HIGHER EDUCATION AND STATE LEGITIMATION IN CYPRUS

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Abstract – *This paper will investigate the state's utilisation of higher education policy as 'compensatory legitimation' within the Cypriot context in the late 1980s. It argues that not only the establishment of the University of Cyprus in 1989 - after thirty years of strong nationalist opposition during the British colonial administration and another thirty years of state hesitation and postponement during political independence - but also the character of the established University (state-based and linked to the international community of scholarship) can be explained mainly as the result of the state's decision to utilise higher education in order to make up for its serious deficit in legitimacy. It also maintains that the state used the policy strategy of expertise and to a lesser extent the policy strategy of participation in order to legitimate the process that determined the character of both the University and the knowledge that it was expected to produce.*

Introduction

*I*n a number of articles Hans Weiler cogently showed how the concept of state legitimacy and, in particular, the theoretical construct of 'compensatory legitimation' as a determinant of educational policy strategies, can be a very useful tool for the comparative analysis of educational policy in advanced capitalist societies (Weiler, 1983, 1988, 1989, 1990). By using instances of educational policy strategies in the Federal Republic of Germany, the United States, and France, he demonstrated how the modern state, which today faces a rather serious problem of credibility and acceptability among its citizens, tries hard to make up for as much of this legitimacy deficit as possible by adopting educational policy strategies well suited for a compensatory purpose. Weiler identified three such policy strategies that seem to be particularly conspicuous in the policy behaviour of modern states. These are: (a) the 'legalisation' or 'judicialisation' of educational policy in terms of the increased invocation of legal norms and institutions; (b) the utilisation of scientific expertise in the policy making process, especially through such devices as experimentation and planning; and (c) the development and stipulation of client participation in the policy process.

This paper is an attempt to apply the theoretical construct of 'compensatory legitimation' in an effort to explore the political dynamics of the policy process regarding the establishment of the University of Cyprus. It will argue that this theoretical approach can provide a satisfactory answer to the two central questions related to the case of the University of Cyprus, namely:

(a) what was the legitimacy for the establishment of a University which was fiercely opposed by the nationalist faction for sixty years, and how were their objections to the establishment of a University finally satisfied? and

(b) what was the justification for the state's decision to encourage the new University to establish strong links with the international community of scholarship from the very beginning?

A research project was designed to answer these two questions and the findings will both contribute to the ongoing discourse on this issue and widen the understanding of the dialectics between state and higher education in a country for which this experience is very new.

The paper comprises three sections. The first section analyses the specific characteristics of the Cypriot context which compelled the state to search for compensatory legitimation; the second is an interpretation of the strategies employed by the state to promote the establishment of a University for the first time in Cyprus; and the third is an interpretation of the strategies employed by the state to secure legitimacy for the character of the University, the knowledge it was expected to produce, and the decision-making process itself. The last two sections also provide an answer to the two major questions put forward above.

The specific Cypriot context

Offe (1972) and Habermas (1975) have elaborated on the problem of governability of the modern state and the resultant spiral of increasing legitimacy needs. The state of Cyprus is no different from any modern state in this respect. It can be even argued that there are three features particular to the Cypriot context which make the precariousness of the state legitimacy deficit much more serious than in other cases. These are the following:

(a) the problematic nature of the Cypriot state and the divisive provisions of the 1960 Constitution;

(b) the contradictory demands for state legitimation after the Turkish invasion of Cyprus in 1974; and

(c) the pressure of uncertainty and apprehension over the future of Cyprus.

The Cypriot state has been plagued by a serious inherent problem of legitimacy from the very first moment of its establishment. With independence in 1960 Cyprus is not a true nation-state, but rather a political construct of partnership between two ethnic communities, imposed by international treaties (the 1959 London-Zurich Agreements) on the Greek and Turkish communities of the island and guaranteed by the three guarantor powers (Greece, Turkey and the UK). The people of Cyprus were given a Constitution but were not given any right to abolish or modify it. The Greek community has always expressed its dissatisfaction and disapproval of the Constitution, and especially of the privileges afforded to the Turkish community (a veto right to the Turkish Vice-President, 30 percent representation in the civil service and 40 percent in the police and the army, compared to its 18 percent share in the population). Until 1974 the ill-feeling was so strong that a part of the Greek community (mainly the nationalists who had fought against the British rule (1955-59) for the cause of political Union of Cyprus with Greece) held the Cyprus flag in contempt and openly demanded the abolition of the state.

The first two decades of independence were marked by events which aggravated rather than solved the legitimacy crisis: the inter-communal strife in the 1960s, the *coup d'état* by forces of the Greek junta against President Makarios, and finally, the subsequent Turkish invasion in 1974 which led to a *de facto* division of the island into the northern Turkish part and the southern Greek part. Since 1974, the Greek Cypriot government of the south (which is internationally recognised as the only lawful government of Cyprus) has been torn between two contradictory legitimacy needs: the need to fight effectively for the interests of the 200,000 displaced Greek Cypriots, and the need to reunite the country and support the interests of the Turkish Cypriots despite the fact that the latter have occupied the displaced persons' houses and property. The lawful government believes that its support for the Greek Cypriots is an act of justice while its care for the Turkish Cypriot interests is an obligation stemming from its internationally recognised capacity as the only lawful administration of the state.

The blatant refusal of Turkey to withdraw its troops and the repeated failure of the inter-communal talks held under the auspices of the UN to reach an agreement have created sincere fears for the survival of both the state and the Greek Cypriots as a national community and have aggravated the state's legitimacy crisis. The general feeling is that the state is extremely fragile and can little sustain internal strife. This feeling of weakness forced the government to utilise material gratification as its main strategy for compensatory legitimation for a very long time. Thus, practically every demand for salary increase by employees in the civil service and the semi-governmental sector was met. This, however, proved insufficient to shore up the state's legitimacy deficits and every time the inter-communal talks failed, the legitimacy crisis reached a new climax.

A severe blow to the legitimacy of the Cyprus state was the constitutional provision (articles 86-111) which deprived the state of any power over education and instead delegated it to the two Communal Chambers (Greek and Turkish) that were established under the same provision. This meant that the power to determine the curricula and the syllabi continued to remain in the hands of the two communities, as was practically the case during both the Turkish (1570-1878) and the British (1878-1960) rules of the island.

In 1965 the Greek community abolished the Greek Communal Chamber under an emergency act and established a ministry of education which, nonetheless, continued to have authority over Greek education only.

The Constitution contained no stipulation regarding higher education, which left open the possibility for the state to establish either a communal University solely for the Greek community or a bi-communal University that would bring the two communities together by educating their future intellectual and political leaders. In 1976 an Interministerial Committee was appointed by the Council of Ministers to advise the government over this very acute dilemma. However, in view of the constitutional subtlety of the issue and because the Greek Cypriots wanted to uphold the constitution which safeguarded the state's international recognition, the Committee was forced to proceed very cautiously (Interministerial Committee, 1976). The failure in 1986 of the international talks and the establishment of three universities (two of them international) by Turkish Cypriots and foreign entrepreneurs in the north (Athanasiades, 1998) resulted in a new legitimacy crisis for the Cypriot state. The thought of the minority establishing three universities and the majority being unable to establish one was unbearable.[1]

Politically, the latter development was highly significant in promoting the establishment of the University of Cyprus. Additionally, and at the same time, the Greek community strongly desired international prestige and recognition through locally producing knowledge of international status. A university was not particularly needed in Cyprus, either for professional training or for reasons of equal opportunity (Matsis, 1997). The great number of Greek Cypriots studying abroad (approximately 12,000 in 1988) and in the private schools of higher education in Cyprus (approximately 3500 in 1988) (Statistics of Education, 1995-6)[2] more than covered the professional needs of the island (there are currently about 8,000 unemployed university graduates) (Phileleftheros, 20 Dec. 1998, p.B4).

On the other hand, the generous offer of scholarships for undergraduate and graduate studies from various foreign agencies such as the American Fulbright Program, the Commonwealth Scholarship Scheme, and European governments, especially the then Soviet Union and the former communist countries (Scholarship

Board's Report) provided ample opportunities for able secondary school leavers with limited financial means to pursue university studies. It is noteworthy that even the very strong communist party of Cyprus (about 33 percent of the electorate) was, until the early 1970s, against the establishment of a university in Cyprus, arguing that the improvement of primary and secondary education was a priority over a university (Persianis, 1981).

After 1974, however, under the threat of Turkish expansionism and the urgent need for international moral support, the belief in a university in Cyprus which would produce knowledge of international status became politically recommendable, as it would gain international status and recognition and bring much needed moral support to the state. For the first time there was a general consensus on the project of establishing a university.

In sum, it can be said that as a result of features particular to the Cyprus context during the first three decades of independence, the state was plagued by problems of governability, insecurity and a precarious legitimacy. As it will be explained in the next section, the establishment of a university was regarded as a suitable policy for the administration to retrieve much needed legitimacy.

The establishment of the University as an act of state compensatory legitimation

Greek Cypriots have traditionally cherished a very strong respect for education. Illiteracy has been considered both an individual and a national disgrace in Cyprus (Persianis, 1978) and education has been regarded as indispensable for individual economic and social-mobility and national development (Persianis, 1981). They have considered national intelligence as 'the most valuable national resource' (Persianis, 1981). At the same time, the great number of Greek Cypriot scholars and researchers abroad has encouraged Cypriots and empowered them to compete intellectually with more advanced nations.

This belief has been reflected in the economic policy of the independent state throughout the thirty eight years of its existence. It has never refused to increase spending for education (and national health care) even during times of economic stringency and the 1990s moratorium on public spending.

There has also been a deep respect for foreign expertise which can be traced to some degree in the Greek Cypriots' need to identify with Europe during the era of Turkish rule. Desire for identification with Europe was reflected in the foreign languages curriculum at secondary schools (English, French, sometimes Italian, but no Turkish) (Persianis, 1978, 1981) and in the importation of expertise from abroad (Persianis, 1994).

Despite all these, the efforts to establish a university failed for thirty years before Independence, and for another thirty years after, because of internal opposition. In 1989, however, all political parties – right, left and centre – voted unanimously for the establishment of a university (Law 144/1989).

There is no doubt that this decision reveals a deep change in both societal structures and processes and the politics of education in the island. Cowen focused on the impact of societal changes on education. Elaborating specifically on the issue of the dialectical connection between a society and its form(s) of educational knowledge, Cowen argued that 'the legitimations of forms of educational knowledge stand in reciprocal relationship to the society in which the educational knowledge is located: such legitimations reflect certain major characteristics of the society and the educational knowledge creates nationally differentiated, and in certain circumstances, subnationally differentiated, reality definitions among educands' (quoted by Welch, 1991: 515-516).

Cyprus experienced drastic societal changes during the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. A major change was the modernisation of the society as this was reflected in urbanisation (the number of inhabitants in urban areas increased from 205,983 in 1960 to 351,600 in 1988 while those of rural areas decreased from 367,583 to 193,000) (Census, 1960, 1973; Social Statistics,1992). There were also other important changes: a shift in the economy base from agriculture to industry and the services, especially tourism (the people working in farming decreased from 94,800 in 1960 to 35,800 in 1988 while the manpower in industry and the services increased from 49,300 and 64,400 to 70,600 and 130,200 respectively) (Social Statistics, 1992); expansion of the civil service (from 9,730 in 1960 to 22,753 in 1988); expansion of literacy (from 82 percent in 1960 to 94 percent in 1988); and the large increase in the number of university students abroad (from about 2,000 in 1960 to about 12,000 in 1988) (Statistics of Education, 1992).

The Greek Cypriot community also underwent a dramatic change with regard to ideology. The political ideal of Union of Cyprus with Greece was sustained for some time after Independence in 1960, but it was virtually destroyed by the 1974 Turkish invasion. The worst blow, however, came from the 1974 *coup d'état* by Greek armed forces stationed in Cyprus. The fact that the coup led Turkey to invade Cyprus tremendously affected for some time Greek Cypriots' loyalty towards Greece. This legitimised the government's decision to follow an independent educational policy with no fear of recrimination for de-emphasising ties with the Greek motherland.

This change in ideology was strengthened by the rapidly increasing number of Greek Cypriot students in non-Greek universities (about 5,000 students in 1988 compared with 600 in 1960) (Statistics of Education, 1992). The flow of Greek Cypriot students to European and American Universities can be attributed to two

factors, namely (a) the higher status and the greater employability of their graduates compared to Greek university graduates, and (b) the improved financial situation of parents that allowed for the required increased expenditure for these universities.

The increase in European and American university graduates led to the formation of an assertive group in Cyprus that questioned the nationalist politics followed until 1974 and supported a more moderate policy. Among the group's members were many young communists (i.e. Greek Cypriots who had studied in great numbers in the Soviet Union and other countries of the Soviet Block). This new group of American and European university graduates questioned the validity of knowledge prevalent in Cyprus and supported a new kind of knowledge that would put more emphasis on scientific and technological rationality (Koyzis, 1997a, 1997b).

The determination to join the European Union also strengthened the move for change. The process towards the European Union began in 1972 with the signing of the Association Agreement, and continued in 1988 with the signing of the Protocol for a Customs Union (Republic of Cyprus, *Cyprus: The Way to Full EC Membership*, 1991: 18-19). These agreements underlined the importance for Cyprus of developing local expertise to prepare for the competitive relations of the international economy in which it was entering.

All these factors caused both a shift in power and a change in the legitimation of knowledge. More dramatically, it caused a deep change in what Dale has called 'politics of education', that is the processes and structures through which macro-societal expectations of education as an institution are identified and interpreted and constituted as an agenda for the education system (Dale, 1994). As could be expected, this change in knowledge legitimation changed the way the social and educational problems were constructed and interpreted and thus affected the popular stand towards the idea of establishing a university. A number of progressivists, liberals and communists formed a group under the name of 'Friends of the University' and campaigned to convince the general public of the need for a university. The group was spearheaded by the then minister of education (1976-1980) who convinced the ministerial council in 1978 to decide for the establishment of a university. Although the decision was made in principle only and was not supported with the earmarking of any money in the budget, psychologically it was a major step towards preparing the public. From then on the administration was increasingly pressured to proceed with the project.

It however took ten more years, and the determination and the skill of a new progressive administration, to take the steps required to implement this project. The initiative came from a private entrepreneur who, as an independent candidate for the 1988 presidential elections, campaigned for 'a new era' and used the

symbolism of 'change' and 'innovation' to compensate for his lack of experience in the political arena. He promised the utilisation of the 'hundreds of competent new scientists who never had the opportunity or the possibility to offer their services and their knowledge for the common good', the establishment of a 'Scientific and Industrial Research Council' and the foundation of 'High Technology Units' as the means through which he wanted to give an outlet to 'the industriousness and entrepreneurship of the Cypriots'. The most important element in this symbolism of change, however, was 'the establishment and operation of an independent, autonomous and high-level university' which would contribute to 'the intellectual and economic development of Cyprus and would create free and reflective people' (Vasiliou, 1988: 2, 11, 17, 21, 33).

From the factors and context surrounding the decision to establish a university it can be inferred that this decision was not based on an incremental change in policy or ideology - it marked a major break from the past. There is only one possible explanation for such a major development: the importance such a project had for the state in its effort to cope with the increasing deficit of its legitimacy.

This notion coincided with the sense that all the strategies the state had used until then to shore up its legitimacy claims had failed. During the 1960s and especially after the 1964 inter-communal troubles, President Makarios subtly attempted to revive the old ideal of Union between Cyprus and Greece (Persianis, 1994/95). After the tragedy of 1974 the economic ideal won priority over the nationalist one with the administration promoting rapid economic development - it spoke of an economic miracle. It utilised also the expansion of social services (education and health) and material gratification. However, as a result of the repeated failures of inter-communal talks, especially their dramatic collapse in 1986, and the ensuing feeling of political in security, the state legitimacy deficit reached critical levels. This was especially painful for those politicians whose political advantage depended entirely on their long experience with the Cyprus problem. Material gratification as a strategy of legitimation also lost its force and there was a growing sense of anger among the tax-paying people towards policies of public overspending.

Under these circumstances new sources of legitimacy were sought; one of them was the establishment of a university. That the establishment of a university was used as a means for compensatory legitimation can be also inferred from the fact that the state preferred a state-based bi-communal to a communal university, despite the fact that the Turkish Cypriots' initiative to establish their own communal universities made the establishment of a bi-communal university redundant to a certain degree.

The importance of the University for state compensatory legitimation can also be gathered from the great flexibility the state showed with regard to the problem

of the language of instruction at the University. In 1981 the House of Representatives unanimously voted for English as one of the languages of instruction. This provoked a bitter attack by both the nationalists in Cyprus and politicians and scholars from Greece (Persianis, 1994/5). That is why in 1989 the administration, in a smart move to avoid more conflict and further delay, made no provision for the language issue in the draft bill it submitted for the University. The administration justified this omission by arguing that such a provision was redundant since the two official languages of the island (Greek and Turkish) were inferred from the constitutional provision (Philippou, 1997). Nonetheless, the House of Representatives added an article stating specifically that the languages of instruction would be Greek and Turkish.

It is obvious that in its strong will to proceed with the establishment of a University the administration considered these problems as only minor and would not allow them to hinder procedures. They considered the international status and the high standards of the University to be the significant issues. Of course, the exclusion of the English language was a great contradiction since it largely limited the international character of the University by virtually excluding non-Greek speaking faculty and students. However, because a significant number of Greek and Greek Cypriot academics were already affiliated with foreign universities, the potential for the new University to participate in the international knowledge network was great. The administration was confident that the foreign affiliations of the academic staff to be appointed would pave the way for international networks and connect both the University and Cyprus to the Community of Europe.

The character of the University and the nature of the decision-making process as acts of compensatory legitimation

In the previous section it was argued that the act of establishing the University of Cyprus resulted primarily from the state's need to cope with its legitimacy deficit. In this section it will be argued that both the character of the University and the decision-making process itself are also due to the state's pursuit of legitimacy.

The University which has finally been established is very different from the universities of Greece. The majority of Greek universities offer professional training, and therefore most do not have graduate schools nor do they emphasise research (Frangos, 1978; Pesmazoglu, 1994; Rokos, 1991). The University of Cyprus, on the other hand, emphasises academic education and research. According to the University Prospectus (University of Cyprus, 1996-97: 109),

'The primary goals of the University are the promotion of scholarship through teaching and research and enhancement of the social and economic development of Cyprus. It is generally agreed that the quality of research at an educational institution will determine its place in the international academic community. It is also the primary means of enhancing scholarship. The University of Cyprus is committed to this vision and has significantly extended its research activity, in spite of its being a very new university. This strategy has resulted in a number of research programmes which cover a wide range of fields and which correspond to the current specialisations and University departments'.

The Chairman of the University Council also stressed the great importance of research:

'Research will help the University maintain a standard as high as that of similar international universities. This will attract good professors to come and work at the University of Cyprus. If the standard is lowered, the good professors will probably leave. Research is also directly linked with the students' education and the faculty professional development' (Triantafyllides, quoted in Eleftherotypia, 28 May 1995).

Although primary and secondary education has been modelled on Greek schools for almost two hundred years, the administration that came to power in 1988 believed that Cyprus needed a university of international status and high standards rather than a communal university which would essentially be a peripheral Greek university. A university after the Greek model would in fact be almost redundant, as Greek Cypriots could easily - and at no great expense - attend universities in Greece. In 1988 there were seven thousand Greek Cypriot students in Greek universities (Statistics of Education, 1992). The administration was confident that Cyprus needed a University of high reputation which would ensure internal and external recognition and attract top talent to both the faculty and the student bodies, resulting in more resources and more power for the University.

To achieve its objective of high standards the administration offered competitive salaries to prospective faculty; in so doing it hoped to attract professors from prestigious universities world-wide. Moreover, in the law about the University the state made a provision stipulating that the electoral committees include three scholars from universities representing three different foreign countries. The objectives of the administration were threefold: (a) to make the University internationally known; (b) to safeguard high standards; and (c) to

safeguard the autonomy of the University by having foreign professors act as a kind of buffer zone against any local interference, favouritism or nepotism.

The administration assumed that the surest way to ensure high standards was to enact laws and regulations concerning the governance of the University. Thus, the law on the University made no provision for any type of assessment or evaluation in contrast to private schools of higher education which were required to have external assessment and accreditation (Law, 1/1987).

A university of international status and high standards implied that knowledge produced would be of international standard. It was thought that such a university would automatically serve the Cypriot society. Papamichael, the University Vice-Rector, echoed general sentiment when he asserted that Cypriot society could be served by both applied and pure research. Applied research has been already undertaken in co-operation with the Ministry of Health, the Planning Bureau, and Banks; pure research is reflected in publications in international scientific journals and contributes to raising the prestige of Cyprus among the international scientific community (Papamichael, quoted in Phileleftheros, 24 June 1997).

Another benefit for the Cyprus state can be seen in the development of a new academic discourse and a new communication code at the University. As one faculty member stressed,

> 'Our future partners in Europe will definitely not be willing to lower their own communication code... Consequently, we must acquire the economic, versatile, cold and aggressive language of science, which functions not unidimensionally but at multiple levels of high and very subtle shades of intellectual meanings' (Spanos, 1996).

The statement implied that the knowledge to be produced at the University must be different from that produced prior to its establishment. Until then there was only one public research centre, the 'Centre for Scientific Studies', which produced knowledge mainly in the fields of Cypriot history, archaeology and language. These studies essentially aimed to highlight the Greek Cypriot past as a way of proving the 'Greekness' of the island (Persianis, 1996). Although some of these studies were of very high standard, their narrow scope prevented them from acquiring international recognition.

The progressive administration which came in power in 1988 did not think highly of this kind of knowledge - not because of their communist affiliations or limited enthusiasm for Greece and Greek models, as they have been accused (Simerini, 19 July 1996) but because this kind of knowledge tended to secure legitimacy for the Greek community rather than the state. And because the administration wanted an institution that would help the state retrieve legitimacy,

it preferred a university that would produce scientific knowledge through empirical research. This would promote a scientific and technological rationality that would help Cyprus leave behind its nationally-orientated, rather monolithic, knowledge, and tragic past, and move forward into a new era.

The administration also expected that a prevalence of this type of knowledge would contribute to or cause a change in the hierarchy of knowledge and in the balance of power on the island. As long as the community-orientated knowledge had the hegemony, the dominant and politically influential groups were Church leaders, nationalists, and the graduates of Greek universities, all of whom had prevented the establishment of a university for so long. Emphasis on scientific and technological knowledge on the other hand could encourage the internationally-orientated group to claim the upper hand and could lead to substantial changes in the political life of Cyprus.

To achieve the desired character of the University the administration utilised to a great degree the strategy of expertise. Twelve Greek professors affiliated with recognised foreign universities were appointed to form a Preparatory Committee (PC); their task was to make specific proposals regarding the character of the University and the processes to be followed to ensure it (Philippou, 1997).

Careful analysis of the strategy followed reveals two specific characteristics in the utilisation of the strategy of expertise as it applies to the University of Cyprus: the conscious political decision to promote expertise as a strategy: and the coupling of expertise with both participation and an emotional dimension. During the first thirty years of Cyprus' independent existence, government officials most often used foreign expertise in order to forestall crisis and manage opposition. They invited foreign experts to submit reports on important issues, and subsequently shelved any report long enough for it to lose its relevance and usefulness.

In the case of the University, however, the initiative came from a new politician who not only put forward the establishment of a university as an election pledge but who also realised that his successful election depended very much on keeping that pledge. Thus, he could not permit any delaying tactics of bureaucratic interference.[3]

The second characteristic is the unique coupling of expertise with two other strategies, those of participation and an emotional dimension. The 12 members of the PC represented a wide participation, and this naturally made the validity of their advice much stronger. Furthermore, their participation comprised a strong emotional dimension: it was an opportunity for the state to express its appreciation to Greek Cypriots who had distinguished themselves and honoured their motherland abroad in the noble field of science and scholarship; and it was a chance for those scholars to offer their services to their small country.

The strategy proved a great success. The PC's proposal had tremendous political potential. The proposal formed the basis for the drafting of the bill for the establishment of the University. Only one member of Parliament questioned some of the proposals of the PC, while all the others welcomed the proposals as the outcome of scientific expertise which they were grateful to have (Minutes of the House of Representatives, 13 July 1989: 2961-3039).

The same strategy was used also for legitimating the decision-making process. The fact that the administration asked its legal department to draft the bill on the basis of the PC's proposals signified that the establishment of a university was something unique which required expert knowledge. The appeal to the scientific paradigm was again meant to give the impression that the administration was acting both democratically and also in a very modern way, appropriate to the present technocratic era. The administration made no secret of its preferred model for the University (Philippou, 1997). By using the strategy of expertise, however, it managed to promote its favourite model and at the same time secure legitimacy for the state and its decision-making process.

They achieved this through careful selection of the professors appointed as members of the PC, who were for the most part professors of natural science and engineering. In a way, this was certainly representative of the kind of expertise Greek Cypriot professors have in foreign universities. There are very few professors of social and political sciences; the majority represent the so-called neutral, value-free sciences. On the other hand, the fact that they were selected because they were internationally known meant that they represented the international rather than the national knowledge network. The administration knew in advance that the selected professors were seriously committed to the hegemony of scientific knowledge, and this determined their selection. This was also a decisive factor in the recommendations they made.

The utilisation of the strategy of expertise is easily understood in a country torn by internal conflict and held in check due to lack of consensus. By appealing to the scientific paradigm with regard to both the character of the University and the decision-making process, the administration was able not only to manage the conflict but also to achieve unanimity in the implementation of the project. Scientific expertise was used to lend credibility to both the decision and the decision-making process. At the same time the administration described the character of the University as a synthesis of elements from American, British and Irish universities, taking into consideration the special features of Cyprus (Philippou, 1997), thus giving the impression that the decision was essentially technical and based on value-free, scientific criteria.

To sum up, it can be said that in the establishment of the University of Cyprus the state utilised the strategy of expertise by entrusting the framing of policy options to experts. This strategy not only secured legitimacy for the state but also institutionalised a new kind of knowledge.

Conclusion

Analysis of the circumstances, procedures and motivation behind establishing the University in Cyprus reveals a state initiative of major political and social significance. Three important features in this initiative stand out:

(a) it was a venture in a project in higher education, which was completely new for Cyprus;

(b) it was a venture touching a constitutionally very sensitive area in a country bound with an unchangeable constitution;

(c) it was a venture in a field which had generated enormous political conflict for sixty years.

The paper has argued that such a bold state initiative can only be explained as the state's effort to secure compensatory legitimation. And in the case of the Cypriot state it has been shown that there were specific reasons that made legitimacy both extremely difficult and highly crucial.

Up to that time the state had used material gratification and legalisation to cope with its legitimacy crisis. In the case of the University, however, it utilised the strategy of expertise. This strategy secured for the state three advantages:

(a) it could legitimate the character it wanted to give to the University as the outcome of an objective, scientific, value-free, expert, recommendation;

(b) it could legitimate the very delicate and nationally precarious decision of preferring a state-based university linked to the international community of scholarship to a community-based one which would be a replica of Greek universities;

(c) it secured additional legitimacy for itself by presenting the processes as both democratic and scientific, and as an initiative designed to pay tribute and offer recognition to Greek Cypriots who had distinguished themselves abroad in the noble area of intellectual activity.

There is no doubt that the legitimation of the character of the University and especially its differences from the Greek universities was rendered easier by the already existing surplus of professionally trained people in Cyprus. This situation

allowed the state to emphasise academic knowledge and research as University priorities as opposed to professional training which Greek universities offered. On the other hand, there is no doubt either that the impression which the 1989 administration tried to give that the decision of the character of the University was based on the recommendations of experts and therefore was value-free, scientific and objective, is completely inaccurate and misleading. Moreover, it in no way reflects the very complex nature of the problem, as it excludes the wider perspective for understanding the dialectics between the state and education.

The normative implications of that policy decision have been enormous for Cyprus as can be seen more clearly today. A group of nationalist intellectuals under the name of 'University Initiative Group' are invoking several constitutional, cultural and intellectual reasons to change the state character of the University or establish additionally a second Greek communal university (University Initiative Group, 1996). The intellectual and social dynamics created by the University, however, are such that even if the new administration which came in power in 1993 had wanted to abolish the University, it would have been impossible. Such a move would incur an enormous political cost to the state, both nationally and internationally.

In fact the intellectual and social dynamics currently act in exactly the opposite way. The initial decision about the University provided for only ten departments, (Greek studies, Philosophy and History, Education, Foreign Languages and Literatures, Social and Political Sciences, Turkish Studies, Mathematics and Statistics, Natural Sciences, Computer Science, Economics, and Public and Business Administration), mainly due to limited financial resources and the envisaged professional training needs of the country.[4] However, only two years after the opening of the University, political and other expedience led to the approval of two more departments and today there are popular demands for engineering, medicine, and law schools, which are claimed to be justified for economic, scientific and national reasons (ETEK, 1997; Theocharous, 1997; Angelides, 1997; SEM, 1997).

All this implies that the decision of the state to establish the University of Cyprus has been catalytic not only in the intellectual but also in the social and political fields. The establishment of a University in Cyprus represents much more than the establishment of a simple educational institution. It represents the institutionalisation of scientific and objective knowledge and the determination to produce new knowledge in Cyprus, and it has been the cause for a change in the knowledge hierarchy, the balance of social and political power in Cyprus and the politics of education. The dialectic relationships of the University with the society are also expected to act as catalysts in the societal development of the island.

Notes

1. In the academic year 1998-9 the number of universities in the north increased to six and the number of students to 19,185 (Athanasiades, 1998).

2. Their number in the academic year 1997-8 was 5,491 (Statistics of Education).

3. A Greek Cypriot professor at the University of Southern California reported a very interesting experience during a visit to the Minister of Education. He related that the Director General availed himself of a short absence of the Minister to stress to him that it is the D.Gs who decide and not the ministers. Today, when the University of Cyprus is producing new knowledge, government officials resent any criticism from the University with respect to the quality and the standards of their work and for the most part have been defensive and hostile rather than co-operative. Some very illustrative examples are the Ministry of Education's reactions (a) to the criticism in the case of the low performance of Greek Cypriot children in mathematics and science in the international IEA's Survey (TIMSS) (Cyprus Mail, 18 Dec. 1996), (b) to the criticism made by the Chairman of the University Department of Education (Phileleftheros, 13 July 1997) for the backwardness of Greek Cypriot secondary education, and (c) to the criticism made in the Unesco Appraisal Study of the Cyprus education system (Unesco, 1997; Phileleftheros, 25 May 1997). The government officials are still unwilling to concede to academics and experts any part of the hegemonic power they have enjoyed for so long.

4. In March 1998 the faculty of the University consisted of 19 professors, 46 associate professors, 52 assistant professors and 40 lecturers (University Senate Minutes, 6 May 1998). The number of students in the same academic year were 2217. Of them 2161 came from Cyprus, 55 from Greece and 1 from another country. Undergraduate students pay no fees, while graduates pay 2000 Cyprus pounds yearly (about US$ 4,000). The University Budget for the year 1998 was CY£19,123,749 (about US$ 38,500,000).

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