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Bonnenfant, Işık Kuşçu, Morgan-Jones, Edward, Psaltis, Charis, Popp, Raluca, Sudulich, Laura and Loizides, Neophytos (2026) *Long-distance nationalism and peace settlement preferences*. *International Studies Quarterly*, 70 (1). ISSN 0020-8833.

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# Long-Distance Nationalism and Peace Settlement Preferences

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Around the world, diasporas engage with the politics of their country of origin, and diaspora activism can play a critical role in homeland conflicts. While some scholars claim stronger nationalist preferences in the diaspora result in intensified and prolonged conflicts, there has been little empirical investigation of how diaspora and homeland preferences may differ. Drawing on the literature on long-distance nationalism, we develop a framework to operationalize and test expectations of differences in the preferences of populations living in conflict zones and those living abroad as they relate to potential conflict resolution and peace settlement solutions. We evaluate these expectations in a study of preferences for peace settlements across two deeply divided communities in Cyprus and their overseas diasporas. In contrast to claims that members of the diaspora have more nationalist views than homeland members, we find either diaspora and homeland preferences mirror each other or diaspora preferences are more supportive of peace. We discuss implications for theory and policy.

Las diásporas se involucran en la política de su país de origen, a nivel mundial, y el activismo por parte de la diáspora puede desempeñar un papel crítico en los conflictos que tienen lugar en su país de origen. Aunque existen algunos académicos que afirman que las preferencias nacionalistas más fuertes por parte de la diáspora conllevan conflictos más intensificados y prolongados, en realidad, existe poca investigación empírica con respecto a cómo pueden diferir las preferencias de la diáspora y las del país de origen. Partimos de la base de la literatura sobre el nacionalismo a larga distancia, lo que nos permite desarrollar un marco de trabajo para operacionalizar y poner a prueba las expectativas en materia de las diferencias entre las preferencias de las poblaciones que viven en zonas de conflicto y aquellas que viven en el extranjero en relación con posibles soluciones para la resolución de conflictos y acuerdos de paz. Analizamos estas expectativas a través de un estudio de preferencias con respecto a acuerdos de paz entre dos comunidades profundamente divididas en Chipre y sus diásporas en el extranjero. En contraste con las afirmaciones de que los miembros de la diáspora tienen opiniones más nacionalistas que los residentes en el país de origen, concluimos que las preferencias de la diáspora y de los residentes en el país de origen son similares o, incluso, que las preferencias de la diáspora son más favorables a la paz. Debatisimos las implicaciones que estas conclusiones generan en la teoría y las políticas.

Dans le monde entier, les diasporas s'intéressent à la politique de leur pays d'origine, et leur militantisme peut jouer un rôle décisif dans les conflits de leur patrie. Bien que certains chercheurs affirment que de fortes préférences nationalistes au sein d'une diaspora se traduisent par des conflits plus longs et intenses, peu d'études empiriques existent quant aux divergences potentielles entre diasporas et préférences du pays natal. Nous fondant sur la littérature relative au nationalisme à distance, nous élaborons un cadre pour rendre opérationnelles et tester les différences attendues s'agissant des préférences des populations vivant dans des zones de conflits et de celles vivant à l'étranger, par rapport à de potentielles résolutions du conflit et solutions d'accord de paix. Nous évaluons ces attentes dans une étude des préférences concernant les accords de paix auprès de deux communautés profondément divisées à Chypre et leurs diasporas à l'étranger. Contrairement aux affirmations

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selon lesquelles les membres de la diaspora entretiennent des vues plus nationalistes que leurs compatriotes restés au pays, nous constatons soit que les préférences de la diaspora et de la terre natale sont les mêmes, soit que les préférences de la diaspora vont davantage dans le sens de la paix. Nous discutons des implications pour la théorie et la politique.

Key words: peace settlements; global diasporas; public opinion; conjoint experiments; long-distance nationalism.

## Introduction

Transnational diasporas contain individuals living abroad but considering themselves, to different degrees, part of the homeland national or ethnic community (Safran 1991; Adamson and Demetriou 2007). Since the early nineteenth century, members of diasporic groups and associated community organizations and institutions have played critical roles in the formation of distinct ethnic and national identities, contributing significant ideological and material resources to ethnic, state, and nation-building projects (Anderson 1992; Demmers 2002). At the same time, wars, the decline of empires, and decolonization processes restructuring the state system have created new diasporas willing to participate in homeland politics and invest time and resources in winning or resolving the disputes leading to their displacement (Baser 2016; Tas 2016; Koinova et al. 2023). In recent years, changes in communication technology and the emergence of the global economy have enabled diaspora members to easily maintain and even intensify their links with the politics of their homeland and provide support to homeland communities in conflict, thus enabling greater diaspora mobilization and extending the range of diaspora activism (Anderson 1992; Demmers 2002). The involvement of diaspora members and organizations in homeland conflicts has been sufficiently noticeable that scholars have suggested diasporas can be viewed as critical negotiating partners whose consent is necessary to reach peace (Shain 2002).

Recent studies have addressed the role of diasporas in both the intensification and the resolution of violent conflicts through the perspective of long-distance nationalism (Hall 2016; Alonso and Mylonas 2023). Long-distance nationalism was introduced by Benedict Anderson in his seminal work on imagined communities (Anderson 1983, 1998).<sup>1</sup> Anderson and scholars who follow his reasoning employ this term to argue that the values, experiences, and organizational imperatives of diaspora communities lead them to hold more extreme nationalist positions than residents in the homeland (Anderson 1983, 1998; Fair 2005; Conversi 2012). With the exception of Hall (2016), however, there has been little systematic quantitative evaluation of this claim. In this article, we develop a theoretical framework to test arguments about the differences we might expect to see between the opinions of members of the diaspora and members of homeland communities on conflict resolution, if the assumptions underlying long-distance nationalism are correct. The framework highlights the differences we might expect to see across diasporic and homeland communities in attitudes towards potential peace settlements, with respect to the overall desirability of a settlement and also with respect to specific settlement provisions.

<sup>1</sup>In *Imagined Communities* Anderson (1983) describes the communion amongst members of a nation in modern times even though co-nationals even within the smallest nation never meet. These feelings of solidarity often extend to their respective transnational diasporas (Anderson 1998).

We tested this framework using data from conjoint experiments embedded in four surveys of the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities and their respective diasporas. We chose this case as it is representative of conflict-generated diasporas such as the Sri Lankan, Georgian or Moldovan diasporas, where violent conflict has ended but has not been resolved. In addition, Cyprus is convenient as it has experienced violent conflict for decades and conflicts have generated long-term displacement of its native population (internally and diasporically), but physical violence is not present. The two Cypriot communities live in free democratic systems (Freedom House scores Cyprus, i.e., areas controlled by the Republic, at 92, and the northern part of the island, currently outside the control of the Republic of Cyprus, at 76)<sup>2</sup> raising no concerns about surveying public opinion—compared for instance to less democratically free homeland environments in Syria or Myanmar—and fit for the purpose of studying diasporas' attitudes towards peace settlements.

The surveys and experiments allowed us to investigate whether diasporas are more likely to oppose peace settlements in principle, whether diasporas oppose losses on distributive issues such as territory, and whether diasporas are less receptive of peace incentives (such as security guarantees or compensations). In conjoint experiments, respondents are presented with pairs of possible peace settlement packages and asked to identify their preferred package. These packages all contain the same peace settlement dimensions. For Cyprus, they included how the island might be divided territorially and potential political power-sharing and security arrangements. The specific attributes of these dimensions were randomly selected from a set of predefined set of options drawn from the rich set of potential proposals emerging in the UN mediation process in Cyprus. Analyzing the data on respondents' preferences allowed us to assess how important such individual attributes are to their overall choice of peace packages. We could comprehensively test expectations about the relative importance of different peace settlement solutions to different groups and map divergences and convergences in preferences across groups.

Contrary to expectations, we found the preferences of each home and diaspora community mirror each other in three critical areas. Specifically, the diasporas are not more opposed to a peace settlement; their preferences for territorial solutions are like those of the resident population, and there is no evidence of diasporas being less accepting of potential win-win or integrative solutions than homeland communities. Our findings cast some doubt on the long-distance nationalism assumptions, at least as they relate to Cyprus, and align with claims that in some circumstances, diaspora members may be less extreme than homeland residents and even more peace supporting (Hall 2016; Koinova et al. 2023).

<sup>2</sup>See <https://freedomhouse.org/country/cyprus>.

In addition to its theoretical implications, our work suggests further avenues for empirical study. The proposed framework could be used to understand the gap between diaspora and homeland preferences with respect to other peace settlement proposals within and across cases. It can be used to test theories of long-distance nationalism beyond the present application to conflict resolution. In policy terms, the findings lead us to reflect on the conceptualization of members of the diaspora as critical stakeholders who should be included in peace settlement processes.

#### Diasporas in Conflict Settings

In the last two decades, there has been growing scholarly interest in diasporic engagement in homeland conflicts, both during conflict and afterward in post-conflict processes. Initial studies focused on diaspora groups' radicalization and their role in augmenting conflicts by providing funding, recruiting soldiers, or even joining as fighters themselves (Demmers 2002; Collier and Hoeffler 2004; Lyons 2004). Studies included the Tamil community in London, providing support for the Tamil Tigers fighting in the civil war in Sri Lanka, Croats based in Germany supporting their co-ethnics in the wars that brought about the end of Yugoslavia, and Kurds in the Netherlands supporting participants in the insurgency in Turkey (Fair 2005; Skrbis 2007; Baser 2017). In this view, the long-distance nationalism of diasporas is expressed through interference, from a distance, in homeland conflicts, particularly when the genesis of the diaspora is due to conflict. Members of the diaspora do not face the direct physical consequences of conflict but are engaged emotionally, sharing the trauma of displacement and memories of the conflict, along with social ties (Demmers 2002, 89).

Later studies explored the positive involvement of diasporas in ameliorating homeland conflicts. These studies emphasized diasporic funding for homeland economic and post-conflict development needs (Feron 2014), participation in post-conflict reconstruction efforts, and engagement in peace processes (Smith and Stares 2007; Brinkerhoff 2008; Koinova 2018; Feron and Lefort 2019; Orjuela 2008; Roth 2015). For example, Cochrane et al. (2009) identify the positive engagement of the Irish and Tamil diasporas in the peace-building processes in Northern Ireland and Sri Lanka, respectively. Moving beyond a dichotomous understanding of diasporas as "peace-wreckers" or "peacemakers," Smith and Stares (2007) suggest the same diaspora group may potentially contribute more to peace or more to conflict at different phases of a dispute. For instance, Fair describes the transition of the Tamil diaspora from "financial lifeline of the militancy" (Fair 2005, 139) to crucial seekers of a political solution to avoid the terrorist stigma after 9/11.

The literature on diaspora activism argues these communities undertake actions that both support and undermine peace. For scholars, this has raised policy-related questions about if and how to incorporate diasporas into decision-making. Shain suggests ignoring diaspora members' preferences in homeland conflict perpetuation, and resolution can be costly for homeland leaders and for the peace process more broadly (Shain 2002, 116). He argues peace negotiations should be treated as a three-level game that should include nationals residing outside the homeland, as they may have a significant impact on the durability of peace (Shain 2002, 120). The Azerbaijani–Armenian, Israeli–Palestinian, and Cuban–American cases all suggest that a diaspora's attitude can affect peace settlement efforts (Shain 2002, 116; Grugel and Kippin 2007). Shain's recommendation for diaspora inclusion chimes with the view

that sustainable peace settlements should aim to be inclusive, involving those who have left the homeland, whether they intend to return or not. Assuming a diaspora committed or partly committed to peace, an inclusive process would encourage participation in key development goals, thus contributing to reconstruction and sustainability (Feron 2014). For effective conflict resolution, Brinkerhoff claims diasporas should be included early in the negotiation phase (Brinkerhoff 2008, 132–134). However, diasporas are rarely engaged formally, and conventional wisdom has often adopted the "long-distance nationalism paradigm," assuming diasporas are dominated by nationalist preferences that lead to prolonged and intensified conflict. However, policymakers rarely have systematic information about the preferences of diasporas and how those differ from home constituencies. We begin to address this gap by developing a framework to test these assumptions in the Cyprus context, setting the stage for broader comparative studies.

#### Long-Distance Nationalism and Conflict Resolution

The key assumption of the long-distance nationalism thesis is that members of a diaspora see themselves as part of a national community together with members of their ethnic group resident in the homeland (Shain 2002, 117). This identification as part of a transnational national community is the result of a common experience of displacement, migration, and mobilization. Diasporas resulting from displacement because of violent conflict share common stories of trauma and departure (Hall 2016). In their new host communities, they may follow similar settlement patterns and participate in the same community organizations. By facilitating mutual aid and collective action, these organizations serve to maintain common identities and social ties with co-ethnics from home (Kopchik et al. 2022).

These common ties and links to the homeland community are emphasized by political entrepreneurs, organizations, and even homeland governments who act to mobilize the diaspora to raise funds and achieve political influence. The growth of digital technologies helps to bridge geographical distance and facilitates participation and mobilization around news from home. Taken together, these experiences can build a mobilized consciousness of being part of a transnational ethnic community where psychological and social ties to the homeland are integral to individual, collective, social, and political identities.

If the long-distance nationalism thesis holds, the characteristics and nature of these psychological and social ties will lead to differences in the preferences of diaspora and homeland communities with respect to homeland conflicts. The physical distance of the diaspora means attitudes towards the conflict are shaped more by the identity, emotional, and symbolic implications of the conflict than by its impact on day-to-day life (Demmers 2002, 95). In other words, lacking direct experience of conflict, members of the diaspora develop more radical attitudes. First, peace solutions are not immediately relevant to their everyday lives, so the incentives attached to any one solution are less appealing. Second, hardline positions are not as risky as they are for the homeland communities, who may suffer directly from them. Finally, the very idea of peace may become a threat, especially if a diasporic identity strongly relies on the existence of an active enemy/adversary and is further accentuated by the actions of diasporic civil society organizations and interest groups (Shain 2002, 129). This logic suggests three hypotheses.

Our first hypothesis argues that diasporas are more likely to oppose peace settlements in principle. As noted above, diaspora displacement trauma, favorable opportunities to articulate diaspora concerns in host countries, and prevalence of identity politics could motivate diaspora members to be less willing to compromise on peace than home communities. Additionally, diasporas might be less willing to resolve conflicts due to more restrictive patterns of intercommunal contact or the presence of long-established community organizations traditionally favoring hardline positions (Djuric 2003; Yucel and Psaltis 2020). In the context of the Cyprus peace talks a hardline view, either in the diaspora or at home, is generally understood as opposing the federal arrangements as described by UN Security Council Resolutions or adding conditions that would make federal arrangements unacceptable to the other side, e.g., on power-sharing the Greek Cypriot (GC) majority proposing a political system where majority rule is unrestricted from minority vetoes or does not require a minimum level of support by Turkish Cypriot (TC) community, arbitration by foreign judges is seen as threatening, territory for the Turkish Cypriots has to be significantly less, restitution for all dispossessed owners has to be prioritized instead of compensations and no mainland Turkish troops or guarantees should be maintained—the reverse apply for the Turkish Cypriots (Michael and Vural 2018). The long-distance nationalism thesis generally reflects these considerations when comparing the views of diasporas and homeland communities (Conversi 2012). Therefore, we formulate our hypothesis as:

**H1:** *Diasporas will be more likely to oppose peace settlements in principle than homeland communities*

Our second hypothesis focuses on preferences for the territorial elements of peace settlements. Long-distance nationalism has been conceptualized as a set of identity claims that “connects people living in various geographical locations to a specific territory that they see as their ancestral home” (Glick Schiller 2005, 570). Shain suggests that diaspora and homeland citizens could perceive territorial concessions differently. Consider, for example,

...a state that gives up its claim to a piece of historically significant territory in order to achieve peaceful relations. ...If giving up a certain territory...would increase security and living conditions, a homeland citizen might find the trade-off worthwhile. By contrast, for the diaspora...the territory's identity function is often paramount. Its practical value (and, indeed, the practical value of peace with a former rival) is not directly relevant to the diaspora's daily experience. (Shain 2002, 134)

Thus, if the long-distance nationalism hypothesis is correct, we expect:

**H2:** *Diasporas will be more likely to oppose losses on redistributive issues such as territory than homeland communities.*

Our third hypotheses centers on incentives for peace settlements provided in the form of security guarantees, compensations for lost properties, and provisions for power-sharing. While these issues are frequently contentious in peace negotiations, they can lead to integrative (win-win) arrangements. This contrasts with territory, which could be viewed in zero-sum terms, with gains for one group and losses to another (Lustick 1993; Diez et al. 2006; Loizides et al. 2022). In Cyprus, novel third-party implementation mechanisms were the most promising part of the agenda in

the 2017 UN peace framework of the Crans Montana talks (McGarry 2020). Likewise, restorative justice is assumed to be effective when the negotiated settlement ensures the return of the displaced or includes compensations for victims of displacement. Moreover, creative incentives to involve power-sharing in governance could appeal to minority respondents. For example, in the case of Cyprus, power-sharing could incentivize support in the Turkish Cypriot community without damaging support in the Greek Cypriot community (McGarry and O'Leary 2007; McCulloch 2014; Hartzell and Hoddie 2019). Such incentives could transform the lives of homeland communities, but arguably have less direct benefit for the diasporas. They have been debated for decades by the two home communities in Cyprus, with previous research demonstrating potential zones of possible agreement (Morgan-Jones et al. 2024), but they have not been discussed with reference to the diaspora. If the long-distance nationalism thesis is correct, the diaspora will be less receptive of such win-win arrangements than home populations. This leads to our third hypothesis:

**H3:** *Diasporas will be less receptive of peace incentives (e.g., on compensations or third-party external guarantees) than homeland communities.*

Table 1 summarizes our main hypotheses, including their theoretical assumptions and how we test them.

Overall, our expectations point to a gap between the positions of homeland communities and their diasporas, with the latter being less amenable to compromise. The alternative argument to long-term nationalism focuses on how the incentives of diaspora communities to take different positions in relation to the homeland conflict depend on the structure of political opportunities (Koinova 2011). As the political opportunity structure in the homeland and internationally changes, diasporas may take more moderate or more radical stands. As currently formulated, this argument neither disaggregates diaspora community organizations from diaspora public opinion nor is it specific about whether external political opportunities (for peacemaking or resistance to peace settlements) are equally prevalent across home and diasporic populations. Applied to public opinion, this approach would leave open the possibility that either there will be no significant difference between homeland communities and their diasporas or there will be a significant gap in the opposite direction (homeland communities will be less amenable to compromise than diasporas). The first scenario could point to understudied links between the home state and the diaspora publics (Waterbury 2010). It could also suggest that long-term nationalism does not always apply or does not apply universally. The second scenario, where diasporas take a significantly more moderate position than home communities, would entail a considerable opening in the political opportunity structure at the international level, along with a responsive host state (Koinova 2011), making this scenario rather unlikely. The dynamic aspect of this argument means it would need longitudinal data to be properly tested. In the meantime, we focus on evaluating long-distance nationalism as the only well-articulated theory of the diaspora's mass political attitudes towards peace settlements. In a field where large N studies remain scarce—with some notable exceptions (Delano Alonso and Mylonas 2017)—our study adds empirical evidence to the debate and paves the way for further contributions.

**Table 1.** Hypotheses on long-distance nationalism in peace preferences.

Hypotheses	Theory	Empirical test
<b>H1:</b> Diasporas will be more likely to oppose peace settlements in principle than homeland communities.	Diasporas entertain more hardline nationalist views than homeland communities. This is expressed in opposition to the principle of a peace settlement.	<b>H1</b> is tested using survey data that compares diaspora and home respondents answering the same or similar questions that measure general attitudes towards a peace settlement.
<b>H2:</b> Diasporas will be more likely to oppose losses on redistributive issues such as territory than homeland communities.	Studies on nationalism emphasize the territorial bond to the homeland, which is particularly strong amongst diasporas. Territorial compromises will be opposed, given this strong emotional and symbolic attachment to territories.	<b>H2</b> is tested using survey data, specifically the experimental part—collected from Greek and Turkish Cypriots and their diasporas.
<b>H3:</b> Diasporas will be less receptive of peace incentives (e.g., on compensations, power-sharing, or towards third-party external guarantees) than homeland communities.	The peace studies literature emphasizes the role of incentives in transforming public opinion. Such incentives are less relevant to the daily lives of diaspora members whose distance from the conflict means they can take more hardline positions.	<b>H3</b> is tested using survey data as above in H1 and H2 (various incentives for peace are tested by assessing support for conjoint options that incorporate the logic of ‘win-win gains. As for H2, the test for H3 uses experimental data.

### Background to the Cypriot Case

Before outlining our empirical approach, we provide key information about the characteristics of the Cypriot diaspora that make it suitable for testing our hypotheses. These include the existence of a politically mobilized diaspora, the decades-long conflict in the Eastern Mediterranean, and the issues at stake in recent attempts to negotiate a settlement.

Cyprus has experienced large diasporic movements in the past century because of its conflictual history (colonization, anti-colonial movements, civil war, and de facto partition), and subsequent crises, such as the post-2008 financial crisis, added new migration waves. Meanwhile, new social media technologies have intensified interactions between the island’s two main communities and their diasporas, particularly the transcontinental diasporas in Australia, Canada, and South Africa. The Cypriot diaspora is proportionally quite large; while Cypriots have migrated in several destinations, the diaspora in the United Kingdom is the largest and according to some estimates represents almost one-fifth of the island’s population.<sup>3</sup>

Cyprus became an independent state in 1959 following a delicate arrangement between the governments of the United Kingdom, Greece, and Turkey. This political compromise provided important constitutional and security guarantees for the Turkish Cypriot community; Greek Cypriots were to elect the President of the Republic and Turkish Cypriots the Vice-President. The United Kingdom and the

two “motherlands” (Greece and Turkey) gained the right to intervene in Cyprus through unilateral action if there was a need to re-establish a balanced state of affairs (Xydis 2017; Necatigil 1989). This arrangement was derailed when inter-communal conflict erupted in 1963, ending Turkish Cypriot participation in the Cyprus government. In 1974, as a response to a coup five days earlier by the Greek Junta, Turkey launched a military offensive and occupied the northern section of the island (37 percent of the island’s territory). The island has remained divided ever since. Both communities suffered traumas of displacement, loss of property, and missing and deceased relatives, and a new diasporic wave began. Greek Cypriots, including those in the diaspora, emphasize territorial loss and displacement, underlining the illegality of the Turkish army-controlled areas in the north. Meanwhile, the Turkish Cypriot community is trapped in a legal jurisdiction unrecognized by any other state but Turkey and has been politically and economically isolated for decades.<sup>4</sup>

Since 1974, various peace proposals have included the key issues of territorial adjustments, security, refugee restitution and compensation, and power-sharing. All these elements are included in our conjoint experiment (described below). For instance, under the Annan Plan, Turkish Cypriots agreed to major territorial readjustments (Varosha, Morphou, and fifty villages) in areas currently occupied by the Turkish military in exchange for power-sharing and federal status within a reunited Cyprus. All UN plans have attempted to re-establish Cyprus as a federal state with significant territorial re-adjustments in favor of the Greek Cypriot constituent state. UN-mediated plans have aimed to enable at least half of the displaced to return under Greek Cypriot administration (Psaltis et al. 2020). UN mediations have also endorsed Turkish Cypriot aspirations and adopted ethnic federal structures recognizing significant autonomy for the future Turkish Cypriot constituent state and political equality within the central government. Specifically, UN proposals have aimed at establishing a form of power-sharing

<sup>3</sup>Estimating the size of the diaspora is difficult. UK statistics suggest fewer than 100,000 Cypriots in the United Kingdom, but other sources suggest as many as 300,000; <https://ukcynews.com/how-many-uk-cypriots-have-died-from-covid-19/>. Two Cypriot-origin MPs, Bambos Charalambous and Nesil Caliskan, were elected in the 2024 UK parliamentary elections. According to an estimate by *Politis* newspaper using various sources, there are about 270,000 Greek Cypriots in the United Kingdom, 85,000 in Australia, 45,000 in each of Greece and South Africa, 30,000 in the United States, and 22,000 in Canada. The *Politis* estimates there are up to 80,000 Turkish Cypriots in the United Kingdom and 30,000 in Australia, with a significant number residing in Turkey. See [https://famagusta.news/news/blog-post\\_43-3](https://famagusta.news/news/blog-post_43-3). Table A3 in the Online Appendix provides information about our data collection in the host countries and the number of diaspora respondents in different locations around the globe. See also <https://www.facebook.com/charis.psaltis/posts/another-myth-busted-by-research/413435700160152/>

<sup>4</sup>For analyses of the Greek and Turkish Cypriot negotiation dynamics, narratives, and their politicization, see Bryant (2010) and Kovras (2012, 2014).

and designated community rights, thereby preventing the Greek Cypriot majority from out-voting Turkish Cypriots on issues of vital political concern by setting up either a consensual parliamentary system or an integrative presidential cross-voting arrangement agreed upon by Cypriot leaders Mehmet Ali Talat and Dimitris Christofias in 2009.

In the twin 2004 referendums on the Annan Plan, Greek and Turkish Cypriots voted simultaneously in the south and north, respectively (Sözen and Özersay 2007). The Plan received maximum publicity both locally and in the diaspora, but the referendum took place only in the island's communities. Cypriots residing outside the island were not included in the UN-led voting process. Since then, several attempts have been made by the Cypriot diaspora to be included in decision-making related to the UN peace process; these align with broader trends extending citizenship and voting rights to global diasporas (Naujoks 2013; Koinova et al. 2023).

### Empirical Approach

To test our three long-distance nationalism hypotheses, we administered four surveys across Greek and Turkish Cypriot homeland and diaspora communities. Our survey questionnaire collected data on attitudinal and demographic characteristics and embedded a conjoint experiment. The survey questions included items measuring support for a peace settlement, allowing us to operationalize our first hypothesis and assess the extent to which respondents supported or opposed a peace settlement in principle. Embedding a conjoint survey experiment in the questionnaire allowed us to understand points of agreement and contention between the two communities in Cyprus and the diaspora. It also allowed us to explore support for our second and third hypothesis. In conjoint analysis, respondents are asked to rank or rate two or more hypothetical choices with multiple attributes; the objective is to estimate the influence of each attribute on respondents' choices or ratings (Hainmueller et al. 2014). The values of different attributes are randomized across respondents, enabling strong causal inferences to be drawn. In the surveys we developed, respondents were asked to holistically consider peace settlements featuring different elements drawn from the Cyprus context. Numerous peace proposals have included territorial arrangements; therefore, we could investigate preferences for territorial arrangements and operationalize our second hypothesis. Similarly, peace incentives have been embedded in these proposals covering power-sharing, security and implementation arrangements, and compensation, allowing us to operationalize our third hypothesis. The attributes were drawn from the extensive set of previous UN decisions and proposals for the Cyprus peace process. These include the UN Security Council resolutions, often unanimous, and international norms in peace-making, especially on contentious issues, such as ethnic federalism, power-sharing, and the right of return. We presented respondents with pairs of potential settlements and asked them to choose the one they preferred. Aggregating respondents' preferences by community (Turkish Cypriots, Greek Cypriots, Turkish Cypriot diaspora, and Greek Cypriot diaspora) allowed us to identify preferences and map areas of convergence and divergence testing H2 and H3.

Our methodology also mapped onto the UN peace talks held in summer 2017. Widely known as the UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres Package, the six-point UN proposal paved the way for new ideas for a comprehensive settle-

ment. The core concept introduced by Guterres was an implementation monitoring mechanism, which would go beyond security and replace the guarantees system proposed in the Annan Plan. While the UN attempted to abolish Greek and Turkish unilateral guarantees for intervention, significant disagreements remained as to the timing and conditions for the complete withdrawal of Turkish troops. Yet the framework attempted to offer both sides incentives (and disincentives) across issues, making the use of conjoint experiments particularly relevant.

## Experimental Design and Analysis

### *Local Survey*

Data collection in the Greek Cypriot community (on the island) was led by [third author's university] and included a representative sample<sup>5</sup> of the Greek Cypriot population ( $n = 817$ ) aged 18+ with voting rights. LIPA consultants collected a representative sample ( $n = 804$ ) of Turkish Cypriots aged 18+ with voting rights. We used multistage stratified random sampling; a confidence of 95 percent allowed for a margin of sampling error of 3 percent in each community.<sup>6</sup> Data collection took place from November 2019 to March 2020.

Respondents were given a survey containing pairs of hypothetical peace agreement packages and asked to choose one. Each agreement had five dimensions<sup>7</sup> mirroring those of the future peace package arrangements to be agreed upon: federal executive; territorial readjustments; compensations for users and owners of properties; implementation monitoring mechanism; and Supreme Court composition. Each attribute had between four and five values, proposing alternative solutions. Table 2 reports the list of dimensions and the potential options within each dimension, and table 3 shows an example of paired choices. Overall, respondents saw five pairs of package settlements in separate screens and were asked to make a choice between the two options in each pair, for a total of ten potential agreements evaluated by each individual.<sup>8</sup>

### *In the Diaspora*

The (corresponding author's university), in cooperation with its local partners, was responsible for data collection in the two Cypriot diasporas. We relied on a multi-stream sampling, including but not limited to representative Cypriot names/surnames from various directories, referrals, and endorsements of community organizations and the Cypriot diaspora media. We used social media (e.g., targeted Facebook ads), as well as paid electronic ads in diaspora media sources. In our ads, we indicated that we wanted to understand in detail how diaspora members relate to their

<sup>5</sup>The Greek Cypriot sample had an overrepresentation of older (65+) participants in all districts; the Turkish Cypriot sample had some overrepresentation in different age groups depending on the district. For this reason, we applied post-stratification weights on the basis of the latest available census data. In the Online Appendix, we present both weighted and unweighted findings.

<sup>6</sup>According to a power analysis, the predicted statistical power to detect an effect size of 0.05 in both communities was consistent with expectations for our conjoint analysis (87 percent). "Conjoint Experiments: Power Analysis Tool." Accessed December 11, 2022. <https://mblukac.shinyapps.io/conjoints-power-shiny/>.

<sup>7</sup>The order of attributes was randomized for each respondent, as were the values.

<sup>8</sup>Following each pair of choices, participants were asked how likely they were to vote for their choice in a future referendum. The full questionnaire is available upon request.

**Table 2.** Local survey peace deal dimensions and values.

<b>The federal executive must be formed by</b>	All parties in proportion to their seats in the assembly
<b>On territory: Fifty villages will be returned as in the Annan Plan and Varosha</b>	GC and TC co-presidents elected through cross-voting GC president and TC vice-president elected through cross-voting support of at least a quarter of MPs from each community a majority in the assembly or voters, regardless of ethnicity but Morphou will stay in TC administration
<b>Most TC users will keep current properties. Users negatively affected will get</b>	plus Morphou plus Morphou, Rizokarpaso, Yialousa plus, old part of Morphou, Rizokarpaso, Yialousa but Morphou and North Karpasia will become federal areas 50,000 Euros (on average) depending on a fair UN-expert estimate of loss
<b>The implementation monitoring mechanism will be led by the</b>	150,000 Euros (on average) depending on a fair UN-expert estimate of loss 200,000 Euros (on average) depending on a fair UN-expert estimate of loss 300,000 Euros (on average) depending on a fair UN-expert estimate of loss 300,000 Euros (on average) plus guaranteed housing anywhere in Cyprus UN with the three former guarantors, Greece, Turkey, and the United Kingdom
<b>The Supreme Court that will deal with deadlocks and guarantee human rights will be appointed * for simplicity this dimension was not included in the diaspora survey</b>	UN with a third party such as NATO UN with EU countries such as Ireland, France, and Germany UN with third countries such as Japan, Australia, and Canada with equal numbers of GCs and TCs with rotating chair
	with equal numbers of GCs and TCs with a minority of judges appointed by the (European Court of Human Rights, ECHR) with a majority of judges appointed by the ECHR by a special international UN tribunal with headquarters in Cyprus

homeland and how they envision the island's future. To encourage participation, respondents were offered the chance to enter a lottery, and prizes were offered to ten participants or their named charities. Our diaspora survey took longer than our island-based survey (June 2019–May 2020) and secured 566 complete responses.<sup>9</sup> Our reliance on a non-probability sample was necessary because sampling frames for diasporas are non-existent; therefore, identifying a representative sample would not have been possible. We report demographic data for the two samples in the Online Appendix, including where the diaspora respondents resided in Tables A1, A2, and A3. The advantage of non-probability sampling amongst diasporas is that it captures the views of those who are more informed, active and more likely to vote in a future referendum, if given the chance.

As we used an experimental design, we can be confident of the internal validity of our findings. As in the island surveys, we used a conjoint survey experiment to present diaspora respondents with options that would make them think about settlement dimensions (as well as their return to Cyprus). The diaspora survey was similar to the local one with respect to conjoint dimensions, but the court dimension was removed for simplicity. In both surveys, our dependent variable was “peace package preferred.”

In what follows, we present our results in the form of marginal means following [Leeper et al. \(2020\)](#), who outline

the benefits of this method to accurately describe subgroup differences if respondents select conjoint pairs containing particular attributes. In our Online Appendix, we present estimations of the average marginal effects of the attributes' values (AMCE)—coded as indicator variables—using a linear probability model ([Hainmuller et al. 2014](#)). In both cases, we clustered the estimates' standard errors by respondent to account for intra-subject correlation. These analyses were performed in R. In addition, to determine whether our results held if the diaspora sample was demographically like the homeland sample, we employed coarsened exact matching on the diaspora (see the Online Appendix). This method yielded results consistent with our primary analysis, albeit with larger standard errors likely attributable to the reduced sample size.

### Findings

**Figure 1** shows attitudes towards a potential peace settlement. Specifically, respondents were asked how they would vote in a referendum on a peace settlement. Contrary to conventional wisdom, the views of the diasporas mirror the views of their homeland communities (see [Dizdaroglu 2024](#)). Neither diaspora demonstrates a more negative view towards a future settlement than its homeland community. In fact, both appear to be more likely to vote for a hypothetical peace agreement than their home community. Consequently, we do not find support for H1.

**Figure 1** suggests a mirroring (Greek Cypriots) or a more positive view (Turkish Cypriot diaspora) of a possible peace

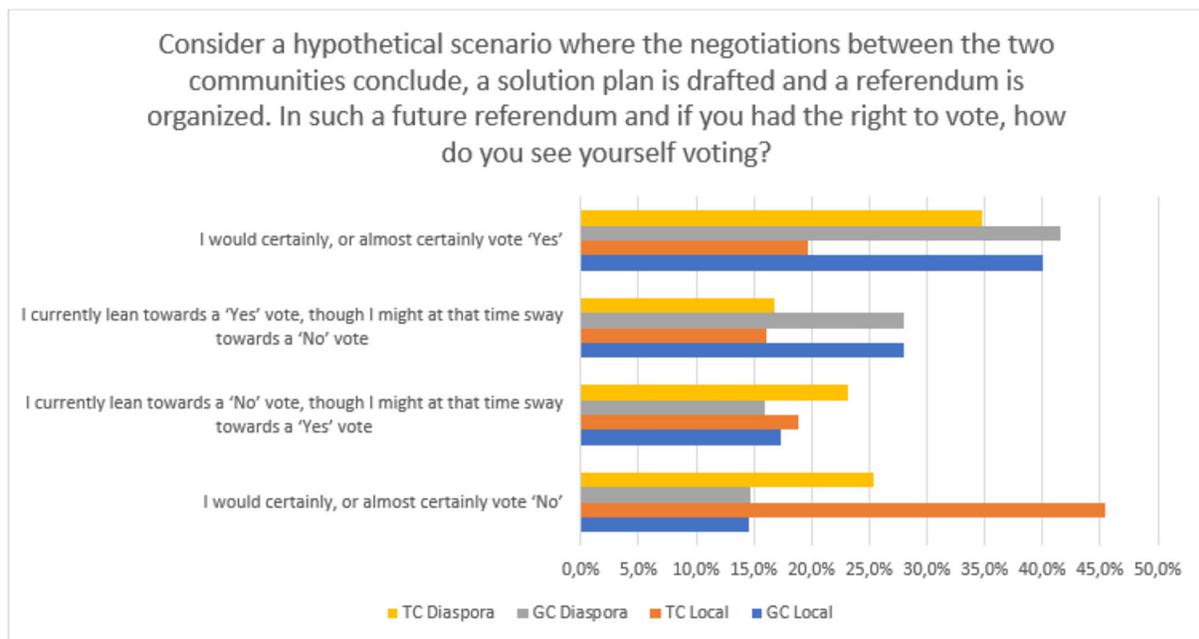
<sup>9</sup>Online surveys had 745 GC and 834 TC respondents, but numbers dropped when participants were asked to complete the survey experiment.

**Table 3.** Sample pair of peace packages.

We will now proceed with the second part of the survey. We will provide you with examples of what a future peace plan might look like. Because this part of the questionnaire entails difficult choices, it might take longer to complete. Therefore, please review the various options carefully. Each package includes alternative provisions randomly selected by our online software. As a result, some packages will look more acceptable than others. Please note that there are two different questions: in the first one, we would like to know which one of the two arrangements you prefer as the least difficult alternative. Choosing one does not imply that you would vote for it, but just that you prefer it over the other option. You will then be asked to say how likely it is that you would vote for each of the packages [*Additional Text only asked to the diaspora: and also how likely it will be for you to return permanently in Cyprus under these scenarios*]. In each question, we will show you two possible arrangements in comparison. Some elements might be similar and some different. We will present you with five comparisons in total. If you wish to read more about the background, visit here:

Please carefully review the options detailed below; then, please answer the questions.  
Which of these choices do you prefer?

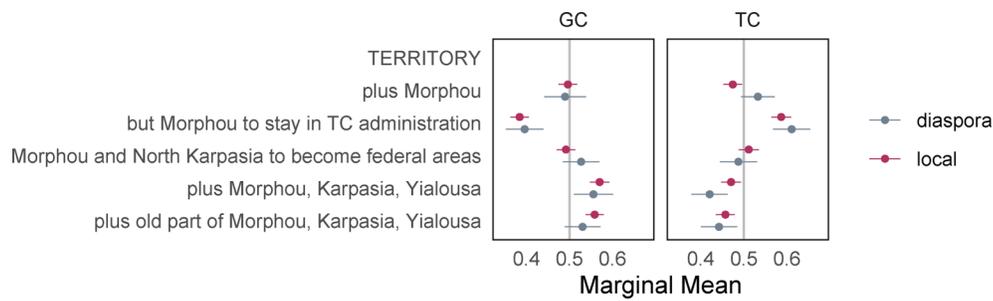
	Choice 1	Choice 2
The federal executive must be formed by	all parties in proportion to their seats in the assembly	GC and TC co-presidents elected through cross-voting
On territory: Fifty villages will be returned as in the Annan Plan and Varosha	but Morphou will stay in TC administration	but Morphou and North Karpasia will become federal areas
Most TC users will keep current properties. Users negatively affected will get	50,000 Euros (on average) depending on a fair UN-expert estimate of loss	200,000 Euros (on average) depending on a fair UN-expert estimate of loss
The implementation monitoring mechanism will be led by the	UN with the three former guarantors Greece, Turkey, and the United Kingdom	UN with EU countries such as Ireland, France, and Germany
The Supreme Court that will deal with deadlocks and guarantee human rights will be appointed (this dimension not included in diaspora survey)	with equal numbers of GCs and TCs with rotating chair	with equal numbers of GCs and TCs with a minority of judges appointed by the ECHR
I prefer Choice 1 as the least difficult alternative for me.		
I prefer Choice 2 as the least difficult alternative for me.		



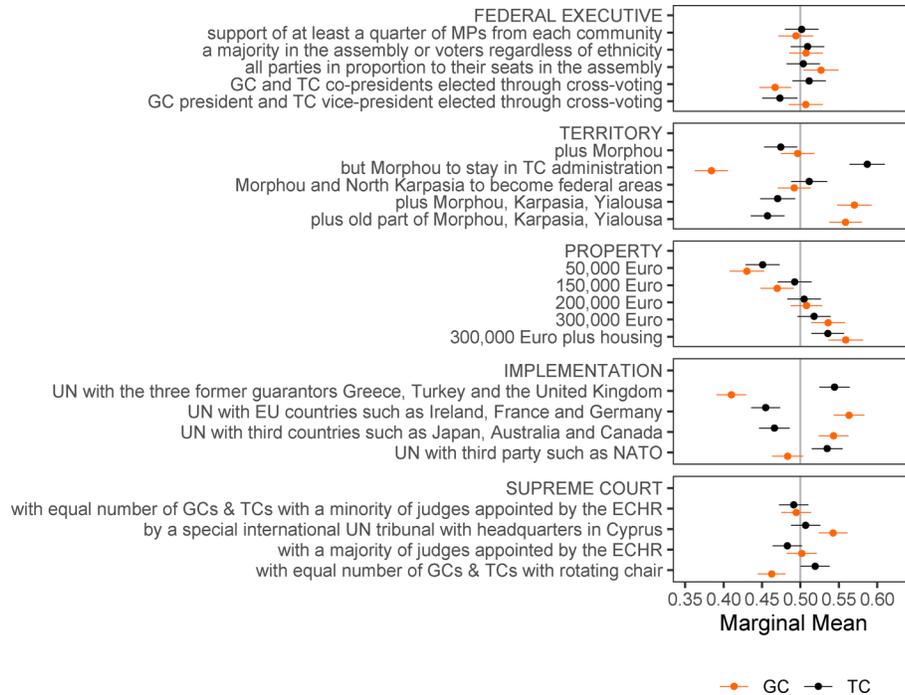
**Figure 1.** Support for a peace settlement in Cyprus and its diaspora.

settlement. Failing to reject the null hypothesis suggests the diasporas' positions are in line with those of the home communities, but the test per se does not explain why we see such pattern.

Figure 2 compares the territorial dimension of our two conjoint experiments to depict differences between the diaspora and resident communities (Greek Cypriots on the left and Turkish Cypriots on the right). They display estimates of



**Figure 2.** Preferences of Greek and Turkish diasporas and local communities for territorial adjustments.



**Figure 3.** Effect of peace package in Cyprus: Respondents by local community.<sup>10</sup>

marginal means (dot), with a 95 percent confidence interval (bars). In both cases, the point estimates for the diaspora and its equivalent homeland community are very close, suggesting territorial concessions/gains have almost identical effects amongst diaspora and homeland populations. This runs contrary to H2, where we expected diasporas to be less accepting of possible territorial concessions than their homeland counterparts. This finding is even more striking given the different techniques used to recruit the samples and the design differences of the two conjoint experiments.

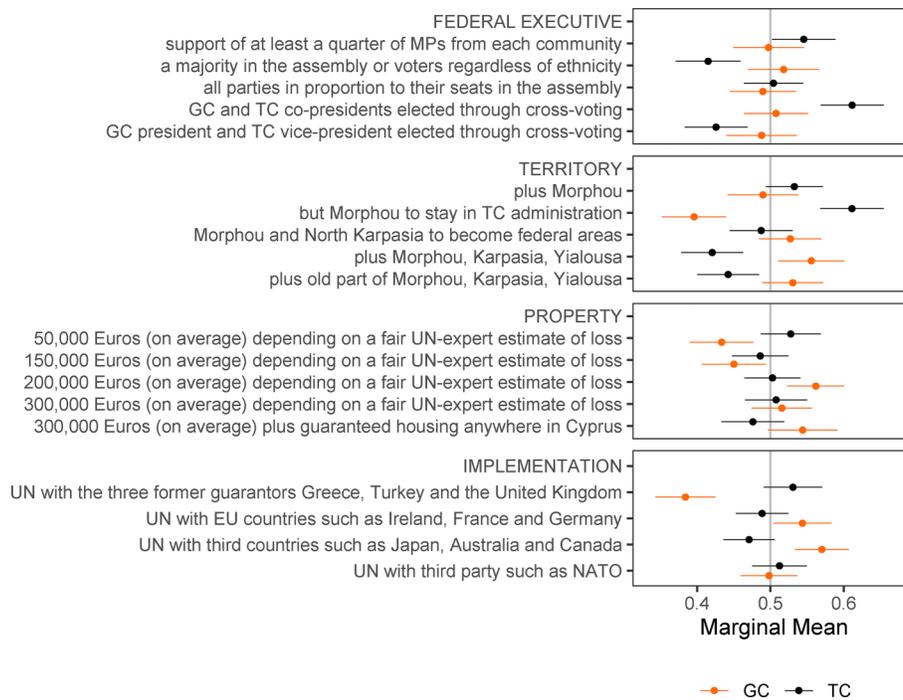
Figures 3 and 4 display the estimates of preferences for all the attributes in the peace packages. In the same fashion as figure 2, the figures illustrate estimates of marginal means (dot), with a 95 percent confidence interval (bars). Figure 3 focuses on the local communities' preferences and figure 4 on the diaspora communities' preferences.

The figures show how likely a respondent is to choose a profile with a particular attribute compared with a marginal mean of 0.5, where the attribute is estimated not to have made a difference to the choice of peace settlement pairs. If it is higher than 0.5, the attribute is more likely to be chosen; lower than 0.5 indicates a lack of support.<sup>11</sup>

H3 argued that the diaspora communities would be less accepting of peace incentives, including power-sharing and compensation, than their respective homeland communities. We begin with our findings for the Greek Cypriot homeland and diaspora community and then turn to the Turkish Cypriot homeland and diaspora community. To preview our discussion, we find no evidence that the Cypriot diasporas are consistently less likely to accept peace incentives than their corresponding homeland communities.

With respect to power-sharing institutions, the Greek Cypriot homeland and diaspora communities are indifferent and have generally overlapping preferences. The evidence presented above suggests neither the homeland nor the diaspora is very likely to choose or reject peace settlements with power-sharing elements; the Greek homeland community is marginally less likely to select peace settlements that contain a presidency than other options. Turning to preferences for property compensation, both groups are less likely to select peace settlements with lower levels of compensation than higher levels of compensation, but the Greek Cypriot homeland community has a stronger preference for a higher level of compensation than the diaspora. In other words, the diaspora is not more demanding than the homeland. The implementation dimension is not a driver of the peace settlement choices of the Greek Cypriot

<sup>11</sup>The Online Appendix contains supporting tables for these figures. The substantive results for these models are the same as the AMCE presented in the Online Appendix.



**Figure 4.** Effect of peace package in Cyprus: Respondents by diaspora community.

diaspora, but the homeland community has strong preferences on this attribute of the settlement. Importantly, the diaspora does not appear to have more nationalist preferences than the homeland community and is not less likely to agree to options that include this peace incentive.

Turning to Turkish Cypriots, with respect to preferences for power-sharing institutions, the homeland community seems indifferent to most options. In contrast, members of the diaspora are more likely to select peace settlement packages that have some elements of power-sharing. They would favor the idea of Greek Cypriot and Turk Cypriot co-presidents selected by community cross-voting. They would also support a proposal where the executive is formed on the bases of a parliamentary majority with the support of at least a quarter of MPs from each community. This suggests that the diaspora has stronger preferences for power-sharing arrangements than the homeland community, although they are prepared to accept a power-sharing compromise compatible with a moderate position on the solution. Crucially, members of the diaspora are indifferent to property compensation and implementation options. Neither incentive is a major driver of choices between peace settlement options.

Taken together, we do not find strong support for H3; the diasporas are not less willing to accept peace incentives in the form of power-sharing, implementation, and compensation dimensions than the homeland communities. While there are interesting differences in the preferences and the emphases the different groups give to different options, no systematic pattern suggests the diasporas are less in favor of specific peace incentives than their homeland communities.

### Conclusion

A predominant view in the literature is that diasporic involvement poses additional challenges to peace efforts, in part because diasporas hold more extreme nationalist views

than homeland communities (Anderson 1998; Fair 2005; Conversi 2012). We systematically tested this long-distance nationalist assumption by developing a generalizable framework to study the diaspora's preferences for peace settlements. Our surveys covered two homeland communities and two difficult-to-reach diasporas (Greek and Turkish Cypriots abroad), thus taking a new theoretical and empirical direction in diaspora studies. We demonstrate the usefulness of combining descriptive data with a four-way conjoint experimental framework to develop and test theories probing differences in stakeholders' responses to multi-issue peace settlements. Our results challenge the assumptions of long-distance nationalism and highlight the diaspora's potential to play a constructive role in the Cyprus reunification efforts, setting the stage for a more inclusive UN peace mediation. Admittedly, with more parties involved, the task of conflict management and resolution can become more challenging for mediators (Berchovitch 2007), but the inclusion of diasporas could add an element of moderation and arguably more legitimacy to the peace process.

Our results indicate that the views of the two Cypriot diasporas on peace settlement issues are either comparable to those of their homeland communities or more favorable (in the case of Turkish Cypriots). The descriptive data show no evidence that diasporas are more opposed to the peace settlement in principle than homeland communities (H1). Similarly, in the conjoint experiment, we found no evidence of the diasporas being less favorable to territorial compromises (H2) or less receptive of peace incentives (H3). Overall, the results suggest that despite the passage of time and socialization in host societies, the preferences of diasporas and their respective homeland communities are not far apart.

The Cypriot diaspora could be more pro-peace than is commonly assumed. This finding aligns with Dizdaroğlu's (2024) study of Cypriot youth and Cyprus and Hall's (2016)

study of Bosnian refugees in Sweden; both show diasporas can follow pro-peace patterns or mirror home communities' views. Internally displaced persons' experiences and differential contact may be other relevant factors moderating views in Cyprus, as found in prior research (Psaltis et al. 2020). Our study differs from this previous work by using survey experiments to reveal the average differences in the various communities' attitudes towards different peace settlement proposals. There are additional interesting possible sources of heterogeneity in diaspora views, for instance, gender, age, cohort, host community, and the extent of cross-community contact. We leave it to future research to investigate these questions; such analysis would require larger samples than the ones we used, particularly if the aim is to address the causes of diversity.

Our findings do not confirm the long-distance nationalist thesis, but we generalize from these findings cautiously. While we consider the Cyprus to be an appropriate case to test theories about the preferences of conflict-generated diasporas, it could be the case that the Cypriot diaspora is relatively moderate when considered comparatively. As we have noted, an alternative argument to long-term nationalism focuses on the political opportunity structure. This argues that the incentives of diaspora communities depend on opening or closing of political opportunities in the homeland and internationally (Koinova 2011). As the political opportunity structure changes, diasporas may take more moderate or more radical stands. Our findings are not inconsistent with this theory, though the dynamic aspect of this argument means that this can be tested only using longitudinal data. Lacking such data, this article provides an evaluation of long-distance nationalism as the most prominent theory of the diaspora's mass political attitudes towards peace settlements and finds no empirical support for it.

Diasporic engagement could be one of the key priorities in a reunited Cyprus. Future peace talks could involve diaspora members, for instance, a dedicated "diaspora technical committee," or a citizens' assembly of diaspora members randomly selected from both communities. Such bodies could assist Greek and Turkish Cypriot negotiating teams, along with the existing infrastructure and technical committees on education, confidence-building measures, gender, and cultural property. Designated voting rights for diaspora members abroad could include participation in some elections, such as the presidency, as currently debated in the Republic of Ireland, or holding designated seats in the parliament reserved for the diaspora, as in Italy, France, and Portugal. Beyond this starting point, many Cypriots abroad could receive restitution or compensation for their properties following a peace settlement and consider re-immigrating to Cyprus.

While these findings speak specifically to Cyprus, our conceptual framework and empirical tests can be adapted and employed in other settings to understand differences and similarities between diaspora and homeland communities as they relate to possible peace settlements and other policy areas. Mediators can find it difficult to incorporate public opinion into the design of peace settlements. In the absence of reliable data, decisions to include (or not) diasporas in peace processes are inevitably made without proper empirical evidence. Our study provides a way forward.

### Acknowledgments

The authors gratefully acknowledge the comments and advice of André Lecours, Erik Gahner Larsen, Alexandros Lardos, Huseyin Cakal, and Ilke Dagli as well as our anonymous

reviewers and editors who were critical to the development of the paper. Ozdil Nami former Turkish Cypriot negotiator provided extensive feedback on our survey design while we benefited extensively from dedicated meetings on the project with the UN team in Cyprus (April 8, 2018) and New York (June 30, 2020) as well as presentations with stakeholders. Feargal Cochrane as CO-I in funded projects leading to this article contributed to data collection and the design of the questionnaire. Andrea Nicolaou, Andreas Aristeidis, Eliz Tefik and Ipek Ozerim advised the questionnaire and supported the data collection while Tekin Baykiz provided technical support. Earlier versions of this paper received useful feedback at the British International Studies Association (June 2024, Birmingham) and the Canadian Political Science Association (June 2024). This article is dedicated to the memory of Thomas Bonnenfant, who passed away on June 10, 2025. Thomas was a beloved husband, a generous mentor, and a true friend to many. His intellectual guidance, unwavering support, and inspiring spirit were instrumental to this work. We honor his legacy with deep gratitude and affection. Ethical approval for this study was granted under the University of Kent's ethics governance protocols (Faculty of Social Sciences Research Ethics Advisory Group for Human Participants) on December 18, 2018 (Ref no. 0101819).

### Supplementary material

Supplementary material is available at *International Studies Quarterly* online.

### Funding

The author(s) disclosed receipt of the following financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article: UK Research and Innovation (Grant no. ES/X010864/2), the United States Institute for Peace (Grant no. 350 2261), and British Academy (Grant no. AF160002). The opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the funders.

### Conflicts of interest

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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