

Small States Challenges to democracy

Cyprus

Created by: Nicos Trimikliniotis and George Charalambous
Presented by: Nicos Trimikliniotis

Small States

The quality of democracy in the country

- Comparative tools and indexes (any of the following or any other):
 - Freedom House (Nations in transit)
 - Polity IV
 - V-dem project
 - The Economist Intelligence Unit Democracy index
 - Trust in political institutions
 - Other tools and evidence

Small States

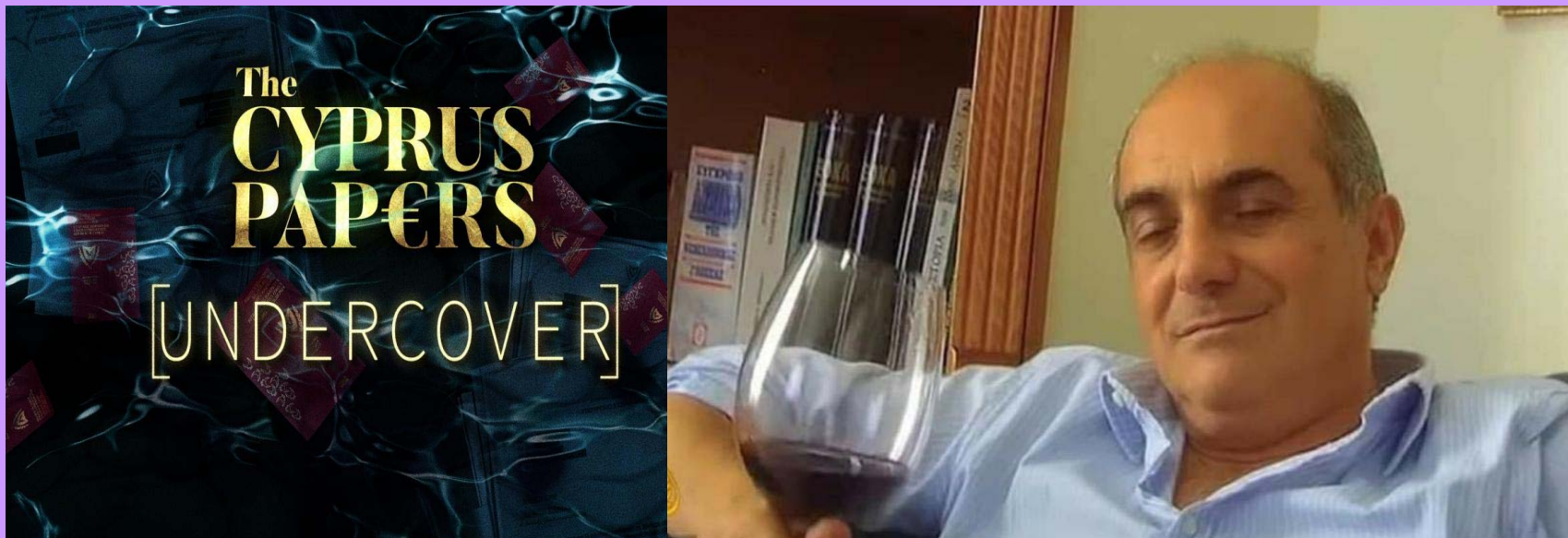
The quality of democracy in the country

- Comparative tools and indexes (any of the following or any other):
 - **Quality of Democracy (2017)**: With corruption control becoming an increasing concern, Cyprus receives a comparatively low overall score (rank 32) for democracy quality. Its score in this area has declined by 0.4 points relative to 2014 ([SGI](#)).
 - [Moneyval Report](#): calls on the Cypriot authorities to pursue more aggressively money laundering from criminal proceeds generated outside of Cyprus, and take a more proactive approach to the freezing and confiscation of foreign proceeds. The risk in the real estate sector has increased exponentially since it has become the **preferred choice of investment to acquire citizenship under the Cyprus Investment Programme**.
 - Situation has deteriorated massively ([‘Cyprus Papers’](#), Al Jazeera)

Small States

The quality of democracy in the country

- Situation has deteriorated massively ([‘Cyprus Papers’](#), Al Jazeera):
Picture of the President of Parliament winking cunningly that went viral
- forcing the unprecedented resignation in October 2020



Small States

The quality of democracy in the country

Over 6500 EU 'Golden' Passports granted. Newspapers suggest that at least 350 passports by persons connected with Ministers and the President himself.

Picture of passport of Notorious Mr Low, criminal, granted Cypriot citizens



Small States

The quality of democracy in the country

- [Democracy Index \(EIU\)](#): Cyprus ranked 339th in the global rankings, in the same 'flawed' group as Italy, France, Greece and the United States of America, whilst Turkey was ranked 110th of 165 nations and 2 territories.
- Bad time for democratic and states institutions – mistrusted by the people, as surveys show, e.g. [Eurobarometer 2019](#):
 - Cypriots distrust political parties, tend to trust the army more than other institutions - 87% of Cypriots say they don't trust political parties, 66% distrust the government and 63% the parliament.
 - Asked which the institutions and Media people trust more, the army emerged first with 62% and is followed by the police with 52% and television with 48% (although the percentage of those who say they distrust television is higher, with 49%).

Small States - The quality of democracy in the country:

[EU Commission Rule of Law Report 2020](#)

- The justice system is experiencing “serious efficiency challenges”.
- Justice system suffers from a nearly complete lack of digitalisation
- Problems with independence of the Authority on Media
- Major issues of public distrust of political institution and major concern about corruption.
- Whistle-blower protection is not yet provided for by law.
- Regulatory framework allows for a certain transparency of media ownership in the audio-visual media sector, the 2020 Media Pluralism Monitor (MPM)
 - raises concerns about the efficiency of its implementation in practice
 - no framework guaranteeing ownership transparency in the written press and digital media sectors which makes it difficult to identify and verify ultimate owners or cross-ownership in these sectors.
 - transparency of media ownership is at high risk (81%).
 - Considerable news media concentration and an unregulated online media market – has resulted in the MPM risk rating for the market plurality area going from low medium risk (34%) in 2017 to high risk in 2020 (74%).

Small States – The quality of democracy in Cyprus: ‘Partitocracy’

- [*Party-State Relations in Cyprus*](#) (Charalambous & Christophorou eds.): Book examines ‘partitocratic’ political culture of Cyprus: critical analysis of the crisis in the social and political relations between state and society
 - Complex civil society, but ‘statist’ domination damaging for democracy
 - Problems of unhealthy dependence on political power
 - Non-transparent and undemocratic linkages between those power and society: Nepotism, family ties, [‘rousfeti’ and political patronage](#) in the party system, state and private institutions
 - Corruption relating to the funding of political parties
 - Business group strategies ‘pulling the strings’: Invisible and distorting dimensions of linkages with society
 - Sexual politics and gendered aspects: Few women and misogyny
 - Ethno-nationalism and exclusion, exploitation of migrants

Small States –The quality of democracy: 'The Cypriot states of exception'

[Constantinou, 2008](#); Trimikliniotis [2010](#), [2018](#)):

- Arguments about deficiencies of democracy derived from the Cyprus problem and how the political leaderships have responded and reshaped the political order. The 'Cypriot States of Exception' has produced and reproduces an erosion of fundamental rights as collateral damage of the Cyprus Problem. There has been a proliferation of regimes of exception and derogation of rights in the following areas
 - Rights of Turkish-Cypriot are subjected to 'doctrine of necessity' arguments since 1964, accentuate since 1974
 - 'Economic necessity' arguments take priority over rights since 1964
 - The '[migration states of exception](#)' – exploitation, derogation of migrant rights
 - Banking crisis and Troika memorandum accentuated 'economic necessity' at the expense of labour rights, social benefits
 - State of exception invoked to undermine environmental rights
 - Covid pandemic expanded the scope for [hygiene states of exception](#) limiting mobility rights, imposing restrictions on crossings across the Green Line

Small States

Political/Social cleavages

- The **high salience of the ethnic cleavage** and consequently its constraining effects on the supply of populism may be a useful explanation for the relative absence of populists close to fully fledged populism.
- The Left-Right ideological/political divide of parties: The division of party system along the left-right ideological/political lines is augmented as the traditional left-right divide is mediated by factors that seem to crosscut the divide. They can be viewed as 'axes of the political divide' in Greek-Cypriot politics in three fields:
 - The socio-economic order;
 - The Cyprus problem.
 - The social issues axis (i.e. multiculturalism, homosexuality, abortion, and religious freedom/recognition), which generate a sharp cleavage.

Small States

Mobilisation of anti-democracy sentiment

- What is the topic that mobilizes anti-democracy sentiment? (corruption, elitism, globalisation, lack of control, environment)
 - There is concern about the neo-Nazi ELAM, connected and effectively being a branch of the criminal Golden Dawn (now banned in Greece). It has won two seats in the 56 parliamentary seats.
 - Anti-corruption and anti-immigration, (fundamentalist) Christian Orthodox religious groups against covid19 restrictions and 5-G has mobilized support that is generating 'new' and 'old' far right groups.
 - Environmental mobilisations have support by the youth but are not anti-democratic but insist on a democratisation based on environmental justice and accountability.

Small States

Corruption and inefficiency

- Corruption &
- The [EU Commission 2020 Rule of Law Report on Cyprus](#) : 95% of respondents to a 2020 [Eurobarometer survey](#) consider corruption to be a widespread problem (EU average: 71%) and 60% of people feel personally affected by corruption in their daily lives (EU average: 26%)

Small States Corruption and inefficiency

Anti-corruption demonstrations after Al Jazeera Cyprus Papers



Small States

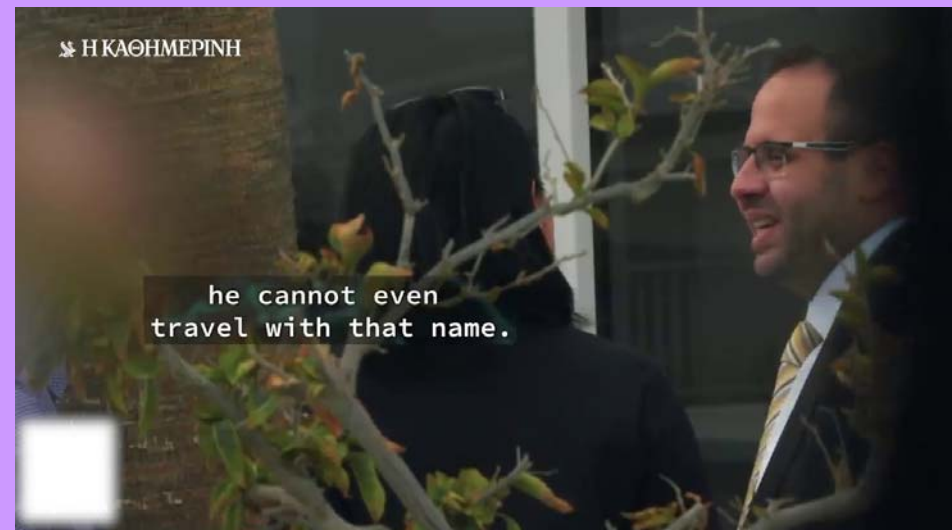
Corruption and inefficiency

The President's son-in-law has been a massive beneficiary as a developer in Limassol of the 'investment scheme' or 'Sale of Golden Passports' (From infamous advert '[Invest in Limassol. Invest in Cyprus. The time is now!](#)')

Small States Corruption and inefficiency



Al Jazeera Cyprus Papers: The President of the House, the Investor-MP and the lawyer 'This is Cyprus'



Small States Far Right Populism

- Party manifestos and the ideological programs of political parties, there has been growth of a combination of xenophobic ethno-nationalism (based on the so-called ethno-pluralist doctrine) and anti-political establishment populism, although there is an emphasis on other socio-cultural issues, such as more 'law-and-order' and a call to strengthen 'traditional family norms'.
- 'Enemies' of the far right fit well into the broader European picture: internally, they the 'παλαιοκομματικό κατεστημένο' (the old party establishment) and the 'τοκογλύφοι τραπεζίτες' (loan shark bankers) and externally; 'Turkey' or 'the Attila' and other foreign interests, such as large hedge funds. ([Charalambous](#))
- Small political parties are increasingly competing with the neo-Nazis on a anti-immigrant and anti-Turkish discourse agenda
- The governing conservative party (DESY) has also shifted to the right in demagogic xenophobic and anti-immigrant politics

Small States Democracy and COVID-19

- The pandemic has adversely affect democratic institutions - there is more concentration of executive power, misuse of power, new 'states of exception':
 - Covid-19 related measures are reshaping the regimes of rights attached to citizenship, leaving marks on Cypriot society, exacerbating old divisions, and configuring new ones.
 - Relationships between the two communities have become even more difficult because of the reframed conditions of mobility within the 'cold' conflict and divide of Cyprus.
 - This has impacted rights of citizens, and more intensively still the rights of non-citizens (asylum-seekers and migrants), with regulations enhancing new controls and restrictions to their mobility, increased suspicion towards persons moving across borders and divides, generated by both new migration policies and fears of Covid-19 infections.
 - The first casualty of the COVID-19 measures was the imposition of restrictions of crossings across the Green Line, justified as precautionary. This caused strong resentment and sparked at the time demonstrations on both sides of the barbed wire. These were abruptly halted because of the lockdown on both sides.

Small States

Democracy and COVID-19

- The pandemic has adversely affect democratic institutions: There is more concentration of executive power, misuse of power)
- Covid-19 related regulations and measures are constantly reshaping the regimes of rights attached to citizenship, leaving marks on Cypriot society, exacerbating old divisions, and configuring new ones.
- Relationships between the two communities have become even more difficult because of the reframed conditions of mobility within the 'cold' conflict and divide of Cyprus.
- This has impacted rights of citizens, and more intensively still the rights of non-citizens (asylum-seekers and migrants), with regulations enhancing new controls and restrictions to their mobility, increased suspicion towards persons moving across borders and divides, generated by both new migration policies and fears of Covid-19 infections.

Small States

Prospects of democracy

The Cypriot citizen of the 21st century is facing serious challenges for democracy, rights and freedom since independence in 1960.

The prospects for democracy is contingent on issues relating to the following:

- Negative prospects for reunification and development of a political discourse on the culture of reunification, the political culture of the Cypriot federalism
- Absence of accountability issues and checks over the 'states of exception'
- Deficiency of rights culture and practice
- Serious corruption issues, clientelism and nepotism
- New social issues need to be addressed
- Rise in inequality issues and unemployment
- New environmental issues
- Address abuses social media, misinformation and violation of rights