

Meta-Memory: An Empirical Exploration of a New Conceptual Schema for Understanding Ethnic Conflict in Cyprus

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Abstract:

Collective memory is the realisation of the past in the form of contemporary experience, a social construct formed in economic, social, cultural, political, and ideological frameworks. This paper examines the way intractable conflict is constructed by the transmission of memories from generations with lived experience of the conflict, and the personal experiences that the current generation has of contemporary events. Additionally, it explores the ways in which the political leaderships in both communities attempt to influence young Cypriots' conceptual framing of themselves and their imaginary other. Using a qualitative framework, a series of in-depth semi-structured interviews was conducted with individual Greek and Turkish Cypriots as the basis for an empirical exploration of their relationship to the events of the 1974 war and the subsequent division of the island. Through a critical review of the extant literature combined with the empirical findings of this paper, a new concept is proposed, that of 'meta-memory'. The concept refers to transmitted experiences combined with experiences occurred at a later stage or in succession of the initial conflict; it is a direct collection and accumulation of experiences from an ongoing conflict that affects current generations' lives in the present. The concept has wide applicability to conflict situations around the world since it offers a theoretical paradigm which can shed light into aspects of ongoing/intractable conflict that remain unexamined and/or neglected.

Keywords: collective memory, meta-memory, conflict, transmitted experiences of conflict

Introduction

Since 1974, the map of divided Cyprus has been a symbol loaded with different meanings for both communities,³ effectively creating an imaginary map as regards

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³ Yiannis Papadakis, 'Nicosia after 1960: A River, a Bridge and a Dead Zone' (2006) 1 *Global Media*

the assertion of sovereignty. The Cyprus Problem is an intractable conflict and an unwavering reality for many generations; it occupies a central role in the lives of both communities, influencing their members' individual and collective decisions.⁴ For almost 50 years, Greek and Turkish Cypriots have been divided along ethnic lines, with distinct language, religions and, crucially, diverging social representations of the Cyprus Problem and its origins.⁵ The long periods of conflict and confrontation between the two communities resulted in the accumulation of animosity and hostility; yet they also motivated initiatives which lifted hopes for a solution. In recent decades, both communities experience the conflict, on a daily basis, as it infiltrates, among others, the media, official narratives of each political leadership,⁶ and commemorative spaces,⁷ all of which serve as narrative mediums. Struggle museums, commemorations, memorials, monuments, and flags all seek to legitimise each community's histories

Journal: Mediterranean Edition 1; Rebecca Bryant, 'The State of Cypriot Silences' (2018) 22 *Cyprus Review* 10.

⁴ Daniel Bar-Tal, 'Sociopsychological Foundations of Intractable Conflicts' (2007) *American Behavioral Scientist* 1432–1433, available at <<http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0002764207302462>> (last accessed 1 May 2017); Constantinos Adamides, *Securitization and Desecuritization Processes in Protracted Conflicts* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2020); Constantinos Adamides, 'A Comfortable and Routine Conflict' in James Ker-Lindsay (ed.), *Resolving Cyprus. New Approaches to Conflict Resolution* (IBTauris, 2015).

⁵ Charis Psaltis, 'Collective Memory, Social Representations of Intercommunal Relations, and Conflict Transformation in Divided Cyprus' (2016) 22 *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Psychology* 19; Niazi Kizilyürek, *Turkish Cypriots, Turkey and the Cyprus Problem (Οι Τουρκοκύπριοι, η Τουρκία Και Το Κυπριακό)* (Papazisis, 2009) 136–142.

⁶ Christophoros Christophorou, Sanem Şahin and Synthia Pavlou, *Media Narratives, Politics and the Cyprus Problem* (PRIO Cyprus Centre 2010); Harry Anastasiou, 'Communication across Conflict Lines: The Case of Ethnically Divided Cyprus' (2002) 39 *Journal of Peace Research* 581; Sanem Şahin, 'Journalism in Conflict-Affected Societies: Professional Roles and Influences in Cyprus' (2022) 15 *Media, War & Conflict* 553; Christophoros Christophorou, 'An Old Cleavage Causes New Divisions: Parliamentary Elections in the Republic of Cyprus, 21 May 2006' (2009) 12 *South European Society and Politics* 111; Adamides (n 2); Vasiliki Triga, Fernando Mendez and Constantinos Djuovas, 'Post-Crisis Political Normalisation? The 2018 Presidential Elections in the Republic of Cyprus' (2019) 24 *South European Society and Politics* 103; Nicos Anastasiades, 'Address by the President of the Republic of Cyprus, Mr Nicos Anastasiades during the Anniversary Event for the 1974 Turkish invasion'; Address by the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Interior, Dr Kostas Konstantinou, on behalf of the Minister in the workshop entitled "Issues that concern Local Authorities of the Occupied Communities"; Annita Demetriou, 'Speech by the President of the Cyprus Parliament for the Anniversaries of the Coup d' Etat and the Turkish Invasion'.

⁷ Yiannis Papadakis, 'The National Struggle Museums of a Divided City' (1994) 17 *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 400; Yiannis Papadakis, 'Nation, Narrative and Commemoration: Political Ritual in Divided Cyprus' (2003) 14 *History and Anthropology* 253.

and narratives⁸ to motivate and mobilise society members and get support from the international community. The past is re-presented to serve hegemonic relations of power and authority,⁹ and establish the dichotomy ‘Us’ vs ‘Them’ or - where monuments and memorials in the public space are concerned – ‘Victim’ and ‘Villain’.

Collective memory is the realisation of the past in the form of contemporary experience, a social construct formed in economic, social, cultural, political, and ideological frameworks.¹⁰ In this sense, collective memory is an invented tradition that is often shaped by people and groups over long periods of time. It is linked to the objective perception of ‘history’ but usually goes beyond that to capture a mythical version of events,¹¹ people, and places that serve social or political interests. The two communities’ collective memory of the Turkish invasion is a double-edged sword. The single seminal event is seen from a different perspective by each side. For the Greek-Cypriots it is a tragedy and a violation of the legal order that led to the de jure partition of the island, while the Turkish Cypriots see Turkey as a ‘peace power’ and the intervention as a ‘peace operation’ that legitimised their ‘State’.¹² The ‘inferno’¹³ of one community is the ‘paradise’ of the other, as determined by their perspective on the historical event.¹⁴

⁸ Reuben Rose-Redwood, Derek Alderman and Maoz Azaryahu, (2008) ‘Collective Memory and the Politics of Urban Space: An Introduction’ 73 161.

⁹ Kenneth E Foote and Maoz Azaryahu, ‘Toward a Geography of Memory: Geographical Dimensions of Public Memory and Commemoration.’ (2007) 35 *Journal of Political and Military Sociology* 125, 129.

¹⁰ Maurice Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory* (Introduction by Mary Douglas. trans. Francis J. Ditter Jr and Vida Yazdi Ditter ed, Harper Colophon 1980); Barry Schwartz, ‘The Social Context of Commemoration: A Study in Collective Memory’ (1982) 61 *Social Forces* 374.

¹¹ Stephen Daniels and Denis Cosgrove, ‘Introduction: Iconography and Landscape’ in Denis Cosgrove and Stephen Daniels (eds), *The Iconography of Landscape: Essays on the Symbolic Representation, Design and Use of Past Environments* (Cambridge University Press 1988); Foote, K. E., & Azaryahu (no 9); Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge University Press 1992).

¹² Lukas Perikleous, Meltem Onurkan-Samani and Gülen Onurkan-Aliusta, ‘Those Who Control the Narrative Control the Future: The Teaching of History in Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot Schools’ (2021) 8 *Historical Encounters* 124; Michalinos Zembylas and Loizos Loukaidis, ‘Affective Practices, Difficult Histories and Peace Education: An Analysis of Teachers’ Affective Dilemmas in Ethnically Divided Cyprus’ (2021) 97 *Teaching and Teacher Education* 103225; Dilek Latif, ‘A Challenging Educational Reform: Politics of History Textbook Revision in North Cyprus’ (2019) 49 *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education* 30.

¹³ Kızılyürek (no 5) 113.

¹⁴ Perikleous, Onurkan-Samani and Onurkan-Aliusta (no 12); Zembylas and Loukaidis (no 12); Latif (no 12).

According to Bar Tal,¹⁵ the collective memory of past events determines how new events or prolonged experiences- even if unrelated- are understood, as long as this serves society's needs and aims. Such new events or prolonged experiences are then incorporated into the narrative and provide further evidence of the group's general representation; collective memory should thus be seen as a multi-layered narrative. The 'Cyprus Problem' is conceptualised here as an open-ended process; it not only encompasses memories of past events but is also on the receiving end of an influx of current developments in the conflict which are subsequently also converted into memories. We propose the term 'meta-memory' to capture the case of young Cypriots with no lived experience of the 1974 events, whose own memories of contemporary developments in the ongoing conflict are supplemented by the memories inherited from past generations. Using post-memory as a springboard, this research seeks to explore and expose the intricacies of the Cyprus Case and draw valuable insights for intractable conflicts more broadly.

This work examines how the perception of intractable conflict is constructed by the transmission of memories from generations with lived experience of the conflict, and the personal experiences that the current generation has of contemporary events. Additionally, it explores the ways in which the political leaderships in both communities attempt to influence young Cypriots' conceptual framing of themselves and their imaginary other. Using a qualitative framework, a series of in-depth semi-structured interviews was conducted with individual Greek and Turkish Cypriots as the basis for an empirical exploration of their relationship to the events of the 1974 war and the subsequent division of the island.

Historical Background

The establishment of the Republic of Cyprus (RoC) in 1960 did little to reconcile the Greek- and Turkish-Cypriot communities; quite the contrary, it fuelled Greek and Turkish nationalism further. The unworkability of the constitution and reluctance of the political elite to abandon Enosis and Taksim¹⁶ triggered intercommunal violence,

¹⁵ Daniel Bar-Tal, 'Collective Memory as Social Representations' (2014) 23 *Papers on Social representations* 1.

¹⁶ Two contradicting national narratives exist in Cyprus; on the one hand, the Greek Cypriot side identifies its historic path with Greece, with which it desired unification (Enosis). The Turkish Cypriots, on the other hand, reacted strongly in the face of a possible Enosis and promoted division (Taksim). Enosis and Taksim remained the main aims of the ruling political elites of both communities.

leading to the collapse of the Republic's bicomunal power-sharing structures.¹⁷ On 21 December 1963 commenced one of the most violent periods in Cypriot history; the events, which came to be known as 'Bloody Christmas', cost the lives of hundreds of Turkish Cypriots, and would become ingrained in the collective memory of their community. For the first time, Cyprus was territorially partitioned and Greek and Turkish Cypriots were separated on account of their ethnic origin.¹⁸

Another defining feature of this period was the mass relocation of Turkish Cypriots and the creation of enclaves in the northern part of Cyprus,¹⁹ where a greater number of Turkish Cypriots resided, for the protection of the community from acts of aggression by Greek-Cypriot nationalists.²⁰ The movement was carried out in an organised manner, under pressure from the leaders of the TMT²¹ who were 'determined that the refugees shall not move back to the Greek-controlled areas from the Turkish enclave and the fortified villages at any cost'.²² From villages and areas near the green line '26,000 Turkish Cypriots – more than a fifth of the Turkish Cypriot population – fled into the enclave', where they were packed into Red Cross tents.²³ Due to the deterioration of bi-communal relations, the United Nations Security Council

¹⁷ Ayla Gürel, 'Displacement in Cyprus: Consequences of Civil and Military Strife: Report 4: Turkish Cypriot Legal Framework' (Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO), 2012).

¹⁸ Secretary General, 'Report by the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Cyprus' (United Nations Security Council, 1964).

¹⁹ According to Pierre Oberling, *The Road to Bellapais* (Social Science Monographs, Boulder 1982) 94., 3,000 out of the 5,000 Turkish inhabitants of Omorphita were 'safely escorted into the Turkish quarter of Nicosia' on 25 December 1963. The population exchange and the creation of ethnically 'pure' areas were requested by Denktash and Halit Ali Riza during the London Conference.

²⁰ Sotos Ktoris, *Turkish Cypriots. From Marginalization to Partnership 1923-1960* (Τουρκοκύπριοι: Από το περιθώριο στο συνεταιρισμό (1923-1960). (Papazisis, 2013); Metin Tamkoç, *The Turkish Cypriot State: The Embodiment of the Right of Self-Determination* (K Rustem & Brother, 1988); Ploutis Servas, *The Cyprus Issue, Responsibilities* (Κυπριακό, Ευθύνης). (Grammi Publishers, 1984); Richard A Patrick, *Political Geography and the Cyprus Conflict 1963-1971* (Department of Geography, Faculty of Environmental Studies, University of Waterloo, 1989); Galo Plaza, 'Report of the United Nations Mediator on Cyprus to the Secretary General (S/6253)' (United Nations Security Council 1965); Michael Wall, 'Greeks Call on Turks to Surrender: ...And Tell British Troops to Keep out of Way' *The Guardian* (1959-2003) (London (UK), 10 March 1964) 1.

²¹ Cyprus Mail, 'Turks Move into Secure Areas "Refugee Problem" Created' *Cyprus Mail* (Nicosia, 13 January 1964) 1.

²² The Illustrated London News, 'Cyprus Waits for a "Miracle" [1965] *The Illustrated London News* 16, 17.

²³ Blair Granger W., 'Greek Cypriotes Enlarging Force' *The New York Times* (New York, 23 February 1964) 1, 4; Cyprus Mail, "'Neutral Zone" Around Nicosia' *Cyprus Mail* (Nicosia, 30 December 1963) 1; *The Illustrated London News* (no 22).

recommended the creation of a United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus with the aim of preventing the resurgence of hostilities between the two communities and restoring law and order.²⁴ The United Nations' (UN) peacekeeping force, the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP), the longest running peacekeeping operation in the history of UN, remains in Cyprus to this day.²⁵

In 1967, Colonel Grivas²⁶ returned to Cyprus and commenced his efforts to undermine the Republic with the support of the Athens military junta. On 15 July 1974, the military junta instigated a coup d'état carried out by the Greek National Guard officers, assisted by the extreme right-wing nationalist allies of EOKA II²⁷ (National Organisation of Cypriot Struggle).²⁸ The coup d'état provided Turkey with a justification for military intervention based on the articles of the Guarantee Treaty.²⁹ Although the putschist government remained in power only for nine days, 42,000 Turkish military troops remain stationed on the island almost 50 years later.³⁰ The

²⁴ UN. Security Council (19th year: 1964), 'S/RES/186(1964) - Security Council Resolution 186 (1964) [on Establishment of the UN Peace-Keeping Force in Cyprus]'.

²⁵ Michael Wall, 'Cyprus - Island of Hate and Fear' *The New York Times* (New York, 8 March 1964) 278; Oberling (no 19); Patrick (no 20); Plaza (no 20).

²⁶ Georgios Grivas was the military leader of EOKA (National Organisation of Cypriot Fighters) who waged an armed struggle against the British colonials in Cyprus. He later also acted as the founder of EOKA B', a paramilitary organisation that undertook a bloody campaign for the unification of Cyprus with Greece. The actions of EOKA B' that led to the overthrow of Makarios, the legitimate president of the Republic of Cyprus, are, even today, a subject of controversy among the political forces of the island and their followers.

²⁷ EOKA was a guerrilla organisation against the colonial government, active in the period 1955-59. The aim of EOKA was the unification of the island with Greece. EOKA II was a nationalist organisation that appeared in 1963 and 1967. In collaboration with the Greek junta, it targeted the Turkish Cypriots and aimed at the unification with Greece.

²⁸ Kostas Gennaris, *Ex Anatolon*. Ekdoseis Kastanioti, 2000.; J Asmussen, 'Cyprus at War: Diplomacy and Conflict during the 1974 Crisis'; *Vangelis Kofiidakis. Cyprus and the Superpowers, 1960-1979* (Η Κύπρος και οι Υπερδυνάμεις), in *Cyprus, History, Proplems and Struggles of its People*, ed. Yiannos Kranidiotis, Giorgos Tenekidis, (Athens, Estia Bookshop, 2009); Caesar Mavratsas, *Aspects of Greek nationalism in Cyprus* (Όψεις του Ελληνικού εθνικισμού στην Κύπρο)." (Katarti 1998).

²⁹ The Treaty of Guarantee was signed on the occasion of the establishment of the Republic of Cyprus in 1959 between Greece, the United Kingdom and Turkey. Article II of the treaty established the obligation of the three guarantor powers (Greece, the United Kingdom and Turkey) to prohibit any activity aimed directly or indirectly at the unification of Cyprus with another State or the partition of the island. In the event of a breach of the treaty, the three guarantor powers had the right to take unilateral measures to restore order.

³⁰ M Hadjipavlou-Trigeorgis, 'Unofficial Intercommunal Contacts and Their Contribution to Peace-Building in Conflict Societies: The Case of Cyprus' (1993) *The Cyprus Review*, available at <<http://search.proquest.com/openview/0f9e61a7f9e173b263eaec6f8e54ec65/1?pq-origsite=gscholar>> (last accessed 26 November 2015).

Turkish invasion caused geographical division and occupation of 37% of Cyprus,³¹ and the displacement of more than 215,000 Greek-Cypriots.³² A further 61,500 Turkish Cypriots were also displaced since the commencement of EOKA's anti-colonial efforts in 1955 and the founding of TMT³³ (Turk Mukavement Teskilati – Turkish Resistance Organization³⁴) in 1957.³⁵

The de facto partition of the island was followed by the establishment of the 'Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus' in 1983,³⁶ with Denktash serving as its first president. Although the newly established state received no international recognition apart from Turkey, Denktash considered the matter closed arguing that 'there is not and never has been a Cypriot nation';³⁷ Greeks and Turks were merely forced to live side by side. As he proclaimed –quite characteristically, 'the only thing that is truly Cypriot are Cyprus donkeys.'³⁸

The dividing line stood in the way of communication between the two communities until the opening of the cross-points in 2003. Any attempt to cross the dividing line without the intervention of the UN before this was essentially tantamount to suicide.³⁹ The events of 1996, where two Greek-Cypriots were killed by Turkish Cypriots

³¹ Cyprus, 'S/2009/296 Letter Dated 5 June 2009 from the Permanent Representative of Cyprus to the United Nations Addressed to the President of the Security Council', United Nations Digital Library, available at <<https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/656995?ln=en>>.

³² N Peristianis, 'Cypriot Nationalism, Dual Identity, and Politics' in Yiannis Papadakis, Nicos Peristianis and Gizela Welz (eds), *Divided Cyprus: Modernity, History and an Island in Conflict* (Indiana University Press, 2006).

³³ 'Denktash: Three People Established the TMT' *KIBRIS* (Nicosia, 16 June 2000) <<http://www.hri.org/news/cyprus/tcpr/2000/00-06-16.tcpr.html#06>>; Kizilyürek (no 5).

³⁴ The aim of the TMT was to prevent the unification of Cyprus with Greece on the one hand and the partition of Cyprus on the other.

³⁵ Rebecca Bryant, *Life Stories: Turkish Cypriot Community, in Displacement in Cyprus Consequences of Civil and Military Strife*. No. 2., (International Peace Research Institute, 2012).

³⁶ The 'Turkish Federated State of Cyprus' declaration preceded, on the 13th February 1975, merely to 'establish the Turkish wing of the envisaged Federal Republic of Cyprus' (Allen & Unwin; K. Rustem & Bro, 1982).

³⁷ *ibid* 13.

³⁸ Smith H Nuttall C., 'Rauf Denktash Obituary Hawkish Leader of the Self-Declared Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus' *The Guardian* (15 January 2012) <<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/jan/15/rauf-denktash-obituary>>.

³⁹ 'Letter dated 12 April 1993 from the Permanent Representative of Cyprus to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General.'; 'Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Cyprus for the period from 11 June to 10 December 1996.'; 'Letter dated 6 June 1996 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General.'

during a peaceful march of motorcyclists,⁴⁰ are a striking example of the status quo that has been maintained, particularly by the Turkish Cypriot side.⁴¹ The long period of no-contact between members of the two communities provided a fertile ground for the leadership of both sides to construct the image of the ‘other’ based on the hegemonic narrative that supported their respective aims. Diachronically, each community maintained vastly different interpretations and memories of the same event, as pre-determined by the hegemonic narrative.

The Annan Plan for the island’s reunification was put before the two communities in two separate referenda before the accession of Cyprus in the European Union in 2004. While the Greek-Cypriots rejected the plan, Turkish Cypriots approved it.⁴² The then Secretary-General of the United Nations described the outcome of the referendum as the destruction of ‘a unique and historic chance to resolve the Cyprus

⁴⁰ ‘Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Cyprus for the period from 11 June to 10 December 1996.’ (n 32).

⁴¹ In September 1996, in an apparent revenge attack along the Green Line, attributed to Greek Cypriots, Allahverdi Kılıç, a Turkish Cypriot soldier was shot and killed, while another was wounded AP Archive, ‘Cyprus: Demonstrator Shot Dead By Turkish Troops’ (1996) <<http://www.aparchive.com/metadata/youtube/da17661ec8c75ad08b0e2dd38448a5c>>; AP Archive, ‘Cyprus - Greek and Turkish Cypriots Clash’ (1996) <<http://www.aparchive.com/metadata/youtube/83bd0a8acf55d-2c23a805c2197f5c010>>; AP Archive, ‘Cyprus - Turkish-Cypriot Soldier Killed’ (1996) <<http://www.aparchive.com/metadata/youtube/14549beed8a911878b4263198e61bf84>>.. The Greek Cypriot side rejected the accusations of the Turkish Cypriot side about a ‘revenge attack’ that led to the death of Kılıç Hurriyet Daily News, ‘Border Murder Highlights Volatile Cyprus Situation’ (1996) <<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/border-murder-highlights-volatile-cyprus-situation.aspx?pageID=438&n=border-murder-highlights-volatile-cyprus-situation-1996-09-10>> accessed 3 July 2016.

⁴² Yücel Vural and Nicos Peristianis, ‘Beyond Ethno-Nationalism: Emerging Trends in Cypriot Politics after the Annan Plan’ (2008) 14 *Nations and Nationalism* 39; C Pericleous, ‘Cyprus Referendum: A Divided Island and the Challenge of the Annan Plan’; Jan Asmussen, ‘Cyprus after the Failure of the Annan-Plan’; George Wright, ‘Greek Cypriot Leaders Reject Annan Plan’ *The Guardian* (22 April 2004), available at <<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2004/apr/22/eu.cyprus>> (last accessed 3 November 2022); Alexandros Lordos, ‘From Secret Diplomacy to Public Diplomacy: How the Annan Plan Referendum Failure Earned the Cypriot Public a Seat at the Negotiating Table’ in Andrekos Varnava and Hubert Faustmann (eds), *Reunifying Cyprus: The Annan Plan and Beyond*, 28 (IB Tauris New York, 2009); Kofi Annan, ‘Report of the Secretary-General on His Mission of Good Offices in Cyprus’ (United Nations, 2004); *The Economist*, ‘The Cyprus Problem: Intractable—or Insoluble? | The Economist’ (*The Economist*, 2014), available at <<http://www.economist.com/news/europe/21635025-hopes-settling-cyprus-problem-are-starting-look-unrealistic-intractableor-insoluble>> (last accessed 1 May 2017); Maria Avraamidou, ‘Exploring Greek-Cypriot Media Representations of National Identities in Ethnically Divided Cyprus: The Case of the 2002/2004 Annan Plan Negotiations’ (2018) 20 *National Identities* 439; Hubert Faustmann, ‘The Cyprus Question Still Unresolved: Security Concerns and the Failure of the Annan Plan’ [2004] *Südosteuropa-Mitteilungen* 44; Andrekos Varnava and Hubert Faustmann (eds), *Reunifying Cyprus. The Annan Plan and Beyond* (IB Tauris & Co Ltd 2009).

problem'.⁴³ The results of the referenda led to an escalation of the tension between the two communities, with hardliner leaders Rauf Denktash and Tassos Papadopoulos of the northern and southern sides respectively speaking out against the plan.⁴⁴

The dividing line still exists and continues to shape dialogues and narratives. The interaction between Greek and Turkish Cypriots today is still influenced by each community's link with respective motherlands Greece and Turkey,⁴⁵ which determines what is collectively remembered or forgotten. The discovery of natural gas reserves and associated research activities undertaken by the RoC are the latest source of tension domestically and within the Eastern Mediterranean more broadly, putting peace and stability at risk.

Research Framework and Methodology

Interviewees were selected based on selection criteria that were defined on age, nationality and gender. A convenience sampling technique (snowballing) was selected.

The interview questionnaire consisted of 72 questions/discussion points covering three pillars that influence collective memory: (a) family environment, (b) school environment, (c) and personal environment. Questions referred to personal experiences of the age group under investigation with regards to the events of the period under research. Even though the research was purely qualitative in nature, the research topic under study required substantial investigation due to its perplexed and complicated nature.

Within the framework of this study, data were collected following a two-stage process through biographical, personal, semi-structured in-depth interviews. The major advantage of in-depth interviews is twofold: enabling participants to express ideas and suggestions on a particular matter, and enabling researchers to fully explore the variety of factors underpinning participants' responses, including reasons, feelings, opinions and beliefs, furnishing hence the explanatory evidence crucial to qualitative research.⁴⁶ Byrne-Armstrong⁴⁷ states that this type of research represents a shift in

⁴³ UN News Center, 'Cyprus Misses "historic Chance" as It Rejects UN Reunification Plan, Annan Says' (24 April, 2004), available at <<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=10512&Cr=Cyprus&Cr1#.V3kww0Z96Uk>> (last accessed. 20 October 2022).

⁴⁴ Birol Yesilada and David Wood, *The Emerging European Union* (Routledge, 2015).

⁴⁵ Kizilyürek (no 5).

⁴⁶ Robin Legard, Jill Keegan and Kit Ward, 'In-Depth Interviews'(2003) *Qualitative Research Practice: A Guide for Social Science Students and Researchers* 141.

⁴⁷ Hilary Byrne-Armstrong, 'Whose Show Is It? The Contradictions of Collaboration' (2001) *Critical Moments in Qualitative Research* 106.

focus from individual meanings to cultural narratives and their impact on people's lives. Therefore, the interview aims 'to sign up many truths/narratives' rather than finding a universal truth.⁴⁸

At the initial stage, 40 interviews (N=40) were conducted with an equal number of Greek- and Turkish- Cypriots who had no direct personal experience of the events of 1974. At the second stage, ten further interviews took place with Greek Cypriots (N=5) and Turkish Cypriots (N=5).⁴⁹ The data was collected through biographical, personal, semi-structured, in-depth interviews. Interviewees, like the participants at the first stage, had only transmitted experience of the events of 1974. At both stages, structured interview guides were used to ensure the comparability of the data and to safeguard the validity and data consistency necessary to allow the use of the data as a single body. Interviews were then transcribed and coded. The data were then translated to English. To ensure validity and reliability, a random sample of six interviews were back translated by an independent researcher.

The data for both stages was collected as part of an ongoing research project with multiple dimensions. The theoretical background, research scope, and methodology of this project extends beyond its boundaries and applies to each publication/research report which stems from it. Both datasets were processed and analysed under a common research protocol, using common coding schemes derived by two different raters during the inter-rater reliability process, resulting in a high consistency score between the raters (92%). Data was fully anonymised according to the EU Ethical and Data Protection HORIZON2020 Guidelines. The interviews with the Turkish Cypriots were conducted in English, while those with the Greek Cypriots were conducted in Greek. All interviews⁵⁰ were later transcribed and analysed following a qualitative thematic analysis pattern⁵¹ using NVivo 12Pro.⁵²

⁴⁸ Legard, Keegan and Ward (no 46); Byrne-Armstrong (no 47) 110.

⁴⁹ As part of the Horizon2020 research program 'RePAST' (<https://www.repast.eu/>).

⁵⁰ Data were also collected from Greek-Cypriot enclaved population and will be used for a subsequent publication.

⁵¹ Mojtaba Vaismoradi and Sherrill Snelgrove, 'Theme in Qualitative Content Analysis and Thematic Analysis' *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung/Forum: Qualitative Social Research* (DEU 2019); Chad R Lochmiller, 'Conducting Thematic Analysis with Qualitative Data' (2021) 26 *Qualitative Report*; Kristina M Scharp and Matthew L Sanders, 'What Is a Theme? Teaching Thematic Analysis in Qualitative Communication Research Methods' (2019) 33 *Communication Teacher* 117.

⁵² Tag_ID list in Data Presentation follows the pattern: first stage data: (GR)/(TC)_F/M_1..._40 and (GR)/(TC)_R_F/M_1...10 second stage data.

Official History, Narrative, and Memory

Memory is about the realisation of the past in the form of contemporary experience. It is a social construct formed in economic, social, cultural, political, and ideological frameworks.⁵³ In this sense, memory is an invented tradition that is often shaped by people and groups over long periods of time. Memory is linked to the objective perception of ‘history’ but is usually a mythical version of events,⁵⁴ people, and places that serve social or political interests.⁵⁵

As indicated by one participant (referring to the Turkish Cypriots):

‘[...] they did what they did to us back in 1974. You keep this in the back of your head. I will trust them but it’s better to keep one’s eyes skinned’.⁵⁶

The past is not an imaginary investment, projection or experience. Respondents have demonstrated the ability to make a critical assessment of events. They experience the consequences of events, and the self is projected as a result of the multiple effects of collective memory, which is enriched by the current events they witness:

‘What I don’t like about Cyprus is like a war [...] a never-ending conflict. [...] there are always negotiations that don’t get anywhere. [...] if we don’t get the Cyprus passport, we do nothing, apart from Turkey. We’re actually not here’.⁵⁷

‘My dad [...] is sixty years old... He’s history now...What am I doing? I see this is a problem, a major problem that has to be solved...’.⁵⁸

Hamber supports that populations that have experienced violence exhibit a high level of distrust for those seen as ‘the other’ and particularly as ‘aggressors’. He adds that in most conflicts a vague distinction is made between victims and perpetrators depending on the political context, while the experience of victimisation varies greatly across communities.⁵⁹ Hamber’s position is validated in the case of Cyprus. Characteristically, the following arguments were put forward by interviewees.

⁵³ Halbwachs (no 10); Schwartz (no 10).

⁵⁴ Daniels and Cosgrove (no 11); Foote, K. E., & Azaryahu (no 9); Hobsbawm and Ranger (no 11).

⁵⁵ Foote & Azaryahu (no 9); Schwartz (no 10).

⁵⁶ (GC)_F_16

⁵⁷ (TC)_F_22

⁵⁸ (CG)_M_7

⁵⁹ Brandon Hamber ‘Remembering to Forget: Issues to Consider When Establishing Structures for Dealing with the Past’, in *Past imperfect: Dealing with the past in Northern Ireland and societies in transition* (INCORE 1998).

‘They told me that Turkish-Cypriots are very different from Turks. Now, I don’t quite know why they say this. Sure, I hope that among many Turkish-Cypriots there will be good ones. What happened with Isaac and Solomos... if you watch the video of Solomos climbing up the flagpole and getting shot you feel hatred. Your instant reaction is to say, ‘what inhumane people’. And that applies to all of them. They’re all bunched together’.⁶⁰

‘We went to the Museum of Barbarism, in Nicosia [...] I had a memory there, as I recall it was in the bus that we were laughing with a friend of mine and the teacher came and scolded us saying ‘While you laugh people on the Greek side keep saying “The best Turk is a dead Turk”’.⁶¹

Until the opening of the cross-points in 2003, the younger generations of both communities learned about the events through formal history lessons, the media, and their family environment. The dominant forces of society, with their ability to shape social memory, legalised the official narrative. As a result, there are two formal ‘histories’ in Cyprus that refer to the same past but are interpreted in completely different ways. Both narratives focus on perceiving the ‘other’ as the enemy and ‘us’ as the victim. Thus, the ‘other’ is delegitimised through the projection of a particular aspect of history. Although free movement between the two communities without significant restrictions is now possible, the intolerance that has been passed on to the next generations is an obstacle in overcoming fear, prejudice, and hatred. As a result, reconciliation between the two communities remains difficult.

The opening of the cross-points sparked a discourse between members of the two communities, without the restrictions imposed by 29 years of isolation, and fuelled the radicalisation of their collective memories. Even in cases where antagonistic narratives are apparent, the members of the two communities are engaged in a dialogue that brings to light truths concealed by the existing monolithic hegemonic discourse; this fills the vacuum in their historical knowledge and makes evident their misinterpretations of historical facts.

The analysis of primary data revealed that students strongly question and are suspicious of the formal history taught in school. Their ability to study history from other sources played an important role in formulating their views and opinions. Most interview participants stated that they re-evaluated the facts and formed their own opinions during their studies.

⁶⁰ (GC)_F_16

⁶¹ (TC)_R_F_7

‘School has helped me to develop the right opposite influence. Because after you realize that you are being lied and you capture these lies once or twice, then you start to question everything they tell you’.⁶²

History sometimes appears to be a ‘crafted outcome’. Each community in Cyprus highlights only certain parts of historical events, leaving behind elements that undermine the community’s ‘interpretation’ of history. Understanding the history of the other side illuminates aspects of history that have been deliberately kept hidden and facilitates a greater understanding of the ‘other’.⁶³ The demand for this is evident in the following extract.

‘And when it was sorted out chronologically, we figured out that there were gaps. There was a major gap in Greek Cypriot side up until ‘74 they didn’t know what happened before ‘74 war, what caused ‘74 and there were many things for them after ‘74 and for it was the right opposite. We (Turkish Cypriots) had nothing after ‘74, we only had the 1983, and the establishment of TRNC⁶⁴ and before ‘74 we had a list of things to count. It was right the opposite. [...] If you put all of them in the same list, you have a full story line’.⁶⁵

‘[...] at school, we were never taught that Greek Cypriots also committed horrible crimes against Turkish Cypriots’.⁶⁶

Bourdieu⁶⁷ describes the formation of national identities ‘through classification systems inscribed in law, through bureaucratic procedures, educational structures and social rituals’, enabling the State to mould mental structures and to impose common principles of vision and division. The dominant narratives can be discussed as a modulating factor of the symbolic core of the social representation of the past and as organisational principles of the quality of relations of the in-groups as well as the contact between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots. This is possible through the

⁶² (TC)_M_32

⁶³ Benjamin J Broome, ‘Overview of Conflict Resolution Activities in Cyprus: Their Contribution to the Peace Process’ (1998) 10 *Cyprus Review* 47; Chara Makriyianni, Charis Psaltis and Dilek Latif, ‘History Teaching in Cyprus’ (2011) 1 *Facing mapping, bridging diversity: Foundations of a European discourse on history education*, Part; Peristianis (n 32); Yiannis Papadakis, ‘Narrative, Memory and History Education in Divided Cyprus A Comparison of Schoolbooks on the ‘History of Cyprus’ (2008) 20 *History and Memory* 128.

⁶⁴ The self-declared ‘Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus’

⁶⁵ (TC)_M_32

⁶⁶ (GC)_M_6

⁶⁷ Pierre Bourdieu, Loic J. D. Wacquant and Samar Farage, ‘Rethinking the State: Genesis and Structure of the Bureaucratic Field’ (1994) 12 *Sociological theory* 1, 7–8.

constant and intense repetition of the need to preserve and maintain national identity. Calhoun points to the example of the ethnic conflict in the former Yugoslavia, where the invocation of national solidarity and the identity of Serbs as members of an elite force led to an ideological mobilisation that required the heirs of the chosen ethnic group to be willing to kill and die for their nation.⁶⁸

‘About hanging out with Turkish-Cypriots, the fact that the Turks came and caught us creates enmity and hatred, and... I don’t know... and this... if I could be a friend with a Turkish-Cypriot. Whether he is good or not, as I said before, with those people (the Turkish Cypriots) I don’t know’.⁶⁹

The above excerpt shows that the construction of the ‘other’ is based on the evaluation of its actions.⁷⁰ Furthermore, the decision-making process in terms of how decisions are made about the present is clearly demonstrated through collective memory. The following extract further emphasises this argument:

‘I believe that because people don’t change easily. [...] I feel threat because if we become one community many things will change’.⁷¹

The use of Collective Memory by the two Leaderships

Azaryahu and Kellerman⁷² argue that history and memory, as a means of coming to terms with the past, are prominent figures in the politics of identity. Collective memory is socially configured and culturally formatted as a statement of group solidarity and distinction. According to them, collective memory is among the symbolic foundations of group identity because it tackles the fundamental question ‘who we are’ in terms of answering the question ‘where do we come from’. Only those references which highlight a positive self-image that gives the right to future claims are retained.

⁶⁸ Craig Calhoun, ‘Nationalism and Ethnicity’ (1993) 19 *Annual Review of Sociology* 211.

⁶⁹ (GC)_M_3

⁷⁰ Samuel Oluwadurotimi Akoni, ‘Education, Identity, and Conflict: A Comparative Study of Northern Ireland and Cyprus’ (Master’s thesis, Eastern Mediterranean University (EMU)-Doğu Akdeniz Üniversitesi (DAÜ) (2016); Kaitlin Peach, ‘Conflict in the Mediterranean: An Analysis of the Turkish-Greek Cypriot Conflict’ [2015] University of Oklahoma; Michalinos Zembylas, ‘Inventing Spaces for Critical Emotional Praxis’, *Peace Education in Conflict and Post-Conflict Societies* (Springer 2009); Broome (no 57); Maria Hadjipavlou, ‘The Third Alternative Space: Bi-Communal Work in Divided Cyprus’ (2012) 18 *Palestine-Israel Journal of Politics, Economics, and Culture* 102.

⁷¹ (GC)_M_3

⁷² Maoz Azaryahu and Aharon Kellerman B., ‘Symbolic Places of National History and Revival: A Study in Zionist Mythical Geography’ (1999) 24 *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 109.

Neither political authority in Cyprus sought to suppress personal memories, although both sides clearly wanted to impose a particular way of remembering the past.⁷³ Thelen writes that ‘the struggle for possession and interpretation of memory is rooted in the conflict and interplay among social, political, and cultural interests and values in the present’.⁷⁴ In Cyprus, both leaderships seek to use the past in public representations in a way that stimulates collective memory to fulfil their political agendas, policies and aspirations.

Greek Cypriots

Papadakis⁷⁵ points out that for Greek Cypriots the events of 1974 were not but an injustice not yet resolved, rendering them an ‘open’ history. In the case of the Greek Cypriot community, more symbolic value was attached to the issue of the missing persons than to those who lost their lives. Their names have been officially registered since 1975 and reference is made to them at every opportunity.⁷⁶ A series of generations grew up with the memory of the missing persons that was enforced by the undue prominence of their family members.

The following excerpts add significantly to this dimension:

‘As long as there are these mothers of the missing, the enclaved, the refugees, this thing works rather against us because it does not allow us to have a comprehensive opinion and make this thing (the solution of the Cyprus Problem) possible’.

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Sontag reports that the understanding of war among people who did not experience it is the impact of images and footage of the conflict. The image of the mothers of the missing persons, in Sontag’s words, form ‘memory freeze frames’ that act ‘like a quotation, a maxim or a proverb’.⁷⁷ These images are stored in memory, to be instantly retrieved whenever a stimulus is presented.

⁷³ Paul Sant Cassia, *Bodies of Evidence: Burial, Memory and the Recovery of Missing Persons in Cyprus* (Berghahn Books, 2005) 71.

⁷⁴ David Thelen, ‘Memory and American History’ (1989) 75 *Organization of American Historians* 1117, 1127.

⁷⁵ Yiannis Papadakis, ‘The National Struggle Museums of a Divided City’ (no 7).

⁷⁶ Natasa Iakovou and Nadia Kornioti, ‘Missing Persons in Cyprus: Observations from the past and recommendations for the future’ (PRIO Cyprus Centre Report, 7., 2019) 14-15.

⁷⁷ Susan Sontag, ‘Memory as a Freeze-Frame: Extracts from “Looking at War”’ (2004) 51 *Diogenes* 113, 113.

‘You realized that something bad happened without knowing more horrible details, and that it caused too much pain because you could see on TV the mothers of the missing, they were crying, they were mourning...’⁷⁸

A striking example of the repetition of traumatic events is the biology activity book issued in 2016 for the 10th grade by the Ministry of Education of RoC.⁷⁹ The ‘Cyprus Tragedy’, as the book calls the conflict, is conveyed through the teaching process. Each page of the book is titled ‘Searching for our Missing Ones’. Endowed with feelings of victimisation, the book explores cell division, genetic material, and genetic inheritance through the narrative of the family of ‘Andreas’, a missing person from the 1974 war. The story of the family and the verification of Andreas’ fate unravels through the pages of the book; the phrase ‘missing persons’ is repeated more than 147 times. As such, learning becomes an experience linked to the hegemonic narrative of victimhood and the injustice of ongoing conflict.

The missing persons are treated as victims of the invasion for whom the Greek-Cypriot side can mourn.⁸⁰ As a result, society remains trapped in a state of denial and mourning, unable to move forward. Remembering the missing ones creates a past that is particularly useful in the present.⁸¹

Did you know that none of them (the missing persons) are still alive? They (*the Turkish army*) executed them. Even now missing persons are found with a bullet in the back of their heads. Even if you do not want it, a feeling of hatred comes up. But the bottom line is that you have to deal with that hate, and I do not think you can talk about everyone the same way. The 27-year-old Turkish Cypriot and also the 27-year-old settler who may have been forced to come here by his parents may have done so to have a better life. But they (the 27-year-old) did not kill me and neither did their friends. I do not hate them. But their army, the grey wolves, I cannot help but hate them.⁸²

⁷⁸ (GC)_M_7

⁷⁹ Demetrios Mappouras and others, *Biology for the 1st grade of the Lyceum (Activities Workbook)* (Demetrios Mappouras ed, Ministry of Education and Culture, Cyprus Pedagogical Institute, Curriculum Development Unit 2016).

⁸⁰ Iosif Kovras and Neophytos Loizides, ‘Delaying Truth Recovery for Missing Persons’ (2011) *17 Nations and Nationalism* 520.

⁸¹ Oliver P. Richmond, ‘Ethno-nationalism, Sovereignty and Negotiating Positions in the Cyprus Conflict: Obstacles to a Settlement’ [1999] *Middle Eastern Studies*.

⁸² (GC)_M_7

After the Turkish invasion, the Greek-Cypriot side launched a large-scale public-ity project about the feelings of material, mental, and personal loss. This led to the formation of ‘symbolic groups’ that had a dual function:

- (a) As political signifiers, on which the loss and restoration of law become the object of political manipulation and are transformed into a hegemonic narrative.
- (b) As subjective signifiers, to emphasise the need to restore the injustice.

The historical narrative in the Greek-Cypriot community steers clear of any mention of the displacement of Turkish Cypriots; the topic of displacement is strictly limited in scope to the case of Greek-Cypriot refugees, advancing, thus, a one-sided, ethnocentric narrative that fails to capture both communities’ experiences equally.⁸³

The State uses subjective and collective feelings to enforce the narrative about the past, the present and the future, redefining in this way both the past and memories.⁸⁴ For Sontag, collective memory is not about remembering, but about ‘a stipulating that this is important, and this is the story about how it happened with the pictures that lock the story in our minds’.⁸⁵ She introduces to the discussion of collective memory the role of ideology in defining archives of images representative of collective ideas to evoke predictable thoughts and emotions.

[...] we’ve met from youth encounters for peace, and she said that ‘you know what, I mean you were monsters’ [...] It’s strange but who can tell that she is wrong? I mean she is learning that way, it’s not her fault’.⁸⁶

‘In the old days we lived with the Turkish-Cypriots, and then EOKA and TMT started, and animosities were created. If the Turkish-Cypriots come here again some people, some organizations, will stir up new trouble and we’ll live with fear. I’m certain of it. And there might be an invasion again. It isn’t impossible’.⁸⁷

A central aim of the Greek-Cypriot leadership as regards education is the preservation of the memory of the events of ’74. The message ‘I don’t forget’ (‘Δεν Ξεχνώ/ Den Xehno’) has been featured prominently in education, particularly in school textbooks, in the early years after 1974. Subsequently, the message was modified to ‘I

⁸³ Bryant, ‘Displacement in Cyprus Consequences of Civil and Military Strife - Report 2 - Life Stories: Turkish-Cypriot Community’, PRIO, 2012’ (no 35); Psaltis (no 5).

⁸⁴ Cassia (no 63).

⁸⁵ Susan Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others* (Penguin Books, 2003) 76–77.

⁸⁶ (TC)_F_32

⁸⁷ (GC)_M_18

don't forget and I struggle' (Δεν Ξεχνώ και Αγωνίζομαι/*Den xehno kai Agonizomai*).⁸⁸ Albeit with reduced intensity,⁸⁹ the message is still advanced by the Ministry of Education reading, in its current formulation, 'I acknowledge, I don't forget, I demand' (Τνωρίζω, Δεν Ξεχνώ, Διεδικώ/*Gnorizo, Den xehno, Diekdiko*). Looking at how the message has taken shape throughout the years is indicative of the different audiences it has come to target: the generation who experiences the war sustains the memory of the occupied territories; the generation after does not forget but struggles for justice; and the new generation, with no lived experience of the occupied lands, remains devoted to sustaining the memories of the past and demanding justice no matter how long it might take.

The effect of the slogan is evident in the excerpts listed below:

'From school, I always remember those notebooks, in elementary school, that said 'I don't forget'.⁹⁰

'We painted our flag on October 1 and there was always the 'I don't forget and I struggle', we had corresponding songs and from the first grade I think there was also a lesson where they dedicated one hour a week [...] specifically to get to know the occupied villages, to talk to us'.⁹¹

Similarly, in the circular of the Ministry of Education and Culture of the RoC on the objectives of the school year 2014-2015 for public primary, secondary, technical and vocational schools:

'Visits or bus tour along the green line to increase the awareness (of the students) of the successive effects of the military and territorial occupation by

⁸⁸ Michalinos Zembylas, 'Unmasking the Entanglements of Violence, Difficult Knowledge, and Schooling' (2014) 109 *Religious Education* 258; Christalla Yakinthou, 'The Quiet Deflation of Den Xehno? Changes in the Greek Cypriot Communal Narrative on the Missing Persons in Cyprus' (2008) 20 *Cyprus Review* 15; Rebecca Bryant, 'Partitions of Memory: Wounds and Witnessing in Cyprus' (2012) 54 *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 332; Hakan Karahassan and Michalinos Zembylas, 'The Politics of Memory and Forgetting in History Textbooks: Towards a Pedagogy of Reconciliation and Peace in Divided Cyprus' [2006] *Citizenship Education: Europe and the World* (London: CiCe) 701; Miranda Christou, 'The Language of Patriotism: Sacred History and Dangerous Memories' (2007) 28 *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 709; Ministry of Education and Culture, 'Annual Report 2013 (Ετήσια Έκθεση) Ministry of Education and Culture' (Ministry of Education and Culture 2014).

⁸⁹ 'Annual Report 2021. Cyprus Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth.' (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth 2021).

⁹⁰ (GC)_M_4

⁹¹ (GC)_F_14

Turkey and to directly familiarise them with our occupied lands even from a distance.

Churches-chapels that were built for religious gatherings and reinforcement of the memory of the displaced residents [...] St. Alexander's chapel for the missing persons'.⁹²

The above excerpts illustrate the State's effort to instil a hazy sense of conflict from early childhood. The State maintains the idea of conflict, but at the same time does not take a clear position on events. However, the sense of conflict is prevalent for young Cypriots in all aspects of their lives. When asked whether the portrayal of the 1974 events in the course or school lessons was neutral or reflected a particular viewpoint, a participant commented that:

'They didn't express a certain view, they always told us that we shouldn't forget, that we should keep on fighting, that there (in the occupied part) are our homes. There were more of positive messages but with a dose of sadness and bitterness than a political debate [...] That we are the victims and that it is somebody else's fault. Always this...'⁹³

Turkish Cypriots

For the Turkish Cypriot side, Kanlı Noel (Bloody Christmas) is a commemorated historic event. It refers to the intercommunal conflicts that sparked off on 21 December 1963, during which many Turkish Cypriots were killed or went missing. The incident is made up of a series of events, known as the 'Remembrance Week of Martyrs of the Struggle' whose main purpose is to commemorate those who lost their lives during the period of 1963-1974.⁹⁴ As a response to the Greek Cypriot 'I Do not For-

⁹² Ministry of Education and Culture, 'Curriculum Objectives for 2014-2015' (2014).

⁹³ (GC)_F_14

⁹⁴ Presidency of the 'TRNC', 'President Ersin Tatar Attends Remembrance Ceremonies with Bereaved Families of Turkish Cypriots Who Were Massacred in the Villages of Muratağa, Sandallar and Athılar' (14 August 2022), available at <<https://kktcb.org/en/president-ersin-tatar-attends-remembrance-ceremonies-with-bereaved-families-of-10111>> (last accessed 28 September 2022); Ministry of Foreign Affairs ('TRNC'), '21st December National Struggle and Martyrs Week Begins Today; Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus' (21 December 2015), available at <<https://mfa.gov.ct.tr/21st-december-national-struggle-and-martyrs-week-begins-today/>> (last accessed 28 September 2022).

get' (Den Xehno),⁹⁵ the Turkish Cypriots came up with the slogan 'We will not Forget' (Unutmayacagız).⁹⁶

'Did you visit the museum of barbarism?'⁹⁷ It's in Nicosia. It's the house where the family was killed. (Shows photos of the museum of barbarism). It really affects. [...] You go there, you see like what they (The Greek Cypriots) caused you... People were dead here...'.⁹⁸

In the book 'History of Cyprus', by Vehbi Zeki Serter, which was taught in Turkish-Cypriot middle schools until 2003, the victimisation of Turkish Cypriots was pronounced. Referring to the book Hatay and Papadakis,⁹⁹ write that four out of the 14 photographs in the book regarding the period 1960-1974, depicted dead Turkish Cypriots, while six of them showed the 'glorified' Turkish army and air force. The book also included vivid descriptions of deaths of Turkish Cypriots. Referring to the history book participants characteristically noted:

'No, back then, the government we had was right wing government and they were using a book of a far-right author. And I remember phrases and adjectives that were used in that book for referring to Greek Cypriots they were very extreme they were like 'barbarian Greeks' for example killing Turks, innocent Turks for example and we were all suffering and suffering and suffering and

⁹⁵ Zembylas, 'Unmasking the Entanglements of Violence, Difficult Knowledge, and Schooling' (no 74); Yakinthou (no 74); Bryant, 'Partitions of Memory: Wounds and Witnessing in Cyprus' (no 74); M Christou, 'A Double Imagination: Memory and Education in Cyprus' [2006] *Journal of Modern Greek Studies*.

⁹⁶ Hakan Karahasan, 'Different Narratives, Different Stories: The Language of Narrative and Interpretation' (2005) 11 *Journal of Cyprus Studies* 115; Papadakis, 'Nation, Narrative and Commemoration: Political Ritual in Divided Cyprus' (no 7); Michalinos Zembylas, 'Personal Narratives of Loss and the Exhumation of Missing Persons in the Aftermath of War: In Search of Public and School Pedagogies of Mourning' (2011) 24 *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education* 767.

⁹⁷ In an upsurge of ethnic violence, which began on 21 December, 1963 Tamkoç (no 17)., two women and three children were murdered in the bathroom of their house in Nicosia where they were hiding from attacking Greek Cypriot militants Bilge Ömer, 'Rum Yalanna Yanıt İçin Geldim - Gündem Haberleri' (2007), available at <<http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/rum-yalanina-yanit-icin-geldim-6159622>> (last accessed 2 May 2016). The house was converted into a museum, in which pictures and stories, published in international newspapers about Greek Cypriot atrocities committed during and after 1963, are still exhibited 'a witness of the Greeks savage bloodshed... [...] a glaring example of Greek Barbarism' (abstract from a leaflet from the Museum of Barbarism, 'TRNC' Department of Antiquities and Museum'.

⁹⁸ (TC)_F_22

⁹⁹ Mete Hatay and Yiannis Papadakis, 'A Critical Comparison of Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot Official Historiographies (1940s To the Present).' in Rebecca Bryant and Yiannis Papadakis (eds), *Cyprus and the Politics of Memory: History, Community and Conflict* (IB Tauris, 2012) 42.

they are barbarians they cannot be friends, this what they did showed their true animalistic face and very terrible adjectives were used in that book and they were pictures of the people with half their organs outside their body'.¹⁰⁰

'In school, they, I don't know why they did that, but it was, it was more brutal, you know. [...] they say, still, what they say for '74 is a happy peace operation. That was the title. But for me, the pictures are more, more like... sadder, you know...'.¹⁰¹

The following extract, according to which the official story is constructed and transmitted by invoking emotion, is a major example of the Turkish-Cypriot official narrative:

'Maratha, Sandallaris and Aloa.¹⁰² And there is a man there, still there whoever goes to visit, he is still there crying out telling how Greek Cypriots are barbarians and how they massacred three villages of people and there are pictures showing... It's very intense'.¹⁰³

In 2003, after the sliding victory of the left-leaning Republican Turkish Party (CTP), led by Mehmet Ali Talat, the history books were replaced with new ones, from which the nationalist/divisive comments were removed, even when it came to comments on the motherlands. However, with the change of the Turkish-Cypriot leadership following the 2009 elections, in which the National Unity Party (UBP) of Dervis Eroglu came to power, new history books were published, which served the principles of nationalism and had many similarities with earlier books.¹⁰⁴

In the middle-school book 'History of Cyprus, year 10',¹⁰⁵ the victimisation of Turkish Cypriots is again highlighted. 32 photos in the book, covering the period 1960-1974, show Turkish Cypriots suffering in concentration and refugee camps, while 14 photographs depict the glory of the Turkish army and air force. The book

¹⁰⁰ (TC)_M_35

¹⁰¹ (TC)_M_36

¹⁰² Mass executions of Turkish Cypriots by Greek Cypriot extremists took place in 1974, in the villages of Maratha, Aloa, Sandallaris and Tochni Cassia (no 63); Angelique Chrisafis, 'Bones Don't Speak' (*The Guardian*, 15 April 2008), available at <<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2008/apr/15/cyprus>> (last accessed 3 November 2022); Rauf R. Denktash, *The Cyprus Triangle.*, (London: K. Rustem and George Allen and Unwin, 1982).

¹⁰³ (TC)_M_35

¹⁰⁴ Hatay and Papadakis (no 81).

¹⁰⁵ KKTC Milli Eğitim, *Kıbrıs Türk Tarihi (10 Sınıf)*. KKTC Milli Eğitim E Kültür. (Ankara, Korza Basım, 2009)

also includes testimonies by military personnel who fought during the 1974 war and vivid descriptions of deaths and violence perpetrated by Greek Cypriots against Turkish Cypriots in 1963-1974.

The issue of the constant change of history books and the contestation and questioning of their content is evident in the following excerpts:

‘In the North, every time the government changes, so does the textbook’.¹⁰⁶

‘I remember, even though I do not want to... They (the books) were very subjective, very violent, I am talking about the content of the lessons, the history lessons and it was very nationalistic, it was overly nationalistic, and it was not history, it was dogma that was taught’.¹⁰⁷

‘There was a lack of information. It was only talked about that we suffered, but we were not told, for example, that Greek Cypriots lived in refugee camps for 3-4 months until December, until winter, when people in the areas had to leave their homes. Our people also lived in refugee camps, that’s fine, but we did not know that Greek Cypriots also lived in refugee camps. That was not in the book. So, there was something missing. Missing information’.¹⁰⁸

The above discussion shows that victimisation is political by its very nature.¹⁰⁹ In societies coming out of violence (such as the Cypriot society) taking control of the memory apparatus and history will enable societies to engage and develop collective memories of the conflict. Collective memory of the Cyprus problem thus becomes a political tool reconstructed and re-appropriated to serve the national and political agendas of both communities.

A Proposal for an Alternative Definition: Meta-Memory

Both communities reproduce and perpetuate these events. Therefore, the conflict has remained at the diplomatic level for almost five decades, with some sporadic outbreaks of heightened tension and fear of military escalation. At the institutional level, there is a ceasefire agreement, maintaining technically a state of war in the island. The current situation is institutionally, socially, and politically an unfinished

¹⁰⁶ (TC)_F_22

¹⁰⁷ (TC)_M_20

¹⁰⁸ (TC)_M_34

¹⁰⁹ James H Liu and Denis J Hilton, ‘How the Past Weighs on the Present: Social Representations of History and Their Role in Identity Politics’ (2005) 44 *British Journal of Social Psychology* 537; Jeffrey K Olick, ‘The Politics of Regret. Analytical Frames’, *The Politics of Regret: On Collective Memory and Historical Responsibility* (Taylor & Francis Group, LLC 2007); Hamber and Newbolt (no 56).

business. The memory of the past is instrumentalised to be used as a means of cohesion among the members of the two communities. The selective remembering of the past is used by both communities in an offensive way. The intractable conflict and the short temporal distance from the division resulted in the co-existence of the *milieu de memoire* (real environments of memory) with the *lieux de memoir* (sites of memory), according to Nora's concept.¹¹⁰ Sites of memory - such as the buffer zone and the deserted homes of refugees, or the 'TRNC' illuminated flag laid over Pentadaktylos hillside, visible from any point in the divided capital of Cyprus- act as a traumatic reminder of the consequences of the ongoing bi-communal conflict.

Hirsch¹¹¹ refers to post-memory as the experience that the 'generation after' has with the memories of those who experienced cultural or collective trauma, namely those who came before them. These experiences are transmitted to the new generation with such intensity, through the stories, images, and behaviours they grow up with, that they seem to form their own memories. As they grow up with these inherited memories dominated by narratives from before they were born, their own delayed stories are displaced by the stories of the previous generation, marked by traumatic events they can neither understand nor relate to. The void created in one's own memory is filled by the progressive memory reproduced through the collective narrative. Thus, the self is projected according to the multiple influences the person receives through oral and written narratives.

Following the above rationale and based on empirical findings, we propose the term 'meta-memory', to describe the case of young Cypriots who have not experienced the events that led to the division of Cyprus, arguing that the 'Cyprus Problem' consists of an open-ended process that carries elements of the past as 'memories' while at the same time being enriched by current developments that are also subsequently converted into memories. As mentioned above, the new generations acquire the memories of those with first-hand experience of the conflict through the official history and personal narratives. This is however only half the picture when it comes to Cyprus; due to the ongoing conflict, the 'generation after' form their own memories of events and incidents that occur during their lifetime. Such subsequent experiences pile on top of the inherited memories, perpetuating the conflict and its open-ended nature.

¹¹⁰ Pierre Nora, 'Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire' [1989] *Representations*, 26.

¹¹¹ Marianne Hirsch, 'The Generation of Postmemory' (2008) 29 *Poetics Today* 103; Marianne Hirsch, *The Generation of Postmemory: Writing and Visual Culture after the Holocaust* (Columbia University Press, 2012).

Meta-memory differs from post-memory in intrinsic ways; ‘meta’ indicates the memories still produced by a non-resolved / ongoing conflict, while ‘post’ deals with the aftermath of a conflict that has since ended and the mediation of the traumatic memories of the generation with lived experience. ‘Post-memory’ refers to transmitted memory. ‘Meta-memory’ refers to transmitted experiences plus the experiences that occurred at a later point or in succession of the initial conflict; it is not only, in the words of Hirsch, an imaginative investment of the past, but rather a direct collection and accumulation of experiences from an ongoing conflict that affects current generations’ lives in the present.

Reversing Eva Hoffman’s position, the members of the age group considered in this study are characterised by a sequence of defining common events rather than a single event (as in the case of the Holocaust post generation addressed by Hoffman)¹¹². In the case of Cyprus, there is no single defining event in the past that constitutes ‘the prehistory’ of the post-war generation, but rather a sequence of ‘major events or public milestones’ that they experience and shape their own history and visions of the future. The post-1974 generation does not only have ‘symbolic reference points’ on an imagined community (borrowing from Anderson’s¹¹³ idea of the nation) but also apt reference points they can ‘touch on as on common scrolls’.¹¹⁴ The empirical findings of this study clearly demonstrate that the post-1974 generation has ‘affective ties’,¹¹⁵ that is, ties that bind together families, groups and generations, to the pre-1974 generations on both sides. Moreover, the meta-memories of the younger generations are fuelled by the intractable open-ended conflict that still prevails on the island. The presence of Turkish soldiers in the ‘TRNC’ is a constant reminder of the partition and the ‘green line’ that accentuate the territorial division of the island.¹¹⁶

¹¹² Eva Hoffman, *After Such Knowledge. Memory, History, and the Legacy of the Holocaust* (PublicAffairs, 2004).

¹¹³ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (Verso Books, 1991).

¹¹⁴ Hoffman (no 88) 28.

¹¹⁵ Jan Assman, ‘Communicative and Cultural Memory’ in Astrid Erll and Ansgar Nünning (eds), *Media and Cultural Memory* (Walter de Gruyter: Berlin, New York, 2008) 111.

¹¹⁶ Katherine Georges, ‘The Cyprus Problem: A Way Forward; St Andrews Foreign Affairs Review’ (*Foreign Affairs Review*, 2015), available at <<http://foreignaffairsreview.co.uk/2015/02/the-cyprus-problem-a-way-forward/>> (last accessed 1 May 2017); The Economist (no 42); Eric Maurice, ‘Turkey Holds Key at Last-Ditch Cyprus Talks’ (*Euobserver*, 2017), available at <<https://euobserver.com/political/136470>> (last accessed 1 May 2017); Michele Kambas and Tom Miles, ‘Turkish-, Greek Cypriots Exchange Maps in Symbolic Breakthrough | Reuters’ (*Reuters*, 2017), available at <<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-cyprus-conflict-idUSKBN14V1AL?il=0>> (last accessed 1 May 2017); İpek Yezdani, ‘No

Over time, the relationship between the two communities and their motherlands has changed, affecting relations between Greece and Turkey: periods of tension and competition alternate with periods of tranquilly, a reality which maintains instability in the Cyprus Issue. What applies to the case of Cyprus is an open-ended meta-memory process that includes contradictory meta narratives,¹¹⁷ affecting the members of both communities deeply. Sant Cassia explains that the obsession with the missing-persons issue follows from the fact that the Turkish invasion is a time of shame that created an unacceptable state of affairs; the frustration of the defeat suffered by Greek Cypriots and the inability of their motherland to defend them led to the humiliation of their army and the rape of their women. The Greek-Cypriot side has used the issue as ‘a vehicle for collective ethnic imagining, both in the past and the future, ‘meta-narratives’ between history and individual experiences.¹¹⁸

Therefore, in the context of Cyprus, one can speak of a meta-memory, because the situation remains an open process that carries elements of the past as ‘memories’ and at the same time is enriched by current developments in the Cyprus Problem that are also transformed into memories through the lived experience of the people. Past and present are transformed into a single ontology, which is enriched by a parallel process, but which also remains an open-ended process. In the context of Cyprus, younger generations may not have experienced the conflict under the prism of armed conflict, but they continue to experience and respond to intense elements and features of that conflict that are actively present such as barricades, occupation forces, the peacekeeping force of the UN, the ceasefire line, or outbreaks of ethnic violence.¹¹⁹

The conflict between the two communities in Cyprus has dominated the public agenda for more than a century. There are two alternative public spheres with the same point of departure (ethno-religious identity), but which are in direct opposition

Sympathy for Turkish Army in Cyprus: Report - POLITICS’ (*Hürriyet Daily News*, 2012), available at <<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/no-sympathy-for-turkish-army-in-cyprus-report.aspx?page-ID=238&nID=24685&NewsCatID=338>> (last accessed 1 May 2017); Arthur Beesley, ‘Turkish Turmoil after Failed Coup Raises Fears for Cyprus Talks’ (*Financial Times*, 2016), available at <<https://www.ft.com/content/86ec770a-5974-11e6-8d05-4eaa66292c32>> (last accessed 1 May 2017).

¹¹⁷ Yehudith Auerbach, ‘National Narratives in a Conflict of Identity’ [2010] *Barriers to peace in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict* 99; Yehudith Auerbach, ‘The Reconciliation Pyramid—A Narrative-based Framework for Analyzing Identity Conflicts’ (2009) 30 *Political Psychology* 291.

¹¹⁸ Cassia (no 63).

¹¹⁹ Susan A. Crane, ‘Memory, Distortion, and History in the Museum’ (1997) 36 *History and Theory* 44.

to each other and compete for supremacy. The conflict in Cyprus is therefore diachronic in nature and is perpetuated by successive layers of events that evoke trauma, experiences, feelings, and reactions that arouse people's fears and fuel resentment, perpetuating the conflict and division. The memory of the conflict is deeply ingrained for each generation. However, the intractable conflict transforms the cumulative memory into a meta-memory.

The proposed concept is a theoretical contribution in itself since it fills a gap in situations where intractable conflict -which carries elements of the past as 'memories'- is enriched by current developments. The contextualisation of intractable conflict in temporal 'meta' terms provides a unique avenue for investigating past and present as a single interrelated ontology which is also parallel in nature. This approach, in addition to its theoretical properties, provides methodological insights since it allows the researcher to capture the parallel dynamics of conflict situations. The applicability of the concept can therefore be extended beyond the Cyprus Conflict.

Conclusion

Meta-memory is a form of memory that has a visible and continuous connection to its source. There is no break in the lifeline, but a series of events in Cyprus. The year 1974 is an incisive event for both Greek and Turkish Cypriots but with different official narratives enforcing their interpretation and justifying the 'us' while demonising the 'other'. The past haunts the present and becomes a weapon in the political struggle between the two communities, used to justify their respective causes. Instability in the relations of the two communities persists and provides a pervasive sense of conflict. Past and post generations share a common core of experiences (refugee camps, buffer zones, clashes between members of the two communities) as well as commemorations that manifest and legitimise the position of each side.

Education is a key factor in the creation and preservation of collective memory, with the power to either defuse or exacerbate conflict. A unique emphasis is placed on the role of education in the post-confrontational era. The curricula of both sides have not been developed with the aim of building peace. On the contrary, they have contributed in a rather instrumental way to perpetuating bigotry, prejudice, fears, and stereotypes between the two sides. In the case of Cyprus, education supports the conflict through the divisive dialectics it employs, the main purpose of which is to achieve the goals of the two sides. The divisive methods of official representation aim to (a) construct the 'other' in the actions of the 'other', which highlights the importance of collective memory for present and future actions, (b) construct history

by evoking emotions, and (c) construct the ‘other’ as an ‘other’ who is blamed for the current situation. In this way, an ideological conflict is maintained in which each side tries to counterpose its own alibi to that of the ‘other’. The failure to establish an official history that exposes the injustices and acknowledges the suffering of both communities is a *sine qua non* for reconciliation.

The analysis of the interviews has shown that the official narrative is intensely questioned, contested, and suspected, while at the same time there is a desire to understand the narrative of the other side. This can be interpreted as an attempt to understand the mindset of the ‘other’. As can be seen from the analysis, the official narrative of history offers vague clues to the conflict, starting with the lower tiers of education. Young people in both communities are confronted from an early age with an unclear and confusing narrative, but which is one that they seem to recognise, challenge, and question.

It is also suggested that the dominant narrative could be altered to mitigate differences and unite people to achieve peace. In order for the way that the two communities perceive reality to change, the communities must have a clear understanding of the content of each proposed solution. The creation of a new shared narrative cannot be based only on what is taught in school or in the media, but on a solid reality based on a solution that respects human rights, equality, and respect for diversity. Understanding the way in which the collective identities of the two communities have been formed under the influence of nationalism handed down from the motherlands will contribute significantly to the resolution of the conflict.

The long unresolved conflict, the built-up mistrust, and the problematic transmission of collective memory on a diachronic basis prevented the two communities from benefiting from the opportunities that would have arisen had the island been allowed to develop its full potential. As long as the members of the two communities do not enter the phase of dialogue and reconciliation, overcome antagonism, and put an end to blaming the other, the vicious circle of the Cyprus Conflict will persevere.

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