

The talks on the Cyprus problem at Crans-Montana, Switzerland (28.06 – 07.07.17) and the Greek-Cypriot Press: The views of newspapers Alithia, Politis and Haravgi

As conversações sobre o problema de Chipre, em Crans-Montana, Suíça (28.06 – 07.07.17), e a imprensa cipriota grega: as posições dos jornais Alithia, Politis e Haravgi

Euripides Antoniadis

Cyprus University of Technology (Chipre) – Faculty of Communication and Mass Media,
euripides.antiadides@cut.ac.cy

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6124-256X>

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Abstract

This paper focuses on the period of negotiations between the Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot community at Crans-Montana, Switzerland, from 28 June to 7 July 2017. It looks into the views of the three leading Greek-Cypriot newspapers of that period and aims to present the positions of each newspaper about the negotiations on the Cyprus problem, at political level. Articles from three newspapers (*Alithia*, *Politis* and *Haravgi*) were studied, with an emphasis on political coverage regarding the negotiations. For the Crans-Montana negotiations on the Cyprus problem, the agenda setting approach was used, according to which, an event becomes an important from a journalist's perspective, not only because it is unexpected and/or dramatic, but also because it attracts a great deal of public attention and the significance of the event itself may, for example, lead to intense public judgment, tension or concerns. The research questions of the paper were shaped as follows: To what extent were the newspapers in

favour of a solution to the problem? Did they have a conflicting or reconciling tone? To what extent did the style and tone of the news items regarding the talks vary depending on the newspaper? To what extent did the news items focus on persons taking part in the talks and the topics of the talks? Were the articles signed or not? Findings suggest that the Greek Cypriot press during the negotiations have faith that the Cyprus issue can be resolved through the talks. The overarching aim is to understand the efforts made to solve the Cyprus problem through the negotiations in Switzerland and to examine the positions of the Cypriot press regarding this thorny and crucial issue, over which the Republic of Cyprus has been agonising for more than forty years.

Keywords: Agenda-setting; Greek Cypriot Press; Crans-Montana negotiations; Cyprus problem.

Resumo

Este artigo trata o período de negociações entre a comunidade cipriota grega e a comunidade cipriota turca, que decorreu em Crans-Montana, na Suíça, entre 2 de junho a 7 de julho de 2017. Analisa-se as posições dos, então, três principais jornais cipriotas gregos, com o objetivo de apresentar as posições de cada um sobre as conversações acerca do problema de Chipre, ao nível político. O estudo sobre *Alithia*, *Politis* e *Haravgi* partiu da ideia de que um acontecimento torna-se importante do ponto de vista jornalístico não só porque ele é inesperado ou dramático, mas, também, porque suscita o interesse da opinião pública, e encerra, em si, uma importância capaz de, por exemplo, suscitar no público debates intensos, tensões ou receios. As questões de investigação são: em que medida os jornais estavam a favor de uma solução do problema? Assumiram um tom conflitual ou reconciliador? Em que medida o estilo e o tom das informações dos três jornais sobre as negociações se diferenciaram entre si?

O foco das informações foi sobre as pessoas ou os assuntos das negociações? Os artigos publicados eram ou não assinados? Os resultados sugerem que a imprensa cipriota grega confia na resolução negociada do problema cipriota. O objetivo principal desta pesquisa foi o de compreender os esforços desenvolvidos para resolver o problema cipriota, através das negociações na Suíça, e analisar as posições da imprensa no que se refere a esta questão espinhosa e crucial, na qual a República de Chipre agoniza há quarenta anos.

Palavras-chave: Agenda – setting; imprensa cipriota grega; conversações de Crans-Montana; problema cipriota.

Agenda-setting Theory

The “agenda setting” approach was coined in 1922 in the observations of American journalist Walter Lippman (1988, p. 322), who went on to become one of the most acclaimed theorists of mass communication. He supported that “the press is like a roaming spotlight, bouncing from topic to topic, story to story, illuminating things”. Half a century later, Cohen (1963:13) claimed that “the press may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about” and therefore what to discuss, what to feel and what topics deserve our attention and how much of our attention. This is achieved in the mass and also “media-ised” society through the priorities set by the mass media, since agenda-setting is a group of topics communicated on a hierarchy based on their significance at a given time. In other words, the agenda-setting approach describes the procedure whereby the media communicate with the members of the public through their texts regarding important or not so important topics and events taking place daily.

The agenda-setting theory relates to the perspective, according to which the mass media are able to carry an important topic of their agenda into the public agenda. By covering the social and political events, situations and institutions, the press influences the topics with which the public opinion engages. This happens because articles and news reports dealing with certain events and incidents, when eventually presented to the public, are sometimes used for long periods of time and are emphasised. Other topics receive short and temporary attention. Newspapers are explicit in attributing supremacy of an article by putting it in the appropriate page or position in a given page and by using an adequate title and number of words (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1998).

In other words, the (general) agenda-setting process is determined by the agenda of the mass media, which influences the public agenda, which in its turn influences the policy agenda-setting (Dearing & Rogers, 2005, p. 13-14, 53).

According to McCombs and Shaw (1977), the education level of the readers, the effect of time, as well as the

politics of the printed medium all play a significant role in agenda-setting.

In general, the agenda-setting process is an ongoing competition about which topics will be chosen by newspapers based on their ideology and as matter of priority to attract the attention of the public and the political elite. The press plays an imperative role in the collection, processing and presentation of social problems as state issues, as in the case of the negotiations on the Cyprus issue. Of-course it has been accepted that “agenda-setting does not operate everywhere, on everyone, and always” (McCombs, Einsiedel & Weaver 1996). However, when citizens feel the need to be informed and form an opinion, they read the Press in order to face the uncertainty of the political future, whilst accepting, as a general rule, the prioritisation of topics in the printed press and, by extension, their editors.

Framing Theory

The framing theory, as opposed to the agenda-setting theory which engages with the questions of which topics are most prominent, which are salient

and which are presented at all, focuses on the way in which these topics are presented by the mass media. Therefore, the difference is not *if* we think about a topic but *how* we think about it. In other words, the mass media not only determine to a large extent the information we have generally, by providing the main updates and images about the world, but also influence the way in which we assess and prioritise them (Iyengar, κατ Kinder, 1987; McCombs, Weaver, & Edelstein, 1996).

Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw (1975) have indicated that one of the factors encouraging the use of mass media is the “need for orientation” (McCombs & Shaw, 1975). This need is caused when the interest on a certain topic is high and there is a significant degree of uncertainty about the meaning of the message. Therefore, a message which is highly interesting encompasses at the same time elements of uncertainty on how it will develop and leads to increased use of mass media by citizens. This, in its turn, increases the chance of greater influence by the mass media. The effect of framing is achieved by publishing a topic which will appear

with bold letters on the headlines and will have narration style, aimed at influencing readers. This means that the starting point of framing is the perspective under which the origin, significance, effects and functioning of certain events is understood.

Cyprus is located in the eastern Mediterranean Sea and is often referred to as the last-divided country in the European Union, with Greek Cypriots living in the southern part of the island and Turkish Cypriots living in the northern part, which has been under Turkish occupation since 1974. The Cyprus problem is considered one of the most significant and pressing issues and, naturally, it is being extensively covered by the Greek Cypriot press. Newspapers include news reports, articles and interviews about the protagonists of the Cyprus problem on a daily basis. As the Cyprus problem evolves into a thorny issue that is hard to resolve in practice, the newspapers of the island devote a large number of columns and pages to it. It can be argued that political coverage “dominates” the daily printed press.

Every time that an action is taken towards solving the Cyprus problem,

Greek Cypriot newspapers demonstrate their keen interest by covering as many of the relevant stories as possible. The 2017 peace talks in Crans-Montana, Switzerland were an example of focused reporting by Greek Cypriot newspapers. This paper aims to present and comment on printed political material regarding the direct peace talks that took place in Crans-Montana, Switzerland, as published in Greek Cypriot newspapers.

The Greek Cypriot Press

Freedom of Press is often an indication of whether a democracy is healthy or not and to what extent. During the Ottoman and British Empire, Cypriots were deprived of the freedoms of thought, expression, opinion and, naturally, the Press (Sofokleous, 1995). During World War II, Cypriot Press started to slowly gain its freedom. Newspaper columns were then reporting on current events, issues, struggles, activities, estimates and positions regarding World War II, the actions, strategies and tactics of the Axis powers, and even on the behaviour and the course of Cypriot society.

The Press's contribution to the 1955-1959 national liberation struggle is of utmost significance. A considerable number of Greek Cypriot reporters were prosecuted, imprisoned and tortured in British concentration camps on account of writing articles against the then status quo (Sofokleous, 2006). A few decades later, the violent division of the island which was the result of the 1974 Turkish military invasion and occupation of 37% of Cypriot land to this day, caused tremendous problems and difficulties. The evolution of Cypriot media (printed and electronic) continued rapidly, keeping up with the developments and changes taking place in developed countries of the world. From 1990 to 2000, all Cypriot newspapers started using modern technologies. Their appearance and content was considerably improved with better layout and more organised distribution of material in multi-page issues that contained more detailed information and updates, as well as in-depth commentary on public figures, services, situations and objects; citizens gained wider access to information and were able to have debates or express opposing views.

In the ten years that followed (2000-2010), dozens of businesses were created in the field of mass communication and media (e.g. radio stations, newspapers, magazines, web portals, advertising agencies, etc.). At the same time, many were forced to suspend their operation. The existence of so many media in a such a small market is the so-called "paradox of communication" (Papathanasopoulos, 2003, p. 33), which is justified by the need of Cypriots to "enjoy" well-rounded and pluralistic information after decades of press monopoly and attachment of several, private newspapers to political parties. In 2012, seven political newspapers were in daily circulation, whilst only four political newspapers are currently in circulation due to the economic crisis which hit the island in March 2013. As noted by Papathanasopoulos (2003: 34), it is striking that the newly founded newspapers did not contribute towards a growing number of readers of political press. According to *Gnora's* Information Report², newspapers have now plummeted to an all-time low readability (14.1%), with *O Phileleftheros* maintaining the position of

most readable among the newspapers. The continuous decrease of readability –with the exception of 2015 when some increase was observed– fully reflects the turn towards electronic media as sources of information. Sales of weekend newspapers have also decreased, but sales of Sunday issues are still quite high, mainly because they include free magazines.

The newspapers used in the sample

As mentioned above, this paper aims to deal with the period of peace talks between the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities, as documented in the Greek Cypriot Press from 28 June 2017 to 07 July 2017. In previous papers, we examined the negotiations at Mont Pèlerin, Switzerland between the Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot community in November 2016. This is an ongoing research since the talks continued at Crans-Montana, Switzerland in 2017. Therefore, this paper builds on previous work by focusing on the talks at Crans-Montana, Switzerland. More particularly, we will focus on political coverage in newspapers

Alithia, *Politis* and *Haravgi*. Moreover, we will examine if the newspapers use a conflictual or reconciling tone when publishing political news stories.

Alithia newspaper was founded in 1952 by the late Antonis Farmakides as a weekly newspaper. Antonis Farmakides is considered one of the pioneers of Cypriot journalism. Weekly *Alithia*, following its Monday issue on 15 July 1974, was forced to suspend its circulation for a few weeks due to the circumstances that occurred as a result of the military coup and the subsequent Turkish invasion. It re-circulated on 5 August 1974 with a detailed report on the tragedy that hit Cyprus and an optimistic message. Today, *Alithia* has completed 35 years of presence as a daily newspaper.

Politis newspaper was first issued on 12 February 1999. The newspaper made a firm commitment to providing all-round and impartial information and to adhering to the principles of independence, impartiality, truth, freedom of speech and pluralism. It is not a newspaper of extreme ideology. It has demonstrated responsibility and, naturally, it endeavours to feature the sensitivities and interests of small and

bigger groups of Cypriot society and to bring Cyprus even closer to European affairs, thus broadening the horizons of knowledge and experience.

Haravgi has large, island-wide circulation and is the medium of expression of left-wing party AKEL (Progressive Party of the Working People). Its first issue was published in Nicosia on 18 February 1956. In a main article titled “Setting off” on the front page of its first issue, the newspaper states “[...] our newspaper will strive to offer high-quality material to our readers. Aside from news reporting which will be our top priority, there are several other topics worthy of attention.” (Sofokleous, 2011, p. 394)

Methodology and objectives

Our methodology was based on elements of content quality analysis which we thought was most appropriate, since “the great strength of content analysis is that it analyses the whole message system, and not the individual’s selective experience of it” (Fiske 2010, p. 139). This method is suitable when cultural issues are examined since it “takes account

of notion systems deriving from culture” (McQuail 2003: 382) and it relies on the description and assessment of language-specific forms of communication and can assist in demonstrating or revealing a social reality which can lead to conclusions through explicit or non-explicit text (Yiallourides, 2001, p. 101). Moreover, this method aims to analyse the content of the text message, discourse and form (Constantinidou, 1998) and involves five stages (ibid, 1998):

1. The procedure of compiling the empirical evidence;
2. The isolation of items (units recorded);
3. The classification of units into categories;
4. The quantity conversion and measurement of items (codification);
5. Analysis and interpretation of data.

The research aims to record the distribution of political news items, the structure of their content, by using certain criteria of a qualitative approach regarding the subject-matter (e.g. sour-

ces of journalism, images, special topics, etc.). More specifically, the research involved recording daily news items in daily newspapers of island-wide circulation and identifying the main political news items in the above newspapers. In this case, the role of the Press is paramount in ensuring that there exist conditions that enable citizens to stay well informed and up-to-date. We recorded the articles and we then classified them into six categories as follows: a) *Republic of Cyprus*, b) *Greek Cypriot community*, c) *Turkish Cypriot community*, d) *countries involved* (i.e. the guarantor countries in accordance with the Treaty of Establishment of the Republic of Cyprus, namely Greece, Turkey and the UK), e) *United Nations* and f) *European Union*.

During the first stage, we identified the empirical evidence, namely the news items that were relevant to our research. During the second stage, we isolated the items that could be used. The third stage involved the codification, i.e. the classification of topics into categories. During the fourth stage, we converted the quantitative items into such form so that they could be processed on the computer, compared and

analysed (ibid, 1998). During the fifth and final stage, the data was presented, analysed and interpreted. A thematic analysis helps to answer questions such as how the negotiations between the two communities are presented, why it is possible to record views and impressions through political news items published in the political columns and subsequently make a connection of all this. Moreover, by putting the news items into categories, we can identify the different positions/ opinions expressed and have them in one place.

The period of our sample was chosen primarily on the basis of the working hypotheses, as well as the material under study. The events taking place between 28 June and 7 July 2017 were of particular significance and the daily issues of newspapers covered a range of stories and topics and made extensive reviews on the progress made during the week. The extent of the duration is just right to support our hypothesis, as it allows us to shape an opinion on the varied reflections expressed by the Greek Cypriot community, which take form and change as the events unfold on both a local and international level.

From the newspaper issues, we focused on the political and news sections which include a plethora of news reports, articles and reportages. Moreover, the political section is dominated by highly interesting, catchy headlines that attract readers and draw them into buying a newspaper. Choosing the material is a difficult task, since as many titles as possible need to be selected from a vast pool of items.

The working hypotheses are the following:

- H1: As the Cyprus problem has brought agony to the people of Cyprus (Greek-Cypriots mainly), the newspapers will maintain a moderate stance and will be in favour of a solution to the Cyprus problem.
- H2: Well-known journalists, opinion leaders in practice, will bear the burden of their signature depending on the position they adopt during the talks.

Therefore, the questions of the paper were shaped as follows:

- Q1: To what extent are the newspapers in favour of a solution to the problem? Do they have a conflictual or reconciling tone?
- Q2: To what extent did the style and tone of the news items regarding the talks vary depending on the newspaper?
- Q3: To what extent did the news items focus on persons taking part in the talks and the topics of the talks?
- Q4: Were the articles signed or unsigned? If unsigned, this probably means that journalists, as individuals, were reluctant to be associated with the talks.

Our research relates to the period of June – July 2017. Overall, 175 news items were examined as units of analysis from all three newspapers (*Alithia*: 67, *Politis*: 52, *Haravgi*: 56). In order to examine front-page items, the following pattern of typical categories/ variables was used:

1. Political news stories that were relevant to the subject were classified based on their type as

follows: Main Article, Opinion Article – Analysis – Comment/ Commentary, Reportage, Interview, Announcement, Letter, Simple Report, Other

2. In order to investigate the content of news, the number of references in each article was recorded so as to create a list of protagonists: President Anastasiades, Mustafa Akinci, Espen Barth Eide, Alexis Tsipras, Nikos Kotzias, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan etc.
3. The news items were recorded on the basis of source, origin of source and editor of the article (signed, unsigned, international news agency, special report).
4. If the newspaper positions were in favour of or against the positive progress of the peace talks and the prospect of a deal.

The position of *Alithia* newspaper

This newspaper deals with a broad range of subjects and includes “articles, news reports on local or interna-

Results of the research

TABLE 1: References in newspapers *Alithia*, *Politis* and *Haravgi*

Period: 28 June – 7 July 2017

References	28 June – 8 July 2017	%	<i>Alithia</i>	<i>Politis</i>	<i>Haravgi</i>
1. Republic of Cyprus	75	16	23 (31%)	29 (38%)	23 (31%)
2. Greek Cypriot Community	66	14	21 (32%)	26 (39%)	19 (29%)
3. Turkish Cypriot Community	64	13	19 (30%)	24 (37%)	21 (33%)
4. Countries involved	111	24	41 (38%)	35 (31%)	35 (31%)
5. United Nations	106	23	44 (41%)	34 (31%)	28 (28%)
6. European Union	47	10	16 (34%)	22 (47%)	9 (19%)
Total	469	100	164	170	135

Note: Based on columns “Politics” and “News”

TABLE 2: A quantitative analysis of news items in *Alithia*, *Politis* and *Haravgi*

Period: 28 June – 07 July 2017

Aritele Editor	<i>Alithia</i>	%	<i>Politis</i>	%	<i>Haravgi</i>	%
Signed	26	39	42	81	40	71
Unsigned	41	61	10	19	16	29
International News Agency						
Special Report						
Total	67	100	52	100	56	100
Type of article						
Main article	16	24				
Opinion article			2	2		
Reportage	24	36	32	62	25	45
Interview	1	1		1		
Analysis	2	3				
Letter						
Simple report	24	36	18	35	31	55
Other						
Total	67	100	52	100	56	100
Origin of source						
Anonymous	25	37	2	2	19	35
Greece						
Cyprus	4		10	19	6	10
UK						
Turkey						
Crans-Montana, Switzerland	31	46	40	77	29	53
International news agencies	7	7		2	2	2
Other						
Total	67	100	52	100	56	100
Focus on protagonists						
Nicos Anastasiades (President of the Republic of Cyprus)	32	19	29	19	22	18

Nikos Christodoulides (Government spokesman)	4	2	3	2	4	3
Antonio Guterres (UN Secretary General)	27	16	25	16	23	18
Espen Barth Eide (UN Secretary General's Special Adviser on Cyprus)	19	11	16	10	12	10
GC Party Representatives	2	2		1		1
Mustafa Akinci (Turkish Cypriot Leader)	15	9	13	8	16	13
Theresa May (Prime Minister of the UK)	6	4	3	1	3	2
Alexis Tsipras (Prime Minister, Hellenic Republic)	5	4	4	3	3	2
Nikos Kotzias (Foreign Minister, Hellenic Republic)	20	12	24	15	20	16
Boris Johnson (UK Secretary of Foreign Affairs)	4	2	3	1	4	3
Recep Tayyip Erdoğan (President, Republic of Turkey)			6	4		
Binali Yıldırım (Prime Minister, Republic of Turkey)	4	2	4	3	2	2
Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu (Foreign Minister, Republic of Turkey)	25	15	25	16	13	10
Federica Mogherini (EU Representative)	3	2	3	1	3	2
Total	166	100	158	100	125	

tional events, commentaries, culture coverage, courts news, reports from the countryside and a variety of other pieces of information” (Sofokleous 2011). Over the period under study, *Alithia* maintained its government-affiliated stance, since it supports the right-wing Democratic Rally, which is President Anastasiades’s political party. *Alithia*’s objective to support President Anastasiades’s efforts to solve the Cyprus problem has remained unchanged. The titles below indicate the newspaper’s support towards President Anastasiades and his negotiating team:

- “Following President Anastasiades’s and Nikos Kotzias’s reaction, Eide’s document has been withdrawn. Satisfaction in Athens and Nicosia (*Alithia*, 28 June 2017),
- “Feeling determined in Switzerland” (*Alithia*, 28 June 2017),
- “Several one-on-one meetings with handshakes and chit-chats between Nicos Anastasiades and Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu (*Alithia*, 29 June 2017),

- “Nicos Anastasiades: Deal guaranteed by the Security Council” (*Alithia*, 30 June 2017)

Whilst primarily aiming at informing readers, *Alithia*’s articles use a witty, moderate tone to criticise the ills, naturally supporting the ideology of the “right”.

The subjects that appear repetitively and consistently in *Alithia* newspaper during the period under study are the following:

- (1) The positive support of the efforts to solve the Cyprus problem:

Extracts from the newspaper:

- “Good spirit and laid-back attitude” (*Alithia*, 29 June 2017)
- “President Anastasiades: Constructive discussion that may lead to exits” (*Alithia*, 01 July 2017),
- “Nikos Kotzias: The UN Secretary-General’s presence is useful and beneficial” (*Alithia*, 1 July 2017)
- “Time for substantial negotiations” (*Alithia*, 02 July 2017)

- (2) Reference to important topics, such as the territorial adjustments, the property trade-offs, security, guarantees

Extracts from the newspaper:

- “Today morning’s discussion opens with the chapter on Security and Guarantees, which is key for the progress of the talks – In the afternoon, discussion between the two leaders on the other chapters, starting with the territorial adjustments” (*Alithia*, 28 June 2017)
- “Answers will be given today on alternative proposals by the United Nations regarding the guarantees” (*Alithia*, 29 June 2017),
- “Representative of the Turkish Foreign Ministry: We did not agree on pulling out 80% of troops” (*Alithia*, 30 June 2017),
- “Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, firmly called on Greek Cypriots and Greece to wake up from the dream of no Turkish troops and guarantees” (*Alithia*, 30 June 2017),

- “Abolishment of guarantees in form or substance?” (*Alithia*, 2 July 2017)

(3) The stance of the guarantor powers under the 1960 Constitution (Greece, Turkey and UK) on the chapters of territory, property, security and guarantees.

Extracts from the newspaper:

- “Kotzias: We are fighting for the road to open” (*Alithia*, 29 June 2017),
- “Çavuşoğlu: A good first day. We shall continue tomorrow” (*Alithia*, 29 June 2017),
- “Kotzias: Both the Treaty of Guarantee and the Treaty of Alliance were essentially never implemented; Turkey violated them in every aspect and, therefore, there is no reason for it to ask for these Treaties -which it violated and were never put into practice- to be maintained (*Alithia*, 30 June 2017),
- “Çavuşoğlu: Wake up from the dream of zero guarantees, zero troops” (*Alithia*, 30 June 2017),

- “The British are also pushing” (*Alithia*, 30 June 2017)
- “Kotzias: Some people do not want the negotiations to happen” (*Alithia*, 04 July 2017)
- “Theresa May: All sides should be flexible” (*Alithia*, 04 July 2017)
- “Çavuşoğlu: There will be no sunset clause (for the presence of Turkish troops)” (*Alithia*, 05 July 2017)
- “Kotzias: Some time I will narrate what exactly happened yesterday and what the Turks admitted about their intentions during our relentless discussion” (*Alithia*, 05 July 2017)

(4) The statements by the UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres regarding the Conference on Cyprus at Crans-Montana:

Extracts from the newspaper:

- “Guterres making waves” (*Alithia*, 1 July 2017)
- “Guterres’s return to Crans-Montana boosts the talks (*Alithia*, 06 July 2017)

- “Guterres’s framework on Cyprus” (*Alithia*, 06 July 2017)
- “He tightened the belts first thing in the morning” (*Alithia*, 07 July 2017)

References to the main protagonists in the sample at hand are as follows: President of the Republic of Cyprus and leader of the Greek Cypriot Community Nicos Anastasiades with 19%, UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres with 16%, Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu with 15%, Greek Foreign Minister Nikos Kotzias with 12% and leader of the Turkish Cypriot community Mustafa Akinci with 9%.

During the period under study, 41% of news items refer to the United Nations, 38% to the European Union, 34% to the Greek Cypriot community, 32% to the Republic of Cyprus and 30% to the Turkish Cypriot community.

Regarding the type of news items, 36% are reportages, 36% are simple news reports and 24% are main articles.

61% of the articles are signed and 39% are unsigned.

The position of *Politis* newspaper

The topics that appear repetitively and consistently during the period under study in *Politis* newspaper are the following:

(1) Reservations regarding the potential deal

Extracts from the newspaper:

- “Still without the document and all scenarios possible” (*Politis*, 28 June 2017)
- “They agree on change but they disagree on how” (*Politis*, 29 June 2017)
- “From dead-end to intense activity” (*Politis*, 01 July 2017)
- “Guterres’s framework without responses” (*Politis*, 04 July 2017)
- “Everyone within the framework but... from a distance” (*Politis*, 05 July 2017)
- “Crans-Montana has ended in failure” (*Politis*, 07 July 2017)

(2) Reference to important topics, such as territory, property, security, guarantees

Extracts from the newspaper:

- “Turkey refers to zero troops and zero guarantees as a ‘dream’” (*Politis*, 30 June 2017)
- “A first step in the chapter of territory” (*Politis*, 01 July 2017)
- “Mechanisms instead of guarantees” (*Politis*, 02 July 2017)
- “Ideas for a map, rotating presidency and property trade-offs” (*Politis*, 04 July 2017)
- “Negotiations on security and guarantees have started with a delay and it looks like there is an effort for the two sides to get over the difficulties and make progress” (*Politis*, 04 July 2017)
- “Çavuşoğlu: Troops forever” (*Politis*, 05 July 2017)
- “They were asking for guarantees and intervention rights for 15 years” (*Politis*, 07 July 2017)

(3) The contribution of the UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres to the conference on Cyprus at Crans-Montana.

Extracts from the newspaper:

- “Antonio has set the table” (*Politis*, 01 July 2017)
- “Guterres broke the deadlock” (*Politis*, 01 July 2017)
- “Guterres placed emphasis on the issue of security” (*Politis*, 01 July 2017)
- “Here is the Guterres framework” (*Politis*, 02 July 2017)
- “The torch is, once again, passed on to Guterres” (*Politis*, 06 July 2017).

(4) The stance of the guarantor powers under the 1960 Constitution (Greece, Turkey and UK) on the chapters of territory, property, security and guarantees.

- “Behind-the-scenes British voices also in favour of a multilateral guarantor power according to *The Guardian*” (*Politis*, 30 June 2017)
- “Mr Çavuşoğlu added: we clearly laid our positions on security and guarantees. Zero troops and zero guarantees are out of the question for us.” (*Politis*, 30 June 2017)

- “The Turkish Foreign Minister filed a proposal implicating the interconnection of security with the four freedoms, with which the Greek and Greek Cypriot side disagreed” (*Politis*, 01 July 2017)
- “Çavuşoğlu: Troops for ever” (*Politis*, 05 July 2017)
- “Greek Foreign Minister Nikos Kotzias stated that the UN Secretary General understands the proposal of the Greek side on the abolishment of the Treaties of Alliance and Guarantees, as well as the need for Cyprus to become a normal state” (*Politis*, 07 July 2017).

(5) The role of the European Union
Extracts from the newspaper:

- “President Anastasiades: Emphasis on the potential role of the European Union” (*Politis*, 29 June 2017),
- “No member-state of the European Union needs a guardian” (*Politis*, 29 June 2017),
- “The European Union has a role to play” (*Politis*, 29 June 2017),

- “EU Support of the Greek-Cypriot positions on guarantees” (*Politis*, 29 June 2017),
- “President Anastasiades: Shielded by the European Union” (*Politis*, 30 June 2017),
- “The EU undertakes a role on the four freedoms” (*Politis*, 01 July 2017)

As expected, *Politis* places an emphasis on the main protagonists of the talks. In the period under study, 47% of the articles refer to the European Union, 39% to the Greek Cypriot community, 38% to the Republic of Cyprus represented by its President, 37% to the Turkish Cypriot community and 31% to the United Nations and the countries involved.

Most news items, i.e. a percentage of 77%, have Crans-Montana as their source of origin due to the reporter’s location since it is the place where the talks took place. 19% of the articles originate from Cyprus.

Regarding the people getting the most attention: President of the Republic of Cyprus and leader of the Greek Cypriot Community Nicos Anastasiades with 19%, UN Secretary General

and Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu with 16%, Greek Foreign Minister Nikos Kotzias with 15% and Turkish Cypriot leader Mustafa Akinci with 8%.

Regarding the type of news items, 62% are reportages-research and 35% simple news reports.

81% of the articles are signed and 19% are unsigned.

The position of *Haravgi* newspaper

The topics that appear repetitively and consistently during the period under study in *Haravgi* are the following:

(1) During the talks on the Cyprus problem, *Haravgi* newspaper focuses on Switzerland and the negotiations; it is a time when the leaders of the two communities must take advantage of the opportunity to reunify the island.

Extracts from the newspaper:

- “The opportunity for reunification lies before us all” (*Haravgi*, 28 June 2017)
- “Everyone should show political will for an overall settlement” (*Haravgi*, 28 June 2017)

- “UN Secretary General’s invite to everyone to take advantage of the opportunity” (*Haravgi*, 28 June 2017)
- “Theresa May expressed her hope for a solution to the Cyprus problem” (*Haravgi*, 28 June 2017).

(2) Reference to important issues, such as territory, property rights, security, guarantees

Extracts from the newspaper:

- “Open cards on guarantees” (*Haravgi*, 29 June 2017)
- “The Greek-Cypriot side awaits genuine intentions and moves by Turkey on the issue of security and guarantees” (*Haravgi*, 30 June 2017)
- “Emphasis on the European perspective on security for all Cypriots” (*Haravgi*, 30 June 2017)
- “Persistent effort for security and guarantees” (*Haravgi*, 1 July 2017)

(3) The contribution of the UN Secretary General Antonio Guter-

res to the conference on Cyprus at Crans-Montana.

Extracts from the newspaper:

- “The issue of property trade-offs was discussed in the presence of Guterres” (*Haravgi*, 1 July 2017)
- “The presence of the UN Secretary General, Antonio Guterres, was a boost” (*Haravgi*, 1 July 2017)
- “Guterres: Daring decisions for common ground” (*Haravgi*, 1 July 2017)
- “Guterres: Emphasis on cross-process negotiation” (*Haravgi*, 2 July 2017)
- “Alignment with the Guterres’ framework” (*Haravgi*, 5 July 2017)
- “Overall negotiations with Guterres” (*Haravgi*, 6 July 2017)
- The stance of the guarantor powers under the 1960 Constitution (Greece, Turkey and UK) on the chapters of territory, property, security and guarantees.
- “Çavuşoğlu insists on guarantees and troops” (*Haravgi*, 5 July 2017)

- “Kotzias: Why do you wish to keep the Treaty of Guarantees and intervention rights? What do you mean? Will you be using them?” (*Haravgi*, 5 July 2017)
- “Çavuşoğlu: Yes, we wish to maintain intervention rights so that we can use them. The right of intervention will apply until Turkish Cypriots feel safe” (*Haravgi*, 5 July 2017)
- “Telephone contact of Tsipras with May and Yıldırım” (*Haravgi*, 5 July 2017)

The main protagonists are: the UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres with 18%, President of the Republic of Cyprus and leader of the Greek Cypriot Community Nicos Anastasiades with 18%, Greek Foreign Minister Nikos Kotzias with 16%, Turkish Cypriot leader Mustafa Akinci with 13% and Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu with 10%.

Daily articles in *Haravgi* newspaper during June-July 2017 refer to the countries involved in the future of the island, i.e. the Greek Cypriot community with 29%, the Turkish Cypriot community with 33%, the Republic of

TABLE 3: List of framings in *Alithia*, *Politis* and *Haravgi* newspapers during the period between 28 June – 7 July 2017 and whether they have a conflictual or reconciling tone:

Tone	<i>Alithia</i>	%	<i>Politis</i>	%	<i>Haravgi</i>	%
Conflictual	4	40%	5	50%	2	20%
Reconciling	6	60%	5	50%	8	80%
Total	10	100		100		100

Cyprus as represented by its president in 31%, the countries involved with 31% and the United Nations with 28% and the European Union with 19%.

Regarding the type of news items, 55% are simple news reports and 45% are reportages-research. It is interesting to note that Crans-Montana is the origin of source in 53% of the articles due to the reporter's presence in Switzerland.

Signed articles account for 71% in total (Table 2)

Analysis and results of variables

A remarkable finding of our research is that all three newspapers use a reconciling tone in the majority of their articles and express the wish of the two communities, the UN Secretary General, the guarantor countries and the representative of the European Union to solve the Cyprus problem.

Extracts from *Alithia*:

- “The time of Guterres: The UN Secretary General adopts an even more rigid stance compa-

red to his predecessor” (*Alithia*, 30 June 2017)

- “Nikos Kotzias: UN Secretary General's presence is useful and beneficial” (*Alithia*, 1 July 2017)
- “President Anastasiades: Constructive discussion that may lead to exits” (*Alithia*, 1 July 2017)

Extracts from *Politis*:

- “Beginning in good spirit” (*Politis*, 29 June 2017)
- “The participants have arrived in good spirit” (*Politis*, 29 June 2017)
- “Guterres: We are not impatient” (*Politis*, 5 July 2017)

Extracts from *Haravgi*:

- “Theresa May expressed her hope for a solution to the Cyprus problem” (*Haravgi*, 28 June 2017).
- “Mogherini also present at the discussion on security” (*Haravgi*, 6 July 2017)
- “Guterres: Significant progress if you agree with any points in my framework” (*Haravgi*, 7 July 2017)

However, during the negotiations there are conflicts between the parties involved:

Extracts from *Alithia*:

- “Turkish tactical moves threatened the Conference” (*Alithia*, 1 July 2017)
- “President Anastasiades: Progress if there is a shift” (*Alithia*, 1 July 2017)
- “Conflict for Çavuşoğlu's statement that Turkey is one step ahead and Cyprus one step behind” (*Alithia*, 4 July 2017)

Extracts from *Politis*:

- “Guterres arrives in a climate of tension” (*Politis*, 30 June 2017)
- “Turkey refers to zero troops and zero guarantees as a ‘dream’” (*Politis*, 30 June 2017)
- “3.15 AM: Turkey did not shift on the issue of troops. Crans-Montana ended in failure.” (*Politis*, 7 July 2017)
- “Disagreement about re-examining the presence of Turkish troops” (*Politis*, 07 July 2017)

Extracts from *Haravgi*:

- “The Turkish proposal is not satisfactory said President Anastasiades” (*Haravgi*, 29 June 2017)
- “Tension during the talks at Crans-Montana” (*Haravgi*, 30 June 2017)
- “Çavuşoğlu insists on guarantees and troops” (*Haravgi*, 5 July 2017)

In conclusion, through daily news reporting, it becomes clear that the desire for a solution to the Cyprus problem dominates journalism. The procedure of direct talks with the mediation of the United Nations aims to resolve the dispute between the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities and, ultimately, to reach an agreement; the press contributes towards this by publishing relevant articles regarding this long-term objective. The reconciliation between the two communities predisposes the termination of any type of conflict between the two sides. Unfortunately, after strenuous, nightlong consultations, a deal for Cyprus was not possible, since the two sides had opposing views. Hence, the United Nations Secretary

General expressed the view that the discussion could not go on and ended the conference.

Conclusion – Discussion

Our objective was to shed light to an international problem – namely the Cyprus problem – and to show how it becomes the object of political controversy and political decision making, through the agenda-setting theory. The agenda-setting approach was used to describe how an issue that is being discussed at the United Nations in the quest for a solution becomes politicised. The newspapers, by setting the agenda, are essentially creating a “menu” or a procedure that focuses on discussing political, economic, social and cultural issues that seek to be regulated by the United Nations. It is precisely this agenda-setting procedure that we examined in this paper, which is directly relevant with the field of Communication.

On the other hand, even though the term “agenda” is widely used in politicians’ and journalists’ discourse to create a feeling of relative vagueness, its introduction into the field of

Communication and its connection with an international problem, has created the necessary scientific and theoretical framework for an in-depth analysis. In its simplest version, as well-put by Garraud¹ (2010, p. 58), the agenda-setting theory focuses on “the study and promotion of the total procedures that transform social events into public issues” which sometimes become the object of conflict, as well as social and political disputes, as is the case with the Cyprus issue which has remained unresolved for 46 years. The agenda setting legitimises the intervention of international organisations in any of their decisions (institutional, legislative) and under any form (emergency measures, long-term action plans, international agreements, appointment of committees, etc.).

The Greek Cypriot press includes news items on current affairs which rely on directness, closeness, significance, popular interest and, of course, social impact. Written news items in the press become part of the agenda on the basis of criteria such as theme, editor of published article, type of publication, origin of sources, sources of publication, etc. aiming to descri-

be the backdrop of the negotiations to solve on the Cyprus issue. Moreover, those news items which were the most important and were presented as headlines in the press take priority on the main sections of the front pages. This indicates the stance and the position of the newspaper about the activity of the President of the Republic of Cyprus and thereby moulds public opinion.

The framing, i.e. the interpretation, the commenting and the promotion of topics are dealt with as part of the important role of newspapers and the mass media in general. The Press that we studied in Cyprus is not restricted to just “framing” the reality and chooses or defines the news item (Serafetinidou, 1999), but also plays a more active and substantial role. Therefore, the positions and framings of the Cypriot Press contribute to the shaping of a society that relies on alliances, negotiations, a desire to solve the issue, as well as disagreements, conflicts and uprisings.

Furthermore, the text in newspapers is processed based on the ideological politics that the newspaper expresses by publishing it in its co-

lumns. This method proves the intention of the printed medium for a certain interpretation, which is relevant to the position and political leaning of the printed medium, as well as the position of the newspaper vis-à-vis the negotiations.

A comparison among the three newspapers demonstrates that all of them have faith that the Cyprus issue can be resolved through the talks. The Greek Cypriot side went to Crans-Montana aiming for success in the matters of territory and property. Both sides showed their cards, whilst the regulatory role of the countries involved and the United Nations was evident. The Greek side holds in its hands the main political demand of Turkish Cypriots, that of political equality, which is envisioned to be obtained through the acceptance of a rotating presidency. Moreover, the Turkish side wishes to discuss the issue of guarantees.

It is worth to note that there is no name-calling, no prejudice, nothing that accuses any of the two sides for the failure of the talks at Mont Pèlerin; just sheer disappointment about the dead end of the peace talks. *Alithia* reported that “The mutual blaming

about the failure of Crans-Montana has started” (*Alithia*, 8 July 2017), whilst *Politis* noted that “Crans-Montana has ended in failure (*Politis*, 7 July 2017). Within the same spirit, *Haravgi* wrote: “Guterres: Differences on a number of issues” (*Haravgi*, 8 July 2017).

Almost all newspapers provided the same coverage and this probably means that they perceived the events of the two summits in the same manner.

Another aspect that was looked into was the reporting style used in the news items of all three newspapers. For example, at Crans-Montana, there was an impression that the conditions have matured and a settlement could be achieved. Journalists’ texts are written in a rather striking tone as they give the impression that an optimistic mood dominates the talks: “Good spirit and laid-back attitude” (*Alithia*, 29 June 2017), “Opportunity for a deal” (*Politis*, 28 June 2017), “UN Secretary General’s invite to everyone to take advantage of the opportunity” (*Haravgi*, 28 June 2017). At the same time, a series of logical arguments are deployed that “convince” the readers of these newspapers that a compromise between the two communities is the only

feasible and viable solution sought by the two communities.

However, following the end of Crans-Montana, all three newspapers report on the failure of the talks and express their disappointment at the same time: The following titles are indicative: “It’s your fault! – It’s all your fault!” (*Alithia*, 8 July 2017), “Crans-Montana ended in failure” (*Politis*, 7 July 2017), whilst Haravgi reported on “Initiative within the UN parameters” (*Haravgi*, 8 July 2017).

A similar image was observed with two of the three guarantor powers, namely Greece and Turkey, as well as the UN Secretary General, as the newspapers reported on the significant role that these parties have during the talks: “Overall negotiation with Guterres (*Haravgi*, 6 July 2017), whilst the Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu made the statement “Troops in Cyprus forever” (*Politis*, 5 July 2017) and the Greek Foreign Minister Nikos Kotzias highlighted that “the Greek side has defended international law and the right of Cyprus to be a sovereign and independent state” (*Alithia*, 7 July 2017).

At this point, it is worth noting that

the connection between the theoretical framework and the empirical study succeeded in demonstrating the significance of the agenda, since according to our research, it emerges that the positions of the newspapers were in favour of a solution to the problem, cultivating a culture of reconciliation and not a culture of conflict or dispute. On the other hand, the research showed that the agenda of the news items attributes the necessary importance to the protagonists of the talks, namely it focuses on the people who took part in the negotiations and were active on the topics dealt with during the negotiations. This finding is consistent with the basic theoretical assumption of McCombs & Shaw (1976) theory. Last but not least, the most important conclusion reached from using this new theory for the first time is that the mass media agenda influences the way in which the topics are prioritized by the public.

We conclude that our study presents evidence that the three newspapers promote a culture of consent between the two sides and only occasionally report on the conflictual spirit of the direct talks among the parties involved at Crans-Montana.

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