and political orientations of those constituting the political elite; the second aims to establish to what extent the members of an elite act as elite. The present inquiry takes the former approach, focusing primarily on descriptive material about those in elite positions. Implicit in this kind of research is the assumption that the leadership's social background and recruitment patterns are indicative of the political system and its dominant values. Wider theoretical issues and controversies fall outside the spectrum of this paper.

The present research will investigate the composition, recruitment mechanisms and career patterns of those who make up the political elite in Cyprus. In order to understand the origin and composition of the island's political elite, a quantitative and qualitative analysis of its characteristics will be undertaken first. Secondly, it will be ascertained whether there are any identifiable patterns that codify the political elite's recruitment and political career evolution. Elite recruitment refers to the process whereby 'staffing' of the political roles takes place (Seligman, 1964, p. 612). Career patterns, encompassing the steps taken by members of the political elite as they strive to attain elite positions, represent a vital part of the literature on political recruitment (Cohan, 1973, pp. 213-214). If a significant number of political elite members demonstrate similar career paths, it may be reasonably assumed that a particular career pattern dominates among the elite.

A related topic of interest concerns the relationship between the affiliation with political parties in Cyprus and membership in the political elite. The extent of party dominance over political life is inextricably linked with the research question. Cyprus is placed among those countries with strong party systems so it would be expected that political parties exercise strong influence on the formation of the political elite. That being the case, party affiliation offers an explanatory tool in the analysis of the link between attachment to a political party and political elite membership.

A note must be made here regarding the descriptive nature of this paper. Descriptive analysis has become almost a blasphemy in today's disciplinary context of comparative analysis (Caramani, 2010, p. 35). There seems to be a misleading perception that science equates only with explanation. However, in order to account for the convergence or divergence in political systems throughout the world it is descriptive analysis that is needed. Descriptive analysis takes place prior to explanatory analysis and 'plays a fundamental role in empirical research since it informs us on the altered perceptions of what the world looks like' (*ibid.*, p. 39), and 'allows us to establish the scope of similarities and differences, and whether spatial differences are larger than temporal ones' (*ibid.*, p. 43).

Operational Definition of Political Elite

Efforts to produce a general political elite theory have not been fruitful (Cammack, 1990, p. 415). The concept is variously defined in the literature according to the particular research focus (Edinger and Searing, 1967, p. 428). In addition, the terms elite and elitism have long carried normative, ideological and sociological connotations that render any type of elite incompatible with the democratic ideal. Other problems commonly associated with elite studies refer to the lack of a clear definition of elite boundaries and the extent of their political autonomy. Marxian criticism is usually intense on this point. Class-based analyses argue that elite theory ignores the extent to which elites are themselves embedded in class alignments (Parry, 2005, p. 3).

Despite these shortcomings, any research into the subject requires an operational definition so for the purpose of the current inquiry, elites are, therefore, defined as 'those persons placed in

strategic locations within society and organisations that are able to affect political outcomes regularly and substantially and, as such, national political elites are not large in number' (Burton and Higley, 1987, p. 296). Consequently, political elites in all political systems constitute a small minority of actors who hold a strategic role in public policy making. They wield influence by virtue of their exceptional access to political information and their key positions in the system which, in turn, results in highly disproportionate control over public policy making, and communication processes which relate society to polity and governors to governed (Edinger and Searing, 1967, p. 428).

Further, for the purpose of this paper, the term political elite includes those holding key elected offices as well as those whose power and elite membership has been attained through appointment by some elected authority (in this case the President of the Republic). Thus, in this study we include: all elected presidents of the Republic of Cyprus, all elected members of parliament (MPs), the party leaders and, finally, all appointed cabinet members. This categorisation results in a total of 206 individuals over a time span of 22 years, which verifies the assertion made earlier that political elites are not large in number. In Cyprus, specifically, the small body of political personnel found in the current study is explained by three main variables:

1. There are only 11 ministerial portfolios and 56 seats in Parliament. In addition, the Constitution strictly prohibits public servants to hold public offices, thus reducing the pool for drawing candidates. There are approximately 50,000 public employees in Cyprus, serving under preferential conditions that they would not jeopardise for an uncertain tenure in a public office.
2. It was not feasible to include the elected members of the European Parliament (MEPs), the mayors and the members of the municipal councils in the 33 municipalities of Cyprus (which total about 500); an attempt was made in this direction but it was very difficult to acquire the information needed with regard to local authorities.
3. The phenomenon of elite recycling: i.e. the fact that many people were elected or appointed more than once. Another expression of this phenomenon refers to the shift in office, for example, from Parliament to ministry/mayoral post and *vice versa*.

Methodology: Social, Demographic and Political Variables

Elite composition and political behaviour are assumed to be related to intervening variables that are a function of social, economic, historical, political and other characteristics. These background data and the socialisation process and experiences affect the way the leaders are inducted into political processes (Edinger and Searing, 1967, p. 430). Personal background variables chosen for the present study include: age at election or appointment, gender, marital status, religious affiliation, length of incumbency, previous party or public offices held, level and country of education, occupation and political party affiliation. Because all political systems will have some background

characteristics that are specifically relevant, for Cyprus the EOKA (National Organisation of Cypriot Fighters) variable, which applies to those who took part in the 1955-1959 armed struggle for union with Greece, was also included in the data. This last variable refers to one of the most controversial issues in the political discourse running through the left-right cleavage to date.

In order to shed light on the above variables, the biographies of all persons included in the definition of political elite were examined. These 'biographies' were culled from the *curriculum vitae* written by the persons themselves upon their election or appointment. As a consequence, the findings are based upon – and limited to – the data available in the House of Representatives published biographical dictionaries and the statements issued by the Press and Information Office of the Republic upon the appointments of the cabinet members.¹ The paper focuses on the Greek Cypriot community due to the easiest access to information and literature. Turkish Cypriots are therefore excluded from the survey.

For certain variables, i.e. occupation, level and country of education, age at election, gender, religious affiliation, and offices previously held, the data are counted and presented irrespective of any overlap in the various categories of political elite membership. In other words, regardless of the number of times an MP is, or was, re-elected, this data is recorded each time. This method also clarifies the data for each election period for the overall analysis, but having said that, comprehensive data are also presented where appropriate. The period under consideration extends from 1988 to 2010 and includes five presidential elections (1988, 1993, 1998, 2003 and 2008) and four parliamentary elections (1991, 1996, 2001 and 2006). It is imperative, however, to situate the data and discussion in context, so a brief overview is given of the political and party systems of Cyprus prior to data analysis. The degree of institutionalisation of any party system influences the environment within which political and other processes take place – for the purpose of our study, these are the patterns of elite recruitment and socialisation.

The Political and Party Systems of Cyprus

The political system of the country was radically reconstructed when Cyprus achieved independence in 1960. The Constitution of the Republic provides for a clear separation of powers. Executive power is exercised by the President, who appoints the cabinet and is not held accountable to Parliament, which plays a secondary role within the political system compared to

1 As already noted, Mayors were not included in the survey due to the difficulty in data collection. Members of the European Parliament were also excluded. Certain public offices (e.g. participation in Boards of Administration of the various semi-state organisations), involvement in civil society organisations and other non-state actors (NGOs) were not incorporated either, due to the inconsistency of the data. The rural-urban origin of political personnel along with information regarding their families, were also omitted due to the lack of this kind of information in the majority of biographical data.

the executive. The President's direct election by the people imposes a need for political parties to forge alliances as no single party or candidate can break the 50% threshold on their own.

The entire political structure is centred on the institution of political parties which play a crucial role in every aspect of political life. The stranglehold of parties is based on various pillars, according to Faustmann (2010), the most important being the control they exercise over patronage practices. Political parties are the exclusive nominators of presidents and deputies (without their support, no presidential candidate has ever secured more than 1-2% of the vote), and the principal nominator of mayors and municipal councillors (for a more detailed discussion on the role of parties, see analysis below). The party system consolidated after 1976 with four dominant parties which occupied more than 90% of the votes: left-wing AKEL, social democratic EDEK, centre-right Democratic Party (DIKO) and right-wing Democratic Rally (DISY). Other smaller parties did not manage to break this pattern until the mid-1990s when, among other factors, proportional representation was introduced in June 1995. This lowered the entrance barrier to the minimum and in 1997 the franchise was extended to include all adults above the age of 18. Voting in national elections is, to this day, compulsory.

Despite small changes in electoral influence, continuity in voting patterns has been a striking feature of Cypriot elections until recently (Christophorou, 2001, p. 97). The premises of party identification theory, which suggests that most electors feel a general allegiance to a party which is inherited through his/her family, is still very much illustrated in the political life of Cyprus. Besides, due to the late achievement of independence, Cyprus has been given little chance to develop a civic and democratic culture: the island suffered sporadic intercommunal violence and has been *de facto* divided since the Turkish invasion of 1974 (Lonnqvist, 2008, p. 1). Its entire political life has been prescribed by the existence of the 'Cyprus problem'; a fact that contributes heavily to the politicisation of the Cypriot society (Christophorou, 2007, p. 114).

Findings

The data submitted here was chosen purposely for the current study and forms the result of an investigation of the subsets of the Cyprus political elite. The presentation of data will follow a sequential pattern: information on each variable for each political elite subset will be introduced separately and then some generalised findings will be discussed. Some of the findings are highlighted in graphs and charts that illustrate the information with percentages or actual figures.

Presidents of the Republic

The President is the head of state and the head of government of the Republic of Cyprus. The tenure is constitutionally specified as five years. Cyprus has only had six presidents since gaining its independence in 1960. Two served for only one term, one is currently serving his first term,

while the other three served two or three terms each. It is interesting to note that among the presidents, only one (Glafcos Clerides) was not supported by the left-wing AKEL. The period under study saw four presidents coming to office. All of them were male, Christian Orthodox and married. The average age at election to office is 65.5 years with George Vassiliou being the youngest and Glafcos Clerides the oldest. The average duration of incumbency is 5.6 years with Clerides holding office for a record of ten years. Nonetheless, this number should be qualified since the current President, Demitris Christofias, is only serving his fourth year. If he exhausts his tenure, as anticipated, then the average rises to 6.25 years. All four presidents were university educated and half were lawyers who studied in the UK. Two presidents took part in the *EOKA* struggle. All but one, George Vassiliou, held a party or public office prior to election; Vassiliou founded a party immediately after stepping down. Two served as presidents of the House of Representatives before coming to office, three as MPs, and three were party leaders before being elected.

Party Leaders

During the period under examination there have been 11 political parties and 20 party leaders (18 individuals in total since two party leaders served more than one party). Three of these parties no longer exist because they merged to form new ones. ADISOK and the Free Democrats Movement formed the United Democrats, while New Horizons merged with another political movement to establish the European Party. The majority of these parties were heavily associated with their founders, particularly in their early years, and especially in the case of EDEK, DIKO and DISY, where Vassos Lyssarides, Spyros Kyprianou and Glafcos Clerides, respectively, dominated intra-party procedures. Sometimes these leaders would continue to dominate party procedures and political discourse beyond their official withdrawal (e.g. Lyssarides in EDEK). This state of affairs began to change in the 1990s but party leaders still continue to play a prominent role in all the Cypriot parties. Moreover, it was also common among all the parties to elect their leadership through methods of indirect representation of membership. Conversely, some parties have recently adjusted due to pressures from the external and probably the internal environment and democratised their procedures, thus electing their leadership through direct voting by the entire party membership. DISY, DIKO, the European Party and the Green Party already use the direct method.

As perhaps anticipated, the principal characteristics of this sub-category of political elite, are reflected in their personal traits and indicate that the dominant cultural value regarding their ethnic origin is Greek Cypriot. All but one were Christian Orthodox; the other being Armenian (Marios Garoyian – DIKO), while only two of the party leaders were unmarried when elected to office. The age factor appears to be a significant indicator of the preference for more aged cohorts. The average age at election to party leadership is 52.65 years. Most party leaders (14) were elected during their 40s or 50s, though no one under the age of 40 was elected. One finding that is

consistent throughout the research is the relative absence of women: only two women from two of the smallest parties were elected as party leaders. Among the party leaders six (30%) took part in the EOKA movement.

Party leadership seems to be an attractive and secure position; all party leaders except Yiannakis Matsis (DISY) have been in office for more than five years. The only exceptions to this pattern are those party leaders newly elected to the post. The average term served in party leadership in this 22-year period is 9.25 years, although Lyssarides (EDEK) held the post for 32 years. Andros Kyprianou (AKEL) and Ioanna Panayiotou (Green Party) are currently serving their third year but for the purpose of this study they were counted as having served for two years.

With regard to recruitment and career patterns, the prevailing feature is long service in the party ranks and other public offices before assuming a leading role. All but four leaders held party offices before their election as head, with two out of the four originating from a split in their former parties where they held elected offices. Three (Glafcos Clerides, Tassos Papadopoulos and Demitris Christofias) resigned from their post after being elected President of the Republic (the only exception being the late Spyros Kyprianou – DIKO). Concerning public office, five did not hold office before their election, seven served in Parliament, one as a minister, four served as both MPs and ministers; one served as President of the Republic (George Vassiliou), and another served as President of the House of Representatives (Spyros Kyprianou). The overwhelming majority (14 - 70%) of party leaders have a university degree, mainly from Greece or the UK. The leading professions represented are lawyers (35%), businessmen (25%), and party employees (15%).

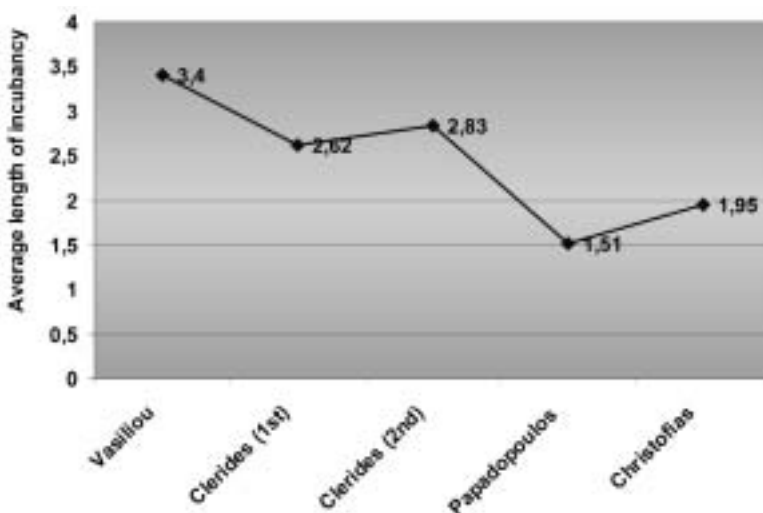
Cabinet Members

During the period of inquiry five presidential elections took place and four presidents were elected with a total of 105 cabinet members serving under them. Personal information for two ministers was impossible to retrieve. Of the remaining 103, six ministers served for a very short period – two months in essentially caretaker positions – until the next presidential election; and four were acting ministers for one month until they received their formal appointment. The aforementioned are all included in the data. Fifteen ministers served more than once in a cabinet, but only six under different presidents. In the course of the two decades researched only six women served as cabinet members and only one minister was not Christian Orthodox (Latin) – serving in a caretaker position for a two-month period only. Ninety-one per cent were married and only 9% were single or widowed.

The average length of tenure for all cabinet members is 2.31 years with the highest average being 3.4 years, in the Vassiliou administration (1988-1993), and the lowest under Papadopoulos with 1.51 years (graph 1); the latter included the four caretakers that served for one month each. If these extreme cases are omitted, the resulting figure for the tenure of Papadopoulos rises to 1.7 years. The death of two ministers during Papadopoulos' tenure should also be taken into account, together with the withdrawal of AKEL ministers from the cabinet a few months prior to the

elections which forced the then president to reshuffle his cabinet. Similar circumstances were observed in the Clerides administration when DIKO broke the coalition with DISY in 1997 and joined forces with AKEL, and in 1999 when EDEK departed the coalition government with DISY due to the S-300 missile crisis. The latter conditions highlight the role of political competition and the rivalries among political parties in the quest for power and the fragile nature of coalition governments. The longest serving minister remained in office for 7.5 years (Christodoulos Christodoulou in the Clerides presidency) and the shortest terms were for the four caretaker ministers who served only one month each.

Graph 1: Average Length of Incumbency (Ministers)

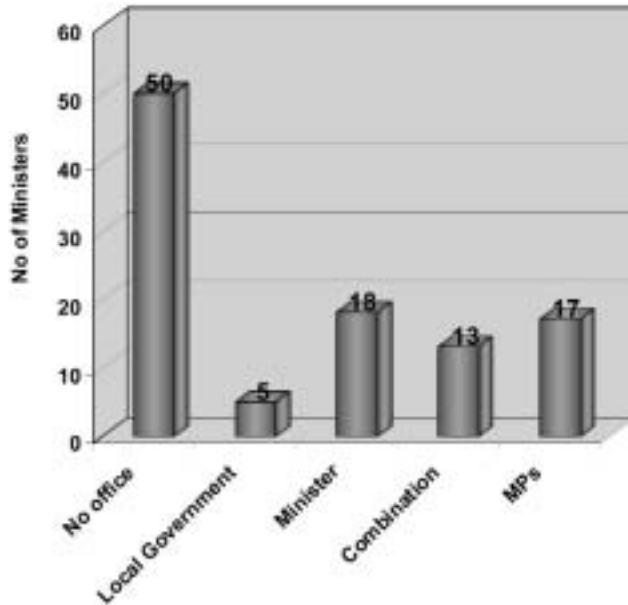


The diminishing rate of tenure from the first to the last presidency under investigation reflects the changing values with reference to governing. On the one hand, expectations of ministers are significantly higher now; but on the other, the ministers' personal and professional careers are subject to much pressure and scrutiny from a number of institutions that were not present in the past – in particular, the mass media and the rising numbers of NGO activists. Both of these factors work against long service in the cabinet. Today, ministers are more easily expendable: their mistakes and/or bad judgments are difficult to hide and may well result in a minister's loss of position.

The recruitment and career patterns of ministers are not typical of other members of the Cypriot political elite. Although close to 50% of ministers never held a public office prior to their appointment (graph 2), only 36% held party offices. Caution must be exercised when reading this result because it does not indicate any party affiliation – a fact that is not stated on most of the ministers' CVs. Nevertheless, it seems reasonable to estimate that 60% of ministers are likely to

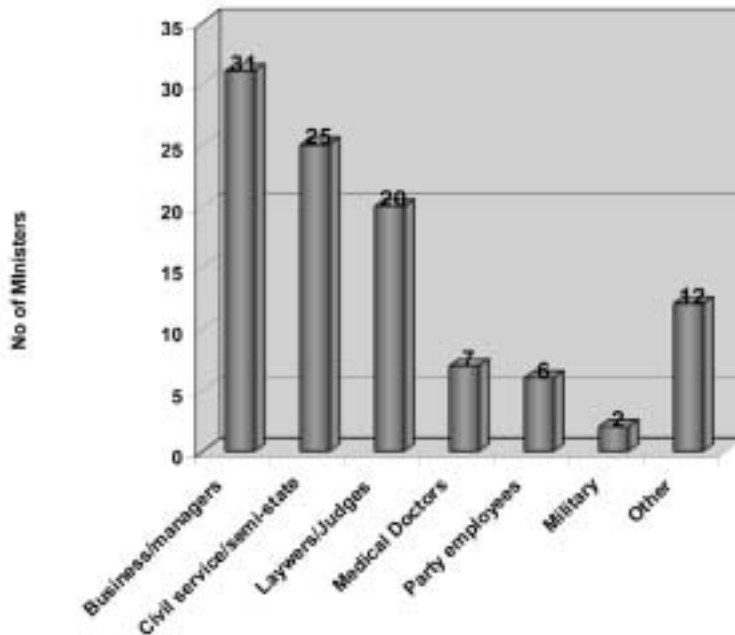
have had a political party affiliation, and that most would be aligned with DIKO (19%). Seventeen per cent had served as ministers prior to re-assuming a cabinet position, 16% as deputies, and 8% had held two public offices prior to their appointment (although not concurrently since this is constitutionally forbidden).

Graph 2: Prior Offices held by Ministers on the Date of Appointment



Graph 3 reveals that the most popular profession among ministers is the business-manager model (totalling 30%), followed by the civil service sector which makes up 19.5% of appointments (including 4% retired civil servants), and thirdly, the law profession which accounts for 19% of all cabinet members (including 3% in the judiciary). Ninety-four per cent were university educated, with the remaining 6% having been educated at other institutions (military, high school, college). The most favoured country of education is Greece (36%), followed by the UK with 21%. When combined together these two countries make up 8% of ministerial appointments. A further 7% were educated in both the UK and the USA, which brings the total percentage of cabinet members to 63% that pursued studies in either Greece or the UK. Throughout Clerides' 10-year administration there were no ministers who had studied in former socialist countries; however this was the case for 21% of ministers in the Papadopoulos administration. Surprisingly, during the early years of the Christofias presidency only one cabinet member was educated in a former socialist country.

Graph 3: Occupations of Ministers



On average the age of appointment for all cabinet members is 54.23 years old; the majority fall into the 41-60 cohort (67%), 29% are between the ages of 61-70 and only 4% were appointed in their 30s. The eldest (70 year old) and the youngest (34 year old) ministers were appointed by the same president, Papadopoulos (2003-2008). Lastly, the EOKA factor characterises 14% of ministers, most of whom were appointed during the Clerides administration; this is an expected outcome since Clerides was supported by DISY and DIKO, the two parties of the right and centre-right that sheltered the majority of EOKA members and followers. Not surprisingly, among the political parties, most cabinet members with an EOKA past come from the ranks of DISY.

Members of Parliament

The Cyprus House of Representatives has a total of 56 Greek Cypriot members plus three other members representing the three religious minorities of the island (Latins, Maronites, and Armenians). The additional three were initially elected to the Greek Communal Chamber, and after the events of 1963-1964 were incorporated as ‘observers’ in the House of Representatives. To this day, the minority representatives have no voting rights and are elected by their community members in separate elections. The period of the present research covers four parliamentary election periods: 1991-1996, 1996-2001, 2001-2006, and 2006-2011. In an ideal situation a total of

224 MPs would be elected but this number increases to 254 if those who replaced the MPs that left Parliament – mainly because they were appointed to cabinet positions – are taken into consideration. This number, however, is significantly different from the actual results when we look at the names, which unveil a number of MPs elected more than once. As a consequence, the actual number of deputies who served in the House of Representatives totals 143 persons, or 63.8% of the total possible number of MPs. The four major parties which are represented in the Parliament, account for over 90% of the total.

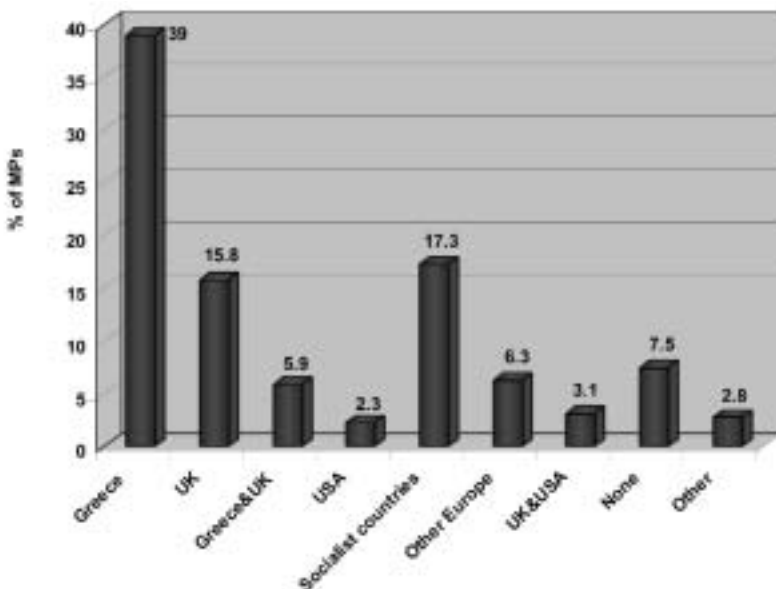
The largest number of newcomers entering Parliament is observed in between 1991-1996 when 38 of the 63 deputies were elected for the first time (60%). The reason behind this development was the total renewal of AKEL's parliamentary team. Seventeen of the party's 18 parliamentarians were elected for the first time. The figures dropped in subsequent terms as 41.2%, 39.06% and 40.6% were newly elected in the 1996, 2001 and 2006 elections, respectively. The longest serving deputy is Lyssarides who served a record of eight terms before stepping down in 2006. When examining the four election periods under review, we can see that eight deputies served all four terms, 20 served three periods, 47 served two and 68 served only one. The number of people who served for one term only is qualified by two facts: first, 25 were elected in the 2006-2011 period and 20 ran for re-election in 2011 (16 were re-elected); second, 25 deputies stepped down after the 1991-1996 period and were never re-elected, so for the purpose of this research they were counted as serving for one term. Twelve of these had served prior to the 1991 election.

Yet again, the age factor is significant in the composition of parliamentary representatives, and once more we see a majority of older representatives. On average the age at election to the house is 50 years old, which is consistent throughout the four election periods. The year of entry for a newly elected deputy is, on average, 47 years of age. Within the parties, the lowest average is found in the DISY group of 2001-2006 with 47.15 years and in AKEL's team in 1991-1996 with 47.5 years. The oldest parliamentary team is EDEK's in 1996-2001 with an average age of 53.3 years. This, of course, ought to be weighted against the participation of Lyssarides who was 76 years old upon election. Throughout the four election periods the youngest parliamentarians, with an average age of approximately 48 years, were members of DISY, and the oldest, with an average age of 53 years, were the deputies of EDEK.

For the most part, the cultural and sociological background of those in parliamentary office is primarily married Christian Orthodox men. Throughout these phases only 27 women (10.6 %) from a total of 254 became MPs, which is a very disappointing figure (some are counted more than once because of their re-election). The highest score is found in the 2006-2011 period (11 women). In terms of party representation, ten women came from the ranks of DISY, nine from AKEL and seven from DIKO. With regard to their marital status only 8% of the deputies were unmarried upon their election. Four members came from the three ethnic minorities of the island (one Armenian, and two Maronites; one served twice), while immigrants and foreigners are totally excluded given the laws on citizenship rights.

Turning to their education (graph 4), the vast majority of the deputies hold a university degree (92.5%). Of the remaining 7.5%, almost half attended high school and a further one-sixth studied in elementary school. The most favoured countries of study are Greece (39%) and the UK (15.8%); a combination of the two countries make up 5.9%, while the USA represents 2.3%, the former socialist countries show 17.2%, and 6.3% have studied in other parts of Europe. None of the deputies received a degree from any of the universities in Cyprus.

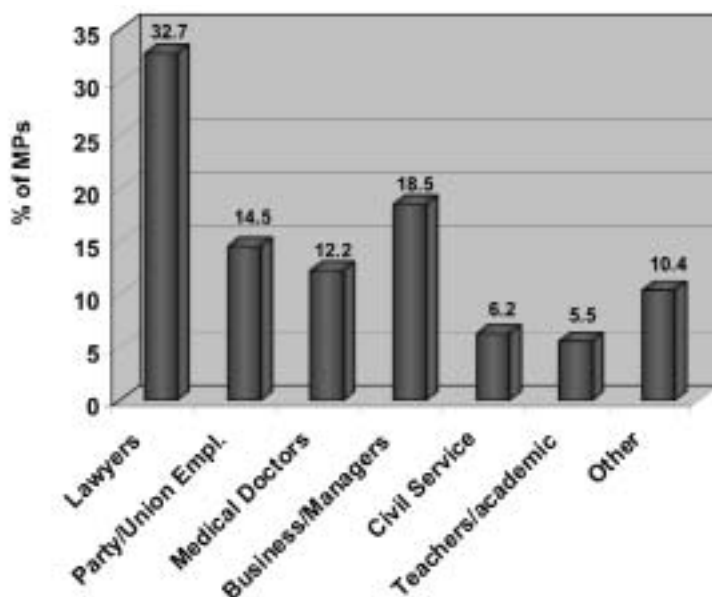
Graph 4: Country of Education (MPs)



The recruitment and career route reveals a strong relationship to party affiliation and an esteemed occupation profile. All deputies elected were listed under a party combination; no independent candidate has ever been successful, which points to the power of the political parties of Cyprus to exercise full control over recruitment channels. It is, however, worth noting here that the system of representative democracy inherently favours political parties, and although lowered to the minimum in 1995, the electoral law threshold essentially excludes the possibility of any independent deputy being elected. This is consistent with the widely held opinion that electoral systems are not being applied and do not change in a vacuum (Rokkan, 1970, p. 168); in fact, they function within culturally given contexts of legitimacy and are modified to suit the interests of political actors, i.e. the political parties. In these four election periods only a small fraction of MPs (6%) were elected in cooperation with the parties without being party members themselves; nevertheless, they were all included on party lists. This pattern is further enhanced by the fact that

only 15.7% of elected MPs did not hold a party office prior to their election, an indication that besides being affiliated with a party the overwhelming majority of MPs are climbing the 'office ladder' through party ranks. An analysis of MP occupations (graph 5) reveals that a respected professional career is a crucial factor in a candidate's successful bid for election. The bulk of parliamentarians hail from six categories of professions: 32.7% are lawyers, 14.5% are party or union employees, 12.2% are medical doctors, 18.5% are managers and businessmen/women, 6.2% are civil servants and 5.5% are teachers.

Graph 5: Occupations of MPs



Looking at the dynamics of holding or having held public office (table 1), it can be observed that the typical MP holds or has held at least one public office. This occurs in 67.3% of deputies that served in the Parliament from 1991 onwards. The combination of at least two offices means that a person has served in two offices before being elected; those offices could have been for mayor and minister, MP and minister (but not held concurrently), or MP and municipal councillor, among others.

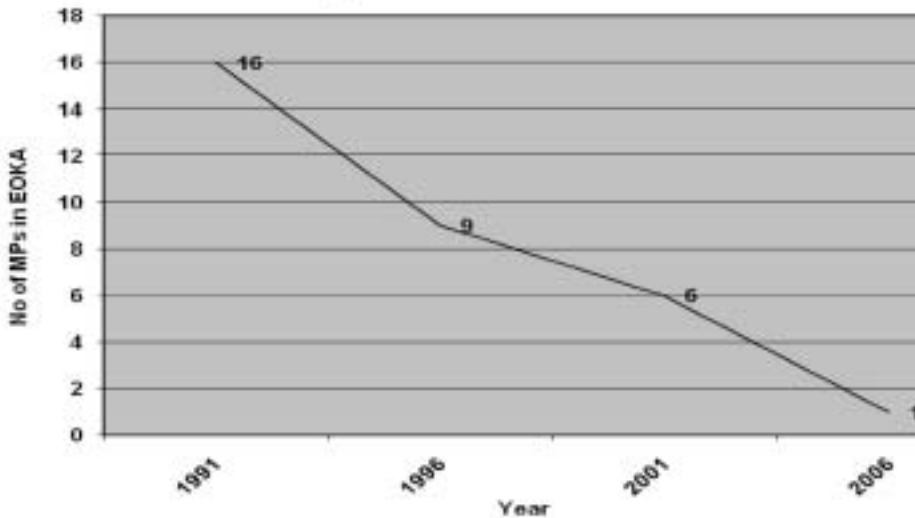
Table 1: Public Offices Held by MPs Prior to their Election

Year OFFICE	1991	1996	2001	2006	TOTAL
MPs	22	29	30	24	105
Ministers	4	1	-	3	8
Local Government	7	5	9	8	29
Combination of at least 2 Offices	4	8	5	12	29
Other	-	1	-	-	1
No office	26	19	20	17	82
Total MPs served	63	63	63	64	254

The final influencing factor – participation in the EOKA armed struggle (graph 6) – appears to be increasingly losing significance over the years. The EOKA ‘militancy certificate’ was an indispensable and valuable qualification for candidates of the right-wing political parties in the earlier years of independence, but even as early as the 1970s its importance began to diminish (Papaioannou, 1984, pp. 48-49). This trend has, of course, been observed in the current survey, and is obviously related to the passage of time. In the previous House (2006-2011) only one member with an EOKA past was elected in 2006 (surprisingly under the AKEL party list) and he was later appointed minister in 2008. In the 1991-1996 period 25.3% of MPs stated that they took part in EOKA, but the figure dropped to 9.3% between 1996 and 2001, and decreased further to 10% between 2001 and 2006, finally, almost disappearing in the 2006-2011 period. Although it might be expected that most EOKA participants belong to DISY, paradoxically, they are largely aligned with DIKO: 40.6% of those that took part in EOKA came from the ranks of this party, 31.25% were elected under DISY and 18.75% were drawn from EDEK.

The presentation of data has so far focused on the examination of socio-demographic characteristics of the Cypriot political elite. The insight they provide into the workings of the political system of Cyprus, its dominant values, the elite’s career patterns and the way they impact on elite recruitment is explored next.

Graph 6: MPs with an EOKA Past



Discussion

In trying to draw some generalisations on the composition, recruitment and career patterns of the Cypriot political elite a number of things are to be observed. First and foremost, the majority of the elite are Greek Cypriot and Christian Orthodox. While immigrants and foreigners are totally excluded from political representation (anticipated, given the laws on citizenship), one Armenian, one Latin and two Maronites have succeeded in breaking this dominant pattern of representation.

The EOKA variable was examined in order to measure the impact of that turbulent period on political representation in subsequent years. Sometimes elites appear on the scene in response to situational circumstances – including among others, in a colonial or neo-colonial context or participation in the anti-colonial struggle (Rejai and Phillips, 1988, p. 111). In the earlier years of independence, individuals involved in the EOKA armed struggle were able to enter political office without prior experience in local government or parties. Political elite members with an EOKA background (12.2% of the total elite) display a heroic past against colonial rule – according to the proponents of this line of thought – *vis-à-vis* the left-wing AKEL which opposed the armed character of EOKA. In the opening stages of independence, the EOKA ‘participation certificate’ was the best qualification for climbing the power ladder within the State (Christophorou and Xadjikiriakos, 1996, p. 3; Faustmann, 1998, p. 64; Faustmann, 2010, pp. 273-274); it also enabled an upward social mobility for many Cypriots. This pattern changes in the years that follow, as the influence of the EOKA variable becomes significantly reduced as we move away from the birth date of the Republic of Cyprus. The most recent Parliament has no representative of EOKA in its ranks while only one minister in the Christofias cabinet has taken part in the EOKA

movement.² The EOKA variable is found only once in the ranks of AKEL in the parliamentary elections of 2001 and 2006 (the same person: Costas Papacostas); yet this slight representation is still surprising as AKEL opposed the armed EOKA struggle. From another perspective, however, this points to a willingness or need for accommodating this conflicting issue within the parameters of party competition.

Elite Recruitment and Career Patterns

The elite recruitment pattern both reflects and affects society (Seligman, 1964, pp. 612-613). As a dependent variable, it expresses the value system of the social order, the type of system representativeness, the basis of social stratification and the structure and change in political roles. As an independent variable, it determines avenues for political participation and status and influences the kind of policies pursued. As an indicator of change, it reflects economic fluctuations from rural to urban environments, shifts in political infrastructure and the degree and type of people's participation. Given the data presented in the first part of this study, the most obvious and important finding relates to the role of the political parties in both the recruitment process and the career patterns of the political elite. Political parties are the principal agencies for the selection and representation processes of political elites in most European democracies, Cyprus not excluded.

The party experience variable proves to be the most essential determinant in explaining the composition and career patterns of the Cypriot party-political elite. The nomination procedures for all kind of elections and cabinet appointments emanate primarily from within the parties. Political parties have the most crucial role in the selection and recruitment of the political elite at all levels. Membership in political parties is heavily weighted in the administrative system of Cyprus. Members of the partisan elite are exposed in advance to political ideologies and participate in political activity as indicated by their party affiliation and membership in party organs. Elite legitimization stems from party procedures and is later verified by the people. Non-partisan citizens are practically excluded from the political elite, especially with reference to the Parliament.

Elite career patterns in Cyprus indicate that service in a party or public office is almost a prerequisite to ascending the political ladder; and indeed, many in Cyprus perceive their current positions as stepping stones to higher stations. Less important offices such as seats in the municipal councils or party organs are considered pathways to more esteemed positions, e.g. Members of Parliament. The discoveries attesting to the strength of the party affiliation element on elite recruitment are self-suggestive: 67.18% of the political elite have held a party office prior to election or appointment. The association is even stronger when we consider the parliamentary domain where we perceive that 84.25% of elected MPs held a party office prior to their election. This shows that candidates must demonstrate their party loyalty if they want to stand good chances of being elected. The fact that no independent MP has ever been elected is further confirmation of this

2 He resigned following the deadly blast of July 2011 at the naval base of Mari village.

pattern. In addition, 17% were found to have held a local government office before being elected as MPs. The reverse is rare but it has occurred. Two former presidents of the Republic have successfully run for election in the House of Representatives (George Vassiliou and Spyros Kyprianou).

While the presidential selection procedure is usually portrayed as an independent decision of the candidate president, the candidate is, in fact, always a party leader or a significant personality who has been selected and supported by at least one political party (e.g. Vassiliou by AKEL in 1988). All presidents of the Republic, except Vassiliou, have been party leaders themselves prior to their election. Nonetheless, we must note that some parties are obliged by their statutes to present their leader as a presidential candidate. This is true of DISY and DIKO, although both of these parties have, on occasion, opted to circumvent these rules, with their leaders rejecting their right to claim the elections in favour of other contenders.

The recruitment pattern for cabinet appointments is slightly different as the president is always allowed some room for manoeuvre. We note that for the period under study, 67% of cabinet ministers did not serve in a lower public office prior to their appointment and 64% had no visible party affiliation. The explanation for this lies in the structure of the political system: Theoretically, the cabinet is appointed on the president's initiative alone, with no direct influence from the political parties, and all presidents aim to recruit ministers without party bias. However, since the president is in many ways dependent on the party or coalition of parties that have elected him to office, he cannot ignore party views.

This trait in Cyprus politics should not be perceived as strange or out of the ordinary. The supremacy of politics in Cyprus is a common feature in what scholars refer to as 'societies of later development' (Mouzelis, 1994, p. 20). In such societies, politics tends to penetrate all aspects of social and institutional life, whether it is in sport, education or religion. In Cyprus we see that state authorities and party mechanisms constitute the principal arena of social life (Demetriou and Gürel, 2008, p. 9). On top of that, over-politicisation in a country with an unresolved ethnic problem can lead to a relative atrophy of civil society (Mavratsas, 2003, p. 121), and the historically weak position of Cyprus civil society is acknowledged by the extremely comprehensive CIVICUS Report (2005). Civil society is not quite independent from the State, which is highly politicised and quite young. Given the lack of civil society organisations and a corresponding social mentality, political parties have constituted the principal mechanism of elite recruitment and advancement. The electoral system fosters party dominated politics further since it is based on multi-seated districts with party lists.

Regardless of the above, the changes that have taken place in Western Europe in previous decades point to the demise of party politics (Poguntke, 1987, p. 76; Mair, 1984; Luther and Muller-Rommel, 2002, p. 8) which are slowly making their way to Cyprus as well. Class voting, which provided parties with a body of reliable supporters, has declined. The waning of class conflict and the blurring of traditional class boundaries has weakened the social basis of the left-right axis, paving the way for other forms of organisation. Changes in the mass media structure have enabled

direct appeals to the electorate at large, an electorate made up of voters who are learning to behave more like consumers than active participants. The process of Europeanization is considered by some scholars to be a strong force in fostering changes in the party and political systems in general (Mouzelis, 1994, p. 25); this is also considered to be the case in Cyprus (Katsourides, 2003). Europeanization appears to favour the development of civil society (Mavratsas, 2003, p. 152) and as such, seems to be furthering the decline of political party supremacy.

We are today witnessing a progressive party de-alignment and many Cypriots are tending to detach themselves from party politics. Various polls have identified a very low interest in the latest national elections of May 2011 (*Simerini*, 1 May 2011; *Phileleftheros*, 1 May 2011); moreover, it has also been found that Cypriots express a much lower level of trust towards representative institutions and more predominantly towards the parties, parliament and politicians (CyBCI, 17 April 2011). This lack of trust in the party system leads to practical consequences with the numbers of abstainers and blank votes increasing. Abstention reached 41% in the 2009 European Parliament elections and 21.3% in the last Cyprus parliamentary elections. This trend is more visible among the younger generations, which have not (yet) developed a strong party identification. All of this may signal the beginning of a party system crisis and a new era in electioneering. At any rate these developments have been altering attitudes and positions, and this is likely to be reflected in elite composition in future years. In fact, as early as 2006, the DISY party elected three MPs from the civil society pool,³ but for the parliamentary elections of 2011 almost all parties took candidates from this pool (see *Politis*, 13 May 2011). Inherently related to party de-alignment is the question of legitimacy of the political parties and consequently that of the political elites themselves. It is anticipated that, given the elite's principal legitimising mechanism is the institution of political parties, any process of party de-legitimation will also be reflected in the elite's legitimacy as well.

Overlapping in Office

A central feature of the political elite in Cyprus is the phenomenon of overlapping in offices. The number of people holding political elite offices in a period of 22 years totals only 206, the majority of whom had served in at least two elite offices. With 67.18% of the political elite holding party offices, and 65.78% holding an elected or appointed public office before their election (or re-election or re-appointment), the overlap is clearly visible. Over and above this, if we consider that the Constitution raises barriers against a person holding two public offices simultaneously, this small number of political personnel is even more striking. Elite recruitment patterns seem to follow long-established routines that favour those in office and discriminate against outsiders; hence, politically experienced candidates reveal a better record of success compared to new candidates.

3 Christos Stylianides, former President of the Movement for Political Modernisation; Eleni Theocharous (currently MEP), former President of Doctors of the World (Cyprus branch); Stella Kyriakidou, former President and now active member of the board of Europa Donna (CSO involved in breast cancer prevention).

Length of Tenure

Elite turnover in Cyprus is low; a total of 206 individuals holding elite positions during the 22 years of this study period. Long tenure in party and public offices is the norm in Cyprus, as clearly indicated in the data for party leaders and MPs. For many of the political elite, parliamentary seats and party leadership are viewed as long-term careers, and although we observe that nine years is the average tenure in party leadership, three party leaders served for more than 20 years, and over half the deputies of the four major parties have served for more than one term. The ratio for AKEL is 25:19, for DISY 23:27, for DIKO 16:15 and for EDEK 6:5.⁴ While the percentage of newcomers in Parliament remains steady throughout the period under study (approximately 40% with the exception of 1991 as explained above), it is beyond the scope of this paper to speculate whether a new political elite with different political attitudes has emerged as this requires further research into their political behaviour once in office.

Whether or not the rate of elite turnover contributes to major or minor shifts in government policies is an interesting question, and while, again, this subject falls outside the scope of this paper, the literature offers some controversial views (Brunk and Minchart, 1984, p. 568).

Occupation Analysis

An analysis of elite occupations reveals some interesting information. Two main professional groups are distinguished: 1) commerce, finance, industry (businessmen and managers); and 2) 'free professions' such as lawyers or medical doctors. These two categories represent the vast majority of the political elite of Cyprus which indicates that the route to a career in politics begins with an esteemed profession. A third category is composed of those who choose politics as their profession and this group is primarily found in the left-wing AKEL party and is usually made up of party or union employees. On the other hand, those who follow manual occupations such as farmers or blue-collar workers are almost totally absent. This demonstrates a social imbalance in political representation.

More precisely, almost 84% of the Cyprus political elite represent five categories of occupations. Lawyers and judges lead with 29.4%, which is not surprising as the legal profession has been historically linked with political representation in many other countries as well as Cyprus (Katsourides, 2009; Papaioannou, 1984, pp. 51-53; Lyssiotis, 1990, pp. 62-64). Next are those involved in the business sector (businessmen, managers, bank employees, and publishers) with 20.7%, followed by party employees (12.4%, mainly from AKEL), civil service technocrats (11%), and medical doctors (10.3%). The medical profession is again historically linked to political participation in Cyprus. Medical doctors are highly esteemed by the local population and are able to build a clientage network easily. For this reason, they have traditionally been recruited by political parties – largely from the right and centre-right – as candidates for elections.

4 In actual numbers of MPs; the first number being those who served more than one term.

Two different career pathways are also revealed when analysing elite occupations: the cabinet members on one hand, and other members of the political elite on the other. While the latter is dominated at approximately 85% by political party affiliation and the holding of at least one public office prior to election, the cabinet model deviates from this path. As already noted, only 36% had held party office before being appointed and 50% had never held any type of public office before. This indicates that the cabinet model is characterised by a more technocratic nature.

Education

That most deputies are highly educated reflects an important value in Cyprus society, as the majority of Cypriots can claim a university education. Because of the value placed on education in Cyprus, higher education is a crucial credential for elite recruitment. The Greek Cypriot political elite are educated, in the vast majority, outside of Cyprus. This is explicable by the fact that the State University of Cyprus was founded in 1992 and its first graduates are still in their mid-thirties, while other private academic institutions acquired university status only recently. For largely historical and cultural reasons, Greece and the UK are the two most preferred destinations and together the two countries have educated 62.4% of the political elite of Cyprus. The former socialist countries have been the academic destination of 14.62% of political officials, all but one belonging to the left-wing AKEL party.

Gender Discrimination

The findings of this study with regard to female participation in the political elite are depressing, showing only 21 female political personnel out of the 206 members (or 10.19%). This bears witness to a discriminatory elite recruitment policy against half of the population of Cyprus. Local women's political organisations contend that in Cypriot society family care giving is considered the exclusive responsibility of women. This is a belief that permeates the social value system and so naturally is reflected in political representation.⁵ Women face difficult choices regarding their careers when they become wives and mothers and are usually expected to commit themselves to their family obligations. This double standard in career advancement is reflected in informal interactions, workplace cultures and personal beliefs, despite the fact that changes are taking place (Coltrane, 2004, p. 218). Gender discrimination continues to shape socialisation and recruitment into political elite positions.

Concluding Remarks

Elite theory has no place in idealised visions of democracy and so it is unlikely to have many enthusiastic supporters. Nevertheless, despite the criticism that elite theory draws, which in many

5 Conclusions of a round table discussion organised by the Women's Cyprus Lobby in Nicosia on 20 February 2009.

cases is valid, the elites are central actors in politics. Consequently, the study of elite origin and composition, recruitment and career patterns (in addition to numerous other facets of elitism) provides useful insight into the social and political system of any given country.

The analysis in the present paper can be used as a first step in the field of elite research in Cyprus. The aim of the paper has been to identify both qualitatively and quantitatively the characteristics of the Cypriot political elite. This information enables the compilation of a preliminary database of social and political variables that characterise the political elite of the Republic of Cyprus. This research has revealed that membership in the island's political elite seems to follow a specific path and to include persons of a particular profile: the typical member of the political elite is male, Greek Cypriot, Christian Orthodox, married, highly educated mainly abroad (Greece and/or the UK) and affiliated to a political party. In addition, once in office, elite members tend to remain there for a significant amount of time, thus exhibiting important self-perpetuating capacities. The pattern of political recruitment and advancement can also be seen in political parties and other public institutions. Membership in lower status public institutions (i.e. municipalities) usually serves as a first step towards higher esteemed offices such as Member of Parliament or minister. The most significant independent variable explaining membership in the political elite of Cyprus appears to be the political parties.

The findings of this paper can serve as a starting point for further research on the topic of the political elite in Cyprus: incorporating more variables and extending the study within and across party lines in order to look for a correlation between the political decisions of legislators and administrators and the interests of those making the decisions. This kind of analysis will enable us to see whether there is a correlation between the model of elite structure in Cyprus and the political policies they pursue. It can also address questions concerning the relative strength of one variable over another and expose which variables best predict which attitudes. Moreover, further investigation might examine other aspects of the political personnel's activities, such as their involvement in civil society organisations.

What would be more intriguing, however, would be the study of the various dynamics (social, economic, and political) that may result in challenges to the composition and power capabilities of elite mechanisms. The majority of western democracies have undergone profound social and political changes during recent decades, and it is likely that these have altered the composition of political elites. Newcomers, thought to be representing a new generation with different value systems and diverse political orientations toward the political processes have made their way into political institutions. The question for Cyprus is whether or not the new generation of political leaders reflects the reduced importance of social class and the left-right cleavage. A related question to examine is whether the changing social and political conditions in the country are mirrored in the attitudes of political elites. In the past, many people thought that there were major differences between political parties and that whoever held the power would govern a certain way but the convergence of political elites toward consensual politics is thought to be the rule now.

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